

Gender and Health Integration in Climate Committments and Financing in Sub-Saharan Africa



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Acronyms

AUC	African Union Commission	FP/SRHR	family planning/sexual and reproductive health and rights
CCRS	Climate Commission for the Sahel Region	GBV	gender-based violence
CDF	consultative dialogue framework	GCF	Green Climate Fund
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa	GED	gender equality and development
CRA	Centre Régional Agrhythmet	GEF	Global Environment Facility
CSOs	civil society organisations	MNH	maternal and newborn health
EAC	East African Community	RCC	Regional Climate Centre
EACSOFF	East African Civil Society Organizations Forum	RECs	Regional Economic Communities
EAHP	East African Health Platform	RMNCAH	reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health
EALS	East African Law Society	SADC	Southern African Development Community
EANNASO	Eastern Africa National Networks of AIDS Service Organisations	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
EASSI	Eastern African Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women	SRHR	sexual and reproductive health and rights
ECSA-HC	East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community	SSA	sub-Saharan Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	STI	sexually transmitted infection
EIHP	EAC Integrated Health Programme	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
		WAHO	West Africa Health Organization

Suggested citation: Zake, J., Kabiswa, C., Kasekende, N.N., and Kansiime, M.K. (2026). Gender and health integration in climate commitments and financing in sub-Saharan Africa. Regenerate Africa. Kampala. Uganda. <https://regenerateafrica.org/activity-reports-2/>



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Summary

This report presents the results of a review of national and regional climate change action plans, policies, strategies, and financing across sub-Saharan Africa, identifying key issues for the integration of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), voluntary family planning (FP), gender, and related thematic areas such as maternal and newborn health. The study also examined the status of climate finance architecture and the extent to which the intersectionality of gender, health, FP/SRHR, and climate action is financed or otherwise addressed. The regional policies we reviewed include climate action plans and strategies for Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the sub-Saharan Africa region, such as the East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

These RECs have made tremendous efforts to strengthen the enabling environment for addressing climate change, aligned with global frameworks. Yet while many policies recognize the gendered impacts of climate change, they fall short of incorporating comprehensive strategies for addressing the interconnected challenges of those impacts on health, gender, and FP/SRHR. Financing is critical to achieving sustainable programme delivery, and the funding landscape for implementing climate action in the region shows glaring gaps. For example, there is a noted underestimation of climate finance needs because the regional bodies have not costed all of their sectoral plans.

The need for deliberate and proactive integration of policy and institutional frameworks to effectively address these challenges is urgent. This integration should extend to planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring processes supported by collaborative institutional arrangements. The proposed solution involves building institutional collaboration, capacity development, and financing mechanisms to foster a unified and resilient approach across the sub-Saharan Africa region.

Key Messages

- Climate change and variability impacts are visibly affecting all sectors (for instance, water, natural resources, environment, health, wildlife, agriculture) across regions. The gender, health, and climate nexus impacts are equally becoming more prevalent at different scales, including community, local, national, and regional levels.
- Various initiatives at national and regional levels—such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Niger, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia; and Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, and West Africa, respectively—are advancing climate change adaptation through policy interventions across sectors and with financial support from existing key climate finance mechanisms (the Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund, and Global Environment Facility).
- Despite these efforts, climate commitments and financing at national and regional levels have limited responsive and intentional actions to address gender and health integration.
- There is need for targeted engagements with key policies, decisionmakers, actors, and stakeholders at national and regional levels to facilitate mindset change, knowledge and skills enhancement to develop more intention, and structured and coordinated responsive actions for advancing gender and health integration in climate commitments and financing.
- In the short term, targeted and ring-fenced financing should be provided through the allocation of portions of funding from climate financing mechanisms to support gender and health climate actions. In the medium and long terms, to support health-climate actions in a more structured way, climate health funds should be negotiated and institutionalized within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Climate hazards are present in all regions, posing risks to health, ecosystems, infrastructure, livelihoods, and food.

Background

The world today is grappling with the increasingly adverse effects of climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports that climate hazards are present in all regions, posing risks to health, ecosystems, infrastructure, livelihoods, and food. These impacts are cascading across sectors and regions. Research shows that 3.6 billion people already live in areas highly susceptible to climate change.¹ The World Health Organization estimates that climate change will cause an extra 250,000 deaths every year from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea, and heat stress alone.²

Climate change projections for the sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) region reflect a warming trend, particularly in the inland subtropics; frequent extreme heat events; increasing aridity; and changes in rainfall—with a particularly pronounced decline in rainfall in southern Africa and an increase in East Africa.³ East Africa's projected increased rainfall would result in rising rates of water-borne and food-borne diseases.⁴ Additionally, the region's growing population and consumption are expected to drive increased emissions of climate-changing greenhouse gases.⁵ Development interventions that fully tap into the synergies between population, health, and environment—with a focus on gender transformation and youth participation—are crucial to combatting the adverse effects of climate change, preserving the environment, and accelerating the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Regional policies are paramount for guiding a coherent and successful solution against the increasingly pressing global and transboundary challenges brought on by climate change's impacts. The connections between SRHR, voluntary family planning, population dynamics, gender, and climate action are crucial to meeting these challenges. Yet current policies and programs rarely feature interventions that integrate population, health, and environment.

Given this background, Regenerate Africa, with financial support from the Population Institute and Panorama Global, conducted a review of SSA's regional climate change action plans, policies, strategies, and financing to identify key issues concerning the integration of FP/SRHR, gender, and related thematic areas. We focused our review on climate action plans and



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strategies for RECs in the SSA region—the EAC, ECOWAS, SADC, and COMESA—and eight selected Member States—Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Rwanda; Niger; Zambia and Malawi; and Ethiopia, respectively. Our findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners of climate change mitigation, and public health experts, enabling a more comprehensive and sustainable strategy for enhancing resilience across the SSA region.

Methods

The first phase of our study involved an extensive review of the official documents related to climate change action in SSA, as stipulated in the RECs (the EAC, ECOWAS, SADC, and COMESA), including regional climate change and health policies, action plans, and financial mechanisms. We employed a rapid-scan approach, analysing and evaluating selected documents to identify key issues for the

integration of health, family planning, gender, and SRHR. Our analysis parameters included health, FP/SRHR, maternal and newborn health (MNH), gender equity, and the integration of these aspects into climate financing, budgets, and projects at the SSA regional and national levels for eight Member States (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Rwanda; Niger; Zambia and Malawi; and Ethiopia, respectively).

We also delved into the financing mechanisms associated with climate change action plans to understand the status of climate finance architecture and the extent to which the intersectionality of gender and health—particularly FP/SRHR—and climate action is financed or otherwise addressed. To do this, we searched within the database of each respective climate finance mechanism—the Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund, and Global Environment Facility—for past and present adaption and mitigation projects funded and implemented at the country level for the selected eight Member States and the regional

These activities send a clear signal that climate decisions should put health at the center of climate action.

level (Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, and West Africa) since the mechanism began operation.

We identified the beneficiaries and critical players, and proposed recommendations for financing FP/SRHR and gender in climate action. Overall, our research methodology was designed to be rigorous, comprehensive, and inclusive to provide a nuanced understanding of the current state and future possibilities at the intersection of these issues in context for the SSA region.

Results

The Context of Climate Change Frameworks

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), formed in 1992, is an international treaty to address climate change and its impacts on a global scale. It advances international collaboration and provides a framework that influences the development of climate change policies at national and regional levels. The UNFCCC sets the stage for coordinated efforts to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to the impacts of climate change, and promote sustainable development worldwide. EAC Partner States in our review who ratified the UNFCCC include Uganda (1993), Kenya (1994), Tanzania (1996), and Rwanda (1998).

The Conference of Parties (COP)—the UNFCCC’s supreme decision-making body—provides a platform for countries to set the global climate change agenda for upcoming years. This platform has lifted the political profile of the climate-health nexus and set the foundation for mainstreaming health into the global climate change agenda. Climate and health actors elevated the issue of people’s health for the first time at a COP during the 28th Conference (COP28 in 2023), including the COP’s first official Health Day. The COP28 UAE Declaration on Climate and Health was issued at this Health Day to express deep concerns about climate change’s negative

impacts on health.⁶ The Declaration has been signed by 142 countries to date. COP28 also hosted an inter-ministerial meeting on climate and health that brought together nearly 50 Ministers of Health and 110 high-level health ministerial staff. These activities send a clear signal that climate decisions should put health at the center of climate action. However, no COP has focused directly on FP/SRHR when discussing climate impacts on health or mentioned gender disparities more broadly, demonstrating a critical gap.

The African Leaders Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action at the inaugural African Climate Summit in Nairobi in 2023 is a strong step toward joint African leadership and development of a common position on climate change. On a continent where climate change’s disproportionate effects are already acutely felt, this first-of-its-kind declaration emerges as a beacon of hope, charting a clear and actionable pathway to address the climate crisis. It also points to the need for comprehensive policy and legal frameworks to protect and empower climate migrants, particularly young migrants, ensuring their access to basic rights, health care, and social security while recognising migration as an adaptation strategy and promoting human rights and gender-transformative approaches in policies.

The Nairobi Declaration’s inclusion of multilateral development bank reforms, particularly on issues of debt relief, and robust proposition on fossil fuel taxation is welcome. Yet, despite making a bold mention of “lives and livelihoods,” the Nairobi Declaration falls short of mentioning health, including FP/SRHR. Climate change is shaping world dynamics and exposing many people to more health- and pandemic-related risks. By failing to reference health and FP/SRHR in this declaration, African leaders missed a high-profile opportunity to highlight the urgency of the climate crisis and its impacts. This inclusion is critical for Africa and remains a missing link in combatting the climate crisis.

Table 1 profiles the SSA regional policies reviewed in our analysis regarding family planning, SRHR, gender, and climate action, and the gaps identified.

TABLE 1. Coherence and Integration of Climate Change, FP/SRHR, and Gender in Policies and Plans of Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Bodies

Policy Framework	Purpose	Integration of Climate Change, FP/SRHR, Gender, and Related Thematic Areas	Gaps
EAC Climate Change Policy	Guides Partner States and other stakeholders on the preparation and implementation of collective measures to address adaptation to and mitigation of climate change	Recognises the gendered impacts of climate change on human health and the need for adequate responses, including resource mobilisation	No reference to FP/SRHR or MNH
EAC Climate Change Strategy	Sets out a range of measures to ensure effective implementation of the EAC Climate Change Policy at all levels, including sustainable financing	Offers broad strategies on health and sexual health, and the development of effective early warning systems and emergency health measures for climate change-related diseases	No specific mention of family planning, MNH, or funding mechanisms
East African Community Climate Change Master Plan, 2011-2031	Provides guidance for Partner States to ensure people, economies, and ecosystems are resilient and adaptable to climate change	Acknowledges the need for shared resources and regional cooperation in human health, sanitation, and settlements, as well as the role of population dynamics and gender-sensitive approaches in climate change matters and the need for financing	No specific reference to FP/SRHR or MNH
East African Community Integrated Reproductive Maternal Newborn Child and Adolescent Health Policy Guidelines (2016-2030)	Calls for regional cooperation on health among Partner States, including joint financing of regional initiatives	Identifies the need to strengthen and integrate SRHR, adolescent health, child health, and maternal health in responding to climate change's impacts on public health	Policy interventions are not integrated to include aspects of climate change
EAC Climate Finance Access and Mobilization Strategy (2022/23-2031/32)	Aims to prevent “dangerous” human interference with the climate system; guides countries to develop national communications and Nationally Determined Contributions	Recognises the role of population dynamics in climate change; identifies key principles to guide the strategy's design, implementation, and monitoring, demonstrating inclusion and gender sensitivity	No specific mention of FP/SRHR or MNH
Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Actions Region (2019-2024)	Supports African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries' efforts to address climate change, including the general achievement of climate actions at the national level	Mentions population dynamics and health issues	No specific mention of FP/SRHR or MNH
EAC Integrated Health Programme	Contributes towards the elimination of preventable maternal, newborn, and child deaths; HIV/AIDS; and the improvement of well-being among women, children, adolescents, and families	Focuses on the elimination of preventable maternal, newborn, and child deaths; and the improvement of well-being among women, children, adolescents, and families in the region	No linkage to climate change; gender equality and gender transformation implied
EAC Vision 2050	Articulates the EAC's desired future state and provides structure around which the EAC can concentrate its energies for economic and social development	Centers population dynamics and prioritises FP/SRHR and the advancement of gender equality; includes infant and maternal mortality rates in socioeconomic indicators	Silent about the integration of FP/SRHR, MNH, and health in climate funding initiatives

TABLE 1. (Continued)

Policy Framework	Purpose	Integration of Climate Change, FP/SRHR, Gender, and Related Thematic Areas	Gaps
ECOWAS Vision 2050	Adopts five federating pillars reflecting the desire of citizens to live together, barrier free, in security and good health for the achievement of shared prosperity and with respect for human rights; guides Member States and institutions in all sectors, particularly peace and security, health and good governance, rule of law, economic development, regional trade and free movement, infrastructure, and human and social development	Identifies broad strategies on health, gender, and social inclusion and climate action; considers gender as a cross-cutting issue for climate action and women’s role as integral to achieving its objectives	No specific mention of FP/SRHR or MNH
ECOWAS Regional Climate Strategy and Action Plan (2020-2030)	Creates an aligned and coordinated framework for climate action in the ECOWAS region, considering adaptation and mitigation dimensions aligned with the Paris Agreement 2023 and SDGs	Outlines broad strategies on health sector adaptation to climate change impacts through integration in the NDCs and national health policies	No specific mention of FP/SRHR or MNH
ECOWAS Environmental Action Plan (2020-2026)	Reflects emerging issues and current trends in environmental management, including effectively tackling climate change, conserving the region’s natural capital, and addressing pollution and waste	Mentions population dynamics and gender as linked to the environment, pollution control, conservation, and sustainable management	No clearly articulated linkage to health, including FP/SRHR, gender equality, or gender transformation
SADC Climate Strategy and Action Plan	Builds resilience and climate proofing of all SADC protocols, policies, and strategies; complements the regional Green Economy Strategy and Action Plan	Articulates climate-induced impacts on the region’s health sector; stipulates strategies and actions for advancing preventive health care to reduce vulnerability to climate change and variability in the public health sector	No specific mention of FP/SRHR or MNH; no strategies for advancing gender mainstreaming and gender transformation of adaptation and mitigation strategies
COMESA Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan	Addresses climate change challenges through a comprehensive and regional approach that promotes resilience, reduction of emissions, and sustainable development	Does not articulate any climate change-induced impacts on the health sector	No specific mention of FP/SRHR or MNH; no strategies for advancing gender mainstreaming or transformation of adaptation and mitigation strategies

East African Community Climate Change Framework

The EAC Climate Change Policy Framework provides long-term and medium-term visions for climate change mitigation and adaptation. It guides EAC Partner States and other stakeholders as they prepare and implement collective measures intended to address climate change and assure sustainable social and economic development. The EAC framework is aligned with global frameworks under the UNFCCC, the SDGs, and other continental frameworks and commitments.

At the EAC level, countries have developed various policies and strategies to focus on climate change, population dynamics, and health-related issues.

The EAC Climate Change Policy

The EAC Climate Change Policy (2011) aims to address the adverse impacts of climate change in the region. It was developed in response to growing concerns about the increasing threats of climate change's negative impacts on national and regional development targets and goals. The

policy acknowledges the links between climate change and human health, and identifies key sector challenges:

- Sufficient resources for water, sanitation, and health facilities experiencing rising needs in climate-related disease hotspots.
- Maintenance of water and sanitation standards, which are threatened by the increasing frequency and intensity of floods and droughts.
- Increasing rates of climate-sensitive waterborne and vector-borne diseases and epidemics such as dengue, diarrhoeal disease, and malaria.
- Growing climate change-related health diseases, such as heat stroke, exhaustion, and cramps, brought on by rising temperatures.
- Growing climate change-related health challenges, such as asthma and chronic respiratory illness, brought on by rising temperatures.
- Increasing malnutrition rates from food shortages related to frequent and prolonged droughts and floods.



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- HIV/AIDS epidemic.
- Development of early warning systems for climate change-related disease outbreaks.
- Inadequate emergency preparedness within health systems.

The EAC Policy also commits Partner States to jointly engage in financial resource mobilisation to support climate change activities and establish and operationalise the EAC Climate Change Fund. The policy recognises the gendered implications of climate change and the need to pay attention to them. It states, “Given the differentiated impacts of climate change on women, men, and youth, and the roles of women in addressing climate change, gender considerations have been given adequate attention to integrate gender in the Policy.”⁷

The policy indirectly underpins the linkage between population dynamics and climate change. This connection is evident in some of the arguments in the policy, such as raising emissions from domestic and industrial waste due to rapid population growth rate, high consumption patterns, and increasing industrial activities. Furthermore, sectoral challenges of land use and soil protection include increased population pressure on land, leading to increased land degradation. Yet the policy does not consider family planning among its adaptation, gender integration, or community resilience-building strategies. It also does not reference or provide guidance on SRHR and MNH.

The EAC Climate Change Strategy

The EAC Climate Change Strategy (2011) envisions an East Africa with a prosperous population and climate-proofed, climate-resilient, and disaster-resilient development.⁸ It aims to reduce populations’ vulnerability to climate-sensitive diseases and enhance adaptive capacities within the health services. Some interventions identified for achieving this goal include: Develop effective early warning systems and emergency health measures for climate change-related diseases; provide access to health care services to vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, children, older persons, and others; and promote measures for preventing the spread and mitigating impacts of HIV/AIDS on climate-vulnerable populations.

The strategy emphasises the need for a predictable level of financial resources and their effective allocation. It guides ongoing and planned programmes by EAC Partner States and development partners contributing to implementing its interventions. However, the EAC Strategy is outdated, and while it includes broad strategies on health and sexual health, including for financing, it does not address family planning, SRHR, and MNH, and their interlinkages with climate change. As the strategy expired in 2016, it is overdue for review. The review process would provide an opportunity to integrate emerging issues.

The EAC Climate Change Master Plan

The EAC Climate Change Master Plan 2011-2031 focuses on ensuring that “the People, the Economies, and the Ecosystems of the EAC Partner States are climate resilient and adapt accordingly to climate change.”⁹ It recognises that Partner States have a young and growing population distributed in all eco-regions, including areas vulnerable to extreme climate events such as floods and droughts.

The Master Plan identifies and prioritises the main regional issues vulnerable to climate change among EAC Partner States as human health, sanitation, and settlements. It also recognises gender as an important element in countries’ capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change, explicitly noting that, “In most cases, women, the youth and children make up a large number of the poor in communities that are highly dependent on local natural resources for their livelihood and are disproportionately vulnerable to and affected by climate change. Because of their roles, unequal access to resources and limited mobility, women and girls in many contexts are disproportionately affected by natural disasters, such as floods, fires, and mudslides.”¹⁰ The Master Plan also stipulates the importance of identifying gender-sensitive strategies to respond to the environmental and humanitarian crises caused by climate change.

It gives support to strategies for integrating gender, such as:

- Mainstreaming gender perspectives into climate change efforts at the national, regional, and international levels, including in policies, strategies, action plans, and programmes.
- Ensuring women and other marginalised groups have access to credit.
- Improving skills and market access for vulnerable populations, as well as provision of basic amenities like reliable access to clean water and energy.
- Increasing women’s participation in decision-making and information sharing on climate change at different levels.

The Master Plan highlights potential financing avenues for proposed priority areas and climate activities, including dedicated climate funding from bilateral and multilateral sources; Partner States’ national budgets through mainstreaming climate change risks into the development agenda; private-sector finance and foreign direct investments in areas such as the energy sector; and carbon markets.

Overall, the EAC Climate Change Master Plan provides strong recognition of the impacts of climate change on human health, the roles of population dynamics and gender-sensitive approaches, and the need for financing. However, it makes no specific reference, guidance, or responsive commitments to the health-climate linkages of family planning, SRHR, or MNH.

EAC Integrated Reproductive Maternal Newborn and Adolescent Policy Guidelines

The EAC Integrated Reproductive Maternal Newborn Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) Policy Guidelines (2016-2030) envision, “A healthy, competitive and productive population in the East African Community” and identify population growth rates as a challenge.¹¹ The document presents population dynamics as key to achieving sustainable development: “The opportunity to harness demographic dividend by prioritizing the proactive investment in the population, to achieve economic

growth potential of EAC through the provision of high-quality education and skills development, creating employment opportunities, sustaining the good health of the populations and ensuring there is leadership and good governance.”

For FP/SRHR, the policy guidelines aim to establish and implement harmonised, integrated regional packages of essential RMNCAH services to expand access to quality services equitably in the EAC. They underscore that SRHR includes family planning; maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health; nutrition; immunisation; the reproductive system; cancers; gender-based violence; violence against children; and women, child, and adolescent health in emergencies.

These guidelines are progressive concerning the strengthening of health systems in the EAC to respond to RMNCAH issues. They seek to achieve a strong, efficient, well-run health system that meets priority health needs through universally accessible, people-centered services. They also integrate gender equity, making it a central element and providing direction on the incorporation of financing for several health activities into laws and legislation, from leveraging available financing facilities to support RMNCAH services to adopting enabling laws and regulations to progressively increasing domestic financing for RMNCAH services. Yet, while the policy guidelines recognise climate change’s impacts on public health, they do not stipulate policy interventions for addressing these impacts.

EAC Climate Finance Access and Mobilization Strategy

According to the UNFCCC, the EAC Climate Finance Access and Mobilization Strategy (2022/23-2031/32) is based on a technical assessment of the climate finance needs and priorities of EAC Partner States, as reported in their Nationally Determined Contribution.¹² It recognises population dynamics in climate change matters and notes that “Climate-related crises already affect 2.8% of the population of EAC partner States (4.7 million people), and over 50% of the population depends on pastoralism and other forms of agriculture—that is, on a sector that is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.” The strategy identifies the key principles guiding its design, implementation, and monitoring, and demonstrates inclusiveness by benefiting vulnerable people, being gender-sensitive, and engaging key stakeholders.



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Among the key strategic areas it identifies for responsive collaborative actions are:

- Strengthen technical skills related to climate finance through capacity building at the national and regional levels.
- Enhance capacity and establish mechanisms for developing and implementing mitigation and adaptation projects and development projects with climate change co-benefits at the national and regional levels.
- Enhance enabling environments for mobilising funding and catalysing public and private investment.
- Identify and mobilise effective, innovative, and appropriate additional finance for priority actions.

However, the strategy does not specifically mention family planning, SRHR, or MNCAH, and it provides no guidance on responsive strategies and actions to address issues associated with them.

Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Actions in the EAC Region

Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Action in the EAC Region (2019-2024) is an initiative of the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) Group of States, supported by the Intra-ACP Global Climate Change Alliance+.¹³ Its objective is to increase countries' resilience to climate change's adverse effects and contribute to the EAC region's achievement of SDGs. Its three targets are to:

1. Enhance the EAC region's capacity for climate change.
2. Strengthen the implementation of climate change actions and the Paris Agreement (the international treaty on climate change).
3. Strengthen regional capacity to access climate financing.

The initiative seeks to strengthen the capacity of the regional Climate Change Technical Working Group to implement climate change actions, and review and update the EAC Climate Change Policy and

Strategy. It also supports the development of the EAC Climate Change Bill, along with identification of relevant national best practices, success stories, and lessons on managing climate change. While these aims are strong, it is important to note that while the initiative supports the general achievement of climate actions at the regional level, it makes no specific mention or identification of responsive actions concerning climate change and FP/SRHR or RMNCAH.

EAC Integrated Health Programme

The EAC Integrated Health Programme (EIHP) commenced in April 2017 following approval by the 13th EAC Sectoral Council of Health, which was held in November 2016, and by the 35th EAC Council of Ministers in April 2017.¹⁴ The programme's goal is to contribute towards the elimination of preventable maternal, newborn, and child deaths; AIDS; and the improvement of well-being among women, children, adolescents, and families in the EAC. Its objectives are to:

- Harmonise and integrate SRHR, RMNCAH, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and sexually transmitted infection (STI) service packages, standards, and guidelines.

- Strengthen SRHR, RMNCAH, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and STI research, innovations, and knowledge management.
- Strengthen SRHR, RMNCAH, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and STI leadership, governance, and accountability.
- Strengthen the regional and national health systems towards universal health coverage of SRHR, RMNCAH, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and STI services.

Gender equity is implied but not explicitly addressed. While the programme provides extensively for matters concerning SRHR, MNH, and health in general, it makes no mention of interlinkages with climate change or financing for these activities.

EAC Vision 2050

The EAC Vision 2050 that was rolled out in 2016 lays out a broad perspective in which the region optimises the use of its resources to accelerate productivity and the social well-being of its people. It portrays a future for East Africa with rising personal prosperity in cohesive societies, with competitive economies and strong inter-regional



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Among the increased climate impacts the region is experiencing are persistent drought and extreme weather, rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and ocean acidification.

interaction. It envisions that by 2050, per capita income will increase tenfold to \$10,000, putting the region in the upper-middle-income range.

Vital development concerns identified in the EAC Vision 2050 include persistent poverty; unbalanced distribution of economic and social infrastructure; sub optimal use of natural resources; inadequate exploitation of mineral resources; poor infrastructure that hampers development; increasing unemployment, especially among youth; unplanned urban settings; low investment in research and development; low levels of industrialisation and lack of competitiveness; insufficient energy supplies; and weak accountability.

In addition to these concerns, the region is vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, further threatening food security and efforts to eradicate poverty. For example, among the increased climate impacts the region is experiencing are persistent drought and extreme weather, rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and ocean acidification. In recognition of these impacts, the EAC Vision 2050 calls for implementing regional projects that will facilitate the development of meteorological services to inform decisions that will reduce the impact of weather and climate-related disasters, improve food security and health outcomes, enhance the safety of life and protection of property, and protect the environment and enhance water resources management, among other benefits.

The Vision also provides measures for ensuring climate change adaptation and mitigation. Climate financing is a key component of its priorities, focusing on climate and carbon finance aimed at the mobilisation of financial resources from a variety of existing climate change funds. Since its initiation by the 11th Summit of EAC Heads of State in November 2009, the EAC Climate Change Fund is being operationalised. Thus, through capitalisation the EAC is acting as a Regional Implementing Entity for international climate finance mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund.

In addition, the EAC Vision 2050 discusses East Africa's demographic trends, including population size, population distribution, employment, economically active population, and youth involvement in economic transformation. Under socioeconomic indicators, the Vision references life expectancy, poverty dimension, literacy, and urbanisation, among other indicators. Similarly, it considers the region's fragile health care system, noting that private health care expenditure currently accounts for 62% of the EAC's health care market, with much of the population not covered by health insurance schemes and out-of-pocket payments at private facilities still commonplace.

The Vision includes gender equity as a cross-cutting issue, acknowledging that gender disparities in the region remain severe, particularly in rural areas. Under 3.8.2 on Gender, Women and Youth Empowerment, EAC Vision 2050 notes that, "Women empowerment and gender equality will be mainstreamed to ensure the participation of women in the transformation of the region. The Vision recognizes that no society can reach its full potential unless it empowers women and removes all obstacles to women's full participation in all areas of human endeavours. The region will stress harmonized gender policies and thereby realise gender equality and women's empowerment."¹⁵

The Vision further prioritises women's health, family planning services, and SRHR as means to advance gender equality. It categorically states that the challenges of sexual and reproductive health will be a high priority, as they have implications for human capital. It thus enjoins EAC Partner States to work collaboratively to ensure that health systems provide the necessary information and health services to address women's sexual and reproductive health, including working towards universal access to safe, effective, affordable, and acceptable modern methods of family planning; women's health; and advancement of gender equality.¹⁶

Economic Community of West African States Climate Change Framework

ECOWAS Vision 2050

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Vision 2050 provides guidance for Member Countries' regional development. It envisions "A fully integrated community of peoples, living in a peaceful and prosperous region, with strong institutions and respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms, striving for inclusive and sustainable development," and considers both progress made and challenges to be addressed.¹⁷

It discusses health in general terms, with no specific mention of family planning, MNH, or SRHR. The document does, however, identify gender as a cross-cutting development issue and acknowledges women's participation as among the necessary elements for achieving its overall objective. Pillar 5 of the ECOWAS Vision 2050 focuses on social inclusion, placing the region's citizens—mainly women, children, youth, and all vulnerable people (including people with disabilities and older adults)—at the heart of development and the integration process. In addition, it identifies specific goals to promote social inclusion. Despite the Vision's explicit inclusion of gender, however, it does not include gender-sensitive targets and indicators.

ECOWAS Regional Climate Strategy and Action Plan

The ECOWAS Regional Climate Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2030) envisions a community "resilient to the effects and impacts of climate change" and that has taken advantage of economic opportunities towards long-term, low-carbon, and sustainable development.¹⁸ The strategy contributes towards:

- Achievement of the Paris Agreement's goals on climate change mitigation, adaptation, and finance. The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change, adopted by 195 Parties at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, France, on 12 December 2015. It entered into force on 4 November 2016.¹⁹
- Implementation of the African Union's Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and

Action Plan (2022-2032) (in line with the African Union Agenda 2060).

- Achievement of the ECOWAS Vision 2050.
- Achievement of SDG 13, "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts."
- Realisation of the four priorities of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030), adopted by the Third UN World Conference in 2015: 1) understand disaster risk; 2) strengthen disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk; 3) invest in disaster reduction for resilience; and 4) enhance disaster preparedness for effective response, and "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.²⁰ This framework aims to substantially reduce disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods, and health, and in economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets.

The ECOWAS Regional Climate Strategy and Action Plan provides a framework for the integration of health in climate adaptation actions, describing expected results, actions, and budget allocations (USD 7.45 million). Some funding (approximately USD 3.5 million) is allocated to health and gender mainstreaming. However, the document describes health-climate implications generally, with no specific references to SRHR, sanitation, or air pollution. It also does not identify any actions or strategies to protect or strengthen health systems and SRHR in response to climate change impacts.

The document is silent on gender, which is absent from its objectives, actions, strategies, targets, and indicators. In addition, while the ECOWAS Regional Climate Strategy and Action Plan provides guidance on developing a monitoring framework, it does not stipulate specific targets and associated indicators for the expected result areas, including health.

ECOWAS Environmental Action Plan

The ECOWAS Environmental Action Plan (2020-2026) is based on strategic objectives defined in the ECOWAS Environmental Policy. Operationally, it focuses on:

- "Strengthening environmental governance and developing operational capacity.
- "Promoting sustainable management of resources to improve the sub-regional economy in an environment friendly manner.

- “Fighting against pollution, nuisance, and waste to control the movements of hazardous products within the economy is strengthened.
- “Promoting information, education, and communication for a better environment.”²¹

The plan generally mentions issues of population dynamics and health. However, it makes no explicit mention or inclusion of specific aspects of FP/SRHR in its objectives, outputs, and outcomes, such as maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health; STIs; gender-based and sexual violence; and early marriage and unintended pregnancy.

SADC Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan provides a broad outline for regional and national actors to coordinate actions that respond to the impacts from climate change.²² It aligns with global and continental objectives set by the UNFCCC, the African Union Commission (AUC), and the Regional Development Agenda. The SADC Plan clearly articulates climate-health interlinkages in terms of direct and indirect impacts from climate change on vector-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue, and schistosomiasis. It also recognises the links between climate change, mental health, air pollution, and respiratory health outcomes like asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and acute respiratory infections.

The SADC Plan does not acknowledge the link between climate, SRHR, and related issues such as MNH, voluntary family planning, and STIs. It identifies strategies aimed at protecting or strengthening health systems and SRHR in response to climate change impacts but in general terms.

Whereas the SADC Plan mentions gender, it does not include gender mainstreaming among its guiding principles or identify gender in its objectives, targets, and actions. Its guidance on developing a monitoring framework also does not identify specific targets and indicators for the expected result areas, including health and gender. Among provisions for the integration of health in climate adaptation action, the plan describes expected results, actions, and budget allocations (USD 900,000). However, these efforts are described in general terms, with no specific reference to particular aspects of health, such as SRHR.

COMESA Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan aims to:

- Build Member States’ resilience to the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events, droughts, and floods.
- Align efforts with the goals of sustainable development to improve people’s livelihoods and reduce vulnerability to climate change.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through mitigation measures such as renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Within the plan’s framework, COMESA is pursuing the following climate-related efforts:

- Develop regional initiatives and programmes, such as the Programme on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (2010-2014), to help COMESA Member States invest in climate-resilient agriculture, forestry, land use, and energy practices. These efforts focus on addressing the impacts of climate change through adaptation and mitigation measures while also promoting economic and social resilience.
- Address climate change vulnerabilities through the Regional Resilience Implementation Plan, developed with the involvement of experts from Member States, RECs, and the AUC.
- Reduce reliance on fossil fuels through the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Action Plan, promoting renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, bioenergy, and geothermal energy.

Despite these intentional efforts, the COMESA Plan does not address climate-induced impacts on the health sector or identify specific targets, strategies, or actions for advancing the health sector’s adaption to the impacts of climate change. Furthermore, it makes no explicit mention or inclusion of specific aspects of FP/SRHR in its objectives, outputs, and outcomes levels.

Key Actors Involved in FP/SRHR and Climate Action at the Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Level

Some of the key actors involved in the implementation of responsive actions on health, including FP/SRHR, gender, and climate, at the SSA regional level are identified in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Key Actors in the Sub-Saharan Africa Region With a Role for Advancing Health—Including FP/SRHR—Gender, and Climate Action

Key Actors	Role
Sectoral Council of Ministers for Environment and Natural Resources	Per the EAC Treaty, this council serves as the highest decision-making body on all matters regarding climate change.
Consultative Dialogue Framework (CDF)	The CDF provides an institutionalised social accountability mechanism for civil society organisations, the private sector, and other interest groups at national and regional levels to participate in the development agenda.
Eastern African Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI)	A subregional, nonprofit organisation, the EASSI strengthens women’s, youth, and civil society organisations’ capacity in governance, leadership, economic empowerment, policy advocacy, peace, and security. It promotes partnerships and collective action among national and regional key actors.
East African Civil Society Organizations Forum (EACSOF)	EACSOF provides a platform for the representation of East African civil society organisations with the EAC. It supports strengthening civil society in the EAC Regional Integration Process.
EAC Gender Equality and Development (GED) Barometer	GED Barometer monitors, measures, and documents the progress of gender equality in areas including GBV, SRHR, human rights, and HIV/AIDS.
East African Law Society (EALS)	EALS engages in public interest litigation on human rights issues and brings together lawyers from across East Africa.
East African Health Platform (EAHP)	EAHP is a nongovernmental agency that provides a platform for non-state actors who operate in the health sector and are committed to facilitating and advancing partnerships for better outcomes in the health space, including regional health integration, within the EAC.
Eastern Africa National Networks of AIDS Service Organizations (EANNASO)	EANNASO is a regional network of national networks of civil societies and community-based organisations in Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Southern Sudan, Tanzania (including Zanzibar), and Uganda. It leverages regional and international expertise to empower civil society in effectively contributing to the reduction of new HIV infections, strengthening institutional and programmatic capacities, and promoting shared experience and best practices.
East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC)	An intergovernmental health organisation, the ECSA-HC works with countries and partners to raise health standards for people in ECSA Member States by promoting health services’ efficiency and effectiveness through cooperation, collaboration, research, capacity building, policy development, and advocacy. Member States include Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

TABLE 2. (Continued)

Key Actors	Role
East African Inter-Parliamentary Forum on Population, Health and Development	This forum provides space for Members of Parliament and representatives from committees responsible for population health and development in Partner States' national assemblies, senates, and the general purposes committee of the East African Legislative Assembly to actively support regional initiatives.
East African Community (EAC) Climate Change Technical Working Group on the implementation of the EAC climate finance access and mobilization strategy	This working group provides technical guidance to stakeholders within the EAC on the design and implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation projects and programs.
West Africa Health Organization (WAHO)	WAHO is a regional agency responsible for safeguarding people's health in the subregion; it initiates and harmonises Member States' policies, pools resources, and fosters collective, strategic cooperation to combat health problems in the subregion.
Regional Climate Centre (RCC)	Operationalised by the Centre Régional Agrhythmet (CRA), the RCC aims to strengthen the climate services value chain in Sahelian and West African countries to promote climate-related information and training. It receives funding from the European Union, which enables the CRA to strengthen its position in the climate sector and increase its capacity to intervene, promote its products and services, and develop new tools for the benefit of Sahelian and West African populations.
Climate Commission for the Sahel Region (CCRS)	The CCRS is an interstate organisation that promotes coordination, monitoring, and implementation of initiatives among 17 countries in the Sahel region to respond to climate change. It operates under the support of the African Union.



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Financing for Climate Action

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health-specific climate action remains underfunded, with only around 6% of adaptation funding and 0.5% of multilateral climate financing currently allocated to projects that protect or improve human health.²³

A United Nations Environment Programme report noted that in the current decade, low- and middle-income countries require at least USD 11 billion in funding per year for adaptation to climate and health impacts and to increase their health systems' resilience.²⁴ Table 3 and Table 4 detail climate action projects in SSA funded by key climate finance mechanisms—the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Adaptation Fund, and Global Environment Facility (GEF)—since they began operation. Most projects at the country and regional levels focus on addressing adaptation and mitigation in agriculture, environment, and natural resources (75%), with few addressing challenges in the health and climate sector (25%). Notably, over the years, most of the 20 climate change adaptation and mitigation projects implemented in the SSA region have been funded by the GEF. Furthermore, the GEF financed nearly all of the projects focused on health and climate challenges. The GEF-funded health and climate-focused regional projects include:

- Monitoring of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and Mercury Under the Stockholm and Minamata Conventions in the Africa Region.
- Fortifying Infrastructure for Responsible Extinguishments (FIRE).
- African Facility for Chemicals and Waste Management (AFLDC)-2 Scaling-Up Investment and Technology Transfer to Facilitate Capacity Strengthening and Technical Assistance for the Implementation of Stockholm and Minamata Conventions in African LDCs.
- Knowledge Exchange and Institutional Partnerships to Reduce Environmental Health Risks From Exposure to Harmful Chemicals and Waste.
- Reducing Environmental Health Impacts of Harmful Pollutants in the Africa Region.

As these examples note, health and climate projects tend to focus on issues such as waste and chemical management rather than population dynamics and FP/SRHR. We find a similar trend in the projects

that address mitigation challenges. All of the GEF-funded mitigation projects address challenges in agriculture, environment, and natural resources management. The other two climate finance mechanisms we examined—the GCF and Adaptation Fund—made nearly all of their investments in projects that support climate resilience (both adaptation and mitigation), aligned with agriculture, environment, natural resources, and renewable energy sectors at the country and regional levels (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Rwanda; Niger; Zambia and Malawi; and Ethiopia; East Africa, West Africa, Southern Africa, and Africa).

The GCF and Adaptation Fund financed only two projects that address health and climate adaptation challenges, one in Malawi—Climate Resilient Health and Well-Being for Rural Communities in Southern Malawi (GCF)—and the other in Uganda—Enhancing Community Adaptation to Climate Change through Climate Resilient Flood Early Warning, Catchment Management and WASH Technologies in Mpologoma Catchment, Uganda (Adaptation Fund). For mitigation-related challenges, the GCF funded one project in Kenya and two projects at the Africa regional level.

These findings are in line with earlier reports by the WHO that noted the limited, structured funding allocation and investment for responding to health-specific climate action.²⁵ However, some of the climate change financial mechanisms have since repositioned and now have initiatives for funding climate-health projects. For instance, the GCF, the largest multilateral climate fund, reports that it is uniquely positioned to begin addressing the funding gap through a range of initiatives, including²⁶:

- **Climate change and health vulnerability assessments.** The GCF has invested more than USD 5.2 million to assist 15 countries in assessments that informed the development of their health national adaptation plans.
- **Projects with direct or indirect health co-benefits.** The GCF has invested USD 32.5 million in health sector-specific projects, such as bolstering national health systems' climate resilience and strengthening capacity to manage the health impacts from climate change. It has committed approximately USD 460 million to support non-health sector projects that offer significant health co-benefits, such as electric and active mobility projects that will improve air quality and positively impact respiratory diseases.

- **A multi-stakeholder approach for coherence and complementarity.** Examples of this approach include a project preparation facility that supports 12 countries in their development of long-term health and climate strategies and innovations; and the endorsement of guiding principles for financing climate and health solutions by nearly 50 development banks, multilateral funds, national governments, philanthropies, implementation partners, and private-sector actors, which sets the stage for a multilateral health and climate investment framework.

This initiative by the GCF towards bridging the climate-health funding gap globally is commendable. More still needs to be done to scale up this initiative to benefit SSA countries that are highly vulnerable to climate-induced health impacts and their development of responses that take an intersectional lens, considering population dynamics, health, FP/SRHR, gender, and the environment. Other climate finance mechanisms, such as the Adaptation Fund and GEF, should follow the GCF's lead to support climate-health actions—both adaptation and mitigation—that will advance resilience at different scales. Projects can be aligned to respond to the needs at national and regional levels separately or in an integrated approach.

TABLE 3. Climate Adaptation Projects in Sub-Saharan Africa by Climate Financing Mechanism

Country	No. of Adaptation Projects: Agriculture, Environment, Natural Resources			No. of Adaptation Projects: Health and Climate		
	Green Climate Fund	Adaptation Fund	Global Environment Facility	Green Climate Fund	Adaptation Fund	Global Environment Facility
Ethiopia	1	1	27	0	0	3
Kenya	2	1	41	0	0	1
Malawi	1	1	27	1	0	1
Niger	0	1	25	0	0	1
Rwanda	1	1	13	0	0	5
Tanzania	3	5	32	0	0	3
Uganda	1	1	25	0	1	4
Zambia	1	0	19	0	0	1
Region	No. of Adaptation Projects: Agriculture, Environment, Natural Resources)			No. of Adaptation Projects: Health and Climate		
Africa	4	0	14	0	0	5
East Africa	1	4	0	0	0	0
Southern Africa	0	2	1	0	0	0
West Africa	1	3	0	0	0	0

Sources: Adaptation Fund, [Projects Table View](#), accessed Nov. 25, 2025; Global Environment Facility, [Project Database](#), n.d., accessed on Nov. 25, 2025; and Green Climate Fund, [Project Portfolio](#), n.d., accessed Nov. 25, 2025.

Note: These data reflect all projects within the database of the respective climate finance mechanism for adaptation and mitigation projects (past and present) funded and implemented at country and regional levels since each mechanism began operation.

TABLE 4. Climate Mitigation Projects in Sub-Saharan Africa by Climate Financing Mechanism

Country	No. of Mitigation Projects: Agriculture, Environment, Natural Resources			No. of Mitigation Projects: Health and Climate		
	Green Climate Fund	Adaptation Fund	Global Environment Facility	Green Climate Fund	Adaptation Fund	Global Environment Facility
Ethiopia	0	N/A	13	0	N/A	1
Kenya	0	N/A	11	1	N/A	3
Malawi	0	N/A	6	0	N/A	1
Niger	0	N/A	9	0	N/A	0
Rwanda	0	N/A	10	0	N/A	2
Tanzania	0	N/A	18	0	N/A	2
Uganda	1	N/A	16	0	N/A	1
Zambia	1	N/A	11	0	N/A	2
Region	No. of Mitigation Projects: Agriculture, Environment, Natural Resources			No. of Mitigation Projects: Health and Climate		
Africa	7	N/A	3	2	N/A	0
East Africa	1	N/A	0	0	N/A	0
Southern Africa	0	N/A	0	0	N/A	0
West Africa	0	N/A	0	0	N/A	0

Sources: Adaptation Fund, [Projects Table View](#), accessed Nov. 25, 2025; Global Environment Facility, [Project Database](#), n.d., accessed on Nov. 25, 2025; and Green Climate Fund, [Project Portfolio](#), n.d., accessed Nov. 25, 2025.

Note: These data reflect all projects within the database of the respective climate finance mechanisms for adaptation and mitigation projects (past and present) funded and implemented at country and regional levels since each mechanism began operation.

Key Issues in Gender and Health Integration in Climate Action at the Sub-Saharan Africa Level

While the strategies and policies we reviewed acknowledge health impacts from climate change, too few of them specifically recognise specific linkages to health and gender, such as FP/SRHR and MNH. This recognition—and the frameworks and financial allocations to act—must be strengthened. We found the following key gaps in the integration of gender and health, particularly FP/SRHR, in climate action policy frameworks at the SSA regional level (the EAC, ECOWAS, SADC, and COMESA):

- No consideration of FP/SRHR as a gender-responsive adaptation or resilience-building strategy in existing policies and legal and institutional frameworks guiding climate action.
- Inadequate financing for and investment in climate-responsive actions in the health sector, specifically the integration of gender and health by the selected SSA countries we examined.
- Insufficient knowledge and skills among regional policymakers and other decisionmakers to fully understand the interconnections between gender and health, particularly FP/SRHR, and climate change and the importance of their mainstreaming in climate action.
- Inadequate data and information on climate change’s impacts on gender and health, and the implementation of responsive actions for addressing intersectional issues of gender, health, and climate change, particularly those related to FP/SRHR.
- Weak coordination among actors and stakeholders responsible for addressing

interconnected issues concerning population dynamics, development, agriculture, environment, natural resources management, and climate action across programmes implemented at national and local levels.

- Religious and cultural beliefs across SSA that are indifferent to FP/SRHR planning services.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Our review of the policy frameworks and strategies of SSA regional bodies—the EAC, ECOWAS, SADC, and COMESA—revealed their increasing awareness of the need to strengthen the enabling environment for addressing the impacts of climate change and improving the resilience of vulnerable communities, as well as the importance of aligning these measures with continental and global frameworks under the UNFCCC and SDGs. Some climate change policies recognise the gendered impacts of climate change on human health and the need for adequate responses, including resource mobilisation. However, they all can be improved to more directly acknowledge, integrate, and monitor FP/SRHR and MNH.

The significant deficiencies we identified in integrating health, family planning, reproductive health, and gender in SSA climate change frameworks are often due to silos in policy implementation, which hinders the region's ability to effectively address interconnected challenges

and emerging issues. Moreover, inadequate mechanisms for linkages and coordination between stakeholders on climate change, gender, health, and FP/SRHR have resulted in overlaps and inefficiency in the design and implementation of responsive programmes and projects at national and regional levels. There remains limited progress on integrating all of these areas into policies and strategies through planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring processes.

The funding landscape for implementing climate action in the SSA region also has glaring gaps, with less investment in climate-health actions (both adaptation and mitigation) and integration of gender and family planning than in agriculture, environment, natural resources, and renewable energy.

The long-term and medium-term plans both for the SSA regional bodies and their Member or Partner States are generally comprehensive but can better address the interconnectedness of climate change, health, FP/SRHR, MNH, and gender equality. More deliberate, proactive integration of FP/SRHR in policies and frameworks for climate change are needed to support the creation of holistic, regional policies that address climate change's diverse impacts on population dynamics and reproductive health. This integration should be supported by institutional arrangements and multisectoral collaboration to collectively integrate gender and health, particularly FP/SRHR, into existing climate policies, frameworks, and strategies. Decisionmakers should invest in building institutional collaboration for capacity development and to access financing mechanisms. We provide recommendations and actions for these improvements in Table 5.

The long-term and medium-term plans both for the SSA regional bodies and their Member or Partner States are generally comprehensive but can better address the interconnectedness of climate change, health, FP/SRHR, MNH, and gender equality

TABLE 5. Recommendations and Actions for Addressing Emerging Issues on Gender, Health, and FP/SRHR in Climate Action in the Sub-Saharan Africa Region

KEY EMERGING ISSUES	RESPONSIVE POLICY/PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS	KEY ACTIONS	SELECTED KEY ACTORS RESPONSIBLE
<p>No consideration of FP/SRHR as a gender-responsive adaptation or resilience-building strategy in existing policies and legal and institutional frameworks guiding regional climate action</p>	<p>Pursue structured engagements with policymakers and other decisionmakers at the regional level about this issue and its implications for population health and resilience, and make recommendations</p>	<p>Highlight the issue's implications and responsive recommendations in a policy brief</p> <p>Conduct issue-based policy dialogues targeting key SSA regional bodies' policymakers and other decisionmakers</p> <p>Participate in ongoing and emerging policy formulation, review, and implementation in the region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional civil society organisations (CSOs), nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), and SSA regional bodies responsible for climate action UN Agencies Development partners
<p>Inadequate financing for and investment in climate-responsive actions in the health sector, specifically the integration of gender and health</p>	<p>Increase fund allocations and access to financial resources to facilitate the implementation of responsive actions that address the interconnections between FP/SRHR, gender, and climate action in the region</p>	<p>Develop joint and integrated programmes that target existing global climate finance mechanisms and other bilateral development partners for funding</p> <p>Climate finance mechanisms should prioritise funding for health-climate action projects at the national and SSA regional levels, particularly to address issues at the nexus of gender, health, FP/SRHR, and climate change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSA regional bodies responsible for climate action Focal institutions responsible for climate finance mobilisation within regional bodies and Member States CSOs and NGOs operating in the region Climate finance mechanisms such as the GCF, Adaptation Fund, and GEF Development partners

TABLE 5. (Continued)

KEY EMERGING ISSUES	RESPONSIVE POLICY/PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS	KEY ACTIONS	SELECTED KEY ACTORS RESPONSIBLE
<p>Insufficient knowledge and skills among regional policymakers and other decisionmakers to fully understand the interconnections between gender and health, particularly FP/SRHR, and climate change and the importance of their mainstreaming in climate action</p>	<p>Pursue structured engagements with key actors and stakeholders at the regional level to advance appreciation for the linkages between gender, health, and climate</p>	<p>Create more targeted stakeholder awareness about the linkages between gender and health—particularly FP/SRHR—and climate action</p> <p>Allocate funding for gender, health, and FP/SRHR champions to participate in climate policy meetings</p> <p>Conduct issue-based policy dialogues through multi-stakeholder engagement platforms to facilitate joint discussions and collaborative planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional and national CSOs and networks • International NGOs • UN Agencies • Climate finance mechanisms • Development partners
<p>Inadequate data and information on climate change’s impacts on gender and health, and the implementation of responsive actions for addressing their interlinkages with climate change, particularly those related to FP/SRHR</p>	<p>Conduct issue-based research that contributes to the evidence base that will inform responsive, integrated climate actions at the regional level</p>	<p>Update SSA’s regional research priorities and agenda concerning the interlinkages of gender, health, FP/SRHR, and climate</p> <p>Develop and implement multisectoral and multi-actor research projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant research and development institutions • CSOs and NGOs • UN Agencies • SSA regional bodies responsible for climate action • Academia
<p>Weak coordination among regional actors and stakeholders responsible for addressing interconnected issues concerning population dynamics, development, agriculture, environment, natural resources management, and climate action</p>	<p>Streamline and strengthen coordination among key actors and stakeholders at the regional level</p>	<p>Establish and strengthen mechanisms for coordination among key actors and stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSA regional bodies responsible for climate action • Focal institutions responsible for climate finance mobilisation within the regional bodies and Member States • CSOs and NGOs operating in the SSA region • Development partners
<p>Religious and cultural beliefs across SSA that are indifferent to FP/SRHR planning services</p>	<p>Pursue structured engagements with religious, cultural, and community leaders to shift norms and beliefs about FP/SRHR</p>	<p>Conduct targeted, issue-based awareness on gender and health—particularly FP/SRHR—for mindset change among religious and cultural leaders and facilitation of responsive actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSA regional bodies • Regional and national CSOs and NGOs • Inter-religious councils • Religious and cultural leaders

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Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the generous funding of the Population Institute and Panorama Global.

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