



COP29: Africa Climate Coalition urgent call for climate action and mental health support for resilient communities

For immediate release

13 November 2024, Baku, Azerbaijan: The African Coalition of Communities Responsive to Climate Change (ACCRCC) on Wednesday in Baku, Azerbaijan called on the global community to urgently scale up financing to address the intertwined crises of climate change and mental health impacts across Africa.

The escalating climate crisis not only threatens the physical environment but also places enormous psychological stress on communities, leading to increased mental health challenges. Africa, facing the brunt of climate impacts it did not cause, demands a response that considers the holistic well-being of its people and ecosystems.

“Every day, African communities grapple with climate-induced traumas—displacement, loss of livelihoods, and destruction of ancestral lands—which profoundly affect mental health. These challenges worsen with each flood, drought, and crop failure, straining the mental resilience of people across the continent.

Science warns that without immediate climate action, the psychological toll will only grow, particularly among the most vulnerable, including youth, women, and Indigenous groups. Yet, international responses remain insufficient, disregarding the urgent need for an integrated approach that supports both climate resilience and mental well-being,” said Hannah Ngugi, from ADRA Regional Office.

The world’s wealthiest nations bear historical responsibility for the majority of greenhouse gas emissions, yet they have failed to offer adequate support. Financial commitments to address climate impacts are vague and lack mechanisms for immediate, accessible aid to address the mental health crisis that accompanies environmental damage. At COP29, ACCRCC urges global leaders to recognize that climate justice requires mental health justice.

Among key demands the ACCRCC pushed forward at a side event in Baku included;

1. **Integrated Climate and Mental Health Finance:** Africa calls for a New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) that includes targeted financing for mental health support in climate-affected communities, with a commitment of at least USD 1.3 trillion annually. These funds must be provided as grants and reviewed regularly to address both physical and psychological climate impacts, without creating debt or dependency.
2. **Loss, Damage, and Psychological Recovery:** We demand a substantial increase in funding to the Loss and Damage fund to address the immediate and long-term psychological impacts of climate-related disasters. Rapid disbursement and easy access are critical for supporting African communities affected by displacement, loss of livelihood, and traumatic events.
3. **Just Transition for Mental Well-being:** Africa's transition to sustainable development must include mental health support, especially in sectors impacted by green transitions like agriculture and energy. Developed countries should contribute to programs that help communities process the emotional impacts of these transitions and ensure mental health is prioritized alongside economic resilience.
4. **Adaptation Finance with a Mental Health Component:** With adaptation funding needs estimated at USD 387 billion annually, we call for COP29 to allocate resources for psychological adaptation services in sectors like agriculture, water, and health. Mental health should be integrated into climate adaptation programs, supporting communities to cope with the emotional strain of changing environmental conditions.
5. **Transparency and Accountability for Holistic Support:** Clear, honest reporting on climate finance contributions should include funds allocated specifically for mental health. African civil society, including ACCRCC, must play a central role in monitoring these processes to ensure resources reach the communities most in need, fostering resilience beyond mere survival.
6. **Mitigation and Psychological Resilience:** Achieving the 1.5°C target requires decisive emissions cuts, but this must be paired with efforts to build psychological resilience in communities impacted by climate change. Developed countries should support programs that empower communities to adapt mentally and emotionally to new realities, alongside technical and physical adaptation strategies.
7. **Recognition of Africa's Special Needs for Climate and Mental Health Interventions:** COP29 must acknowledge Africa's unique climate and mental health vulnerabilities, establishing frameworks under the Paris Agreement that prioritize funding for comprehensive, integrated approaches to climate resilience.

According to Dr Rosalid Nkirote, the ACCRCC stands firm in demanding a response to the climate crisis that considers the full spectrum of its impacts, including mental health. These demands are essential to preventing the worst outcomes for Africa and supporting the well-being of its people. Anything less is a failure to address the true scale of this crisis and the moral responsibility to protect the resilience and dignity of Africa's communities.

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About ACCRCC

The African Coalition of Communities Responsive to Climate Change (ACCRCC) is an organization that works to influence governments and stakeholders to create and implement policies and programs that address mental health in climate-related humanitarian crises. www.accrcc.org

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