



**PRESIDENTIAL  
CLIMATE COMMISSION**  
TOWARDS A JUST TRANSITION



# **SOUTH AFRICA'S 2035 NDC TARGETS**

## **Capacity Building Workshop Series Report**

Date: 11 - 23 November 2024

Time: 09h00 - 14h00

Venue: 54 on Bath, Rosebank & on Zoom

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report presents a high-level overview of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) capacity building workshops that were conducted by the Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) in November 2024. The presentations, reflections and discussions that took place during the capacity building events have been synthesised into this report. The questions asked during the capacity building sessions will be included in the Q&A and factsheet document that the PCC is compiling for stakeholders ahead of the NDC consultations sessions. In this report, the overview of the presentations and emerging themes from the discussions have been synthesised and captured, these inputs will form the basis of ongoing work on the consultations, post consultation webinars and national colloquium on the NDCs. This will culminate in the following key documents in April 2025:

- PCC Commissioner NDC Recommendations Report
- Technical Report on the PCC Recommendations
- Stakeholder Perspectives Report on the PCC Recommendations

## ABOUT THE PRESIDENTIAL CLIMATE COMMISSION

The Climate Change Act, 2024 (Act 22 of 2024) (The Climate Act) sets out the functions of the PCC, which includes providing advice on the Republic's climate change response to ensure the realisation of the vision for effective climate change response and the long-term Just Transition to a climate-resilient and low-carbon economy and society. The PCC is an independent multi-stakeholder body established by the President of the Republic of South Africa. Its mandate emanates from the Presidential Jobs Summit held in 2018, and its commitment is to ensure that the transition is socially just and that the needs of vulnerable groups are addressed.

Commissioners of the PCC include government ministers, representatives of labour, civil society, academia and business which represent the diverse perspectives of our social partners. The PCC is supported by a Secretariat which undertakes research and policy work to inform the Commission, manage outreach and communications, and provide logistical support to the functioning of the organisation.

The PCC facilitates dialogue between social partners on key issues—defining the type of society we want to achieve, and detailed pathways for how to get there. Work is conducted openly and transparently to build social consensus around the complex and challenging decisions required to successfully navigate the climate transition.

## Contents

1	INTRODUCTION .....	3
1.1	Context .....	3
1.2	Process Overview .....	3
2	OVERVIEW OF NDCs .....	4
2.1	Evolution of the NDC Process .....	4
2.2	South Africa's Enabling Policy Framework for the NDCs .....	4
2.3	Just Transition Framework for Equity and Inclusivity .....	6
3	COMPONENTS OF THE NDCs – CONTENT COVERED .....	6
3.1	Adaptation .....	6
3.2	Mitigation .....	8
3.3	Means of Implementation .....	10
4	KEY MESSAGES FROM THE CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOPS .....	10
4.1	Divergent Views on Level of Ambition of NDCs .....	11
4.2	Transparency and Inclusivity in NDCs and the Just Transition .....	11
4.3	Prioritising Vulnerable Communities .....	11
4.4	Skills, Gender, Social Partner Inclusivity, and Jobs .....	11
4.5	Integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems .....	12
4.6	Capacitation of Local Government .....	12
4.7	The pace and scale of climate finance is inadequate for South Africa's mitigation and adaptation requirements .....	12
4.8	Prioritisation of Rural Climate Adaptation .....	13
4.9	Policy and Implementation Alignment .....	13
5	WAY FORWARD .....	13
6	CONTACT .....	14

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Context

South Africa, as a signatory to the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is required to submit updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) every five (5) years. These NDCs are essential benchmarks for the country's greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reduction goals and broader climate resilience and financing strategies. Since South Africa first submitted its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in 2016 and later updated them in 2021, the Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) has played a key role in providing recommendations to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and Environment (DFFE) to support the development and revision of these NDCs. The 2021 NDC update set ambitious yet achievable emissions targets for 2025 and 2030, providing a framework for climate adaptation, mitigation, and implementation strategies.

The current NDC, which covers the period 2025–2030, is being updated for the 2030–2035 period through ongoing consultations. As South Africa prepares for its next NDC submission ahead of COP30, an inclusive approach to engaging stakeholders is vital. These efforts aim to ensure that the revised NDC aligns with national socio-economic priorities while meeting global climate commitments. Through a capacity-building process, the PCC seeks to address gaps in climate literacy and foster a shared understanding of the social and economic benefits of climate-compatible development.

## 1.2 Process Overview

The active involvement of the PCC's social partners (civil society, the faith community, labour organizations, local government, business sectors, and the youth) ensures that the NDC reflects the views of a diverse group of stakeholders. By involving all social partner groups, the PCC ensures the NDC reflects a balanced, inclusive, and equitable approach to climate action. The capacity-building workshops were designed to empower stakeholders with the knowledge and tools needed to understand the technical inputs and evaluate the socio-economic implications of the NDC. These sessions also created a platform for meaningful dialogue, allowing stakeholders to share insights, raise concerns, and contribute to shaping a credible and ambitious NDC submission.

*Table 1: Summary of PCC NDC Capacity Building Workshops that took place November 2024*

Date	Capacity Building Session	Link to Webpage and Materials
11 November 2024	Civil Society	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=to5YMLVxLzE&amp;t=14599s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=to5YMLVxLzE&amp;t=14599s</a>
12 November 2024	Faith Community	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&amp;v=551824590927278">https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&amp;v=551824590927278</a>
15 November 2024	Organised Labour	This was a closed session and was not broadcast, the views of labour have been reflected in this report.
20 November 2024	Local Government	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&amp;v=2704491683066970">https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&amp;v=2704491683066970</a>
22 November 2024	Business	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&amp;v=1749389719209660">https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&amp;v=1749389719209660</a>
23 November 2024	Youth	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3C6ssPp3Vtw&amp;t=864s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3C6ssPp3Vtw&amp;t=864s</a>

## 2 OVERVIEW OF NDCs

### 2.1 Evolution of the NDC Process

The transition from a top-down regulatory approach to a bottom-up voluntary regime was instrumental in shaping the NDC framework. Early climate negotiations, focused on binding international commitments which faced significant hurdles, culminating in the failure of the Copenhagen COP15. The 2015 Paris Agreement marked a turning point by introducing the concept of voluntary NDCs, enabling countries to define their climate commitments based on national capabilities and contexts. These contributions are updated every five years, fostering a dynamic and adaptable framework for global climate action.

To ensure accountability, the Paris Agreement established the Global Stocktake, a five-yearly process to evaluate progress toward its goals. The first Global Stocktake, concluded at COP28 in Dubai in 2023, revealed a stark gap between current commitments and the necessary measures to limit global warming to 1.5°C. Instead, projections based on existing pledges indicated a temperature rise of 2.1–2.8°C. This alarming finding underscores the urgency for more ambitious NDCs in the next cycle, set for submission at COP30 in Brazil. The Stocktake not only assesses collective progress but also identifies areas for improvement and serves as a catalyst for greater ambition and action in future NDC updates.

### 2.2 South Africa's Enabling Policy Framework for the NDCs

While mitigation—setting targets to reduce GHG emissions—often dominates discussions, adaptation and means of implementation are equally critical. **Adaptation** focuses on preparing for and addressing the physical impacts of climate change, enhancing resilience across vulnerable sectors and communities. **Means of implementation** refers to the resources needed to support these efforts, including financial investment, technology transfer, and capacity-building initiatives. Together, these pillars are guided by the overarching



principle of achieving a **Just Transition**, ensuring that climate action aligns with social equity, reduces poverty, and fosters job creation as South Africa transitions to a low-carbon economy.

South Africa's NDC commitments are underpinned by a robust domestic framework, which integrates national legislation, policies, and strategies to align domestic actions with international obligations. Key guiding frameworks include the **Climate Change Act, 2024 (Act 22 of 2024)** (The Climate Act), the **National Development Plan**, and sector-specific policies and strategies. These are some of the tools ensure that climate goals are not only ambitious but also support local developmental priorities, fostering a balanced approach to sustainability and socio-economic development.

- **The Mitigation System:** This includes a legislated national emissions trajectory (the NDC), the GHG Inventory, GHG Projects, Policies and Measures, the sectoral emissions targets (SETs) and the allocation of company carbon budgets. SETs are greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, either qualitative or quantitative, applicable to sectors or sub-sectors over a period. The SETs are allocated at the level of national government in line with the NDC time frames, they define emission limits for key sectors like agriculture, industry, energy, mining, human settlements, transport and environment. They are anchored in sector Policies and Measures (PAMS) governing the programmes and activities that currently or have the potential to make significant impact on greenhouse gas reductions when adequately implemented.
- **National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (NCCAS):** The NCCAS is the key domestic policy instrument to guide implementation and informs the update to the adaptation component of the NDCs. Key sectors identified by the NCCAS include, water, agriculture and built environment, health, biodiversity and ecosystems, human settlements, disaster risk reduction and management, transportation and infrastructure, energy, mining as well as oceans and coasts. The Climate Act provides legislative basis for the implementation of the NCCAS, fostering institutional coherence and enhancing climate change adaptation governance across the spheres, national and sub-national layers of government in South Africa.
- **Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (JET-IP):** International and domestic finance are crucial in supporting South Africa's transition to a low-carbon economy. During COP26 in 2021, the International Partners Group (IPG) pledged a financial package of \$8.5 billion (approximately R161 billion) between the donor countries and South Africa. Underpinned by the "Political Declaration establishing the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP)" SA produced its Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (JET-IP) 2023–2027.
- **The South African Climate Finance Landscape 2023 Report:** The report recommends scaling up investment-ready, low-carbon projects by addressing early-stage funding gaps and boosting developer capacity. It highlights the need for concessional finance to support emerging technologies and hard-to-abate sectors. To

attract private investment, the report suggests leveraging international de-risking tools such as partial guarantees. Strengthening government systems for climate finance tracking and integrating equity and gender considerations are emphasized. Building awareness, aligning efforts, and incorporating climate risks into public and private investment decisions are vital for achieving climate goals.

## 2.3 Just Transition Framework for Equity and Inclusivity

A critical component of South Africa's mitigation plan is the Just Transition Framework, which ensures that the shift to a low-carbon economy is equitable and inclusive. The framework prioritizes job creation in green sectors, the retraining of workers in high-carbon industries, and support for communities dependent on fossil fuel industries. This framework seeks to ensure that South Africa's climate actions do not exacerbate inequality but rather promote sustainable development and social equity. Through consultations with stakeholders, it has been highlighted that gender and youth have been underrepresented, the PCC is looking to do further work on that.

The means of implementation is underpinned by South Africa's Just Transition Framework, ensuring that all resources mobilized prioritize equity, inclusion, and socio-economic benefits. This includes creating green jobs, supporting workers in carbon-intensive industries, and ensuring that vulnerable communities benefit from climate action. The approach aligns with the principles of climate justice, ensuring fairness in resource distribution and access to climate finance.

## 3 COMPONENTS OF THE NDCs – CONTENT COVERED

The NDC framework encompasses **three key pillars: adaptation, mitigation, and means of implementation**. These three priorities are also guided by the overarching objective of achieving a just transition and an inclusive future—ensuring climate action aligns with social equity, reducing poverty, and creating jobs while lowering emissions.

### 3.1 Adaptation

The adaptation element of South Africa's NDCs addresses the urgent need to adjust social, - economic and environmental systems to manage current and projected physical climate impacts. Adaptation is no longer a future concern but an immediate necessity, given South Africa's exposure to increasing extreme weather events, such as droughts, floods, heatwaves, and rising sea levels.

#### 3.1.1 Integration of Adaptation with Development Goals

South Africa's adaptation strategy prioritizes climate resilience as an integral part of national development. The approach aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Just Transition Framework, ensuring that adaptation efforts address poverty, inequality, and socio-economic inclusion. Adaptation is not treated as a separate goal but as a necessary component to achieve sustainable development while mitigating the risks of climate change. This integration aims to avoid maladaptation where focus on short-term solutions that may

exacerbate vulnerabilities and lock the country into high-adaptation pathways instead of increased resilience.

### 3.1.2 Critical Climate Risks and Vulnerabilities

South Africa is increasingly vulnerable to extreme weather events, including droughts, floods, and heatwaves, which are exacerbated by declining water resources, soil degradation, and coastal vulnerabilities driven by rising sea levels and ocean acidification. These climate risks pose significant threats to critical sectors such as agriculture, commercial forestry, water management, human settlements, transportation, and infrastructure. The socio-economic consequences are severe, with projections indicating potential GDP losses of up to 30% under a 3°C warming scenario.

The impacts are disproportionately felt by vulnerable populations, particularly rural communities, women, and youth, who often lack the resources to adapt. This underscores the urgent need for targeted resilience-building measures to safeguard livelihoods, protect ecosystems, and reduce inequalities as South Africa addresses the multifaceted challenges of climate change.

### 3.1.3 Policy and Financial Frameworks for Adaptation

There has been a great focus on investment planning for Just Energy Transitions, but comparatively little emphasis on investment in adaptation and resilience. This is generally attributed to challenges in motivating the bankability and return on investment of these projects to the private sector. The PCC's "Recommendations of the Just Transition Financing Mechanism (JTfM)" contributes to ongoing efforts to address climate finance challenges while promoting social and economic justice. This is achieved by building on the assessment of challenges related to the financing of just transition projects, the existing financial architecture and ecosystem, and the subsequent provision of options for a Just Transition Financing Mechanism.

Financial instruments such as the Climate Change Response Fund (CCRF) and the forthcoming Just Adaptation and Resilience Investment Plan (JAR-IP) are critical frameworks aimed at closing the adaptation funding gap and responding to the challenges posed by climate change, ensuring that the measures taken to adapt and build resilience against the impact of climate are socially inclusive and equitable. The CCRF is intended to drive fiscal reform and climate action by bringing together all spheres of government and the private sector in a collaborative effort to build resilience and respond to the impacts of climate change. The JAR-IP aims to address the investment case for adaptation and resilience, linked to broader considerations of a just transition and diversified economic development. The investment plan analyses the quantification of costs and investment planning in relation to food security, water security and the built environment and how this can be achieved.

The Climate Change Act 22 of 2024 is also a crucial lever for South Africa's adaptation response and policies, mandating that all government entities prepare and implement climate risk and vulnerability assessments and adaptation plans. The Climate Change Act is



the country's most comprehensive response to the climate emergency. The Act provides a legal framework for the regulation of our country's response to climate change and gives effect to South Africa's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, achieve net-zero by 2050 and build the country's resilience to climate change impacts. The Acts also provides for key climate actions such as establishment of the PCC as a statutory body; the development of key policy documents such as a Low Emissions Development Strategy and the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy; implementing a carbon tax; and implementing a Just Transition Framework and Implementation Plan.

### 3.1.4 Science-Based and Inclusive Adaptation Approaches

The adaptation framework leverages global and local scientific insights, such as the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report and regional climate modelling, to prioritize resilience strategies. These include enhancing water security, promoting climate-smart agriculture, and preparing urban areas for extreme events. A human rights-based approach ensures that adaptation plans are equitable, addressing the specific needs of marginalized groups and ensuring their participation in decision-making. By embedding inclusivity and equity, South Africa's NDC adaptation framework seeks to build a climate-resilient society that balances environmental sustainability with socio-economic justice.

## 3.2 Mitigation

Anchored in inclusive economic development, the mitigation section focused on aligning South Africa's 2035 GHG emissions targets to the Paris Agreement objectives whilst pursuing its fair share contribution to a 1.5°C global temperature rise by 2050. The section on mitigation provided an overview of the current NDC commitments and how they contribute to South Africa's trajectory of contributing towards limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C. The content covered also provided scientific based evidence on what would be required to for South Africa's NDC submission for the period 2030 – 2035, all in the context of economic development and reducing transition impact. However, the South Africa's carbon intensive economy was acknowledged a key risk for the pace of transition and that it poses significant challenges for a low carbon future but also presents opportunities for transitioning to an inclusive low-carbon future that would enable sustainable opportunities for development and broader community empowerment (**Restorative Justice**).

### 3.2.1 Alignment with Global Climate Targets

South Africa's policies on climate mitigation exist within the context of both its international commitments and its national development priorities. Internationally, there is widespread scientific and political consensus that global temperature rise should be kept well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue a limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels in alignment with the goals of the Paris Agreement. Locally, aligning our climate targets with a low carbon economy would benefit South Africans by driving economic growth, creating jobs and increasing energy security if implemented in a just manner. Other benefits of an energy transition to less carbon intensive sources of energy such as renewable energy

include the reduction of negative impacts on health and this shift contributes to reducing costs in South Africa's health system<sup>1</sup> and the overall positive contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>2</sup>.

South Africa's emissions are relatively high on a per capita basis for a developing country. Most emissions originate in the energy sector. This, coupled with significant development challenges, means that the country's path towards achieving its climate targets is more complex. A more ambitious NDC mitigation targets should not exacerbate unemployment and inequality considering the country's dependence on coal for electricity and synthetic fuels.

This requires that mitigation policies need to be compatible with a number of other key policy objectives. Transition towards a green and climate resilient economy is already part of the country's National Development Plan 2030.

The NDC mitigation targets (points) can be translated into a carbon budget for the period 2030 and 2035 once agreed, carbon budgets form part of the country's mitigation trajectory to 2050. The budget is designed to be progressively tighter over the years, allowing for the phased decarbonization of key sectors like energy, transport, and industry. They are updated regularly to reflect technological advancements, economic shifts, and climate science.

Whilst the remaining global carbon budget for the 50% likelihood of limiting warming to 1.5 °C (2.7 °F) have been scientifically calculated and outlined in the IPCC 6th Assessment Report Working Group 1 to be 500 Gt CO<sub>2</sub> from the start of 2020<sup>3</sup>, South Africa is yet to agree on its remaining carbon budget for the period up to 2050. An agreed national carbon budget will be useful for the Climate Change Act's requirement for company level carbon budget and overall sectoral mitigation pathways leading up to 2050.

### 3.2.2 Alignment with domestic and international commitments – limit temperature increases to 1.5°C by 2050

The mitigation overview highlighted the challenges of achieving the 1.5°C target given South Africa's development context. Issues like high poverty rates, unemployment, and energy access must be balanced with decarbonization goals. South Africa's reliance on coal and other high-emission industries presents a significant barrier to meeting global targets at the required pace, and the country advocates for financial and technical support from developed nations to make the transition economically viable.

A central focus of South Africa's NDC mitigation strategy is sectoral decarbonization. The energy sector, the largest emitter in South Africa, is set to decarbonize more rapidly due to available technologies such as renewable energy and energy storage. Industry and

---

<sup>1</sup> Available at: <https://www.cobenefits.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/COBENEFITS-Study-South-Africa-Health.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Available at: <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/3.43%20IRENA%20Nagata.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Available at: [https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/faqs/IPCC\\_AR6\\_WGI\\_FAQ\\_Chapter\\_05.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/faqs/IPCC_AR6_WGI_FAQ_Chapter_05.pdf)

transportation will follow, with a focus on improving energy efficiency, adopting low-carbon technologies, and expanding the use of electric vehicles. The government is working on SETs for each area to ensure alignment with the national carbon budget.

### 3.3 Means of Implementation

The section on means of implementation in South Africa's NDC highlights the critical need for local and international support to be able to meet the goals of the Paris agreement and to ensure equity and effectiveness in climate action. In addition to mitigation finance, means of implementation also refers to financing mechanisms that support resilience measures in vulnerable nations and access to adaptation finance measures such as the Loss and Damage Fund. Thus, the disproportionate climate burden borne by developing countries, particularly in Africa needs to be addressed for both mitigation and especially adaptation and resilience.

#### 3.3.1 Climate Finance

The financial aspect of the means of implementation is emphasized as a key enabler for achieving our NDC mitigation and adaptation goals. South Africa relies on domestic instruments such as the JET-IP and CCRF to mobilize domestic and international funding to address the financial gaps faced by developing nations. These resources are vital for investments in capacity building, renewable energy development, new energy vehicles, climate resilient infrastructure, just transition programs, and the development of new sectors such as green hydrogen value chain.

South Africa advocates and strongly encourages equity in global climate agreements, pushing for increased contributions from developed nations to assist with financing mitigation and adaptation as well as technology transfers. Mechanisms like the Loss and Damage Fund, established at COP27, are pivotal to addressing historical emissions with disproportionate development thereby providing restorative justice to nations most impacted by physical climate change.

#### 3.3.2 Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing

Capacity development and building are essential to the NDCs, the overview emphasized the importance of capacitating, particularly for local governments tasked with implementing climate action plans. This includes enhancing skills for planning, monitoring, and evaluating climate interventions. International collaboration is crucial for knowledge sharing, enabling South Africa to adopt best practices and innovative solutions from global climate leaders.

## 4 KEY MESSAGES FROM THE CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOPS

Stakeholders welcomed the PCCs effort to capacitate stakeholders on the NDC and equip them with the ability to engage on the NDCs. There was a level of agreement from stakeholders with regards to the physical and transitional risks posed by the changing climate and that there is a need to develop and implement strategies to mitigate and finance these risks while addressing their socio-economic implications. However, the pace, depth and scale of the transition as well as the

planning and response to these risks remains unresolved due because of previous energy insecurity and the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

#### 4.1 Divergent Views on Level of Ambition of NDCs

There were contrasting opinions on whether South Africa's NDCs should remain the same or be more progressive. Labour emphasized the need for procedural justice and cautioned against overly ambitious targets without analysing their impact on workers and vulnerable communities. Therefore, labour stressed the importance of understanding the beneficiaries of a more ambitious NDC and what criteria is being used to ensure that local conditions are being factored into the science and decision-making process. Stakeholders recognised the importance of understanding the science but emphasised that it should not be the sole factor in determining the level of ambition for NDC emission reduction targets. Further, business stakeholders supported a balanced approach, stressing the importance of achievable targets that do not jeopardise economic stability or investment security. Civil society and faith groups however were in broad agreement on a greater ambition to address climate transitional and physical climate risks effectively.

#### 4.2 Transparency and Inclusivity in NDCs and the Just Transition

Civil society, youth, and labour constituencies, broadly agreed on the importance of transparency and inclusivity in the NDC process. Some civil society and labour stakeholders however raised concerns about the perceived lack of transparency and fairness in the allocation of Just Energy Transition (JET) funds, which they felt often favoured large corporations over SMMEs and local communities.

Labour also emphasized the importance of procedural justice, advocating for workers to be afforded the opportunity to engage with NDC material prior to all engagements. They also highlighted the need for participatory decision-making mechanisms to ensure that climate policies and funding reflect the diverse needs of communities, particularly the most vulnerable.

#### 4.3 Prioritising Vulnerable Communities

Faith-based organizations, civil society, and labour unanimously agreed on the importance of prioritising vulnerable populations, including rural communities, women, and youth, in climate action strategies. Stakeholders recognised the disproportionate impact of climate change on these groups and emphasized the need for targeted support to enhance resilience and socio-economic opportunities.

#### 4.4 Skills, Gender, Social Partner Inclusivity, and Jobs

Stakeholders agreed that the NDCs must lead to the creation of sustainable jobs, enhanced skills development, and gender equality. They also stressed the importance of recognizing social partners and integrating their contributions into climate strategies. Promoting inclusivity is critical to fostering equitable climate action and gaining widespread support. Vulnerable populations, particularly rural communities, women, and youth, face disproportionate impacts, making targeted resilience-building measures imperative. Stakeholders agreed that there needs to be a

conscientious effort to empower vulnerable groups in society such as youth and women and create more opportunities for them.

Business stakeholders expressed concern about the social impacts of the transition to a low-carbon economy, particularly job losses in carbon-intensive industries. They highlighted the need for a just transition, ensuring that displaced workers are retrained and integrated into the green economy, thus promoting job creation and economic resilience in new industries.

Civil society highlighted the importance of balancing economic growth and environmental protection and health implications, example, the Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zones (SEZs) for iron and steel with great job creation potential but also threatening the conservation of indigenous protected species such as Baobab trees in the area. Business stakeholders expressed concern about the social impacts of the transition to a low-carbon economy, particularly job losses in carbon-intensive industries. They highlighted the need for a Just Transition, ensuring that displaced workers are reskilled where appropriate and integrated into the green economy, thus promoting job creation and economic resilience in new industries.

#### 4.5 Integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Civil society, faith-based organizations, and labour collectively highlighted the value of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKS) in addressing climate challenges. Indigenous practices were acknowledged as complementary to modern technologies, providing culturally relevant and locally adaptable solutions for resilience-building. Thus, civil society, faith-based groups, and labour strongly advocated for the integration of AIKS into climate policies. They emphasized that indigenous practices provide invaluable insights for scenario planning, resilience-building, and sustainable resource management. Business raised issues focusing on technological innovation and economic viability.

#### 4.6 Capacitation of Local Government

Local government, civil society, and labour stakeholders agreed on the critical role of local governments in implementing climate related policies and for disaster preparedness and response. There was consensus on the need for targeted capacity-building programs to empower municipalities to align climate initiatives with local economic development goals. Such efforts are seen as essential to the successful implementation of the NDCs at the grassroots level.

#### 4.7 The pace and scale of climate finance is inadequate for South Africa's mitigation and adaptation requirements

Stakeholders from the business, local government, labour, and youth constituencies shared concern over the inadequacy of climate finance to meet South Africa's mitigation and adaptation needs. Stakeholders called for accelerated efforts to mobilize both domestic and international funding to support critical projects, including renewable energy development, disaster resilience,



and green job creation. Local government and labour emphasized the need for greater financial and technical support to address climate-induced disasters, ensure a sustainable and accessible transport transition, and enhance urban resilience.

Business stakeholders, prioritized policy predictability and incentives for technological innovation, reflecting a focus on long-term investment security over immediate capacity-building needs. Moreover, youth stakeholders emphasized the importance of innovative solutions and climate finance, advocating for creative solutions that ensure equitable access to resources. Innovative approaches, such as leveraging technology and establishing new financing mechanisms, were highlighted as essential to address funding gaps and drive impactful climate action.

#### 4.8 Prioritisation of Rural Climate Adaptation

Youth and faith participants expressed concerns over the urban-centric nature of many climate strategies, advocating for the inclusion of rural areas through initiatives like “green villages.” The youth emphasized the consideration of sustainable and resilient alternatives to urban green cities, reflecting a broader need to balance urban and rural development planning. This sentiment underscores a call to reduce urban migration pressures while ensuring rural communities are equipped to handle climate risks. The faith community highlighted the difficulty in funding accessibility for rural climate adaptation projects. This perspective was less emphasized by the other groups, highlighting a generational gap in priorities.

#### 4.9 Policy and Implementation Alignment

Faith-based groups, civil society, and labour highlighted the disconnect between policy commitments and implementation, calling for stronger accountability mechanisms. Labour also emphasized the need to consider geopolitical circumstances and the fairness of borrowing capital for climate transitions. Business stakeholders, while agreeing on the need for action, focused on creating enabling environments for private sector participation rather than direct critiques of policy execution. However, business stress the importance of monitoring and evaluating the progress mitigation targets globally.

### 5 WAY FORWARD

The PCC is developing draft recommendations report for the 2030 – 2035 NDCs. Stakeholders are being consulted on the process through a series of engagements, with the NDC capacity building sessions having been the first stage. The PCC will then engage with stakeholders via a formal public consultation process in February/ March 2025 to solicit stakeholder views as to what should be contained in the PCC recommendations for the 2030 – 2035 NDCs. Thematic engagements and feedback sessions will take place post-consultation followed by the convening of a national colloquium for a final engagement with stakeholders.

This process will culminate in the compilation of:

- The PCC’s NDC Recommendations Report,
- A Technical Report on the NDC Recommendations, and

- A Stakeholder Perspectives Report on the NDC.

The final reports will be sent to the Minister of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), which is legislatively responsible for the submission of the updated NDCs. The final version of South Africa's updated NDC will be submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at COP30 in Brazil by the DFFE

## 6 CONTACT

For more information on this topic please contact the Presidential Climate Commission Secretariate by email at [mitigation@climatecommission.org.za](mailto:mitigation@climatecommission.org.za).