

**GCA Leaders' Dialogue at UNGA80: Shaping Resilient Futures
Climate Emergency – Resilient Transformation at Scale – Global Partnership**

OUTCOME COMMUNIQUÉ: CHAIR'S SUMMARY*

25 September 2025 | United Nations Headquarters, New York

Thirty-five nations¹, including more than twenty leaders and high-level representatives, joined by ten global and regional institutions, convened for the Global Center on Adaptation (GCA) Leaders' Dialogue on the margins of the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The meeting, co-convened with Kenya and Norway, and co-chaired by H.E. President Macky Sall and H.E. Ban Ki-moon, brought together Heads of State and Government, ministers, development banks, international organizations and partners to advance global cooperation on climate adaptation.

Participants met at a decisive moment—just weeks before UNFCCC COP30 in Belém, Brazil—amid record global heat, mounting climate extremes, and tightening public budgets for climate and development. Leaders and high-level representatives reaffirmed that adaptation is central to development, security, and prosperity, and that urgent, collective effort is required to protect vulnerable communities worldwide.

1. Adaptation as a global priority

The Dialogue agreed that adaptation is an immediate and universal necessity. Speakers described how floods, droughts, sea-level rise, and heat extremes are already devastating lives and economies across Africa, Asia, and small island states. Participants recognized adaptation as a shared responsibility and underlined that investment in adaptation saves lives, protects infrastructure and food systems, and delivers high economic and social returns. Climate adaptation is not only about resilience to climate impacts but also about strengthening development pathways.

H.E. Ban Ki-moon warned that climate action—the world's most universal public good—must not become hostage to political divisions. He urged all countries to “double down, not retreat,” noting that the 1.5 °C safeguard of the Paris Agreement is slipping away and that the most vulnerable will bear the consequences of inaction: when the next great drought, flooding, and heatwaves hit, we know they will hit harder.

Participants recognized that even compared to climate mitigation, climate adaptation does not secure sufficient attention yet, even though the degree of warming that will need to be adjusted to is likely to be greater than 1.5 °C, underscoring the urgency and importance of the agenda. Scaling up adaptation

¹ Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Namibia, Netherlands (Sint Maarten), Norway, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, South Sudan, Sweden, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe

measures is critical and will take a global effort, and require a broad variety of sources, instruments, and actors.

Looking ahead, participants concurred on the need to focus on what works, to strengthen where there are gaps, and to continue to strive to scale local ownership and locally led adaptation. Being successful also means mobilizing finance from all sources, sharing risks, and aligning with national strategies. In particular, the need to focus on leveraging private sector investments was highlighted, since resilience is bankable.

2. Delivering on commitments for adaptation finance

Speakers expressed grave concern at reductions in development and climate finance. They cautioned that unprecedented aid cuts and competing fiscal priorities risk undermining trust and reversing progress just as the need for adaptation funding reaches new heights. Fulfillment of the Glasgow pledge to double adaptation finance by 2025 – heavily at risk – was highlighted as critical for global credibility. In this environment of declining aid and climate budgets, telling the stories of the successes of development and climate action is very important, to bolster or rebuild confidence to sustain financing.

Public finance was recognized as the cornerstone for unlocking private investment and ensuring predictable, affordable support to developing countries. It was also emphasized that concessional and grant-based funding must be prioritized for the least-developed countries and small island states to prevent deepening debt burdens. It will be vital to find and to mobilize the right instruments to catalyze private finance on adaptation. All the different climate funds and the development banks need to be effectively put to use including to crowd-in other sources of finance, particularly private finance, and to pave the way for funding for local development banks to do better investments to get risks down and private capital flowing for instance in exposed sectors like agriculture.

Several partners, including Norway, Denmark, Germany, and France, reaffirmed their commitment to maintain or increase prioritization for adaptation in climate budgets and official development assistance.

3. Scaling climate-resilient agriculture and food systems

Agriculture was identified as one of the most urgent and opportunity-rich areas for adaptation. Speakers noted that climate change is already cutting yields, threatening food security, and undermining rural incomes. It was underlined that strengthening agriculture is the fastest route to build resilience and reduce poverty. Investments in digital weather information, climate-smart seeds, efficient irrigation, and resilient supply chains can safeguard harvests and open new markets for smallholder farmers.

Leaders stressed that adaptation in agriculture must be treated as a growth agenda: protecting livelihoods while driving innovation, entrepreneurship, and employment—especially for Africa's youth. Also in the case of Africa, it was noted that the continent should no longer have to import food in almost every category, but could potentially act as a very large net exporter of food, helping to meet the global increase in food demand expected in coming decades. African Development Bank experience emphasized that Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program (AAP) has already delivered results in this sector by embedding climate resilience into agricultural and infrastructure lending. Participants welcomed these advances as evidence that adaptation is not only necessary but

economically sound. The Dialogue called for stronger global partnerships to scale climate-smart agriculture, share data and technology, and integrate food security targets into adaptation plans for Africa, Asia, and SIDS alike.

4. Africa's leadership through the Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program (AAAP)

The Dialogue acknowledged the AAAP as the largest, and one of the most effective, adaptation program in the world, thanks to its mainstreaming of climate adaptation solutions in projects across some 40 African nations. Developed jointly by the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, and the GCA, the program is on track to have integrated adaptation and resilience into US \$25 billion of investments across forty countries in Africa by the end of 2025, protecting livelihoods, infrastructure, and food systems to the benefit of some two hundred million people. A major independent evaluation of AAAP prepared by the Boston Consulting Group highlighted the extent to which the program, launched in 2021, was meeting its ambitious objectives, and generating a unique contribution at scale.

The Prime Cabinet Secretary of Kenya, speaking on behalf of President William Ruto, presented AAAP 2.0, the new phase of the program first announced at the Africa Climate Summit (ACS) in Addis Ababa earlier in September 2025. He recalled that ACS reaffirmed Africa's unity and agency under the Nairobi Declaration, positioning the continent not merely as a victim of climate impacts but as a vital actor offering global solutions. AAAP 2.0—a Blueprint for a Resilient Africa—sets out three important 2030 goals: Climate-prepare Africa's food systems; Future-proof Africa's infrastructure; and unlock resilient finance at scale. Kenya has also spearheaded welcoming the GCA to establish a major office at Nairobi in order to support ambitious adaptation efforts in-country and across the continent.

H.E. President Macky Sall, Chair of the GCA Supervisory Board, reiterated that "Africa is charting its own course to resilience" and urged partners to stay the course and build on an agenda that has already delivered. Calls were made to ensure AAAP 2.0 would be capitalized by COP30 to commence work as of 2026.

Building on Africa's experience, the Dialogue encouraged the GCA to explore opportunities for an AAAP-style mechanism for Asia and the Pacific in collaboration with regional banks and partners. Participants encouraged regional development partners such as Japan, Australia, and Canada to step forward to work with the GCA and countries of the region towards such a platform. It was noted that extending the AAAP approach to other regions and across SIDS can accelerate progress and ensure that no region or group of countries is left behind.

5. Small Island Developing States: scaled-up needs-specific financing

The Dialogue marked the pre-launch of the GCA State and Trends in Adaptation (STA) Report on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), formally presented by H.E. President Hilda Heine of the Marshall Islands to the participants. The report shows that the 39 SIDS together receive barely US \$2 billion per year in adaptation finance—a fraction of global flows—and that about half of this is provided as debt despite debt challenges facing SIDS. SIDS require around US \$12 billion per year to meet adaptation needs, while projected climate damages for small islands could reach hundreds of billions of dollars by 2050. The new STA report highlights that adaptation investments in SIDS are exceptionally cost-effective, returning three to fifteen times their costs through avoided damage and sustained development.

It was likewise acknowledged that current financing mechanisms are not sufficiently designed with SIDS realities in mind. Complex eligibility rules, high transaction costs, and limited capacity continue to restrict access. A call was made for urgent reform to make climate finance fit for purpose for island nations facing comprehensive and growing climate-related risks.

6. The road to COP30 in Belém

While participants acknowledged that the political atmosphere heading into COP30 at Belém is among the most difficult it has ever been, they also emphasized that COP30 must be a turning point for adaptation. They called for adaptation finance to stand on equal footing with mitigation and for the Global Goal on Adaptation to be operationalized with all the necessary clear indicators agreed, and effective reporting systems established on those. It was reported that countries have also been communicating on their preparedness for development with climate positive growth, which is an important shared approach moving into COP30 to be built upon.

The Brazil COP presidency confirmed the importance of adaptation in the Summit at Belém: Adaptation finance is as important as mitigation finance but not in competition with it, but rather each can and does build on one another. So, COP30 has put adaptation and adaptation finance on the top of its priorities, including in the COP action agenda. Participants agreed to put a strong emphasis on the adaptation agenda of COP30 and will be very dedicated and working and using the next weeks and days on the road to Belém towards achieving the utmost there.

The launch of AAAP 2.0 at the Belém Summit was welcomed as an important contribution to demonstrate tangible progress on resilience at COP30, to be complemented with other regional initiatives as feasible. COP30 must unite all actors around a common goal, demonstrating that adaptation and mitigation are part of the same story and equally essential to achieving lasting climate progress.

Shared conclusions

The GCA Leaders' Dialogue at UNGA80 concluded that:

- Adaptation and adaptation finance must remain a core pillar of the global climate agenda and a central focus of COP30 and its action agenda in Belém, complementing and building on climate mitigation;
- Public climate finance – and the doubling of adaptation finance – is vital for unlocking private sector investment in climate adaptation, which has huge potential for scaling in vulnerable regions, such as Africa. Development partners were strongly encouraged to successfully maintain a balanced share of adaptation and mitigation in international climate finance flows;
- Proven innovations in food, water, infrastructure and other domains require urgent scaling up to meet the scale of the challenge of building resilience to climate shocks;
- Africa's AAAP 2.0 can serve as an important anchor of Action Agenda adaptation outcomes at COP30 for Africa, while similar adaptation finance mainstreaming initiatives to AAAP for Asia and SIDS were called for;
- Small island states across regions seek upscaled support, in-line with the findings and recommendations of the new STA SIDS report.

Speakers highlighted the role of the GCA as a bridge between science, policy, and finance. They commended its collaboration with the African Development Bank, the African Union Commission, and

national governments, and the authoritative State and Trends in Adaptation knowledge products covering Africa and SIDS. Participants encouraged the GCA to deepen cooperation with regional development banks and the private sector and to continue its global advocacy to keep adaptation high on the political and financial agenda.

H.E. Ban Ki-moon reminded leaders that “no country, however powerful, can face this crisis alone” and urged joint responsibility to protect future generations.

Leaders and high-level representatives closed the meeting by reaffirming determination to scale adaptation action that protects lives, secures economies, and ensures that no nation is left behind.

About the September 2025 UNGA80 GCA Leaders’ Dialogues

The September 2025 80th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA80) GCA Leaders’ Dialogues event was chaired by **H.E. Ban Ki-moon**, Chair of the GCA and 8th Secretary-General of the United Nations and Co-Chaired by **H.E. Macky Sall**, GCA Board Member and 4th President of the Republic of Senegal, and moderated by the GCA CEO, **Prof. Patrick V. Verkooijen**. The event was also co-convened by **H.E. Musalia Mudavadi**, **Hon. Prime Cabinet Secretary on behalf of the President of the Republic of Kenya** and **H.E. Åsmund Grøver Aukrust**, **Hon. Minister of International Development on behalf of the Prime Minister of Norway**.

Under the theme “Shaping Resilient Futures – Climate Urgency, Resilient Transformation at Scale, Global Partnership,” the event served as a milestone in the lead-up to COP30 in Belém, Brazil. Building on the momentum of the 2024 Leaders’ Dialogue, it aimed to reaffirm high-level political commitment to accelerate adaptation action globally, align priorities under the UAE–Belém and Baku-to-Belém frameworks, and strengthen partnerships to deliver measurable, well-financed adaptation outcomes. The Dialogue showcased country-led and GCA-supported solutions – particularly under the Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program (AAP) and emerging regional initiatives in the Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean – while elevating the voices of the most climate-vulnerable countries and regions.

Participants were presented with key materials, including the Executive Summary of the Boston Consulting Group’s External evaluation of the Upstream Financing Facility of the Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program (AAP), the Communiqué of the High-Level Development Partners Committee on AAP 2.0 adopted at the September 2025 Nairobi meeting, the Executive Summary of the forthcoming State and Trends in Adaptation for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and the recently issued joint GCA–Climate Policy Initiative report on Adaptation Finance Flows to Africa – State and Future Trends.