

Towards Climate Justice: Embracing Just Transition

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Towards Climate Justice: Embracing Just Transition

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Abstract

The paper critically discusses the role of just transition in the climate justice agenda. It examines the need for climate justice and argues that it is an urgent concern due to the disproportionate impacts of climate change especially on developing countries and indigenous communities. The paper further defines just transition and discusses how this concept can foster climate justice. It also examines challenges facing the realization of just transition and suggests solutions towards embracing just transition for climate justice.

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1.0 Introduction

Climate change is now affecting every country on every continent¹. It is disrupting national economies and affecting lives, costing people, communities and countries dearly today and even more tomorrow². People all over the world are experiencing the adverse impacts of climate change, which include changing weather patterns, rising sea level, and more extreme weather events including intense droughts, catastrophic storms and flooding³. As a result of its significant impacts on people and the planet, climate change has been described as the most defining challenge of our time⁴. It is a major global concern that is affecting both developed and developing countries in their efforts towards realization of the Sustainable Development agenda⁵. The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and its adverse impacts undermine the ability of all countries to achieve Sustainable Development⁶. Responding to climate change has therefore become a top policy agenda, at local, national, and global levels⁷.

Sustainable Development Goal 13 urges all countries to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts⁸. Further, in order to strengthen the global response on climate change, countries adopted the *Paris Agreement*⁹ in 2015. The Agreement seeks to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of

¹ United Nations., 'Climate Action.' Available at <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-action/> (Accessed on 28/11/2023)

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ United Nations., 'What is Climate Change?' Available at <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/what-is-climate-change> (Accessed on 28/11/2023)

⁵ Muigua. K., 'Achieving Sustainable Development, Peace and Environmental Security.' Glenwood Publishers Limited, 2021

⁶ United Nations General Assembly., 'Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.' 21 October 2015, A/RES/70/1

⁷ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs., 'Forum on Climate Change and Science and Technology Innovation.' Available at <https://www.un.org/en/desa/forum-climatechangeandscience-and-technology-innovation> (Accessed on 28/11/2023)

⁸ United Nations General Assembly., 'Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.' SDG 13, Op Cit

⁹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change., 'Paris Agreement.' Available at https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf (Accessed on 28/11/2023)

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Sustainable Development and efforts to eradicate poverty by holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change¹⁰. It has been pointed out that a holistic response to climate change entails both mitigative and adaptive strategies¹¹. Mitigation involves actions taken to reduce or prevent greenhouse gas emissions such as practices that reduce energy consumption, prioritize renewable energy or absorb carbon from the atmosphere (such as installing solar panels or heat pumps on buildings, using public transportation and reforestation) while adaptation refers to the ecological, social or economic adjustments that can be taken to enable humanity to thrive in the face of changing climate such as planning for emergencies, insuring that vulnerable individuals have reliable access to cooling and heating systems and planting drought tolerant crops¹².

In designing appropriate responses to climate change, it needs to be acknowledged that the people who have contributed least to the changing climate are being affected by it the most, and are likely to be less able to protect themselves from the impacts¹³. The climate crisis therefore brings enormous injustices. Effective climate action therefore envisages the participation of the people and communities most impacted by climate change including developing countries, indigenous communities, women and children as part of the climate solution in order to foster climate justice¹⁴. The idea of just transition has been

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ramsey County., 'On climate justice: Climate Change and Environmental Justice.' Available at <https://www.ramseycounty.us/content/climate-justice-climate-change-and-environmental-justice#:~:text=Climate%20Justice%20is%20a%20subset,the%20impacts%20of%20climate%20change> (Accessed on 28/11/2023)

¹² Ibid

¹³ Oxfam., 'Climate Justice.' Available at <https://www.oxfam.org.au/what-we-do/climate-justice/> (Accessed on 28/11/2023)

¹⁴ Muigua. K., 'Fostering Climate Justice for Sustainable Development.' Available at <https://kmco.co.ke/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Fostering-Climate-Justice-for-Sustainable-Development.pdf> (Accessed on 28/11/2023)

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proposed as one of the key ways of achieving climate justice¹⁵. The paper critically discusses the role of just transition in the climate justice agenda. It examines the need for climate justice and argues that it is an urgent concern due to the disproportionate impacts of climate change especially on developing countries and indigenous communities. The paper further defines just transition and discusses how this concept can foster climate justice. It also examines challenges facing the realization of just transition and suggests solutions towards embracing just transition for climate justice.

2.0 The Need for Climate Justice

Climate justice is a concept that frames climate change as an ethical and political issue, rather than one that is purely environmental or physical in nature¹⁶. This is done by relating the effects of climate change to concepts of justice, particularly environmental justice and social justice and by examining issues such as equality, human rights; collective rights, and the historical responsibilities for climate¹⁷. It has been observed that the climate crisis brings enormous injustices since it affects everyone, but not equally¹⁸. Further, it has been stated that the people and communities who have contributed least to climate change are being affected by it the most, and are likely to be less able to protect themselves from its impacts¹⁹. For example, it has been highlighted that developed countries mainly the large industrialised economies of Europe and North America and some Asian countries such as China continue to benefit more from the industries and technologies that cause climate change while developing nations in places such as Africa, Asia, the Caribbean Islands and the Pacific Islands which due to an unfortunate mixture of economic and geographic vulnerability, continue to shoulder the brunt of the burdens

¹⁵ United Nations Development Programme., 'What is just transition? And why is it important?.' Available at <https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/what-just-transition-and-why-it-important> (Accessed on 28/11/2023)

¹⁶ United Nations Environment Programme., 'Climate Justice.' Available at <https://leap.unep.org/en/knowledge/glossary/climate-justice#:~:text=Climate%20justice%20is%20a%20term,environmental%20or%20physical%20in%20nature.> (Accessed on 28/11/2023)

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Oxfam., 'Climate Justice.' Op Cit

¹⁹ Ibid

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of climate change despite their relative innocence in causing it²⁰. These countries are more vulnerable to adverse impacts of climate change including severe flooding, intense droughts, sea level rise, increasing temperatures and frequency and intensity of tropical cyclones, and storm surges despite their very little contribution to the climate change problem²¹.

Climate justice acknowledges that while climate change is global, the poor are disproportionately vulnerable to its effects²². This is due to the fact that they lack the resources to afford goods and services they need to buffer themselves and recover from the effects of climate change²³. As a result of these concerns, there have been calls for climate justice as evidence increases of the environmental and social injustices caused or worsened by climate change²⁴.

Climate justice fundamentally is about paying attention to how climate change impacts people differently, unevenly, and disproportionately, as well as redressing the resultant injustices in fair and equitable ways²⁵. Climate justice envisages understating climate change as an issue that relates to equity, fairness, ethics and human rights and not just an environmental phenomena²⁶. It links human rights and development to achieve a human-centred approach, safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable people and sharing the burdens and benefits of climate change and its impacts equitably and fairly²⁷. The goals of climate justice are to reduce marginalization, exploitation, and oppression, and

²⁰ Giles. M., 'The Principles of Climate Justice at CoP27.' Available at <https://earth.org/principlesofclimatejustice/#:~:text=That%20response%20should%20be%20based,the%20consequences%20of%20climate%20change> (Accessed on 28/11/2023)

²¹ Ibid

²² United Nations Environment Programme., 'Responding to Climate Change.' Available at <https://www.unep.org/regions/africa/regional-initiatives/responding-climate-change> (Accessed on 28/11/2023)

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Newell. P., 'Toward Transformative Climate Justice: An Emerging Research Agenda.' *WIREs Climate Change.*, Volume 12, Issue 6 (2021)

²⁵ Sultana. F., 'Critical Climate Justice.' Available at <https://www.farhanasultana.com/wp-content/uploads/Sultana-Critical-climate-justice.pdf> (Accessed on 28/11/2023)

²⁶ United Nations Environment Programme., 'Climate Justice.' Available at <https://leap.unep.org/knowledge/glossary/climate-justice> (Accessed on 28/11/2023)

²⁷ Ibid

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enhance equity and justice in climate action²⁸. Climate justice therefore seeks to put equity and human rights at the core of decision-making and action on climate change²⁹.

Climate justice encapsulates various facets of justice including distributive, procedural, and justice as recognition³⁰. Distributive justice involves identifying and acknowledging the disproportionate impacts that climate change is already having and will continue to have on the people, communities and countries that are least responsible for climate change but which bear the full brunt of its devastating impacts; Procedural justice aims to address distributive injustices by tackling climate change through processes that are participatory, accessible, fair and inclusive; while justice as recognition refers to the importance of centring the voices of people who have traditionally been marginalised through structural inequality³¹. Climate Justice is guided by several principles including the protection and empowering of vulnerable individuals and communities, promoting public participation in decision making in climate action, fostering global collaboration in the response to climate change, achieving intergeneration equity in order to protect future generations from the effects of climate change and assigning of responsibility to nations that contribute most to global greenhouse gas emissions³².

Climate justice is therefore an important component of the Sustainable Development agenda. It seeks to address the causes and impacts of climate change in a manner that recognizes and fosters the rights and concerns of vulnerable people, communities and countries³³. Climate justice is therefore essential in tackling climate change. It has been

²⁸ Sultana. F., 'Critical Climate Justice.' Op Cit

²⁹ United Nations Development Programme., 'Climate Change is a Matter of Justice – Here's Why.' Available at <https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/climate-change-matter-justice-heres-why> (Accessed on 28/11/2023)

³⁰ Monica. T & Bronwyn. L., 'Community Lawyering and Climate Justice: A New Frontier.' *Alternative Law Journal* (47) 3 pp 199-203

³¹ Ibid

³² Giles. M., 'The Principles of Climate Justice at CoP27.' Op Cit

³³ Schlosberg. D & Collins. L., 'From Environmental to Climate Justice: Climate Change and the Discourse of Environmental Justice.' *WIREs Clim Change*, 2014

rightly pointed out that climate justice is also an important aspect of just transition toward a sustainable future³⁴.

3.0 The Role of Just Transition in Climate Justice

Just transition has been defined as a concept that seeks to foster climate, energy and environmental justice in a manner that promotes fairness and equity in the journey towards sustainability³⁵. It has also been defined as a fair and equitable process of moving towards a post-carbon society by addressing major global justice concerns such as (but not limited to) ethnicity, income, and gender within both developed and developing contexts³⁶. Just transition therefore seeks to foster climate action in a manner that ensures that the whole society including all communities and social groups are brought along in the journey towards a net-zero future³⁷.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), just transition entails greening the economy in a manner that is fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind³⁸. ILO further asserts that just transition involves maximizing the social and economic opportunities of climate action, while minimizing and carefully managing any challenges through effective social dialogue among all groups impacted, and respect for fundamental labour principles and rights³⁹. The African Development Bank Group envisages just transition as a framework for facilitating equitable access to the benefits and sharing of the costs of Sustainable Development such that livelihoods of all people, including the most vulnerable, are supported and enhanced as societies make the transition to low carbon and resilient

³⁴ United Nations Development Programme., 'Climate Change is a Matter of Justice – Here's Why.' Op Cit

³⁵ McCauley. D., & Heffron. R., 'Just Transition: Integrating Climate, Energy and Environmental Justice.' *Energy Policy.*, Volume 119, 2018, pp 1-7

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ United Nations Development Programme., 'What is just transition? And why is it important?.' Op Cit

³⁸ International Labour Organization., 'Frequently Asked Questions on Just Transition.' Available at https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/WCMS_824102/lang-en/index.htm (Accessed on 29/11/2023)

³⁹ Ibid

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economies⁴⁰. It further asserts that just transition affirms Africa's right to development and industrialization based on the Paris Agreement and its principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances⁴¹.

Just transition has been described as an important principle for the delivery of all climate goals, whether mitigation or adaptation, at every level of governance⁴². Just transitions to low-carbon and climate-resilient development can create opportunities for environmental sustainability, social equity and economic prosperity⁴³. Just transition offers an opportunity for countries to strengthen efforts to decarbonize, green their economies, and build climate resilience⁴⁴. It can help countries address the impacts of climate change and green their economies by bringing the public along, supporting a green jobs revolution, laying the social ground work for a resilient net-zero economy, driving local solutions and reinforcing the urgency for concerted efforts to combat climate change⁴⁵.

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), a just transition secures the future and livelihoods of workers and their communities during the transition to a low-carbon economy⁴⁶. UNFCCC, further points out that just transition requires guarantees for intra-, intergenerational and gender equity, racial

⁴⁰ African Development Bank Group., 'Just Transition Initiative to Address Climate Change in the African Context.' Available at <https://www.afdb.org/en/topics-and-sectors/initiatives-partnerships/climate-investment-funds-cif/just-transition-initiative> (Accessed on 29/11/2023)

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² United Nations Conference on Trade and Development., 'A Global Just Transition: Climate and Development Goals in a World of Extreme Inequalities.' Available at https://unctad.org/system/files/non-official-document/UNCTAD_Just_Transition_BACKGROUND_NOTE_COP27.pdf (Accessed on 29/11/2023)

⁴³ African Development Bank Group., 'Just Transition Initiative to Address Climate Change in the African Context.' Op Cit

⁴⁴ United Nations Development Programme., 'What is just transition? And why is it important?.' Op Cit

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change., 'Views on Different Elements of the Work Programme on Just Transition Pathways Referred to in Paragraph 52 of Decision 1/CMA.4.' https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/SubmissionsStaging/Documents/202309181045---ITF_SLOCAT_JTWP%20submission.pdf (Accessed on 29/11/2023)

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justice, respect for the rights of indigenous peoples, impacted communities and migrants and promotes and protects human rights and ILO fundamental labour rights⁴⁷. Shifting to a low-carbon economy can unlock new jobs and opportunities but it must be done in a way that is as socially and economically fair as possible for everyone in order to realize just transition⁴⁸. It has been observed that in order to ensure no one is left behind, countries need just transition and economic diversification policies that are comprehensive, inclusive, and based on social dialogue and stakeholder engagement⁴⁹.

The concept of just transition is envisaged under the *Paris Agreement* which urges countries to take into account the imperatives of a *just transition* of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities⁵⁰ (Emphasis added). The UNFCCC points out that several countries have demonstrated their efforts in integrating just transitions in their long-term national strategies and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) through measures such as building resilient economies through affordable and decentralized renewable energy systems, reallocating finance to ensure benefits for people affected by transitions to sustainable economies, focusing on vulnerable groups including informal labor forces and women, and the creation of green jobs, thereby fostering low-carbon, resilient and sustainable growth⁵¹.

The concept of just transition has the potential to foster climate justice. It has rightly been pointed out that climate change has the greatest impact on vulnerable groups and communities⁵². Just transition can therefore promote climate justice by addressing the

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change., 'Leaving No One Behind in the Transition Towards a Low-Carbon Economy.' Available at <https://unfccc.int/news/leaving-no-one-behind-in-the-transition-towards-a-low-carbon-economy> (Accessed on 29/11/2023)

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change., 'Paris Agreement.' Op Cit

⁵¹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change., 'Financing Fair, Inclusive and Just Transitions to a Sustainable Future.' Available at <https://unfccc.int/news/financing-fair-inclusive-and-just-transitions-to-a-sustainable-future> (Accessed on 29/11/2023)

⁵² Giles. M., 'The Principles of Climate Justice at CoP27.' Op Cit

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social, economic, and environmental challenges associated with climate change at the same time⁵³. In addition, it has been pointed out that just transition can enhance climate justice through the opportunities it presents to transition to a greener future through initiatives such as clean energy among others⁵⁴. Further, in addition to climate action, a just transition framework can also advance progress towards all the SDGs especially those related to affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, and responsible production and consumption therefore enhancing environmental, social and economic sustainability⁵⁵. Just transitions to low-carbon and climate-resilient development can therefore create opportunities for environmental sustainability, social equity and economic prosperity⁵⁶. According to the African Development Bank, a just transition can enable African countries to achieve greater redistribution of wealth and ensure that climate action occurs alongside development⁵⁷.

Just transition can also foster climate justice by ensuring inclusivity and participation in climate action⁵⁸. It is a key tool to ensure that the transition towards a green future happens in a fair way, leaving no one behind⁵⁹. It can facilitate the allocation of resources to support the most affected persons and communities to alleviate the socio-economic impacts of the climate transition⁶⁰. Just transition is also a means of ensuring efficient and effective climate change mitigation and adaptation policies and regulations that limit

⁵³ Kemei. N., 'Navigating the Path of Just Transition: Kenya's Sustainable Future.' Available at https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/navigating-path-just-transition-kenyas-sustainable-future-naomi-kemei/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android&utm_campaign=share_via (Accessed on 29/11/2023)

⁵⁴ Oxfam., 'Climate Justice.' Op Cit

⁵⁵ United Nations Development Programme., 'What is just transition? And why is it important?.' Op Cit

⁵⁶ African Development Bank Group., 'Just Transition Initiative to Address Climate Change in the African Context.' Op Cit

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ European Commission., 'The Just Transition Mechanism: Making Sure no One is Left Behind.' Available at https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/finance-and-green-deal/just-transition-mechanism_en (Accessed on 29/11/2023)

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Ibid

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labour market disruptions and job losses and that support workers and companies impacted by the transition⁶¹.

The idea of just transition can therefore promote climate justice by support of more concerted action to address the needs of people and communities that are being impacted by climate change⁶². It further ensures that costs of climate action including mitigation and adaptation strategies are not disproportionately borne by certain people⁶³. Just transition can thus achieve climate justice by ensuring that costs of shifting to a low-carbon society as well as of the experiences of climate change are shared in a just and equitable way⁶⁴. The concept of climate justice and initiatives to implement just transitions, begin by recognizing that climate change affects people, communities and countries differently, and that effective climate action requires a greater understanding of these differences and how they can be addressed⁶⁵. Just transition can provide a framework for action to ensure that shifting development paths towards a sustainable, carbon-neutral economy, happens in a fair way⁶⁶. A just transition framework recognizes people's social and economic opportunities, and specifically in a way that does not exacerbate existing social inequalities⁶⁷. It is therefore imperative to embrace just transition in order to achieve climate justice.

Despite its efficacy in fostering climate justice, it has been pointed out several obstacles hinder the achievement of just transition including inadequate investment, inadequate

⁶¹ International Organization of Employers., 'Climate Change and Just Transition.' Available at <https://www.ioe-emp.org/policy-priorities/climate-change-and-just-transitions> (Accessed on 29/11/2023)

⁶² Smith, J., 'Global Climate Justice Activism: "The New Protagonists" and their Projects for a Just Transition.' Available at https://web.archive.org/web/20190429063257id_/http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/35560/1/Smith%20and%20Patterson%20Unequal%20Exchange%20Volume%20New%20Protagonists%20DScholarship.pdf (Accessed on 29/11/2023)

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Climate Policy., 'Just Transition and Climate Justice.' Available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/tcpo20/collections/Just-Transition-and-Climate-Justice> (Accessed on 29/11/2023)

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ Ibid

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national capacity, insufficient or weak policies and lack of clarity and consensus on just transition⁶⁸. It has also been pointed out that there are common challenges facing developing countries that hold them back from realizing a just transition⁶⁹. These challenges span the Paris Agreement means of implementation: finance, technology and capacity-building⁷⁰. Such challenges include limited multilateral support to meet financing need, lack of fiscal space to scale up climate investments, expensive external financing, barriers to green technology transfer, and restricted energy access⁷¹. It is imperative to address these challenges in order to effectively embrace just transition towards climate justice.

4.0 Way Forward

In order to embrace just transition, it is imperative to build a climate resilient and integrated sustainable energy sector in Africa and other regions which are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change⁷². It has been observed that Africa has rich energy and mineral resources including lithium, graphite, cobalt, nickel, copper, and rare earth minerals all of which provide new market opportunities for the green transition⁷³. This coupled with the Continent's renewable energy potential means that Africa has the capacity to achieve just transition to an equitable and inclusive low-carbon future⁷⁴. It has correctly been observed that Africa has immense potential for renewable energy including wind, solar, hydro, bioenergy, ocean tidal waves, geothermal among other

⁶⁸ United Nations Development Programme., 'What is just transition? And why is it important?.' Op Cit

⁶⁹ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development., 'A Global Just Transition: Climate and Development Goals in a World of Extreme Inequalities.' Op Cit

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² Lee. S., 'Unpacking Just Transition: What is it and How Can We Achieve it in Africa?.' Available at https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/unpacking-just-transition-what-it-and-how-can-we-achieve-it-africa?gad_source=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI7ufGuYrpggMVboVoCR2gtAn3EAAYASAAEgL8VvD_BwE (Accessed on 29/11/2023)

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Ibid

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renewables⁷⁵. It has been pointed out that in order to ensure delivery of global climate change mitigation goals, developing countries will need to drive investment towards building a renewable energy infrastructure that can serve their populations into the future and not drive further climate breakdown⁷⁶. A just transition promotes the shift towards renewable sources of energy and sustainable practices, reducing the reliance on fossil fuels and mitigating the impacts of climate change⁷⁷. It is therefore important for developing countries to embrace just transition by promoting renewable sources of energy in order to achieve climate justice and energy justice.

It is also essential to integrate just transition initiatives in national climate action plans and adaptation plans. It has been observed that the importance of just transition is increasingly being recognized by governments worldwide as they cite just transition principles in their short- and long-term climate plans known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Long-Term Strategies (LTSs)⁷⁸. Embedding just transition strategies within short and long term climate plans like NDCs and LTS, can help governments stay focused on the urgent task at hand of rapid decarbonization, while also striving for fair and inclusive outcomes⁷⁹. In Kenya, the *National Climate Change Action Plan*⁸⁰ enshrines the principles of just transition and seeks to foster an equitable and inclusive climate response which ensures an electricity supply mix based mainly on renewable energy that is resilient to climate change and promotes energy efficiency; encourage the transition to clean cooking that reduces the demand for biomass; and reduced exposure and vulnerability of the country, and especially of the poor and

⁷⁵ Africa Union., 'Agenda 2063: The Africa we Want.' Available at https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/33126-docframework_document_book.pdf (Accessed on 29/11/2023)

⁷⁶ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development., 'A Global Just Transition: Climate and Development Goals in a World of Extreme Inequalities.' Op Cit

⁷⁷ Kemei. N., 'Navigating the Path of Just Transition: Kenya's Sustainable Future.' Op Cit

⁷⁸ United Nations Development Programme., 'What is just transition? And why is it important?.' Op Cit

⁷⁹ Ibid

⁸⁰ Government of Kenya., 'National Climate Change Action Plan (Kenya): 2018-2022.'

Nairobi: Ministry of Environment and Forestry (2018)., Available at

<https://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/8737.pdf> (Accessed on 29/11/2023)

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vulnerable groups, to climate disasters and shocks⁸¹. It is therefore necessary for countries to incorporate just transition initiatives in their NDCs and LTSs in order to achieve efficient climate outcomes. This will demonstrate commitment towards achieving climate justice while securing public support for ambitious and stronger climate action⁸².

Further, there is need to unlock and align climate finance with the idea of just transition⁸³. It has been argued that governments have an obligation to mobilize sustainable, affordable, predictable and long-term finance from public and private, domestic and international sources, and aligning public and private financial flows and public procurement to the objectives of a just transition⁸⁴. According to the UNFCCC, increased climate finance is needed to effectively address the challenges and seize the opportunities of just transitions in country-specific and sector-specific pathways considering the local circumstances⁸⁵. Climate finance has been identified as a key tool towards fostering climate justice since it recognizes the inequalities between countries with developing countries being the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and thus requiring financial resources to aid their mitigation and adaptation programmes⁸⁶. It is therefore imperative for all countries and especially developing countries to unlock climate finance from multiple sources including public, private and multilateral sources in order to achieve just transition by addressing the socio-economic impacts of climate change and addressing climate inequalities more broadly through efficient mitigation and adaptation strategies⁸⁷.

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Lee. S., 'Unpacking Just Transition: What is it and How Can We Achieve it in Africa?'

⁸³ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change., 'Views on Different Elements of the Work Programme on Just Transition Pathways Referred to in Paragraph 52 of Decision 1/CMA.4.' Op Cit

⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁵United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change., 'Financing Fair, Inclusive and Just Transitions to a Sustainable Future.' Op Cit

⁸⁶ Colenbrander. S et al., 'Using Climate Finance to Advance Climate Justice: The Politics and Practice of Channeling Resources to the Local Level.' *Climate Policy*, 2017

⁸⁷ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development., 'A Global Just Transition: Climate and Development Goals in a World of Extreme Inequalities.' Op Cit

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In addition, it is necessary to embrace and enhance technology transfer between developed and developing countries in order to enhance the capacity of the former to later to embrace just transition. It has been pointed out that developing countries have vast renewable potential, but are unable to realize it as long as they are constrained by lack of access to green technologies⁸⁸. Without access to environmentally sound technologies, developing countries in particular least developed countries, will not be able to meet mitigation targets and will be forced to continue using carbon-intensive technologies resulting in climate and sustainability concerns⁸⁹. Transferring low-carbon and green technologies to those most at risk of climate crisis is critical, among a range of other measures, to ensure that people can respond and adapt to the threat of climate change⁹⁰. Technology transfer can support the climate agenda in developing countries for energy and other sectoral transitions⁹¹. The Paris Agreement acknowledges the importance of technology for the implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions and urges countries to promote and facilitate enhanced action on technology development and transfer in order to support the implementation of the Agreement⁹². It is thus pertinent for developed countries to promote transfer of low-carbon technologies including green technologies in developing countries in order to support climate action in such countries⁹³. Developing countries should on the other hand remove barriers to green technology transfer including Intellectual Property barriers and revise bilateral and multilateral trade agreements that present a barrier to transfer initiatives⁹⁴

Finally, there is need to foster capacity building in order to effectively realize just transition. One of the key challenges in achieving climate justice through just transition

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ International Institute for Sustainable Development., 'Rethinking Technology Transfer to Support the Climate Agenda.' Available at <https://sdg.iisd.org/commentary/guest-articles/rethinking-technology-transfer-to-support-the-climate-agenda/> (Accessed on 29/11/2023)

⁹¹ Ibid

⁹² United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change., 'Paris Agreement.' Article 10

⁹³ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development., 'A Global Just Transition: Climate and Development Goals in a World of Extreme Inequalities.' Op Cit

⁹⁴ Ibid

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has been identified to be inadequate national capacity on just transition initiatives⁹⁵. Capacity building can strengthen individual and institutional capacities on just transition in key areas such as policymaking, cross-sectoral coordination, and stakeholder participation⁹⁶. It can further enhance the ability of the public to be involved in key decisions in the journey towards just transition⁹⁷. It has been pointed out that participation and engagement are crucial for achieving just sustainability transitions⁹⁸. Capacity building is therefore integral in achieving just transition. It is thus necessary for all countries and especially developing states to strengthen their legal, institutional, technical, human, social and financial capacity in order to embrace just transition⁹⁹.

The above among other measures are necessary in order to achieve equitable and inclusive just transition towards climate justice.

5.0 Conclusion

Climate justice is an important component of the Sustainable Development agenda. It seeks to address the causes and impacts of climate change in a manner that recognizes and fosters the rights and concerns of vulnerable people, communities and countries¹⁰⁰. The concept of just transition can foster climate justice since it seeks to foster climate, energy and environmental justice in a manner that promotes fairness and equity in the journey towards sustainability¹⁰¹. Just transition can also promote climate justice by addressing the social, economic, and environmental challenges associated with climate

⁹⁵ United Nations Development Programme., 'What is just transition? And why is it important?.' Op Cit

⁹⁶ Partnership for Action on Green Economy., 'Argentina's Capacity Building on Green Jobs and Just Transition.' Available at <https://www.un-page.org/news/argentinas-capacity-building-on-green-jobs-and-just-transition/> (Accessed on 29/11/2023)

⁹⁷ European Environment Agency., 'The Case for Public Participation in Sustainability Transitions.' Available at <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/the-case-for-public-participation> (Accessed on 29/11/2023)

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development., 'A Global Just Transition: Climate and Development Goals in a World of Extreme Inequalities.' Op Cit

¹⁰⁰ Schlosberg. D & Collins. L., 'From Environmental to Climate Justice: Climate Change and the Discourse of Environmental Justice.' Op Cit

¹⁰¹ McCauley. D., & Heffron. R., 'Just Transition: Integrating Climate, Energy and Environmental Justice.' Op Cit

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change at the same time¹⁰². Several obstacles hinder the attainment of just transition including inadequate investment, inadequate national capacity, insufficient or weak policies and lack of clarity and consensus on just transition¹⁰³. The idea of just transition can be effectively embraced through measures such as building climate resilient and integrated sustainable energy sectors, integrating just transition initiatives in national climate action plans and adaptation plans including NDCs and LTSs, unlocking and aligning climate finance with the idea of just transition, embracing and enhancing technology transfer between developed and developing countries, capacity building and embracing public participation and stakeholder engagement in just transitions¹⁰⁴.

In our journey Towards Climate Justice and Net zero, we must fully embrace Just Transition.

¹⁰² Kemei. N., 'Navigating the Path of Just Transition: Kenya's Sustainable Future.' Op Cit

¹⁰³ United Nations Development Programme., 'What is just transition? And why is it important?.' Op Cit

¹⁰⁴ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development., 'A Global Just Transition: Climate and Development Goals in a World of Extreme Inequalities.' Op Cit

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