

Mary Robinson, the former President of Ireland, and an influential figure in global climate diplomacy, on Saturday acknowledged that solution-based negotiations was still important for Africa to leverage finance allocated through the UNFCCC known as “loss and damage”.

“African countries should engage in negotiable solutions with rich countries and avoid the pressure of having to reach a loss and damage agreement on every issue,” said Robinson while referring to the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP27) which began this week in the city of Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.

According to the latest publication by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), around a third of global greenhouse gas emissions come from the food system – 71% of those are down to agriculture and land use change (deforestation, fertilizers, methane emissions).

However, reports indicate that Africa is not a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions. The continent accounts for only 2–3 percent of the world’s carbon dioxide emissions generated especially from energy and industrial sources.

In addition, the IPCC report shows that Africa is already experiencing severe and widespread impacts of climate change, causing devastation to lives, livelihoods and the continent’s development trajectory.

The chair of African Group of Negotiators (AGN) Ephraim Mwepya Shitima was hopeful ‘the African COP’ currently will deliver substantive progress and implementable climate actions on the priority issues for Africa and other developing countries, including on adaptation, loss and damage and climate. finance.

Viable adaptation projects

Speaking to reporters in Sharm El Sheikh, Robinson stressed that African countries need viable adaptation projects and programmes to benefit from the adaptation fund to boost their integrity in carbon trading.

Transitioning to a green economy for developing countries especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, according to Robinson, can unlock new economic opportunities and jobs.

“But there are key requirements to mobilize this finance,” the climate justice campaigner told reporters.

On the sidelines of the COP27, a session titled “Unlocking Private Sector Finance for Adaptation in Africa featured vibrant and timely discussion on how climate change comes at a cost and that adaptation planning was a sensible solution for the private sector.

The session brought out key messages on best practices to mainstream private sector engagement in National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and concrete examples on financial solutions to attract and de-risk private sector investments, a missing element for many developing countries.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that costs associated with climate-change adaptation across Africa could hit \$50 billion annually by 2050, even if the global temperature does not rise more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels.

Liability and compensation

To leverage on loss and damage as part of the post-2025 climate finance target under the Paris Agreement, African countries have so far outlined bold aspirations to build climate-resilient and low-carbon economies in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement.

Aside from finance, Robinson pointed out that there are some critical elements for developing countries, especially in Africa, to be eligible for loss and damage finance. These included enabling policies, building the capacity of communities and the involvement of the private sector.

COP meetings are the vehicle through which the countries coordinate actions to cut planet-warming greenhouse-gas emissions. The ultimate goal is to cap the rise of global average temperatures which, at the moment, are headed for an increase of around 2.7°C or more by the end of the century, from the average of pre-industrial times.

The climate negotiations to address loss and damage caused by climate change to low and middle-income countries is to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C. A greater ambition is to keep to the 1.5C possible. Climate experts say that the 1.5-degrees limit is on life support.

However, some negotiators complained that funds committed by developed

countries were not reaching the intended programmes in various developing countries to tackle climate change.

“Commitments to increase climate Finance for addressing loss and damage have been made but they are not being delivered,” said Shitima.

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