



AKADEMIYA

AICAA

Accelerated Implementation
of Climate Action in Africa

Issue 1, October 2025

AICAA LETTER

Policy Brief: UNGA 2025 on Climate and AI and Implications for Africa

Racine Ly



Accelerated Implementation of Climate Action in Africa (AICAA)

The new phase of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Declaration on “Building Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems in Africa” and the associated CAADP Strategy and Action Plan (2026-2035) underscore the importance of promoting the sustainable management of natural resources, highlighting climate change adaptation and mitigation as key priorities for Africa’s agrifood system transformation agenda. It has expanded, with increased granularity, the resilience commitment under the 2014 Malabo Declaration on “Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods.”

In recognition and support of this expanded agenda, AKADEMIYA2063 is implementing a series of projects to support climate action across the continent. These initiatives are deployed under the framework of **Accelerated Implementation of Climate Action in Africa (AICAA)**.

Several climate change frameworks have been adopted at the continental level. These include the Africa Climate Change Strategy (2020–2030), the African Union (AU) Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032), the African Union Green Recovery Action Plan – GRAP (2021-2027), as well as the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) developed under the Paris Agreement. AKADEMIYA2063 provides technical and analytical support for the implementation of these initiatives in selected countries to inform climate planning and strengthen capacities for evidence-based policymaking to advance progress toward climate goals.

The AICAA Letter series provides policy insights to help accelerate the implementation of climate action. Based on research by AKADEMIYA2063 scientists and collaborators, the AICAA Letter relies on data trends to extrapolate critical policy perspectives to support institutional and coordination capacities in the deployment of climate-centered interventions. These interventions include the development of comprehensive Integrated Results Frameworks (IRFs) and the definition of mitigation and adaptation indicators and metrics to assist countries toward effective governance of climate actions; baselining and stock-taking analysis; assessment of greenhouse gas (GHG) dynamics as well as their distribution in tracking by land use and land cover and in real-time; as well as identifying policy and program opportunities for mitigation and adaptation. At the continental level, the team is supporting the development and implementation of the African Mitigation and Adaptation Review (AfMAR) dashboard to help the Monitoring, Reporting, and Learning Dashboard (MRLD) in the implementation of the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan.

The insights presented through the AICAA Letter series aim to provide evidence-based recommendations to decision-makers and practitioners driving climate action at global and continental levels, toward accelerated climate resilience and better-calibrated policy outcomes.

1. Introduction

The 2025 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) marked a significant turning point for global climate action and the governance of Artificial Intelligence (AI). For Africa, the message is clear: these are not distant debates but immediate priorities with existential implications. This policy brief offers a comprehensive roadmap for African and global leaders, outlining the key issues at stake and defining a proactive agenda that aligns global, regional, and national actions. It encourages Africa to seize this moment to play a leading and collaborative role in shaping the global governance of climate and AI, emphasizing proactive engagement and partnership. It reviews the UNGA and African initiatives, drawing implications for African leadership, and proposing pathways that link global negotiations, regional coordination, and national implementation into a coherent agenda.

2. Global Context: What UNGA 2025 Signaled

UNGA 2025 reiterated the urgency of limiting global warming well below 2 degrees Celsius (2°C), with many Heads of State emphasizing the need to accelerate emission reductions by 2030 and to align national policies with net-zero pathways. The debates also confirmed the growing importance of carbon pricing as a key instrument for climate action, including discussions of carbon price floors and border carbon adjustments. The Global Climate Policy Project (GCPP 2025) report suggests that a coalition approach, beginning with carbon-intensive sectors such as steel, aluminum, cement, and fertilizers, could achieve emissions cuts seven times greater than current policies while generating substantial fiscal revenues for member countries. *For Africa, participation in such coalitions presents both opportunities and challenges: it provides a route to influence the rules of global carbon pricing and secure climate finance and technology transfer, but it also raises questions about competitiveness and administrative capacity.*

Equally prominent at UNGA was the debate on AI governance. The rapid deployment of generative AI systems and autonomous decision-making tools has heightened calls for international regulation to ensure transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights (UNESCO 2024). However, the risk is that governance frameworks may be designed without meaningful participation from the Global South. Africa has an opportunity to articulate a vision of AI that prioritizes inclusion, data sovereignty, and developmental use cases. *Aligning with the AU Continental AI Strategy, African leaders can advocate for global norms that promote equitable access to data and computing resources, encourage funding for capacity building, and establish safeguards to ensure the fair and responsible use of technology (AUC 2024).*

3. Africa's Climate and AI Imperatives

Africa is disproportionately affected by climate change despite contributing the least to cumulative GHG emissions. Rising temperatures, declining rainfall in some regions and extreme rainfall in others, recurrent droughts, and intensifying cyclones pose a threat to food security, health outcomes, water availability, and economic stability (IPCC 2022). The Africa Climate Change Strategy highlights that without decisive adaptation measures, the continent's youngest population will face a bleak future characterized by disrupted education, social instability, and deepening poverty (AUC 2020). At the same time, Africa holds vast potential for mitigation through its forests, grasslands, and renewable energy resources. *Harnessing this potential requires integrating adaptation and mitigation in a balanced manner and securing access to predictable climate finance (AfDB 2023).*

AI presents both a parallel challenge and an opportunity. The AU Continental AI Strategy envisions AI as a lever for socio-economic transformation, contributing to Agenda 2063 goals of prosperity, peace, and inclusive development (AUC 2024). AI can enhance climate action by enabling early warning systems for drought and floods, optimizing irrigation, forecasting crop yields, and monitoring forest cover and carbon stocks with high spatial and temporal resolution (World Bank 2023). It can also improve efficiency in energy systems, urban planning, and public service delivery. However, risks are present, including algorithmic bias, job displacement, privacy concerns, and the potential misuse of AI for surveillance or the dissemination of disinformation. *These risks must be addressed through ethical governance frameworks and investment in African capacity to develop, adapt, and audit AI systems.*

4. Regional and Continental Leadership

Africa already possesses a strong policy foundation for integrated action. The AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2032) calls for harmonized responses to climate change, improved institutional capacity, and greater access to finance (AUC 2023). The AU Green Recovery Action Plan (2021–2027) links post-COVID economic recovery to investments in renewable energy, resilient agriculture, biodiversity, and climate-resilient cities, emphasizing that recovery choices made today will determine the trajectory of emissions and resilience for decades to come (AUC 2021). Together, these frameworks point toward a model of development that is climate-resilient and low-carbon. The AU Continental AI Strategy complements this vision by proposing a people-centered approach that prioritizes building infrastructure for computing and data, strengthening AI skills and education, and developing governance mechanisms that respect African cultural and ethical values (AUC 2024). *The convergence of these frameworks suggests the need for a Continental Climate – AI Nexus that mainstreams AI into climate strategies and embeds climate considerations into AI policy.*

5. Post-UNGA 2025 Recommendations for African Leaders

- 5.1. **Reinforce African Leadership in Climate Coalition Negotiations:** African leadership after UNGA 2025 could operate at three mutually reinforcing levels. At the global level, African countries are encouraged to participate actively in climate coalition negotiations, promoting equitable carbon price floors that take development realities into account and supporting mechanisms that direct revenues toward adaptation and just transition measures in low-income countries (GCPP 2025). This framing will facilitate collaboration and shared responsibility while maintaining Africa’s role as a constructive partner in global climate governance.
- 5.2. **Promote Climate Finance Reform:** African leaders are encouraged to promote climate finance reforms, including supporting the establishment of a new, collective, and quantified goal on finance that is ambitious, predictable, and accessible (UNFCCC 2023).
- 5.3. **Advocate for Participation in the Elaboration of Global Frameworks:** In the realm of AI, African countries can collectively seek meaningful participation in the drafting of global rules and frameworks, advancing principles of inclusivity, fairness, and shared prosperity, while advocating for responsible and mutually beneficial technology exchange (UNESCO 2024).

- 5.4. Harmonize AI Governance Frameworks:** At the regional level, the AU can play a pivotal role in harmonizing AI governance frameworks, encouraging the establishment of a continental observatory for AI ethics and safety, and facilitating coordinated investments in compute infrastructure and data platforms that benefit all Member States (Smart Africa 2024). Such collaboration can reduce duplication, generate economies of scale, and enhance system interoperability. This will also ensure that the AU is well-positioned to strengthen Africa's measurement, reporting, and verification systems for GHG emissions and climate finance flows, as well as support the tracking of AI adoption and its impacts, thereby building transparency and trust among citizens and international partners (AUC 2023).
- 5.5. Integrate AI into National Climate Strategies:** At the national level, Member States are encouraged to integrate AI into their climate strategies and development plans, utilizing AI to enhance climate-smart agriculture, water resource management, disaster preparedness, and urban planning. They can invest in human capital by expanding AI and data science education, supporting innovation hubs, and nurturing inclusive ecosystems that empower women, youth, and smallholder farmers to benefit from technological advances. National AI strategies can be aligned with the AU framework while being tailored to reflect local priorities and capacities, ensuring both coherence and relevance (AUC 2024).
- 5.6. Invest in Blended Finance Instruments:** Financing remains the linchpin for Africa's climate and AI ambitions. Carbon pricing revenues, whether from domestic schemes or participation in international carbon markets under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, can provide a domestic resource base for funding adaptation measures and digital infrastructure (World Bank 2023). Blended finance instruments can attract private investment into broadband expansion, data centers, and renewable energy-powered compute infrastructure. Partnerships with development finance institutions, philanthropic foundations, and the private sector are crucial for de-risking investments and ensuring that capital flows to the regions and sectors that need it most (AfDB 2023). International partners should be encouraged to co-invest in capacity-building, research, and technology-transfer initiatives that strengthen Africa's autonomy in climate and AI domains.
- 5.7. Define Ethical Guidelines to Ensure Oversight:** Climate and AI interventions carry risks that must be managed deliberately. Maladaptation can occur when climate measures exacerbate vulnerability, for example, by encouraging settlement in areas that will face future climate hazards (IPCC 2022). Similarly, AI systems can perpetuate discrimination if trained on biased data or erode trust if their decision-making processes are opaque. African leaders should adopt participatory governance approaches that involve civil society, academia, and the private sector in the design and oversight of both climate and AI initiatives. Ethical guidelines could be codified in law, and independent oversight bodies should be empowered to monitor compliance and protect citizens' rights.

6. Conclusion: A Call to Action

Africa stands at a historic crossroads. The twin forces of climate change and AI will shape the continent's development trajectory for generations to come. The decisions taken in the months following UNGA 2025 will determine whether Africa can harness these forces to build resilience, prosperity, and global competitiveness. By engaging boldly in global negotiations, coordinating regionally to pool resources and harmonize policies, and implementing nationally with a focus on inclusion and innovation, African leaders can turn vulnerability into opportunity.

References

AfDB (African Development Bank). 2023. *African Economic Outlook 2023: Mobilizing Private Sector Financing for Climate and Green Growth*. Abidjan.

AUC (African Union Commission). 2024. *Continental AI Strategy: Harnessing AI for Africa's Development and Prosperity*. Addis Ababa.

AUC (African Union Commission). 2023. *African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan*. Addis Ababa.

AUC (African Union Commission). 2021. *AU Green Recovery Action Plan 2021–2027*. Addis Ababa.

Global Climate Policy Project at Harvard and MIT. 2025. *Building a Climate Coalition: Aligning Carbon Pricing, Trade, and Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University; Cambridge: MIT.

IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). 2022. *Sixth Assessment Report (AR6)*. Geneva.

Smart Africa. 2024. *Artificial Intelligence for Africa – AI Blueprint*. Kigali.

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization). 2024. *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*. Paris.

World Bank. 2023. *State and Trends of Carbon Pricing 2023*. Washington, DC.

About AKADEMIYA2063

AKADEMIYA2063 is a pan-African non-profit research organization with headquarters in Kigali, Rwanda, and a regional office in Dakar, Senegal. Inspired by the ambitions of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and grounded in the recognition of the central importance of strong knowledge and evidence-based systems, the vision of AKADEMIYA2063 is an Africa with the expertise we need for the Africa we want. This expertise must be responsive to the continent's needs for data and analysis to ensure high-quality policy design and execution. Inclusive, evidence-informed policymaking is key to meeting the continent's development aspirations, creating wealth, and improving livelihoods.

AKADEMIYA2063's overall mission is to create, across Africa and led from its headquarters in Rwanda, state-of-the-art technical capacities to support the efforts by the Member States of the African Union to achieve the key goals of Agenda 2063 of transforming national economies to boost economic growth and prosperity.

Following from its vision and mission, the main goal of AKADEMIYA2063 is to help meet Africa's needs at the continental, regional, and national levels in terms of data, analytics, and mutual learning for the effective implementation of Agenda 2063 and the realization of its outcomes by a critical mass of countries. AKADEMIYA2063 strives to meet its goals through programs organized under five strategic areas—policy innovation, knowledge systems, capacity creation and deployment, operational support, data management, digital products, and technology—as well as innovative partnerships and outreach activities. For more information, visit www.akademiya2063.org.

Suggested Citation: Ly, R. 2025. *Policy Brief: UNGA 2025 on Climate and AI and Implications for Africa*. AICAA Letter, Issue 1. Kigali: AKADEMIYA2063. <https://doi.org/10.54067/aicaals.01>

Author

- **Racine Ly** is the Director of Data Management, Digital Products, and Technology at AKADEMIYA2063; rly@akademiya2063.org.

AKADEMIYA2063 is supported by the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Gates Foundation, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Mastercard Foundation. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the partners.



 **AKADEMIYA2063 Headquarters**
| Kicukiro/Niboye KK 341 St 22 | 1855 Kigali-Rwanda

AKADEMIYA2063 Regional Office
| Corniche des Almadies, Lot N*3 | 24933 Dakar-Senegal

 +250 788 318 315 | +221 33 869 28 81

 kigali-contact@akademiya2063.org | dakar-contact@akademiya2063.org

 www.akademiya2063.org

    @AKADEMIYA2063