



Advancing Just Transition
in Ghana's NDCs 3.0

What it Takes

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Climate action can simultaneously reduce emissions, generate decent work, and deliver equitable socio-economic benefits. The ambition of Ghana’s NDCs is in the economic security and well-being it delivers to its people and the environment.

Dr. Daniel Tutu Benefo, Environmental Protection Authority (EPA Ghana)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ghana’s forthcoming update of its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs 3.0) presents a pivotal opportunity to align ambitious climate goals with inclusive and equitable socio-economic development. Building on the National Energy Transition Framework (2022–2070) and lessons from NDC 2.0, this policy brief emphasizes the importance of embedding Just Transition principles at the core of climate action. Doing so will not only ensure fairness and social protection but also strengthen Ghana’s ability to achieve its climate ambitions in line with the Paris Agreement’s 1.5°C target.

The implementation of NDC 2.0 (2021–2025) demonstrated both progress and critical gaps. Despite the outlined 47 mitigation and adaptation measures aimed at reducing 64 MtCO₂e by 2030, challenges persist, including limited social impact tracking, weak private sector and community involvement, underrepresentation of high-emission sectors such as transition minerals and industrial decarbonization, and a mismatch between training programs and the emerging green job market. These shortcomings underscore the need for NDC 3.0 to function not only as a climate action plan but also as an inclusive development framework that ensures no one is left behind.

In the national multi-stakeholder dialogue, the key highlight was opportunities for improvement include enhancing skills development to align with industry needs and ensuring inclusion of various communities, including those in the informal sector, which comprises nearly 80 percent of Ghana’s labor force. The exclusion of this sector poses a barrier to widespread participation in the green transition. Additionally, communities in mineral transition zones, vital for clean energy development, need focused attention. Gender mainstreaming and youth participation present both challenges and significant opportunities for the green transition. These issues are exacerbated by a considerable financing gap, with an estimated USD 9 to 9.5 billion still needed to fully implement Ghana’s climate commitments.

NDC 3.0, therefore, represents a transformative opportunity for Ghana to merge climate ambition with inclusive development. By embedding Just Transition as a guiding principle, Ghana can strengthen its climate resilience, build a green and future-ready economy, and ensure that no community or group is excluded from the benefits of the transition to a low-carbon future.



This brief strongly recommends institutionalizing community participation and multi-stakeholder target allocation as a non-negotiable requirement, ensuring that local voices shape policies and benefit-sharing frameworks.



It also emphasizes the importance of institutionalized workforce-building initiatives to bridge the skill gap with intentional green industrialization pathways.

KEY TERMINOLOGIES

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)	Countries' official climate action plans under the Paris Agreement, detailing targets and actions for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change.
Paris Agreement (1.5 °C goal)	A global climate treaty aiming to keep warming well below 2°C, preferably to 1.5°C, compared to pre-industrial levels.
Transition Minerals	Critical minerals like lithium, cobalt, and manganese are used in clean energy technologies such as batteries, electric vehicles, and renewable energy storage.
Benefit-Sharing	The fair distribution of benefits arising from the use of natural resources, projects, or policies among all stakeholders, especially local communities.
Blended Finance	The strategic use of public or philanthropic funding to attract private investment for sustainable development.
MRV (Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification)	Processes for tracking progress on climate actions, reporting results, and verifying accuracy.
Green Industrialization Pathways	Education and training programs that equip people with job-specific skills for particular trades or industries.
Pro-Sustainable Mining Zones	Designated areas where mining follows strict environmental and social safeguards to ensure fair community benefits and minimal environmental harm.
Industrial Decarbonization	Industrial processes, such as manufacturing, refining, and energy production, often rely heavily on fossil fuels, which release significant amounts of CO ₂ when burned. This brief specifically explores how Ghana can industrialize without compromising its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) targets and the global shared goal of limiting temperature rise to 1.5°C.

BACKGROUND

As Ghana works towards updating its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to align with the 1.5 °C under the Paris Agreement, the need to embed Just Transition principles has become increasingly urgent. This policy brief is the result of a National Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue focused on advancing a just transition in Ghana's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) 3.0. The dialogue builds on and reflects the priorities outlined in the National Energy Transition Framework (2022–2070), the energy investment plan, which calls for a transition that is both environmentally sustainable and socioeconomically just, as well as the NDCs 2.0 to address missing links¹. It was co-facilitated with Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL), the Ministry of Energy and Green Transition, the Ministry of Labor, Jobs, and Employment, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Ghana, along with other relevant stakeholders.

Ghana's NDC 2.0—Achievements and Gaps

Ghana's updated NDC (2021–2025) outlines 47 mitigation and adaptation measures aimed at reducing emissions by 64 MtCO₂e by 2030 (15% unconditional, 45% conditional) and building climate resilience across 10 priority areas, with 19 policy actions. These included measures in energy efficiency, renewable energy deployment, sustainable agriculture, forestry, and resilient infrastructure².

However, while some progress has been made on policy alignment and project initiation, several gaps have limited the NDC's potential to deliver broad socio-economic transformation:

Limited social impact tracking

Limited social impact tracking.



Critical sectors underrepresented

Transition minerals, industrial decarbonization, and green manufacturing were not sufficiently addressed, despite their high emissions and economic relevance.



Private sector and community role underdeveloped

Few mechanisms existed to allocate specific mitigation/adaptation targets to private sector actors, communities, and CSOs.



Skills mismatch

Training initiatives were not explicitly linked to projected green job market needs.



These gaps highlight the need for NDC 3.0 to be designed as both a climate action plan and an inclusive economic development framework. The key ask is, 'How do we ensure that NDCs 3.0 do not feel like NDCs 1.0 even with increased ambitions and targets?'

¹ https://mesti.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Ghanas-Updated-Nationally-Determined-Contribution-to-the-UNFCCC_2021.pdf

² https://mesti.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Ghanas-Updated-Nationally-Determined-Contribution-to-the-UNFCCC_2021.pdf

INTRODUCTION

The 2025 NDCs update represents a global partnership aimed at meeting aggregate climate demands. According to the UNFCCC, “NDCs 3.0 need to be more progressive and ambitious than current NDCs and may be the last opportunity to put the world on track with a global emission trajectory in line with the Paris Agreement’s 1.5°C goal.”³ As Ghana advances in the development of its third Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), there is a unique opportunity to explore the full potential of the just transition principle, not only as a social safeguard but also as a driver of ambition. Just Transition provides a comprehensive framework to ensure that workforce transformation, community resilience, and inclusive economic development align with Ghana’s decarbonization and adaptation objectives⁴.

To maximize its impact, the principles of just transition must be integrated into NDC 3.0 in a way that actively involves the sectors most critical to the transition, including youth, informal workers, gender groups, and resource-rich communities. These stakeholders are not simply vulnerable populations; they have a huge potential to catalyze the achievements of Ghana’s NDCs and strengthen Ghana’s climate ambition, implementation capacity, and social outcomes.

A just transition ensures that no group is left behind as Ghana charts its path to decarbonization. Critical to this for Ghana are the informal sector workers and mining communities, who, although directly impacted by climate change policies, play a crucial role in the success of implementation. Just transition also focuses on the unique roles that women and youth play in both local and global communities and how to ensure the inclusion of these voices.

Just Transition as key support for the NDCs and the Paris

Agreement Goals and Framework⁵.

- Mitigation keeps the temperature increase to well below 2°C and 1.5°C.⁶
- Adaptation increases the ability to adapt and fosters resilience
- Finance flows consistent with the path to low GHG emissions and resilient development; without unlocked and sustainable financial pathways, the notion of just transition is attacked.⁷

At the heart of all this is to enhance the living conditions of all groups of people while achieving Adaptation and mitigation actions.

In the National Multi-stakeholder dialogue, it was clear that anchoring the NDCs on the principles of Just Transition is critical to achieve these.

- Translate the NDCs 3.0 from an ambition to a national sustainable prosperity agenda that leaves no one behind.
- Promotes a whole-government, whole-society implementation approach that unlocks diverse sources of support for NDCs implementation
- Scale NDCs’ ambition through multi-stakeholder-developed and assigned targets with associated aligned commitments for enhanced benefit-sharing.
- Ultimately, an NDC that has great ambitions for climate action but also has an equal reflection on its citizenry.

According to the ILO’s mapping Just Transition in the NDCs, overview 2025, “A just transition inclusively promotes environmentally sustainable economies by creating decent work opportunities, reducing inequality, and leaving no one behind.”⁸



Outlook of Suburbs of Accra. Photo by Virgil Sowah on Unsplash

3 <https://unfccc.int/ndc-3.0>

4 <https://climatestrategies.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/A-Critical-Review-and-Analysis-of-Opportunities-and-Challenges-for-Just-Transitions-in-Ghana-1-1.pdf>

5 <https://climatepromise.undp.org/research-and-reports/how-just-transition-can-help-deliver-paris-agreement>

6 <https://unfccc.int/most-requested/key-aspects-of-the-paris-agreement>

7 https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/eu-funding-climate-action/making-finance-flows-consistent-climate-goals_en#:~:text=Under%20the%20Paris%20Agreement%20%2C%20countries,engages%20with%20its%20international%20partners

8 https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/Mapping%20Just%20Transition%20in%20NDCs-%20%20An%20overview_FINAL_PUBLISHED.pdf

Fact Box

ENERGY, CLIMATE, DEVELOPMENT

What Is a “Just Transition”?

A framework for ensuring that the shift to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy is **fair, inclusive, and equitable** for all people, especially those whose livelihoods, communities, or identities are most affected by the transition.



Source: <https://climateactiontransparency.org/just-transition-transparency-fair-inclusive-climate-action/>

ENERGY, CLIMATE, DEVELOPMENT

Why Just Transition Matters for NDC 3.0

- Because Climate Action Affects Real Peoples Livelihoods
- Because Equity Builds Public Trust and Legitimacy
- Because Inclusion Unlocks Implementation
- Because It Strengthens Ghana’s Global Climate Leadership
- Because It Anchors Institutional Coordination

Source: <https://mofep.gov.gh/news-and-events/2024-10-22/climate-financing-division-established-in-the-ministry-of-finance>

Fact Box

ENERGY, CLIMATE, DEVELOPMENT

Social-Inclusion Gaps That Remain

Ghana faces a climate financing need of \$9.3 billion to \$15.5 billion between 2020 and 2030

Women occupy only 21 % of renewable-energy jobs - AfDB; wage gap persists

Informal workers are still excluded from mainstream green-finance windows

Mineral-rich communities lack clear benefit-sharing frameworks

Source: <https://mofep.gov.gh/news-and-events/2024-10-22/climate-financing-division-established-in-the-ministry-of-finance>

Must-Haves for an NDCs 3.0 Anchoring Just Transition:

01

It must model Ghana's labour requirement and community capacity for the implementation of the NDCs; the NDCs' ambition should be tied to the probability of implementation success

02

A clear assessment of the impact of adaptation and mitigation commitments for poverty eradication, community well-being, and social prosperity

03

Identify and section out vulnerable groups relevant to the NDCs' ambition and allocate benefit quotas in terms of both climate action commitments and means of implementation

04

Engage and establish coordination teams comprising national agencies, communities, MMDAs, CSOs, informal sector actors, the private sector, and donor agencies to co-design implementation models that mitigate the projected impacts of Ghana's climate commitments on the population

05

Undertake and reflect on labor market plans to align job pathways, industry capacity, workforce development, and skilling pathways

06

Robust Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, and Learning (MERL) with open feedback mechanisms leveraging strongly on AI and digitalization

07

Robust Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, and Learning (MERL) with open feedback mechanisms leveraging strongly on AI and digitalization

Source: https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/final_green_jobs_for_women_in_africa_ghana_country_report.pdf

CONSULTATION INSIGHTS & RELEVANT FINDINGS

Just Transition as a Driver for Inclusion and Ambition in NDCs 3.0

Embedding just transition principles within Ghana's NDC 3.0 is not only a matter of fairness but also a strategic lever for unlocking higher climate ambition. When developed through inclusive and participatory processes, a just transition can foster broad public trust and secure stronger buy-in for climate policies. Evidence from UNDP's People's Climate Vote shows that investing in green businesses and jobs ranks among the most supported climate actions globally, demonstrating that the most effective climate policies are those that simultaneously

reduce greenhouse gas emissions, stimulate economic growth, create decent work, and deliver equitable socio-economic benefits.⁹ Yet, Ghana's experience with the green transition so far shows limited realization of these social dividends. While renewable energy projects, energy efficiency programs, and climate resilience measures have been implemented, the direct benefits to ordinary citizens, such as expanded job opportunities, improved livelihoods, and enhanced community resilience, have been modest and unevenly distributed.

Findings from the National Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Advancing Just Transition in Ghana's NDCs 3.0 highlighted persistent challenges, including:



Skills and Workforce Gaps:

Misalignment between training programs and emerging green job markets, especially in solar installation, e-mobility, and sustainable agriculture.



Informal Sector Exclusion:

Waste pickers, artisanal miners, and small-scale producers lack formal pathways into the green economy.



Community Impacts of Transition Minerals:

Resource-rich areas face environmental degradation without sufficient benefit-sharing frameworks.



Gender Inequality:

Women and young people face disproportionate barriers to entry in climate-related sectors.



Speakers and GAYO team at the Multi-Stakeholder Engagement on Ghana's NDCs 3.0 event, Accra.

⁹ <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/UNDP-Oxford-Peoples-Climate-Vote-Results.pdf>

Opportunities in NDC 3.0 through Just Transition

A well-embedded just transition in NDC 3.0 creates the opportunity to co-design climate actions with all relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, the private sector, the informal sector, academia, communities, and civil society. This ensures that every group not only understands the national targets but also has allocated roles, responsibilities, and measurable contributions toward achieving them. This approach allows for:



Target Allocation and Shared Ownership:

Assigning specific mitigation and adaptation targets to different stakeholder groups, including the private sector and communities, to increase accountability and mobilize local solutions



Resource and Technical Support:

Directing resources, training, and technical expertise to those implementing on the ground, bridging capacity gaps, and ensuring quality outcomes



Participatory Implementation:

Creating mechanisms for continuous feedback, adaptation, and innovation, making climate action a collaborative national effort rather than a top-down policy directive

According to the International Labour Organization, implementing the necessary measures to achieve the Paris Agreement, coupled with investments in a circular economy, could create a net gain of 24 million jobs globally by 2030.¹⁰ These jobs, if well-targeted, can uplift vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Ultimately, a just transition is crucial for navigating Ghana's political economy during its decarbonization journey. Without deliberate measures to address the social and economic impacts of the transition, climate action risks sparking resistance that could slow progress. Making just transition a core theme in NDC 3.0 would strengthen Ghana's ability to build a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready economy.

Integration of informal sector workers into climate action

Insights gathered from the workshops reveal both systemic barriers and transformative opportunities in integrating informal waste workers into national waste management strategies. Waste pickers are often the first and only line of defense against unmanaged waste, yet they remain marginalized in policymaking, infrastructure development, and formal employment pathways. A foundational need expressed by waste pickers is formal recognition of their role in national and municipal waste systems. Currently, many face discrimination, exclusion from public contracts, and harassment while performing critical environmental work. To address this, several prepositions were discussed:



Enactment of a legal framework that acknowledges waste pickers as essential public service providers. This includes issuing municipal identification cards or cooperative registration documents that grant waste pickers access to public sorting areas, markets, and transfer stations. Moreover, waste picker associations should be formally represented in local waste governance platforms, allowing them to contribute directly to decision-making processes.

*'South Africa's Waste Picker Integration Guidelines serve as a model in this regard, demonstrating how institutional frameworks can facilitate inclusion and accountability.'*¹¹



Capacity building and skills development are equally essential. Waste pickers have expressed interest in acquiring technical knowledge on safe organic waste handling, composting techniques, and basic business practices such as bookkeeping and pricing models. Governments, NGOs, and development partners should support targeted training programs that equip waste pickers with these skills. This includes peer-to-peer training led by experienced workers, as well as modules on occupational health and safety.

*'For example, in Nairobi, Kenya, local governments and civil society organizations collaborate to offer waste picker training programs that have improved operational efficiency and income generation.'*¹²

Replicating such models can professionalize the informal sector while enhancing its climate impact.

¹⁰ <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/24-million-jobs-open-green-economy-0>

¹¹ <https://wasteroadmap.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Waste-Picker-Integration-Guidelines.pdf>

¹² https://www.wiego.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Kuria_Muasya_Mapping_VWP_Kenya.pdf



Another critical area is infrastructure and access to resources. Policy integration is a strategic priority to allow for both resource allocation and mainstreaming their contribution to NDC 3.0 targets. Waste pickers are largely excluded from national climate strategies, despite their direct contribution to methane mitigation.

Policymakers should embed waste picker-led initiatives into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), methane action plans, and urban resilience strategies. Projects involving composting and anaerobic digestion should be eligible for climate finance, including carbon credits or municipal offset schemes.



Ultimately, participatory planning and co-governance are crucial to achieving sustainable integration. Waste pickers emphasized the importance of being consulted on policies and programs that affect their livelihoods. Governments should establish formal consultation mechanisms, such as waste management advisory boards with representation from waste pickers, and conduct regular town hall meetings to gather feedback.

Encouraging the formation and strengthening of waste picker cooperatives and federations will also enhance their bargaining power, access to resources, and ability to influence policy agendas. Integrating waste pickers into organic waste management systems is not only a matter of social justice but also a strategic pathway for reducing methane emissions and enhancing climate resilience.

The experiences of Ghana and other African nations show that with proper legal frameworks, training, infrastructure, and participatory governance, waste pickers can lead the transformation of waste systems from linear, extractive models to circular, community-centered economies, which is essential for an ambitious and highly implementable NDC 3.0.

Community-led approaches in transition mineral zones

Transition mineral zones, rich in lithium, bauxite, manganese, and other critical resources, are central to Ghana's clean energy ambitions under the National Energy Transition Framework.¹³ Currently, the Awoyaa lithium mine is centered in the Mankessim Municipality; these minerals underpin technologies such as electric vehicles, battery storage systems, and renewable energy infrastructure.¹⁴ Yet, the communities hosting these resources often face environmental degradation, economic marginalization, and limited access to the benefits of extraction.

Insights from the National Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue underscored that a just transition will only be possible if these communities move from being extraction frontlines to co-owners and beneficiaries of the green transition from licensing to processing to restoration.

Key Must-Haves for exploration include;

- Support for cooperatives and youth-led enterprises to develop solutions tailored to community needs, such as efficient kilns for charcoal production, sustainable fuel alternatives like briquettes, and recycling initiatives (e.g., fishing nets repurposed into new livelihood products).
- Broadening mining operations beyond basic extractions of minerals to advance the local economic footprint through alternative industries and product portfolios that create long-term employment beyond extraction.
- Establish targeted training programs for youth and women to meet the technical requirements of jobs in both mining-related and green industries, in partnership with educational institutions.
- Investment in local refinery and processing facilities to retain more value within the community while ensuring adherence to environmental and social safeguards.
- Decolonize the NDC process by ensuring community priorities shape national targets and match local best practices with similar global success stories to create scalable models.

¹³ https://www.energymin.gov.gh/sites/default/files/2023-09/FINAL%20GHANA%27S%20NATIONAL%20ENERGY%20TRANSITION%20FRAMEWORK_2023_compressed%20%281%29_compressed%20%282%29.pdf

¹⁴ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1L170-LXtgxPycSgv7Hme80XRykUEd-Gj-FVMvVAOfXA/edit?pli=1&tab=t.0#heading=h.jm8ejuy0zpaa>

Policy Implication

The NDC 3.0 should institutionalize community participation as a non-negotiable requirement. This means embedding measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for local employment, cooperative growth, and industrial value addition; mandating revenue reinvestment into essential services and green infrastructure; and creating clear pathways for communities to co-design, implement, and monitor projects.

Climate Finance & Governance for Equitable NDC Implementation

A just transition converts climate investments into shared socio-economic outcomes (jobs, health, local value-addition, resilience). To do that, finance must be structured so that it de-risks investments attractive to private capital, conditions funds for social outcomes, channels revenue back to affected communities, and builds local capacity & pipelines for investable projects.

The transition also integrates lessons from global energy market shocks, such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, recognizing the need for resilience against external disruptions.'



Our weakest link remains financing; until we figure out how to pay for NDCs, ambition will remain limited.

- Dr. Daniel Tutu Benefo, EPA, Ghana

Ghana's Quick Finance Snapshot for NDCs 2.0

Since the launch of NDC 2.0 in 2021, Ghana has mobilized approximately USD 1.3 billion in climate finance toward its mitigation and adaptation targets. However, the total estimated cost to implement the NDCs remains at around USD 10.3–10.8 billion by 2030, leaving a funding gap of USD 9–9.5 billion.¹⁵

Sources of Finance: Climate finance flows are primarily from multilateral climate funds (e.g., GCF, GEF), bilateral development partners, and concessional loans. Private sector contributions have increased, especially in renewable energy (solar mini-grids, utility-scale solar farms) and circular economy projects.¹⁶

Domestic Finance: Ghana's national budget allocation to climate-related programs remains modest, limiting the ability to scale up local initiatives without external support.

Private Sector Potential: Recent blended finance arrangements, such as joint ventures in utility-scale renewable projects, have shown promise but remain underutilized.



¹⁵ <https://ndcpartnership.org/country/gha>

¹⁶ <https://www.climatepolicyinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Climate-Finance-in-Ghana.pdf>

Just Transition Financing Link

Embedding Just Transition as a core theme in NDC 3.0 creates an opportunity to co-design sectoral targets with multiple stakeholders, including the private sector, informal workers, and local communities. This promotes allocating clear benefit-sharing mechanisms. This approach can:



Unlock private sector investment by aligning job creation, skills development, and local manufacturing opportunities with climate targets



Leverage multi-stakeholder co-responsibility to spread implementation costs and benefits, ensuring social and political buy-in



Reduce reliance on external concessional loans by growing domestic green industries and value chains (e.g., critical minerals processing, solar assembly, and sustainable agro-industries)

Just Financing Mainstreaming Outlook

01

National Investment Readiness Facility to build pipelines and deliver investment-readiness support (ESG, bankable models) to SMEs and community projects.

02

Standard Community Responsibility and Benefit-Sharing templates for extractive and transition projects (legal, fiscal, monitoring), which are embedded in licensing schemes.

03

Pilot Article 6 deals with local sharing rules, which implies that a share of ITMO proceeds must flow to a Just Transition Fund or local community trust, with MRV.

04

Launch Skills and implementation Task forces to align TVET curricula and create apprenticeship quotas tied to financed projects. This was recommended to help build targeted local expertise for funded projects to produce a local sellable workforce.



We often hear Africa's carbon mitigation is cheaper; our land is cheaper, our labor is available, so it is okay to receive less for our high-impact mitigation outcomes. But we have to argue this at the international level, the COP, to ask why Africa's carbon pricing is not equal to or even higher than that of other European countries.

- Dr. Robert B.M. Sogbadji



Industrail Emission in Ghana. Photo by Omkar Jadhav on Unsplash

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR NDCS 3.0

Just Transition Is an Opportunity to Correct Structural Exclusion

Participants widely agreed that Ghana's transition to a low-carbon economy must also serve as a corrective to longstanding inequalities. Just Transition was framed as a social and developmental framework, not only an environmental tool.

- It emerged that social inclusion and equity principles are still insufficiently mainstreamed in the existing climate frameworks.
- Stakeholders emphasized that NDCs must be owned by the people, not just signed off on by the state.
- This means policies should be locally embedded, community-tested, and informed by realities such as gender

restrictions in technical professions and unequal energy access.

Policy Implication

Embed equity screening and social metrics within all climate programs and NDC indicators. Establish community oversight mechanisms to ensure that no population is left behind in the implementation process.

Workforce and Skills Gaps Threaten the Viability of Green Job Promises

The gap between climate ambition and the capacity of Ghana's workforce, particularly among youth and women, to participate meaningfully in the green transition was repeatedly highlighted. For NDCs 3.0, the stakeholders continuously stressed not just quoting "1 million jobs" but more specifically which sectors will contribute to what percent and commitments as part of the NDCs to ensure these jobs. A further breakdown of these jobs into temporal and sustainable categories will help enhance targeted efforts in ensuring job creation. In brief, stakeholders highlighted some challenges that are hindering the job creation possible with the energy transition

- Existing TVET programs are outdated and underfunded, with curricula still anchored in legacy trades rather than green, circular economy needs.
- Ghana TVET Service has taken bold steps, but the impact is

still early-stage.

- Informal sector workers who dominate Ghana's labor landscape are almost entirely excluded from structured green job pathways.
- Green industrialization pathways that will drive workforce skilling are mostly unavailable or lacking.

Policy Implication

Prioritize *curriculum modernization*, create bridging programs for informal workers, and introduce targeted incentives for women and vulnerable youth in green sectors like renewable energy, recycling, and clean cooking solutions.



Participants at the Multi-Stakeholder Engagement on Ghana's NDCs 3.0 event, Accra.

Climate Action Must Be Centered Around the Informal Economy

Nearly 80% of Ghana's labor force operates informally.¹⁷ This reality poses both a challenge and a powerful opportunity for innovation.

- Field data from GAYO in Northern Ghana revealed that many households still rely on charcoal and have limited or skeptical engagement with solar and clean cooking technologies. A huge opportunity exists to tie in our energy efficiency, clean cooking, and renewable energy commitment to such communities. The key recommendation that can be explored is;

“Promoting an industrial charcoal production through alternatives such as shear-nut waste and coconut husks with advancing kiln techniques through renewable energy sources can secure livelihoods and provide sustainable

charcoal briquettes for local delicacies while scaling local communities' contribution to climate action and emission targets.”

- Informal workers are both vulnerable and resourceful, yet current policy frameworks lack meaningful entry points for them.

Policy Implication

Design *pro-poor*, community-first climate interventions that meet people where they are—financially, socially, and technologically. Pilot social enterprise and cooperative models to make clean technologies accessible and owned by the people.

Transition Mineral Zones Require Development-First Approaches

Participants flagged serious concerns about the lack of equitable benefit-sharing in communities located near critical mineral deposits (lithium, bauxite, and manganese).

- Despite their strategic contribution to the green economy, these communities remain underdeveloped and environmentally vulnerable.
- There is an urgent need to prevent a repeat of the extractive-development paradox, where resource-rich regions remain the poorest.

Policy Implication

Introduce *transition mineral governance frameworks* that mandate local employment quotas, environmental safeguards, and social investment obligations from mining companies. Involve local communities in co-designing extraction benefit-sharing schemes. ‘For such communities, industrialization of the mineral resource value chain is crucial for sustainable, decent, and high-paying jobs. The NDCs 3.0 should prioritize these transition mineral zones as key catalysts of ambition, with measures to ensure that such zones are transformed into pro-sustainable mining zones, thereby protecting the environment, people, and livelihoods.



Participants at the Multi-Stakeholder Engagement on Ghana's NDCs 3.0 event, Accra.

¹⁷ <https://africanmarketingconfederation.org/informal-workers-comprise-80-of-ghanas-workforce-new-report/>

Climate Finance Is Not Reaching Where It's Needed Most

Despite Ghana's clear NDC targets, climate financing remains a bottleneck. The estimated need of USD 9.3–15.5 billion for NDC 3.0 implementation is not matched by accessible pipelines.

- Local CSOs and subnational actors reported difficulty accessing funds due to bureaucratic requirements and a lack of donor alignment with grassroots realities.
- Participants urged for more blended finance, community-based financing models, and inclusive governance of climate funds.

Policy Implication

Establish a Just Transition Climate Fund, led by a multistakeholder board (gov't, civil society, private sector, and community reps). Channel at least 30% of climate funds to local-level and informal economy projects. Integrate transparency and feedback loops. The NDCs must explore in-country financing schemes and modules for self-paced and community-prioritized delivery of climate targets, to reduce climate vulnerability and disaster risks.

Measurement Must Go Beyond Emissions

The dialogue highlighted the need for a comprehensive Just Transition monitoring framework, one that tracks not just GHG reduction but also equity, employment, and well-being outcomes. Key metrics proposed include:

- Gender equity in green jobs
- Informal sector participation
- Household energy affordability
- Community-level benefits from extractive activities

Policy Implication

Integrate Just Transition indicators into Ghana's national climate tracking architecture. This ensures progress is measured by human and social indicators, not just technical compliance.



Speakers at the Multi-Stakeholder Engagement on Ghana's NDCs 3.0 event, Accra.

RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

Based on the dialogue and gap analysis, the following are priority recommendations:
For EPA Ghana and the leading Public Agencies on the NDCs



Quantify skills and job creation targets linked to each NDC theme and specify enablers for such targets



Include transition minerals and industrial decarbonization as priority sectors, with emphasis on emissions reduction and social impact indicators.



Develop stakeholder-specific target allocation frameworks for the private sector, communities, and CSOs



Institutionalize a just transition as a core theme of the NDC, encompassing social protection, benefit-sharing, and gender equity



Create a national Just Transition Taskforce to coordinate cross-sectoral implementation



Prioritize locally generated funds for the implementation of key NDC targets to ensure enhanced social benefits and community protection

For the Private Sector and CSOs



Align ESGs to specific, relatable targets to achieve both mitigation outcomes and social benefits



Follow standardized reporting and monitoring mechanisms from the EPA to ensure a credible stocktake on Ghana's NDCs implementation



Strengthened advocacy and monitoring to report informal sector contributions and legitimacy for structured support and inclusion

Donor Agencies



Decolonize donor funds to promote ownership, self-paced and just NDC commitments, and an implementation pathway





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