SHARM EL-SHEIKH: The African Union Commission (AUC) on Monday presented the initial assessment of a first ever proposed plan dedicated to tackle the combined challenges of the COVID-19 recovery and climate change across many African regions.

The plan which is set to focus on critical areas of joint priority across the continent, has been released on the sidelines of the Global Climate summit currently taking place in Sharm El Sheikh.

By 2027, the six-year plan will be implemented closely with Pan African institutions including the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and a wide range of regional and continental initiatives, development banks, the private sector, and African Union member States, so as to complement and enhance national recovery plans.

The Green Recovery Action Plan focuses on five key priority areas such as Climate finance, including increasing flows, efficiency and impact of funding.

According to the plan other interventions will be oriented towards supporting renewable energy, energy efficiency and national Just Transition Programmes.

The African Union is also looking to adapt nature-based solutions and focus on biodiversity through work on sustainable land management, forestry, oceans and ecotourism, while on the other hand key focus will be on resilient agriculture, by focusing on inclusive economic development and green jobs, it said.

Among other key focus of the new strategy also include the promotion of Green and resilient cities, including a focus on water and enhancing information, communication and technology, according to the same source.

Latest estimates by the African Union show that COVID-19 remains the biggest global economic shock on the continent since and will hit Africa particularly hard due to existing vulnerabilities.

The World Bank estimates show that an additional 23 million people will be pushed into extreme poverty and 20 million jobs could disappear, costing Africa up to $500 billion in revenue. Food insecurity and debt are rising, and hard-won development gains are being lost.

AU officials predict that for the COVID-19 recovery to be sustainable, it must link a

green recovery with an inclusive recovery.

Speaking at the occasion, Josefa Sacko, AU Commissioner, Agriculture, Rural Development, Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy said: “The inclusive recovery will be one that leaves no one behind.”

“We want to ensure that marginalized groups such as women and youth are actively involved and part of the recovery,” she said.

Climate spending in developing countries particularly in Africa is likely to be hit hard in the short-term due to COVID-19 impacts, it said.

As African countries move from containing the virus to economic recovery, choices are being made that will shape trajectories on emissions, resilience and biodiversity for decades to come, it said.

Experts argue that new investments must especially prioritize job creation and a just transition through access to affordable, reliable, and clean energy for the almost 600 million Africans that do not have access to electricity.

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