Climate FiGS

Mzumbe University

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Insights on Tanzania's National Climate Planning in International Context

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Background and Purpose

In August 2025, ClimateFiGS and Mzumbe University brought together experts and practitioners in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, for a climate finance co-design workshop. Participants discussed topics related to the quality, quantity, and effectiveness of climate finance, as well as the extent to which it aligns with the needs of its intended beneficiaries. The workshop featured five roundtables focused on different aspects of climate finance. **This brief summarizes the insights from the session on the country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) and National Adaptation Plans (NAP)**, which brought together 13 participants.

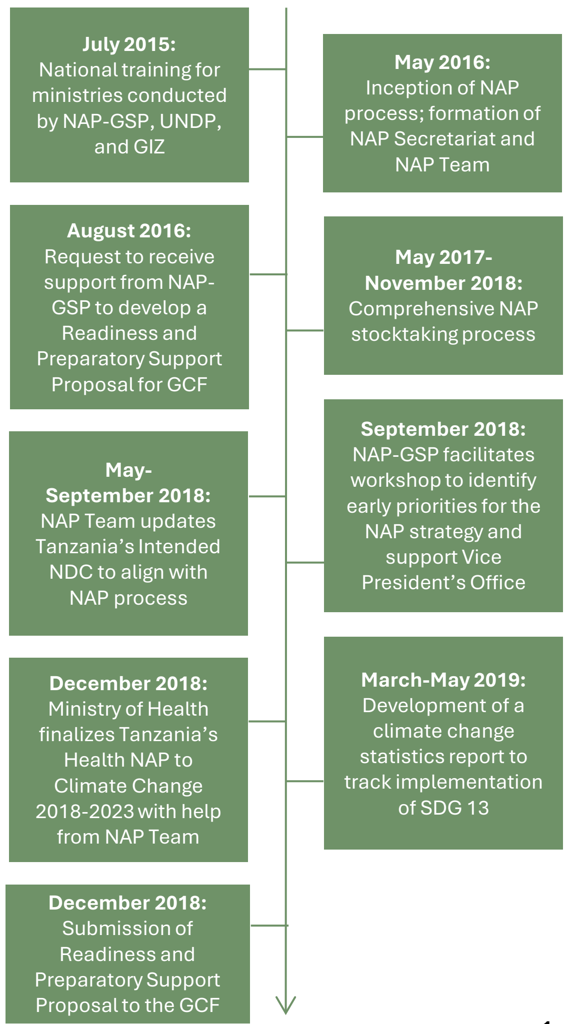
The aim of this brief is to present key themes and insights from the discussion and to highlight the pressing research areas identified. We hope it can help guide researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders toward areas where attention and contributions are most needed.

The Tanzanian Context

As a signatory to the Paris Agreement, Tanzania has progressively advanced its climate commitments through successive updates of its NDC — evolving from the Intended NDC in 2015 to the revised NDC in 2021, with a new update (NDC 3.0) currently under development. The 2021 NDC outlines an economy-wide approach to emission reductions, targeting a 30–35% decrease in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to business as usual, conditional on international support. It also reaffirms Tanzania's strong focus on adaptation, with priorities including enhanced agricultural resilience, improved water access for all by 2030, and integrated actions across energy, transport, waste, and land-use sectors. The estimated cost for implementing the 2021 NDC is USD 19.2 billion, underscoring the scale of resources required to achieve Tanzania's climate ambition.

Tanzania's first NAP, which outlines the country's roadmap for climate adaptation, was introduced in 2007 in alignment with Development Vision 2025 and Zanzibar Vision 2050. Over the past decade, the NAP process has evolved through extensive collaboration with partners such as GIZ, UNDP, and UNEP under the NAP Global Support Programme (Fig. 1). Key milestones include the establishment of a multi-sectoral NAP team, nationwide consultations and vulnerability assessments, and the integration of adaptation priorities into national health and climate change strategies.

Figure 1: Evolution of Tanzania's NAP. Data source: NAP-GSP (2020, p.3).



Key Themes

The roundtable discussions centered on five themes: drivers of climate ambition, actors, institutional coordination, financing sources, and inclusivity. The sections below outline the main insights emerging from each theme.

> "If countries request too little support in their NDCs, they risk exclusion from funding opportunities, yet asking for more may reinforce external influence and dependency."

Drivers of Climate Ambition

Participants noted that Tanzania's stated climate ambition in its NDC and NAP reflects both internal vulnerabilities and external pressures, although the latter play a stronger role. Internally, the country's dependence on agriculture and recent climate-related disasters underscore its exposure and have prompted some actions that remain largely reactive rather than proactive. Externally, international frameworks such as the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC[1] processes, along with the flow of climate finance, strongly influence Tanzania's agenda. Climate change is sometimes viewed as an opportunity to attract funding rather than an existential threat, which has led to misalignment between global mechanisms and national priorities. Even when civil society organizations advocate for local needs, participants questioned how representative these organizations are, given their reliance on external funding sources.

Actors

Participants discussed that while Tanzania's NDC and NAP processes involve a range of actors, the voices with the most power are those of external funders. This results in policies that do not align with realities on the ground. Although community perspectives are supposed to be reflected, this rarely occurs in practice. Funders, despite being far from local contexts, influence priorities more than farmers or villagers, who are the actual implementers. Civic organizations were seen as key actors that should drive a more bottom-up agenda, ensuring that national commitments reflect lived experiences and local needs. Participants highlighted the need to "go down to villages, talk to farmers" to really understand the situation on the ground.

Institutional Coordination

Participants identified major challenges in institutional coherence and coordination around Tanzania's climate policy framework. The Vice President's Office serves as the official channel to the UNFCCC, and the NDC process draws inputs from sectoral ministries including those responsible for agriculture, health, energy, and water. However, limited communication and coordination among the ministries and other entities involved in the NDC process have led to overlapping mandates and inconsistencies in implementation. For example, the National Climate Change Technical Committee and the National Environmental Advisory Committee play overlapping roles in some instances, creating confusion. At the local level, coordination gaps are even more pronounced: regional secretariats lack environmental officers, and district environmental officers are often overstretched and assigned to unrelated tasks. Participants noted that as a result, policies frequently fail to reflect local priorities or diverse regional needs, with centrally designed programs imposing uniform solutions that do not match local realities.

[1] The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international treaty aimed at coordinating countries' efforts to limit dangerous human interference with the climate system.

Financing NDCs and NAPs

Participants noted that financing for Tanzania's NDCs and NAPs primarily comes from multilateral sources such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank, with the latter playing an increasingly significant role given its continental mandate and focus on adaptation. Domestically, beyond tax revenues, emerging mechanisms such as carbon credits are being explored as ways to channel funds directly to communities, while microfinance institutions like Village Community Banks (VICOBA) could help fill adaptation finance gaps. The discussion also highlighted a tension between dependence on international funding and the pursuit of climate justice: if countries request too little support in their NDCs, they risk exclusion from funding opportunities, yet asking for more may reinforce external influence and dependency. Participants nonetheless agreed that current climate finance flows to countries in the Global South are inadequate.

Inclusivity

Participants discussed the inclusion of underrepresented groups in NDC and NAP processes, emphasizing the need for meaningful participation from the planning stage through to implementation. They noted that stakeholder engagement should genuinely be inclusive to ensure that diverse groups are invited to participate, discussions address issues relevant to them, and they have opportunities to highlight their own priorities. The design of these processes should intentionally create spaces for different voices to be heard and reflected in both planning and action.

When discussing the inclusion of women specifically, participants expressed varied perspectives. Some emphasized that women are central to many climate-affected sectors, particularly agriculture, livestock keeping, and fishing. They also highlighted that many women hold leadership positions in politics. These reflect mechanisms such as "special seats" (gender quotas). And at the local level, even when men are the public face of decision-making, some argued that many decisions are still informed by women's input. Others, however, noted that women continue to face institutional, social, and cultural barriers that limit their participation.

Looking Ahead

The roundtable highlighted several gaps and opportunities for future inquiry (Box 1). We invite researchers to take these questions forward to strengthen evidence and inform more effective climate finance in Tanzania.

Box 1. Key Areas for Research

- How do internal and external pressures shape Tanzania's climate ambition?
- To what extent do international frameworks and financing mechanisms align with Tanzania's national priorities?
- How can coordination across institutions be improved for more coherent climate action?
- What explains persistent implementation gaps between national climate plans and on-the-ground action?
- How can Tanzania balance reliance on international funding with efforts to build domestic climate finance capacity?
- What criteria should be used to assess adequacy and equity in climate finance flows to Tanzania?
- How is overall progress against NDC targets measured?
- What participatory approaches would ensure meaningful, scalable inclusion of local actors in NDC processes?
- What is the extent of women's representation and influence in NDC and NAP processes in Tanzania?

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