
INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION, ZAMBIA, AND ACMAD CONVENE CONTINENTAL DIALOGUE TO STRENGTHEN AFRICA'S PREPAREDNESS FOR EL NIÑO 2026/2027 THROUGH ENHANCED AND TIMELY WEATHER AND CLIMATE SERVICES



Lusaka, 15 June 2026. The African Union Commission (AUC), in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Zambia, through the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment, and the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) today officially opened the Twenty-First African Continental Climate Outlook Forum (ACCOF-21), alongside with the Continental Dialogue on Climate-Sector Nexus, under the theme: *"Preparing Africa for El Niño 2026/2027: Strengthening Readiness to Anticipate and Manage Climate Shocks."*

Message from Mr. Ranford Simumbwe, Representing the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment from the Republic of Zambia.

"Africa continues facing severe climate challenges placing the need of climate information as an essential resource for sustainable development. However, climate information only creates value when it is translated into action. Today, we must take early action to protect Africa and our people. This meeting comes at an opportune time, because it will provide Zambia and regional experts with a unique opportunity to strengthen collaboration, share scientific knowledge, harmonize climate outlooks, establish working modalities for the continental climate-sector working groups, and strengthen the continental user interface platforms that connect the producers of climate information with those who use it."

The Dialogue brings together the Regional Economic Communities, African Regional Climate Centres, National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs), climate experts, disaster management institutions, humanitarian actors, sector representatives, and the media to strengthen Africa's collective preparedness for the anticipated El Niño event expected from 2026. The Dialogue is being facilitated through the African Union's Climate Services (ClimSA) Programme with financial support from the European Union. The objective of the Dialogue is to strengthen continental coordination, climate service delivery, and preparedness for the anticipated 2026 El Niño event.

Message from Dr. Ousmane Ndiaye, Director General of the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD).

"With the looming El Niño 2026/2027 and its potential impacts across Africa, we cannot afford to wait before acting. ACCOF-21 provides a critical platform to strengthen preparedness, enhance early warning systems, and translate climate information into timely action. Together, we aim to anticipate risks, protect lives and livelihoods, and build resilience across the continent. ACMAD remains committed to working closely with the African Union Commission, Regional Climate Centres, governments, humanitarian partners, and development actors to ensure that communities receive timely and actionable climate services, leaving no one behind."

Delivering opening remarks, the AUC emphasized the need for Africa to anticipate and prepare in a timely manner for climate shocks, rather than just react to them. The focus must now shift towards anticipation, preparedness, and early and coordinated action to protect lives, livelihoods, economies, and critical infrastructure.

Harsen Nyambe Nyambe, Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy Director message on behalf of the Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, at the African Union Commission.

"As we gather for the Twenty- First African Continental Climate Outlook Forum (ACCOF-21), we do so with a shared commitment to prepare Africa for the anticipated El Niño 2026/2027 event. Climate shocks do not respect borders, sectors, or communities. Our response must therefore be collective, coordinated, and proactive. This gathering provides an opportunity to transform climate information into early action, strengthen preparedness across critical sectors, and ensure that timely forecasts translate into decisions that protect lives, livelihoods, and sustainable development. Together, we are building a more climate-resilient Africa one that anticipates risks, acts early, and leaves no community behind."

Recent El Niño events have demonstrated the significant impacts climate shocks can have across the continent. Droughts, floods, food insecurity, water shortages, disease outbreaks, and disruptions to energy systems continue to affect millions of Africans. Vulnerable communities, particularly women, children, smallholder farmers, pastoralists, and coastal populations, often bear the greatest burden.

The Lusaka meeting is expected to deliver practical outcomes to help member states better prepare for anticipated climate impacts. Such outcomes include the development of coordinated continental climate outlooks, strengthened collaboration between climate information providers and sector users, improved early warning communication, and enhanced preparedness planning in key priority sectors such as agriculture, food security, water, health, disaster risk reduction, and humanitarian response.

Messages from Dr. Agnes Kijazi, Director, WMO Regional Office for Africa.

“The increasing likelihood of El Niño conditions extending into 2026–2027 underscores the urgent need for Africa to strengthen preparedness, anticipatory action, and climate-informed decision-making. Through the African Continental Climate Outlook Forum, countries are working together to translate climate science into practical early warning services that protect lives, livelihoods, and economies. WMO remains committed to supporting the African Union Commission, Regional Climate Centres, and National Meteorological and Hydrological Services in delivering accurate, accessible, and actionable climate information that enables communities and governments to anticipate and manage climate risks effectively.”

A major milestone of the meeting will be advancing effective engagements between climate information producers and sectoral users of that information through the Continental Climate Sector Working Groups and User Interface Platforms. Bringing together climate experts and sector institutions will ensure that tailored weather and climate information is translated into practical guidance for decision-makers and communities. Doing so will help move climate information from technical reports into real-world actions that support resilience and sustainable development across Africa.

The Dialogue further demonstrates Africa's commitment to strengthening continental cooperation and ensuring that climate information reaches those who need it most, in an adequate, timely, understandable, and actionable manner.

The workshop will continue until 19 June 2026 in Lusaka, where throughout the week, climate experts and stakeholders are expected to discuss and jointly develop recommendations that will support governments, institutions, and communities in preparing and managing climate-related risks before they become humanitarian and socio-economic crises.

About Intra-ACP Climate Services and Related Applications (ClimSA) Programme

Climate shocks have no boundaries, the same goes for the benefits which cut across all sectors of the communities, because this climate information reduces the disproportional impact Africa faces. ClimSA is a EUR 22 million AU flagship initiative that aims to close the climate information services gap in African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries by promoting integrated, end-user-oriented climate services across sectors such as agriculture, health, energy, water, agriculture and disaster risk reduction. It implements the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS), through the 11th European Development Fund (11th EDF) it implements continental activities under its five outputs of the programme, as well as leading the implementation of the programme in the ECCAS region.

The ClimSA programme achieves this by strengthening the capacities of African Regional Climate Centres (RCCs) and National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) of AU Member States to develop, deliver and integrate science-based climate information and predictions into policy and decision-making, development planning and practice at the levels of African continent, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and Member States.

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