



FROM CLIMATE CRISIS TO CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Pathways for West Africa and the Sahelian
Region at local and regional levels

West Africa Climate Resilience Summit



📅 **March 23–24, 2026**
📍 **Dakar, Senegal**

1. Objectives of the Cooperation

- Strengthening climate resilience through partnerships, networking, science and policy, and consultations with society for positive actions.
- Mobilizing and strengthening the voices and actions of decentralized governments (mayors and governors) at local (rural and urban), sub-national, national, and regional levels, with special emphasis on West African farming communities and youth.

2. Background, Rationale, and Concept

Mitigation needs to be complemented by adaptation and societal transformation to cope with the additional heating of the planet in the coming decades and to evolve into a sustainable way of living. Resilience consists of the following actions:

- Anticipate threats and risks
- Prepare for threats and risks
- Respond to threats and risks
- Recover and rebound from threats and risks

Mitigation, Adaptation, and Societal Transformation (MAST) form three pillars for climate resilience:

- **Mitigation:** With the goal of bending the warming curve as soon as possible, and limiting it to below 2°C.
- **Adaptation:** Mainly through three phases: reducing sensitivity to climate change, reducing exposure to climate threats, and enhancing adaptive capacity, including with land use. It must start at the local level—community, city, or village—and scale up to the entire nation and the planet.
- **Societal Transformation:** Achieving a sustainable way of living is essential for thriving after the climate crisis. Societal Transformation involves fundamental shifts in behavior, socio-economic systems, and governance.

Sustainable Land Use: Exploring the role of forests and related nature-based solutions serves all three elements of MAST.



3. PAS/PASS Initiatives on Climate Resilience and Scope for Cooperation on the Regional Summit in West Africa and Beyond

A series of initiatives by PAS/PASS on climate policies and the climate crisis, organized by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (PAS) and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences (PASS), have paved the way for an influential transdisciplinary alliance between climate science, social science, policy, business, and faith-based communities.

- **The Faith and Science Initiative by the Vatican:** With the leaders from about 30 world religions, including Islamic, Christian, Buddhist, etc., PAS mobilized science communities, and the Governments of the UK and Italy shaped the COP 26 agenda in Glasgow and helped place issues of water, food, and agriculture high on the agenda of COP 27 in Sharm el Sheikh and COP 28 in Dubai.
- **MAST Concept for Resilience:** In July of 2022, PAS organized a meeting of experts, at which the [MAST concept for resilience](#) was proposed and accepted by all attending experts in a conference declaration. This led to the realization that resilience must be built at the local level in cities and states (Ramanathan and von Braun 2022).¹
- **Global Summit on Innovative Solutions for Climate Resilience:** A Global summit was organized jointly by PAS and PASS on May 15-17, 2024, bringing together mayors and governors from all hemispheres to discuss and showcase innovative solutions for climate resilience. The outcome of the summit was a **Planetary Call to Action** for Climate Change Resilience signed by Pope Francis, with Ramanathan, V; Suárez-Orozco, M; von Braun, J; Alford, H; Turkson, P; and 15 other authors from PAS and PASS, signed by all attendees, including all the Mayors and Governors. The [document](#) recognizes that the climate crisis is already upon us, and that we need a new, expanded approach beyond emissions mitigation to protect people and ecosystems, and to engage with global reach at the local level. To support implementation, a series of regional summits across all hemispheres was envisioned.
- **The Regional Summits:** The regional summits in all hemispheres shall advance the call to Action for a universal protocol of resilience, as Pope Francis called it in his speech on May 16, 2024, to the global resilience summit attendees: “I commend the two Academies for producing a universal protocol of resilience”. Regional summits are planned from February 2025 to March 2026. We aim to culminate in a final comprehensive Vatican Summit in 2027 and the release of a Universal Protocol for Climate Resilience.
- **A Blueprint for Climate Resilience:** The primary outcome of the regional summits will be a blueprint for climate resilience that can be adopted locally by communities worldwide. The 2025/2026 regional summits shall advance the call to action for a universal protocol of resilience, as we aim to culminate in a final comprehensive Vatican Summit in 2027 and the release of a Universal Protocol for Climate Resilience. Thus far, regional summits have been held in Austria, Brazil, Kenya, and the United States.

¹ Ramanathan, V., and J. von Braun (Eds.). 2022. Resilience of People and Ecosystems under Climate Stress. Proceedings of the Working Group, Vatican City, July 13-14, 2022. Scripta Varia 152, LEV.

4. The West Africa and Sahelian Summit: Strategic Orientation and Implementation

- **Regional Collaboration in the Context:** Foster regional and international cooperation and knowledge sharing to develop effective, innovative, and scalable climate solutions. Tailor solutions to West Africa's unique and diverse climate challenges and socio-economic, political/governance, and cultural contexts, including exploring the role of forests and related nature-based solutions.
- **Science Communities of the Region in the Lead:** As in all PAS/PASS-stimulated regional summits, the West Africa Summit shall be guided by regional climate resilience expertise, in cooperation with PAS and PASS.
- **Community Engagement:** Involve local communities, farmers, pastoralists, Indigenous groups, and regional stakeholders in discussions and decision-making. The conference will also include and actively engage religious communities of the region, in particular Islamic and Christian communities.
- **Equity:** Ensure the summit prioritizes equity and the protection of the poorest and most vulnerable populations, including children and youth. Address the disproportionate impacts of climate change on marginalized communities and incorporate diverse perspectives in climate planning.
- **Youth Engagement:** Foster youth engagement as an integral part of the conference.

4.2 Organizational aspects and reach of the Senegal Summit

Central to the Summit are regional science communities, mayors of cities, and heads of provinces (local states) from West Africa, covering rural, urban, and coastal resilience challenges, together with youth, science, business, and civil society stakeholders.

4.3 Aiming for lasting outcomes among the Summit partners

Beyond conference reporting and platform formations, the following tangible outcomes are envisioned:

- Regional and local planning and adaptation, with a focus on financing resiliency
- High-level policy dialogue formats for resilience actions, with emphasis on inclusion and in structures dedicated to youth perspectives and science on climate change.
- Adoption of implementation methods and structured inputs to be included in the blueprint for climate resilience and the Universal Protocol for Climate Resilience.
- Strengthen capacity-building initiatives and best practices to support local implementation of climate resilience solutions.



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