

Private sector funding essential to combat climate change in Africa

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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An excess of \$100bn will be required to meet Africa's infrastructure needs over the next decade. Much of the needed investment is in long-lived infrastructure such as power stations, roads, reservoirs and irrigation canals - all of which are vulnerable to changes in climate patterns.



Image source: Gallo/Getty

The failure to integrate climate change into the planning of this infrastructure could lead to major negative development impacts such as crop losses, traffic disruption, reduced power production and higher energy costs.

The Fourth Africa Climate Resilience Investment Summit (ACRIS IV) took place recently at the Sandton Convention Centre in Sandton. The main aim of the summit was to attract international private investors and development agencies to invest in infrastructure-resilient projects in Africa.

Hosted by GRV Global with key partners the World Bank Group, Nordic Development Fund (NDF) through the Africa Climate Resilient Investment Facility Partnership (AFR-RES) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), opening speakers included South Africa's minister of environmental affairs Nomvula Mokonyane, Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, commissioner of the department for rural economy and agriculture at the African Union Commission, and Mohale Rakgale, group executive, project preparation division: Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA).

Paul Numba Um, World Bank country director for South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, delivered the keynote address.



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Climate change threaten Africa's development

“The need for climate action has become increasingly important for Africa as climate change threatens its development and humanity, in particular affected women and children living in rural areas, as well as its agriculture, water and energy,” said Mokonyane.

While various policies and legislation have demonstrated South Africa’s approach to climate change, Mokonyane says these are limited by a lack of resources and funding. “The private sector plays an important role as it offers different types of finance to bridge the finance gap. Also, it is only if the public and private sector work together through partnerships that an integrated climate plan can be achieved.”

Sacko says that despite being the least responsible for global warming, Africa is the most vulnerable to climate change. “African governments and international organisations are well aware of this and have been working to limit the impact. However, Africa requires trillions of dollars to battle this problem.”

She added that the conference is timely as it provides the platform for government, civil society and the private sector to determine the action required. “I hope this conference comes up with actions to strengthen private sector and government institution solutions for the planning, design and implementation investment into climate change sensitive sectors and manage the funding of these.”

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Africa most vulnerable to climate change

In his keynote, Noumba noted that the summit is more critical than ever as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C tells us that Africa is the most vulnerable to climate change.

“Climate change priorities on resilience, in particular, must be ramped up if African countries want to meet their development goals. Governments and citizens all need to mobilise. This must be the focus of the summit - to take away a shared vision and strong drive to action, with the speed and scale of the best practice that we are aware of.”

Rakgale explained that the DBSA’s focus is on how to unlock other sources of funding as public funding is limited. “The bulk has to come from the private sector. We need to identify what needs to happen for this take place, from creating an enabling environment to legislation and policy and political will,” he said.

“Financing institutions such as the DBSA play a defining role here in creating the mechanism to channel funding for climate change and facilitating investment by leveraging the private sector,” he added.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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