The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Inger Andersen on Thursday reiterated the need for parties at the upcoming UN Climate Conference (COP27) in Egypt, to provide a clear and time-bound roadmap on closing the finance gap for addressing loss and damage that is mostly affecting the African continent.

“This will be a central litmus test for success at COP27, Ms. Andersen said while referring to the upcoming climate negotiations scheduled take place from 6-18 November 2022 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

Addressing an expert panel at the launch of the 2022 Adaptation Gap Report, Ms. Andersen said urged countries to quickly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strive for net-zero.

Estimates show that at global level countries most from Sub-Saharan Africa require between USD 160 to 340 billion per year for adaptation by 2030.

Reports indicate that in 2020, international adaptation finance flows to developing countries mostly in Africa hit USD 29 billion. “This leaves a yawning gap to be filled – around 5 to 10 times the size of the adaptation finance that arrived in 2020,” the senior UN official said.

Latest projections show that the war in Ukraine, global supply shortages and the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to an energy and food security crisis with major impacts on the costs of living that are going high.

“Climate adaptation may not seem like a priority right now,” Ms.Andersen said.

Speaking in the same vein, Mohamed Adow, Director of Power Shift Africa, an organization engaged in mobilizing climate action in Africa, blamed rich countries for failing to keep their promise on previous climate finance pledges.

According to him, there was little progress on creating a fund for loss and damage and there was a lack of binding emissions reductions on the continent.

“This year we have a chance to put things right and get the world back on track. We need to see the victims of the climate crisis put front and centre, with their needs prioritized and those that are most responsible taking real action to address the

climate emergency," Mr Adow said.

Latest official estimates indicate that the need for adaptation is expected to be high in Africa, especially in light of the existing deficit in adaptation to current climate variability and climate change.

Members of the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) stress that key success at COP27 ultimately rests on its ability to get money flowing from wealthy countries to those most in need – at the pace and scale required to match the climate crisis.

This article has been published with the support from MESHA/IDRC grant for COP27 coverage