WORLD GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL & AFRICA REGIONAL NETWORK

The World Green Building Council (WorldGBC) catalyses the uptake of sustainable built environments for everyone, everywhere. Transforming the building and construction sector across three strategic areas - climate action, health & wellbeing, and resources & circularity - we are a global action network of over 70 Green Building Councils around the world.

AFRICAN UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

The African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) has the mandate to execute priority regional and continental projects to promote regional integration towards the accelerated realisation of Agenda 2063 of the African Union. This is from a decision of the 31st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of African Union Heads of State and Government in July 2018. AUDA-NEPAD does this through strengthening the capacity of African Union Member States and regional bodies, advancing knowledge-based advisory support, undertaking the full range of resource mobilisation and serving as the continent’s technical interface with all Africa’s development stakeholders and development partners.

For climate action and resilience in cities, regions and the built environment, the mandate of AUDA-NEPAD gives the organisation a wider role in terms of providing knowledge-based advisory support to African Union Member States in the pursuit of their national development priorities within the framework of the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2032.

FOREWORD

We are facing a climate double jeopardy — the dual challenge of keeping a 1.5 degree Celsius future within reach and protecting our societies’ most climate-vulnerable citizens. Air pollution alone kills over seven million people a year, and in the past 20 years, natural disasters have affected 4.4 billion people, claimed 1.3 million lives and caused $3.64 trillion in economic losses.

Although Africa contributes only 4% of the world’s carbon emissions, it is home to over 16% of the world’s population. By 2050, Africa’s population is projected to grow to 2.5 billion and 80 percent of the buildings that will exist in the region are yet to be built. Africa’s carbon output per person is set to grow exponentially faster than its population.

But as the COVID-19, cost-of-living, energy and the climate crisis continue to create economic and political uncertainty in the region, there is certainty in the potential of a sustainable built environment.

From finance to energy, the built environment can accelerate enhancing resilience and climate action across every sector. With almost 40% of global energy-related emissions coming from the built environment, African governments must prioritise it as a way of drastically drawing down emissions and scaling economic, social and climate resilience.

This is our opportunity to galvanise the health of people, nature and our economies — and the WorldGBC Africa Manifesto for Sustainable Cities & the Built Environment is a pivotal step in driving this positive change. Developed by the WorldGBC Africa Regional Network, this Manifesto defines a common position of policies and commitments so that we are recognising the full potential of the built environment and cities in delivering the African Union’s Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. I would like to thank the African Union Development Agency for your valuable input and insight as we developed this manifesto.

The time to act is now, and we must act together. We call on African policymakers and business leaders to support this manifesto to accelerate the transition towards sustainable cities and built environments in Africa.

Let’s work together to put people back at the heart of a net zero, healthy and resilient built environment that works for everyone, everywhere.

CRISTINA GAMBOA, CEO
WORLD GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL

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INTRODUCTION TO THE WORLDGBC AFRICA REGIONAL NETWORK

Member GBCs as of 31 October 2022
The built environment, this means an exponential demand for buildings with Africa's urban footprint expected to almost triple by 2050 — 80% of buildings that will exist in Africa in 2050 are yet to be built. In 2018, the African buildings sector accounted for 61% of regional energy demand and 32% of regional energy-related CO₂ emissions. Growth in emissions has been driven by a 23% rise in regional population and a 25% increase in wealth (as GDP) since 2010 which has increased this demand for floor area.

As African business leaders and governments look to meet the energy demands of this urban growth, the World Green Building Council (WorldGBC) urges them to build in a way that reduces emissions in alignment with the Paris Agreement and in alignment with a ‘prosperous Africa, based on inclusive growth and sustainable development’ as outlined in Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

After public consultations from Cape Town to Cairo through written comments and regional roundtables across all regions in Africa, the WorldGBC Africa Regional Network is excited to launch the Africa Manifesto for Sustainable Cities & the Built Environment. In preparation for COP27 and our WorldGBC Africa Regional Network regional programmes in 2023, this launch is supported by the African Union Development Agency.

The transition towards a net zero, healthy and resilient built environment that works for everyone, everywhere in Africa, cannot happen without you.

To become a part of the green building movement in Africa either through partnering or collaborating with the WorldGBC Africa Regional Network, contributing to your local Green Building Council or starting a Green Building Council in a country in Africa that doesn’t have a Green Building Council, please email africa@worldgbc.org.

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OUR VISION AND MISSION

The Africa We Want is one where every African, from Cape Town to Cairo, prospers in a resilient, socially inclusive, equitable, environmentally sustainable and culturally vibrant built environment.

Sustainable buildings, cities and infrastructure are critical to achieving this vision.

Our mission is to unite the building and construction sector in Africa to shift from advocacy to action and implementation of this vision.

Achieving these goals and delivering The Africa We Want requires policymakers and business leaders across the continent to recognise the untapped potential of the built environment. But this can only be realised with the implementation of policies that support transformative action, through deep collaboration between governments and the cities, regions, businesses and investors.

DELIVERING THE AFRICA WE WANT

The African Union represents 1.4 billion people\(^1\) and is committed to delivering environmentally-sustainable and climate-resilient economies and communities.

This ambition is evidenced by the ratification of the Paris Agreement by all 55 member states of the African Union\(^2\) and the commitment of these member states to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals. The Agenda 2063 framework, developed by the African Union, aspires for inclusive growth and sustainable development for Africa.

Outlined below are the key policy and regulatory changes that African leaders must support. The WorldGBC Africa Regional Network and their members stand ready to support the transition and to equip the African building and construction sector with the necessary implementation guides, resources and solutions to support local and regional action.

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\(^{1}\) Worldometer: ‘Africa Population (live)’ (2022)

\(^{2}\) African Union: ‘About the African Union’ (n.d.)
ENERGY

Although Africa contributes only 4% of the world’s carbon emissions\textsuperscript{11}, it is home to 1.4 billion people\textsuperscript{12}. This number is projected to grow to 2.5 billion\textsuperscript{13} by 2050 with Africa’s carbon output per person growing exponentially faster than its population\textsuperscript{14}.

With the energy required to meet the needs of Africa’s growing population, rapid urbanisation and temperatures in the region rising faster than the global average, a low-carbon development pathway for Africa will also address the Energy Trilemma of energy security, energy equity and environmental sustainability in both urban and rural areas across Africa.

This increase in energy demand and associated carbon emissions add urgency to Africa’s drive as a key driver towards low-carbon development as outlined by national policymakers in their Nationally Determined Contributions and by businesses in their net zero carbon commitments.

Over 640 million Africans have no access to electricity, meaning the electricity access rate for African countries is 24%, the lowest in the world\textsuperscript{15}. Access to electrification and to clean and renewable energy would help address the need for low-carbon and energy efficient cooling in urban areas and clean cooking and bathing in informal settlements and rural areas. It would also accelerate decarbonisation through the transition from fossil fuel energy sources to renewable energy sources for existing energy infrastructure. Access to electrification will lead to better health and wellbeing, equity, resilience and economic outcomes for all Africans.

African business leaders, investors and policymakers in national and sub-national governments and cities must:

- Implement and enforce green building policies and codes that support region-specific bioclimatic design, prioritise the principle of energy efficiency first and utilise performance-based metrics to ensure buildings perform efficiently and appropriately for the climate.
- Include building decarbonisation targets with policies, measures and related implementation mechanisms in all country Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Locally Determined Contributions (LDCs) in Africa.
- Implement a Net Zero Carbon Roadmap for all buildings, including both formal and informal housing, that goes beyond minimum requirements so that buildings are in line with the goals of WorldGBC’s Advancing Net Zero programme. These roadmaps must prioritise programmes and initiatives such as Minimum Energy Performance Standards and Energy Performance Certificates which mandates low-carbon design in new and existing buildings to help reduce energy demand (operational carbon) and high-carbon materials use (embodied carbon).
- Integrate smart grid technologies to strengthen and improve efficiency of existing energy infrastructure. Consideration must be made for cross-border transmission and trade-in electricity to better support load balancing and grid resilience.
- Increase the percentage share of renewable energy in centralised and decentralised electricity grids through incentives and schemes such as Feed-In-Tariffs, Public Private Partnerships and other mechanisms, including subsidies.
- Promote the installation of diverse and distributed renewable energy systems to improve load balancing, energy security and increase access to electrification, providing a more reliable electricity grid for all Africans.
By 2050, two-thirds of the world’s population is expected to suffer from water scarcity. Globally, domestic water consumption is 12% of freshwater resources, and Africa’s projected population growth and increasing urbanisation will increase the demand on freshwater resources. 418 million people in Africa lack access to drinking water, 779 million lack basic sanitation services and 839 million lack basic hygiene services.

Water scarcity and quality issues will only be exacerbated in Africa unless policymakers create a regulatory environment that recognises the critical role that cities and the built environment can play in protecting this precious resource through policies that reduce freshwater consumption and drive water efficiency while firmly embedding the concept of water access, quality and security for all Africans.

African business leaders, investors and policymakers in national and sub-national governments and cities must:

- Mandate water efficiency measures such as the installation of low-flow fittings, fixtures and appliances, water sub-metering and automated leak detection - into building codes and standards. Such codes must integrate region-specific bioclimatic designs that implement nature-based solutions and water circularity principles through water capture, reclamation, recovery and recycling into building regulations.

- Implement a Net Zero Water Roadmap for all buildings, including both formal and informal housing, that prioritises programmes and initiatives such as water standards and integrated water resource management. Such initiatives must reduce the demand and use of potable water in buildings and incentivise the on-site reclamation and recycling of blackwater and greywater, rainwater recovery systems and smart irrigation systems through subsidies and financial incentives.

- Both public and private sector must increase water infrastructure investments including the provision of centralised and decentralised water grids. This will ensure all Africans — in urban, rural and vulnerable communities including homes, schools and clinics in informal settlements — have immediate access to clean, safe and affordable water for drinking, cooking, bathing and sanitation to mitigate air-borne and water-borne diseases.

- Develop Urban Climate Action Plans and climate disaster risk assessments that include stormwater catchment and attenuation strategies to avoid extreme flooding caused by climate change in coastal and vulnerable urban, rural and informal settlements built near floodplains. Water sensitive design that enables sustainable drainage systems must be integrated in these Urban Climate Action Plans.

- Encourage regulatory coordination between government and the private sector through the use of predictive monitoring to anticipate and respond to climate change scenarios, such as heavy rainfall, flooding, strong winds and drought.
MATERIALS

The planet thrives through regenerative circular natural systems. However the built environment’s ever increasing demand for materials is exacerbating the climate and biodiversity crisis. By 2060, global material use is expected to more than double and a third of this rise will be attributable to materials used in the building and construction system.

In Africa, construction waste is expected to rise to 516 million tonnes per year by 2050. However, more than 90% of this waste is disposed of at uncontrolled dumpsites and landfills, often followed by open air burning which causes air and water pollution, with severe adverse impacts on human health.

Considering projected growth in Africa, it is crucial that governments introduce circular policies that end unsustainable extraction of natural resources and promote locally-sourced, recycled and affordable construction materials. This would release secondary resources back into the African economy, growing and strengthening local manufacturing, creating jobs, addressing unemployment, and building local and regional economies.

The successful implementation of a circular economy requires total transformation of a linear, non-integrated multi-stakeholder sector — the materials supply chain and construction industry. Shifting to a circular built environment requires cross-sectoral systemic shifts that make successful implementation both practically and financially feasible.

African business leaders, investors and policymakers in national and sub-national governments and cities must:

- Mandate life cycle assessment in national building codes and regulations to support the use of low-cost, low-carbon, ethically-sourced and locally-sourced, resilient building materials in the design and construction of new buildings and retrofitting of existing buildings.
- Implement Green Procurement Policies including ensuring that all building products and materials have Extended Producer Responsibility and Environmental Product Declarations indicating their whole life-cycle carbon emissions and environmental performance.
- Implement policies and programmes — and facilitate investments by the public and private sector — that supports the adoption of informal materials recovery, recycling and material reclamation stations and promote the reuse of recovered materials.
- Implement a Circular Economy Roadmap for Buildings in design, construction, commissioning and operations, outlining the tools needed to deliver these policies including capacity building and the development of local supply chains with material reclamation facilities.
- Promote the use of secondary resources and adaptive reuse of buildings through sufficiency and incentivise dematerialisation and deconstruction that extracts less natural resources.
- Penalise the use of commonly used red list building materials that are ‘worst in class’ containing chemicals and elements known to pose serious risks to human health and the wider ecosystem. Use of such materials is widespread in the building and construction industry in Africa, particularly for informal housing where lack of awareness and resources exacerbates the risks to the most vulnerable communities.
Climate change presents a US$3 trillion investment opportunity in Africa by 2030 and the private sector will be key to green investment and development. Although 16% of the world’s population live in Africa, total climate finance flows in Africa represent only 11% of the estimated US$277 billion needed annually to implement its NDCs and meet its 2030 climate goals. Sustainable finance is critical to enabling Africa’s adaptation to climate impacts and to ensure its future development path is consistent with global climate goals.

Although Africa has contributed little to global greenhouse gas emissions, it’s already being disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change.

As Africa continues to grow, policymakers must avoid the mistakes of the past and support more sustainable pathways of growth that can deliver on both its development and climate goals. This will be achieved through increased access to sustainable finance from public sector and private sector investments.

African business leaders, investors and policymakers in national and sub-national governments and cities must:

- Develop a common international taxonomy for sustainable finance between international and African financial institutions and investors.
- Barriers must be decreased to allow access to sustainable finance for green building developments and retrofitting by property developers in Africa.
- Facilitate the accreditation of Green Building Councils and green building certification schemes in Africa to facilitate access to sustainable finance for green building developments and retrofitting. This would be through capacity building and preferential financial terms for bankable green building projects and clear linkages between green buildings and sustainable finance.
- Provide relevant, blended sustainable finance instruments that are inclusive and equitable while scaling up the number and technical capacity of sustainable finance specialists and MSMEs in African countries.
- Increase availability of climate and sustainable finance as a financial mechanism to mitigate the physical loss and damage of buildings and infrastructure.
- Ensure every African can afford a green home by incentivising the provision of green mortgages for all income brackets.
- Develop a policy for derisking green building financial instruments for all building classes and formal and informal income brackets through blended finance, green bonds or sustainability-linked bonds. This includes assessing alternative forms of financial instruments for the unbanked and those without traditional credit profiles including the recognition of informal collective saving schemes (such as stokvels and chamas).
INFRASTRUCTURE

Rapid urbanisation requires a look beyond buildings to recognise the dependent relationship between the buildings and surrounding infrastructure that comprise our urban environment. This includes natural systems like blue and green infrastructure, supportive systems like utilities, connective systems such as transport and communications infrastructure, and the social infrastructure of the built environment.

With an estimated infrastructure gap up to $107.5 billion a year, it’s critical that leaders invest in sustainable infrastructure and recognise the importance of adopting an integrated approach to buildings and infrastructure, and urban and rural areas to deliver on a sustainable built environment that aligns with the regional climate commitments.

African business leaders, investors and policymakers in national and sub-national governments and cities must:

- Ensure an integrated approach to buildings and infrastructure through the implementation of Clean Construction principles at city scale and climate resilience planning that is underpinned by smart, integrated, holistic and measurable urban implementation frameworks and urban climate action plans.

- Support nature-based solutions that leverage nature and the power of healthy ecosystems to protect people, optimise infrastructure and safeguard a stable and biodiverse future. This includes blue and green infrastructure like green parks, urban water bodies, green roofs, urban agriculture, solar shading and sustainable, permeable drainage systems that can help build climate resilience, whilst promoting health and wellbeing.

- Implement policies and plans that incentivise the use of non-motorised transport and public transport with electric vehicle charging points and infrastructure for decarbonisation of transport emissions. This will provide an important co-benefit in terms of improved air quality in densely-populated urban areas.

- Implement Sustainable Infrastructure Principles for the low-carbon maintenance of existing infrastructure, especially in vulnerable formal and informal settlements including coastal areas that are susceptible to coastal erosion and natural disasters caused by climate change.

- Infrastructure design and upgrading must support and explore the potential of smart city strategies which includes national-scale, city-scale and precinct-scale programmes.

- Invest in the upgrading of informal settlements and slums to formal housing to improve urban resilience for vulnerable communities in urban poverty and to ensure equitable access to basic infrastructure and services for every African.
Delivering ‘The Africa We Want’ requires a coordinated approach from all levels of government across Africa to support and implement the policies outlined in this manifesto. This includes regional institutions such as the African Union setting out a strategic vision, national governments demonstrating a commitment and - crucially - subnational actors in districts and cities as the implementers on the ground.

**REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS MUST**
- Provide support to encourage alignment of mandates across all levels of governance.
- Highlight the importance of citizen engagement and consultation in policy making, particularly the inclusion of women, youth and vulnerable communities.
- Channel funding to multi-level governance processes and ensure strategies and policies are vertically integrated.
- Facilitate access to funding for pilot projects to increase market readiness of solutions, strengthen business models and promote integration of technologies.
- Consider how a carbon border adjustment mechanism in the African Continental Free Trade Agreement could support the decarbonisation of Africa.

**NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS MUST**
- Ensure Naturally Determined Contributions (NDCs) include the key asks outlined in this manifesto.
- Commit to developing decarbonisation, water and circularity roadmaps which facilitate an integrated and holistic approach that reflects national contexts and, more regionally, the continent’s needs.
- Support a regulatory environment that enables greater coordination between government, ministries, private sector and civil society organisations such as Green Building Councils to better anticipate climate risks and the appropriate response.
- Promote sustainable public procurement as a tool to deliver sustainable cities and built environments, and ensure public procurement is leveraged as a tool to drive the transformation towards decarbonised and circular built environments.
- Work closely with local authorities to assess, plan and implement energy generation systems, and ensure that regulation at national level is contextualised for uptake of accessible, affordable, renewable energy at local government level.
- Ensuring subnational governments have access to dedicated technical assistance and financing mechanisms so they can develop and replicate projects.

**ROLE OF SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND CITIES**
- Recognise their crucial role as delivery partners and create the enabling frameworks to deliver the asks outlined in the manifesto.
- Engage with relevant local stakeholders and communities to define a clear strategy for implementation that recognises local needs and context.
- Collect data on cost, energy and other indicators to build a solid evidence base on the business case for sustainable buildings.
- Lead by example including piloting innovative solutions to deliver low carbon, circular and resilient strategies.
- Support building and construction sector upskilling in higher education and the creation of new local employment within the green economy.
- Support setting up of local materials recovery, processing and exchange sites to support circular supply chains in the building and construction sector.
- Collaborate to create joint commitments, transfer knowledge and share experiences with other cities, governmental levels and stakeholders.

**IMPLEMENTATION: A MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE APPROACH FROM ADVOCACY TO ACTION AND IDEAS TO IMPLEMENTATION**