

TWENTY-FIRST AFRICAN CONTINENTAL CLIMATE OUTLOOK FORUM (ACCOF-21) AND CONTINENTAL WORKING GROUP WORKSHOP:

*“Preparing Africa for El Niño 2026/2027:
Strengthening Readiness to Anticipate and Manage Climate Shocks”*

Date: 15 to 19 June 2026

Location: Lusaka, Zambia

I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Africa is increasingly exposed to climate variability and extreme weather driven by global systems like El Niño. The 2015-2016 event, among the strongest recorded, left over 50 million people food insecure as drought devastated Southern Africa and floods struck the East. Agriculture collapsed, livestock perished, and ripple effects spread across health, water, sanitation, and education (*ref. FAO special Alert 2015, 2012; World Bank, Apr 2018*).

The 2023-2024 El Niño, though weaker, revealed new vulnerabilities. Severe droughts and erratic rainfall hit West and Southern Africa, deepening food insecurity, while East Africa endured alternating dry spells and floods. Coastal regions faced record sea level anomalies, storm surges, erosion, and saltwater intrusion that threatened communities and infrastructure. This episode also fuelled global heat, making 2024 the hottest year on record.

Together, these events underscore a new reality: El Niño now compounds the impacts of climate change, amplifying both land and ocean hazards. Africa faces repeated shocks to food systems, water resources, and livelihoods, alongside rising risks from global ocean warming (in particular Indian, Atlantic and Antarctic Ocean) and coastal flooding.

Global Forecasting Centres project a strong El Niño in late 2026, with peak intensity expected between October and December. Africa's Regional Climate Centres (RCCs) discussed the forecast of the event during a webinar session mid-May 2026. While each episode is unique, Africa must urgently strengthen preparedness and mitigate impacts, especially across climate-sensitive sectors and among vulnerable groups such as children, women, and persons with disabilities. As widely noted, ***"The question is no longer whether El Niño will occur, but what actions must be taken to reduce its impacts."***

RCCs are central to generating, interpreting, and disseminating climate information. Over the past four years, collaboration among RCCs has deepened, with more structured engagement of governments, disaster managers, agriculture and water stakeholders, health institutions, media, humanitarian actors, and local communities. Yet, sectoral working groups, critical to anchoring User Interface Platforms (UIPs), remain not well constituted. Their establishment, strongly recommended by the African Union Commission (AUC) at the 6th STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment, is a priority to ensure ACCOF products translate into actionable, sector-specific services.

In this context, ACMAD, as WMO's designated continental RCC, together with the AUC through the ClimSA Programme and other RCCs, will convene the **21st African Continental Climate Outlook Forum (ACCOF-21) alongside the continental working group and UIP workshops from 15-19 June 2026 in Lusaka, Zambia.**

This forum will unite RCCs and key stakeholders to assess the projected El Niño impacts, harmonize regional outlooks, share lessons, and co-develop actionable climate services and early warnings tailored to vulnerable communities. It will also advance the formal establishment of Continental User Working Groups, ensuring synergy between AUC, RCCs, RECs, sectoral institutions, and user communities.

II. OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

The overall objective of the forum is to strengthen continental coordination, climate service delivery, and user preparedness for the anticipated 2026 El Niño event.

The specific objectives are to:

- Present and discuss the latest forecasts and projected impacts, building on lessons learned from past episodes.
- Facilitate dialogue between climate information producers and users across priority socio-economic sectors.
- Enhance user capacity for preparedness and early action for 2026 ENSO.
- Advance the formal establishment of Continental Working Groups, including governance, membership, and Terms of Reference.
- Define guidelines for producing Continental Sectoral Climate Bulletins.
- Initiate drafting of a Continental White Paper on Climate Services for Priority Sectors, consolidating lessons and institutional frameworks.

- Develop recommendations for coordinated communication and climate service delivery during the El Niño period.

III. EXPECTED RESULTS

The expected results of the Forum include:

- Shared forecasts and potential impacts of the 2026 El Niño across Africa.
- Enhanced collaboration among RCCs and alignment of continental climate service delivery.
- Structured dialogue between climate information providers (RCCs) and socioeconomic sectors (RECs) to improve preparedness.
- Improved user ability to interpret and apply seasonal forecasts for early action.
- Formal establishment of Continental Working Groups with agreed governance and Terms of Reference.
- Guidelines for Continental Sectoral Climate Bulletins and coordinated messaging during Extreme events.
- Drafting of a Continental White Paper on Climate Services for Priority Sectors.
- Identification of region-specific risks, priorities, and opportunities for tailored early warning.
- A harmonized approach to transforming seasonal outlooks into sector specific advisories and early warnings.

IV. PARTICIPATION

Participants for the upcoming ACCOF-21, Continental Working Group workshops in Lusaka will include:

- **African Regional Climate Centres (RCCs):** RCC Africa (ACMAD), RCC ECOWAS (AGRHYMET), RCC ECCAS (CAPC-AC), RCC IGAD (ICPAC), RCC SADC (SADC-CSC), Northern Africa RCC-Network, SWIO RCC-Network
- **African Regional Economic Communities:** SADC, ECOWAS, ECCAS, IGAD, IOC, UMA.
- **African Union Commission (AUC) Institutions**
- **World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Representative;** and
- **Regional Stakeholders and Representatives from organizations including:** (ANBO, ABN, NBI, PAFO, Africa CDC (online), ECOWAS, ECCAS, SADC & IGAD Situation Rooms, ARC, MSF (online), AUB, IFRC, GWP, GNDR, Clim-Health Africa, Save the Children, CILSS, Anticipatory Action (East & Southern Africa, West & Central Africa)

V. WORKSHOP FORMAT

The workshop (ACCOF-21 and Continental Working Group session) will be conducted in **hybrid Format** (in-person and online) from 15–19 June 2026 in Lusaka, Zambia.

The forum will feature a series of sessions as follows:

- From 15 to 17 June: Technical Session** - Analysis of global, continental, and subregional climate forecast of the anticipated El Niño.
- From 18 to 19 June: User Engagement Session** - an interactive dialogue between RCCs and partner organizations to prepare for the ENSO 2026. Formal establishment of Continental Working Groups and strengthen synergy among RCCs, RECs, AUC institutions, and user communities

VI. DATE AND VENUE

The 21st African Continental Climate Outlook Forum (ACCOF21), including the Continental Working Group workshop, will take place in **hybrid format** from **15-19 June 2026** in **Lusaka, Zambia**, hosted by the **Zambia Meteorological Department**.

VII. ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENT

The organization will be coordinated by the **African Union Commission (AUC)** through the **ClimSA project** and **ACMAD as co-organisers**, with the support of the Zambia Meteorological Department as the host institution.

VIII. Proposed Agenda

ACCOF-21: Technical Session - Analysis of global, continental, and subregional climate variability, with review and discussion of forecast outputs in the context of the anticipated El Niño.

Time (CAT)	Session Title / Activities	Presenter / Facilitator	Moderator/Chair
DAY 1 Monday, 15 June 2026			
ACCOF-21 Opening and Climate Situation Assessment <i>(Common understanding of climate drivers and anticipated El Niño conditions)</i>			
08:30 – 09:00	<i>Registration of participants and virtual meeting connection logistics</i>		AUC Logistic Team
09:00 – 09:30	<i>Official Opening Ceremony and Welcome Remarks</i>	<p>-Dir. of Zambia Met: <i>Mr. Edson Nkonde</i></p> <p>-WMO: <i>Dr. Agnes Kijagi</i></p> <p>-ACMAD: <i>Dr. Ousmane Ndiaye, DG</i></p> <p>-AUC: <i>Mr. Harsen Nyambe Nyambe, SEBE</i></p> <p>-Host of Honor: <i>Dr. Douty Chibamba Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment of Zambia</i></p>	ACMAD/AUC Communication Team
09:30 – 10:00	<i>Overview of Workshop Objectives, Expected Outputs, and Agenda</i>	ACMAD/AUC	
Group Photo & Coffee Break 10:00 – 10:30			
Session 1: Global / Africa Climate Drivers & ENSO Status and Teleconnections/interactions			
10:30 – 11:30	Keynote Address: <i>What is ENSO? What is ENSO's current state and forecast evolution? What are the expected 2026 El Niño development scenarios?</i>	ACMAD	
11:30 – 12:30	<p><i>Regional Climate Drivers and ENSO Impacts in Africa</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>ENSO Teleconnections: What does ENSO mean for different regions and seasons?</i> <i>Other regional drivers and how they interact with El Niño</i> 	Northern Africa RCC-Network, RCC ECOWAS (AGRHMET), RCC ECCAS (CAPC-AC),	Chair: AUC Rapporteur: ACMAD

12:30 – 13:00	Questions / Discussion	All Participants	
Lunch Break 13:00 – 14:00			
Session 1: (Cont'd)			
14:00 – 15:30	<p><i>Regional Climate Drivers and ENSO Impacts in Africa</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ENSO Teleconnections: What does ENSO mean for different regions and seasons?</i> • <i>Other regional drivers and how they interact with El Nino</i> 	RCC IGAD (ICPAC), RCC SADC (SADC-CSC), SWIO RCC-Network	Chair: AUC Rapporteur: ACMAD
Coffee Break 15:30 – 16:00			
Session 2: Extreme Event Preparedness and Anticipatory Action			
16:00 – 17:15	<i>RECs experiences sharing from Past El Nino Event/Extreme event in Africa and Subregions: lessons learned and good practices</i>	AUC, RECs (UMA, ECCAS, SADC, ECOWAS, IOC, IGAD)	Chair: ACMAD Rapporteur: SADC-CSC
17:15 – 17:30	<i>Day 1 Wrap-up</i>	All Participants	
DAY 2 Tuesday, 16 June 2026			
Harmonization and Drafting of Continental Outlook			
<i>(Draft ACCOF-21 Continental Climate Outlook Statement, key warning messages, identified climate-risk hotspots)</i>			
Session 3: Analysis of the Current State of continental, and sub-regional climate variability, as well the Review and Discussion of the forecast output			
09:00 – 09:30	<i>Recap of Day 01</i>	ACMAD	
09:30 – 10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Impacts of ENSO 2026 over subregions: West Africa and Sahel; Central Africa; Northern Africa, Emerging vulnerability hotspots</i> 	Northern Africa RCC-Network, RCC ECOWAS (AGRHYMET), RCC ECCAS (CAPC-AC),	Chair: Pr Matazu (ECOWAS)
Coffee Break 10:30 – 11:00			
11:00 – 12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Impacts of ENSO 2026 over subregions: Eastern Africa; Southern Africa; South-West Indian Ocean Region, Emerging vulnerability hotspots</i> 	RCC IGAD (ICPAC), RCC SADC (SADC-CSC), SWIO RCC-Network	Chair: Pr Matazu (ECOWAS)

12:30 – 13:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the recent Season and Expected Outlook with the looming El Nino in background over Africa: Harmonization of Regional Forecasts into Continental Outlook Discussion 	ACMAD, All RCCs	
Lunch Break 13:00 – 14:00			
14:00 – 15:30	Draft of the Continental Outlook Statement and expected hazards	All RCCs	Chair: ACMAD
Coffee Break 15:30 – 16:00			
16:00 – 16:30	Draft of Brief for Policy and Decision Makers (Format and Content)	All RCCs	Chair: ACMAD
16:30 – 17:00	Wrap-up of Day 02	All RCCs	
DAY 3 Wednesday, 17 June 2026			
Preparation review of the Continental Working Groups Foundational Documents			
09:00 – 09:20	Recap of Day 02	CAPC-AC	Chair: AUC Rapporteur: UMA
09:20 – 10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keynote Presentation / Defining the Climate-Sector-based Continental Working Groups: what is it? What is the current implementation status? Priority Sectors; Membership; Roles and responsibilities; Governance arrangements Discussions 	AUC	
Coffee Break 10:30 – 11:00			
11:00 – 11:15	Plenary Presentation of the Draft Working groups ToRs	ACMAD/AUC	Chair: AUC Rapporteur: IGAD
11:15 – 11:45	Technical group sessions: Review or development of sectorial working groups ToRs	All	
11:45 – 12:00	Plenary presentation of inputs of ToRs (5min for each group)	Group Rapporteur	
12:00 – 12:15	Plenary: Presentation of the Draft Working groups Road Map	ACMAD/AUC	
12:15 – 12:45	Technical group sessions: Review or development of sectorial working groups Road Map	All	
12:45 – 13:00	Plenary presentation of inputs of Road Map (5min for each group)	Group Rapporteur	

Lunch Break | 13:00 – 14:00

14:00 – 14:30	Validation of harmonized Draft ToRs and Road Map for the Continental Working Group	All	
14:30 – 14:45	Plenary Presentation of the Draft Continental Sectoral climate bulletins Framework: <i>Objectives; Content; Production arrangement; dissemination strategy and feedback mechanism</i>	ACMAD/AUC	
14:45 – 15:15	Technical group sessions: Review or development of the Draft Continental Sectoral climate bulletins Framework: <i>Objectives; Content; Production arrangement; dissemination strategy and feedback mechanism</i>	All	Chair: AUC Rapporteur: ECCAS
15:15 – 15:30	Plenary presentation of inputs of the Draft Continental Sectoral climate bulletins Framework (5min for each group)	Group Rapporteur	
Coffee Break 15:30 – 16:00			
16:00 – 16:15	Plenary Presentation of the Draft Continental White Paper on Climate Information for Decision-Making in Africa: <i>Objectives; Content;</i>	Pr Matazu	Chair: AUC Rapporteur: ECCAS
16:15 – 16:45	Technical group sessions: Review or development of the Draft Continental White Paper on Climate Information for Decision-Making in Africa: <i>Objectives; Content</i>	All	
16:45 – 17:00	Plenary presentation of inputs of the Draft Continental White Paper on Climate Information for Decision-Making in Africa (5min for each group)	Group Rapporteur	
16:30 – 17:00	Closing Remarks ACCOF-21 Technical Session	ACMAD, AUC	AUC

ACCOF-21: User Engagement and Continental Working Group Session - an interactive dialogue with RCCs and partner organizations to refine needs, challenges, and opportunities for coproduction of climate products and services. Presentation of the Continental Climate Outlook Statement for the coming season, followed by direct engagement with stakeholders. Formal establishment of Continental Working Groups and strengthen synergy among RCCs, RECs, AUC institutions, and user communities

Time (CAT)	Session Title	Presenter / Facilitator	Moderator/Chair
DAY 4 Thursday, 18 June 2026 : Co-production of Climate Services for El Niño Preparedness			
08:30 – 09:00	<i>Registration of participants and virtual meeting connection logistics</i>		AUC
09:00 – 09:30	<i>Official Opening Ceremony and Welcome Remarks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dir. of Zambia Met: <i>Mr. Edson Nkonde</i> - WMO: <i>Dr. Agnes Kijagi</i> - ACMAD: <i>Dr. Ousmane Ndiaye, DG</i> - AUC: <i>Mr. Harsen Nyambe Nyambe, SEBE</i> - Host of Honor: <i>Dr. Douty Chibamba Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment of Zambia</i> 	Chair: Host Country Rapporteur: AUC
09:30 – 9:50	<i>Overview of Workshop Objectives, Expected Outputs, and Agenda</i>		AUC
09:50 – 10:30	<p>Keynote: The Looming El Niño 2026/2027 – Risks & Preparedness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Overview on ENSO and implications</i> • <i>Reflections from past El Niño episodes (2015-16, 2023-24)</i> 		ACMAD
Group Photo & Coffee Break 10:30 – 11:00			
Thematic Block 1: Sectoral Perspectives on Climate Risks			
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Parallel sessions - Sectoral Working: Each sector to discuss emerging vulnerabilities, priorities, and lessons learned from past El Niño episodes</i>	<p>Agriculture & Food Security</p> <p>Disaster Risk Reduction / Humanitarian</p> <p>Health</p> <p>Water Resources</p> <p>Media</p>	Chair: SADC Rapporteur: CILSS (AA)

11:30 – 13:00	Launch of State of Climate in Africa 2025 (Separate detailed agenda will be provided)	WMO, AUC, ACMAD	
Lunch Break 13:00 – 14:00			
Thematic Block 2: Impact-Based Forecasting, Early Warning, Policy Brief Development			
14:00 – 14:15	Plenary Presentation of the Continental Outlook Statement and expected hazards for July to October 2026	ACMAD	
14:15 – 15:15	Parallel sessions - Sectorial Working: Each group to discuss on implications and recommendations upcoming perspectives; Identification of region-specific risks and anticipatory actions; - potential socio-economic impact	Agriculture & Food Security Disaster Risk Reduction / Humanitarian Health Water Resources Media	Chair: ACMAD Rap.: IGAD (AA)
15:15 – 15:45	Plenary presentation of inputs of the Continental Outlook Statement (5min for each group)	Groups Rapporteur	
15:45 – 16:00	Plenary Presentation of the Draft of Brief for Policy and Decision Makers	ACMAD/AUC	
Coffee Break 16:00 – 16:15			
16:15 – 16:45	Parallel sessions - Sectorial Working: Each group to discuss and review the draft policy brief content and structure	Agriculture & Food Security Disaster Risk Reduction / Humanitarian Health Water Resources Media	Chair: AUC Rap.: Green Aid
16:45 – 17:00	Plenary presentation of inputs on the Brief for Policy and Decision Makers (5min for each group)	Groups Rapporteur	
17:00 – 17:15	Day 4 Wrap-up	NECJOGHA	
DAY 5 Friday, 19 June 2026: Action Planning and Continental Outlook Statement			
09:00– 09:15	Recap of Day 4	AUC	

Thematic Block 3: User Interface Platforms (UIP) and Working Groups

09:15 – 10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keynote Presentation / <i>Defining the Climate-Sector-based Continental Working Groups: what is it? What is the current implementation status? Priority Sectors; Membership; Roles and responsibilities; Governance arrangements</i> • <i>Case Study of AWGDRR (African Working Group for DRR)</i> 	AUC / UMA	
Coffee Break 10:30 – 11:00			
11:00 – 11:15	Plenary Presentation of the Draft Working groups ToRs and Road Map	AUC	Chair: ECCAS Rap.: GNDR
11:15 – 11:45	Technical group sessions: <i>Review or development of sectorial working groups ToRs and Map</i>	Agriculture & Food Security Disaster Risk Reduction / Humanitarian Health Water Resources Media	
11:45 – 12:00	<i>Plenary presentation of inputs of ToRs and Road Map (5min for each group)</i>	Groups Rapporteur	
12:00 – 12:15	Plenary Presentation of the Draft Continental Sectoral climate bulletins Framework: <i>Objectives; Content; Production arrangement; dissemination strategy and feedback mechanism</i>	AUC/ACMAD	Chair: ACMAD Rap: AGRHYMET
12:15 – 12:45	Technical group sessions: <i>Review or development of the Draft Continental Sectoral climate bulletins Framework: Objectives; Content; Production arrangement; dissemination strategy and feedback mechanism</i>	Agriculture & Food Security Disaster Risk Reduction / Humanitarian Health Water Resources Media	
12:45 – 13:00	<i>Plenary presentation of inputs of the Draft Continental Sectoral climate bulletins Framework (5min for each group)</i>	Groups Rapporteur	
Lunch Break 13:00 – 14:00			
Thematic Block 4: Continental Working Group establishment, Continental Climate Outlook Statement			

14:00 – 14:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validation of harmonized Draft ToRs and Road Map for the Continental Working Group • Presentation of Draft White Paper on Climate Information for Decision-Making in Africa 	AUC Pr Matazu	Chair: AUC Rap.: ACMAD
14:30 – 15:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation and Adoption of the Continental Climate Outlook Statement • Consolidated recommendations for El Nino preparedness and resilience 	AUC, ACMAD, All	
15:30 – 16:00	<p>Closing Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing statements • Media interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dir. of Zambia Met: Mr. Edson Nkonde - WMO Rep: Dr Agnes Kijagi - ACMAD: Dr Ousmane Ndiaye, DG - AUC: Mr. Harsen Nyambe Nyambe, SEBE - Host of Honor: Dr. Douty Chibamba Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment of Zambia 	AUC/Zambia Met