

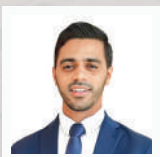


AFRICAN NARRATIVES

Africa's Climate Future: Navigating Challenges After a U.S. Paris Agreement Withdrawal



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Main Points:

- **The Impact of Climate Change on Africa:**

Africa is experiencing severe consequences of climate change, including droughts and floods, despite its minimal contribution to global emissions. These impacts threaten food and water security and exacerbate conflicts and migration.

- **Trump's Postulated Withdrawal from the Paris Agreement:**

A potential United States withdrawal from the agreement, as posited in this study, could weaken global efforts to combat climate change, particularly in Africa, by potentially reducing financial and technical support needed to address climate challenges.

- **Security Threats:**

Climate change is identified as a factor increasing instability in Africa, as terrorist groups may exploit harsh environmental conditions to recruit individuals, thereby exacerbating conflicts and threatening regional security.

- **Climate Financing Concerns:**

A U.S. withdrawal could negatively impact climate financing, potentially hindering climate adaptation projects in Africa, such as improving water management and transitioning to renewable energy.

- **Adaptation Efforts:**

Africa requires financial and technical support to enhance its capacity to adapt to climate change through projects like developing drought-resistant agriculture and building disaster-resilient infrastructure.

- **Africa's Agenda 2063:**

Africa aims to integrate climate risk management into its development plans, focusing on renewable energy and regional cooperation to achieve sustainable development and effectively address climate challenges.

Abstract

This study examines the potential future of climate change in Africa, considering a hypothetical withdrawal of the United States, led by President Donald Trump, from the Paris Climate Agreement in January 2025. Africa is one of the regions most severely affected by climate change, despite its minimal contribution to global emissions (less than 4%). The continent confronts acute environmental, economic, and social challenges, including droughts, floods, desertification, and water scarcity, which jeopardize food and water security and exacerbate poverty and conflicts.

The postulated withdrawal of the United States, as one of the largest historical emitters and a key funder of climate initiatives, could weaken the global commitment to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement, potentially leaving Africa in a precarious position. A reduction in financial and

technical support could diminish the capacity of African nations to adapt to climate change, thereby intensifying environmental and economic crises and possibly creating conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism and terrorist groups.

The study explores the impacts of climate change on stability in Africa, including increased displacement leading to environmental refugees, and escalating conflicts over resources. It also discusses international efforts to address climate change, such as the Loss and Damage Fund, and the potential implications of a U.S. withdrawal for climate financing. Finally, the study highlights Africa's Agenda 2063 and its role in promoting sustainable development and addressing climate challenges, emphasizing the need for enhanced regional and international cooperation to ensure a sustainable future for the continent.

Keywords

Climate Change, Paris Agreement, American Withdrawal, Human Security, Drought and Desertification, Climate Finance, Political Stability, International Cooperation.



The Future of Climate Change in the African Continent In Light of a Postulated U.S. Withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement

Climate change has emerged as one of the most critical issues on the international agenda in recent years, garnering widespread attention from countries and global organizations. This focus is primarily due to the severe threats it poses to human security. The impacts of climate change are not confined to its direct negative repercussions; they also include rising drought rates, increasing desertification, and significant crises related to water scarcity. Moreover, these consequences have become more severe and intertwined, linking directly to food and water security, economic and political stability, and the escalation of conflicts and terrorism, particularly within the African continent. Despite contributing no more than 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions, Africa suffers immensely from the impacts of climate change. Among the most prominent manifestations are drought, irregular rainfall patterns, and desertification.

These consequences lead to an increase in the number of environmental refugees and internally displaced persons, placing greater pressure on infrastructure and economic resources. They also expose societies to further political and social instability, potentially exacerbating ethnic and sectarian conflicts.

This study considers a scenario where, on January 20, 2025, a newly elected U.S. President, Donald Trump, announced the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement. Such a move could spark global concern, particularly in Africa, which is one of the regions most affected by climate change. Despite its minimal

contribution to global emissions, Africa faces serious environmental, economic, and social repercussions due to rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, and an increased frequency of natural disasters such as droughts and floods. A U.S. withdrawal, given its position as one of the world's largest historical polluters, could weaken the international community's commitment to achieving the agreement's goals, potentially leaving Africa in a difficult position. With a possible decline in financial and technical support, the ability of African countries to adapt to climate change could become limited, threatening food and water security and potentially exacerbating poverty and conflicts.

In this study, we aim to shed light on the potential future of climate change in the African continent and the implications of such a U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on Africa. We will examine how this decision might affect Africa's efforts to tackle growing climate challenges, focusing on several key areas discussed in the following sections.



1 Farouk Hussein Abu Deif, "Climate Change and Terrorism: The Case of Lake Chad," *Afaaq Istratijiya Magazine*, Issue 6, August 2022.
<https://www.idsc.gov.eg/Article/details/7372>

The Potential Impact of a U.S. Withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on Stability in Africa

The announcement by a newly elected U.S. President, Donald Trump, in January 2025, regarding the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement, could send a clear message of prioritizing national economic interests over global environmental commitments. However, the ramifications of such a decision would likely not be limited to environmental aspects alone but could extend to security and political dimensions, especially in fragile regions such as Africa. One of the most critical potential consequences of such a withdrawal is its impact on the growing climate change-related terrorist threats, a phenomenon that has become increasingly evident in recent years. Climate change is not merely an environmental issue; it can act as a threat multiplier, particularly in regions suffering from weak governance and political instability.

In Africa, where a vast majority of the population relies on agriculture and natural resources, climate change can exacerbate poverty, drought, and desertification, potentially creating fertile ground for the spread of violent extremism. Terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram in West Africa and Al-Shabaab in East Africa, may exploit these conditions to recruit individuals who have lost their livelihoods due to climate-induced changes.

The Paris Climate Agreement provides a global framework to unify efforts in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting the countries most affected by climate change, particularly in Africa. With a potential withdrawal of the United States—historically one of the largest emitters of greenhouse gases and a major financier of climate initiatives—the financial resources available to support climate adaptation projects in Africa

could diminish significantly. This decline in international funding could mean that many African countries would struggle to implement adaptation projects, such as improving water resource management or developing drought-resistant agriculture. As a result, environmental and economic crises could worsen, potentially increasing poverty and unemployment—two key factors that can fuel violent extremism.

In regions already suffering from resource scarcity, such as the African Sahel, climate change can exacerbate conflicts over water and agricultural land. These disputes can quickly escalate into armed conflicts, particularly in the absence of governments capable of managing resources equitably. Terrorist groups, which can thrive in chaos and instability, may take advantage of these conditions to expand their influence and recruit more individuals. For example, in the Lake Chad region, declining water levels due to climate change have led to the degradation of agricultural land, forcing thousands to migrate. This mass displacement has created a security vacuum that groups like Boko Haram have exploited to expand their operations and recruit those who have lost their sources of income.

A U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement would not merely be a political decision; it could send a strong message to the world that the United States might not fully assume its responsibility in combating climate change. This message could potentially encourage other countries to relax their climate commitments, leading to a slowdown in global efforts to curb emissions. Such a slowdown would mean the continued worsening of climate change impacts, thereby increasing pressure on vulnerable communities in Africa.

2 Camilla Mina, Africa's climate change chief criticises Trump's Paris withdrawal, African Business, 22 January 2025. <https://african.business/2025/01/politics/africas-climate-change-chief-criticises-trumps-paris-withdrawal>

3 Africa's climate change chief criticises Trump's Paris withdrawal, African Business, *ibid*.



The Impact of Climate Change on Instability in Africa

With growing instability within the African continent, driven by the increasing effects of drought waves that have severely affected several regions—particularly the Horn of Africa—there has been a significant rise in internal displacement. Approximately 2 million people have been displaced within Somalia and Ethiopia, while millions of refugees have been forced to cross their national borders, as seen in Somalia and South Sudan, where many have fled to Kenya and Ethiopia. This situation underscores the magnitude of the climate catastrophe facing Africa. According to various UN reports, the impacts of climate change in the region have become increasingly diverse, manifesting as droughts, rising temperatures, and fluctuations in rainfall patterns, all of which pose threats to the lives and livelihoods of African citizens.

Sudan remains highly vulnerable to climate change threats, with increasing drought levels,

erratic rainfall patterns, and escalating environmental challenges. These issues are further compounded by the ongoing conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, which has destroyed a significant portion of the country's infrastructure, including vital oil facilities, potentially leading to an environmental disaster. Additionally, the conflict has contributed to the shrinking of agricultural land, turning once fertile areas into barren, uncultivable lands. This deterioration is expected to escalate conflicts among local communities and displaced populations over fragile agricultural lands, exacerbating tribal and political divisions within the country. Such circumstances highlight the urgent need for intensified international and regional efforts to address climate change and its devastating consequences across various African regions.

4 Shaaban Bilal, "Climate Change in the Horn of Africa Threatens Millions of Lives," Al-Ittihad News Center, December 28, 2023.

<https://shorturl.at/YaRhP>

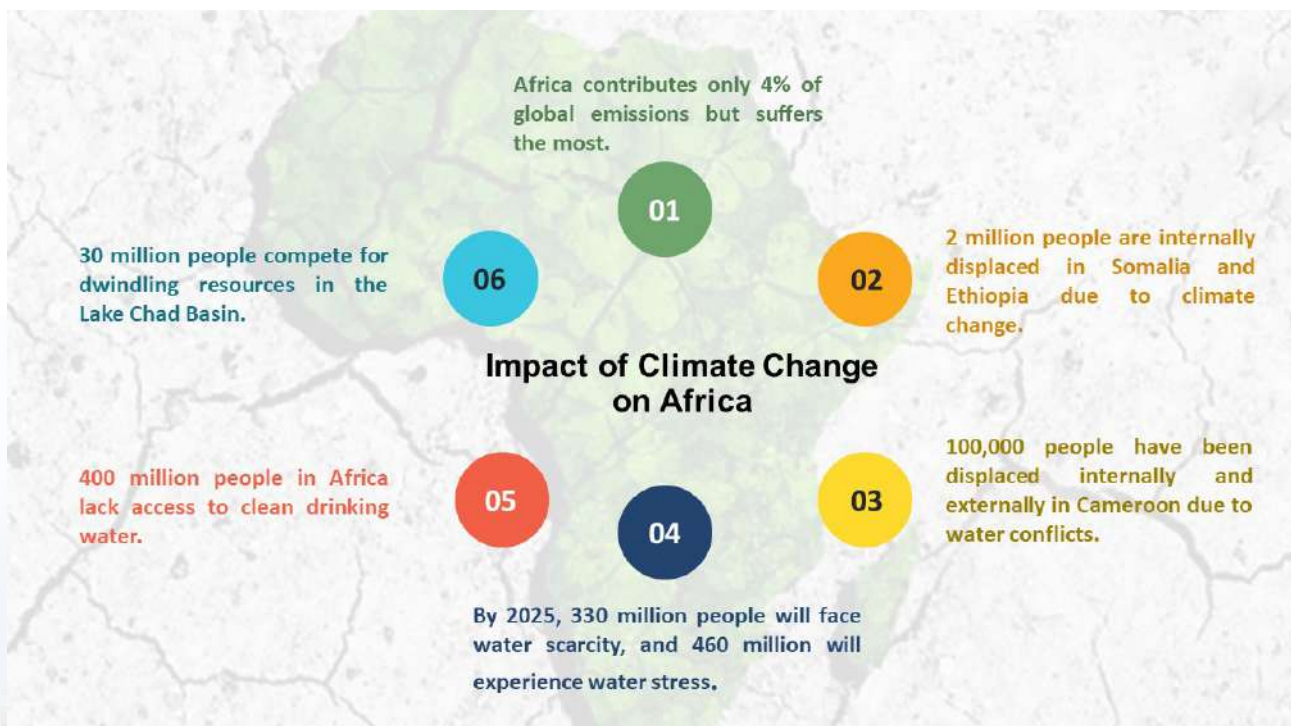
5 Farouk Hussein Abu Deif, "Climate Change and Its Implications for the Horn of Africa: The Case of Sudan (Study)," Pharos Center for Consultations and Strategic Studies, August 2024.

<https://shorturl.at/ixeJ2>

As climate change threats continue to escalate—affecting agriculture, crop patterns, and water security—armed groups have exploited these challenges to strengthen their presence and expand their activities across the continent. Climate change has become a catalyst for these movements, enabling them to increase their influence within vulnerable states. Moreover, countries most exposed to extreme climate events are increasingly becoming breeding grounds for conflicts and violence, further exacerbating poverty and providing fertile ground for recruitment into extremist and terrorist groups. According to the United Nations, many of the countries most affected by climate change also suffer from significant security fragility. Notably, 8 out of the 15 most climate-affected countries host UN peacekeeping missions. Mali serves as a prime example, facing a complex interplay of internal conflicts and climate change impacts. Armed groups across Africa have capitalized on

the persistent instability caused by climate change, particularly in countries struggling to meet the basic needs of their citizens. For instance, water shortages in Cameroon have led to intensified local conflicts between fishermen and farmers, displacing approximately 100,000 people both internally and externally. Meanwhile, the Lake Chad Basin continues to face severe food insecurity challenges amid growing regional conflicts. Climate-induced impacts in the region have resulted in competition among nearly 30 million people from Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon over access to the lake's diminishing water resources.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, around 400 million people currently lack access to drinking water. By 2025, an estimated 330 million people across the continent are expected to face water scarcity, while approximately 460 million will be at risk of water stress.



6 People, Countries Impacted by Climate Change Also Vulnerable to Terrorist Recruitment, Violence, Speakers Tell Security Council in Open Debate, United Nations. <https://press.un.org/en/2021/sc14728.doc.htm>

7 Coups, food, climate, and more on AU summit radar, Deutsche Welle. <https://www.dw.com/en/au-summit-grapples-with-coups-food-crisis-terrorism-climate-change/a-61962760>

10 Climate Change Is a Gateway to Terrorism in East Africa and the Sahel, *ibid.*

8 Janani Vivekananda, Lake Chad Risk Assessment: The role of climate change in the current crisis, Adelphi. <https://www.adelphi.de/en/project/lake-chad-risk-assessment-role-climate-change-current-crisis>

9 Farouk Hussein Abu Deif, Climate Change Is a Gateway to Terrorism in East Africa and the Sahel, Alternative Policy Solutions. <https://aps.aucegypt.edu/en/articles/1321/climate-change-is-a-gateway-to-terrorism-in-east-africa-and-the-sahel>

International Efforts to Address Climate Change

Addressing climate change has become one of the top priorities of the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda, known as the "2030 Agenda," with Goal 13 focusing on "Climate Action." This goal aims to enhance resilience in responding to climate-related disasters and to take serious and robust measures to mitigate and combat the effects of climate change. In recent years, international efforts have intensified to develop strategies that reduce the impact of climate change on countries, with a particular emphasis on cutting emissions of harmful greenhouse gases.

Although Africa contributes a very small percentage to global greenhouse gas emissions, it remains one of the continents most affected by climate change. African nations face major challenges such as droughts, floods, and food insecurity, which often lead to famines. However, the continent's capacity to tackle these challenges remains severely limited due to a lack of funding and international support. In this context, developed countries have allocated funds to support Africa in addressing climate change, but these financial commitments often fall short of what the continent needs to adapt to the difficult conditions it faces.

One of the most notable efforts in this regard was the establishment of the "Loss and Damage Fund" during the COP27 Climate Summit, held in Sharm El-Sheikh in November 2022. This fund aims to compensate developing countries for climate-related damages. However, discussions are still ongoing regarding how the fund will operate and the conditions for benefiting from it. As environmental and climate challenges continue to grow, the impact on the African continent is expected to extend beyond its borders, potentially affecting other regions worldwide. This may push some countries—particularly industrialized ones—to reduce carbon emissions, alleviate

pressure on Africa's climate, and work towards finding appropriate solutions to tackle climate threats.

Recently, climate diplomacy has emerged as a key tool for the global response to climate challenges. This diplomacy seeks to enhance dialogue between national interests and international cooperation, aiming to formulate collective responses. One of the most prominent frameworks in this regard is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while focusing on supporting developing countries.

Moreover, the discourse on climate justice plays a vital role in highlighting Africa's challenges and promoting climate security across the continent. This discourse emphasizes the importance of adopting a climate security approach, which prioritizes Africa's specific needs.

In this regard, several African nations—particularly those in the Horn of Africa, such as Somalia and Sudan—have the potential to confront climate change through the following measures:

- **Increasing financial support:**

By securing more international aid and grants.

- **Enhancing regional cooperation:**

By strengthening institutions such as the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to develop effective climate strategies.

- **Implementing effective climate policies:**

To better adapt to the growing climate challenges.

These measures, if effectively implemented, can improve Africa's resilience to climate change and foster sustainable development across the continent.

11 Goal 13 of the Sustainable Development Goals: Climate Action, International Atomic Energy Agency. <https://www.iaea.org/ar/min-nahn/alhadaf-13-min-ahdaf-alt-anmiat-almustadamt-aleamal-almunakhii>

12 Climate Change and Its Implications for the Horn of Africa: The Case of Sudan (Study), *ibid*.

13 Climate Change and Its Implications for the Horn of Africa: The Case of Sudan (Study), *ibid*.

14 Climate Change and Its Implications for the Horn of Africa: The Case of Sudan (Study), *ibid*.

The Future of Climate Change in Africa in Light of Agenda 2063

Agenda 2063 serves as a crucial continental framework for the African Union, built upon seven key aspirations, with one of the most prominent being “A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.” Through this vision, the African continent seeks to confront the accelerating threats of climate change and enhance African development. In light of this, it has become necessary to update Agenda 2063 to address climate change challenges and transition towards more sustainable pathways that support the continent’s aspirations to achieve its future goals.

Africa faces significant challenges due to climate change, which not only hampers development but also threatens the realization of Agenda 2063’s objectives. Insufficient responses to the climate crisis raise concerns about rising carbon emissions resulting from population and developmental growth. As Africa strives to improve living standards, carbon emissions are projected to increase by an additional 297 million tons by 2043. This could raise the continent’s share of global emissions from a current level (stated as 9% in this section of the original text) to 12% by that year, and potentially to 30% by 2063.

In the context of future carbon emissions projections, there is growing concern that inadequate responses to the crisis could lead to far-reaching negative consequences, particularly as Africa’s development trajectory is closely linked to increased emissions—similar to patterns observed in other parts of the world. Rapid

population growth and rising demand for improved living conditions further exacerbate the issue. Studies suggest that by 2030, Africa’s emissions could surpass those of the European Union, with a significant rise expected across the continent. Projections indicate that Africa’s emissions could surpass those of major global emitters at various points in the future:

- Potentially surpassing the United States by 2039.
- Possibly exceeding India by 2046.
- Potentially outpacing China by 2056.

This alarming escalation could threaten global efforts to limit temperature rise to below 1.5°C, highlighting the urgent need for ambitious interventions and strategies. To ensure that climate change does not hinder the progress of Agenda 2063, integrating climate risk management into key strategies is essential. This includes:

1. Risk Assessment:

Identifying vulnerabilities and forecasting environmental impacts.

2. Infrastructure Enhancement:

Building resilient structures capable of withstanding extreme climate events.

3. Agricultural Planning:

Selecting climate-resilient crops and adopting sustainable water management strategies.

4. Energy Diversification:

Expanding the use of renewable energy and enhancing adaptation capabilities.

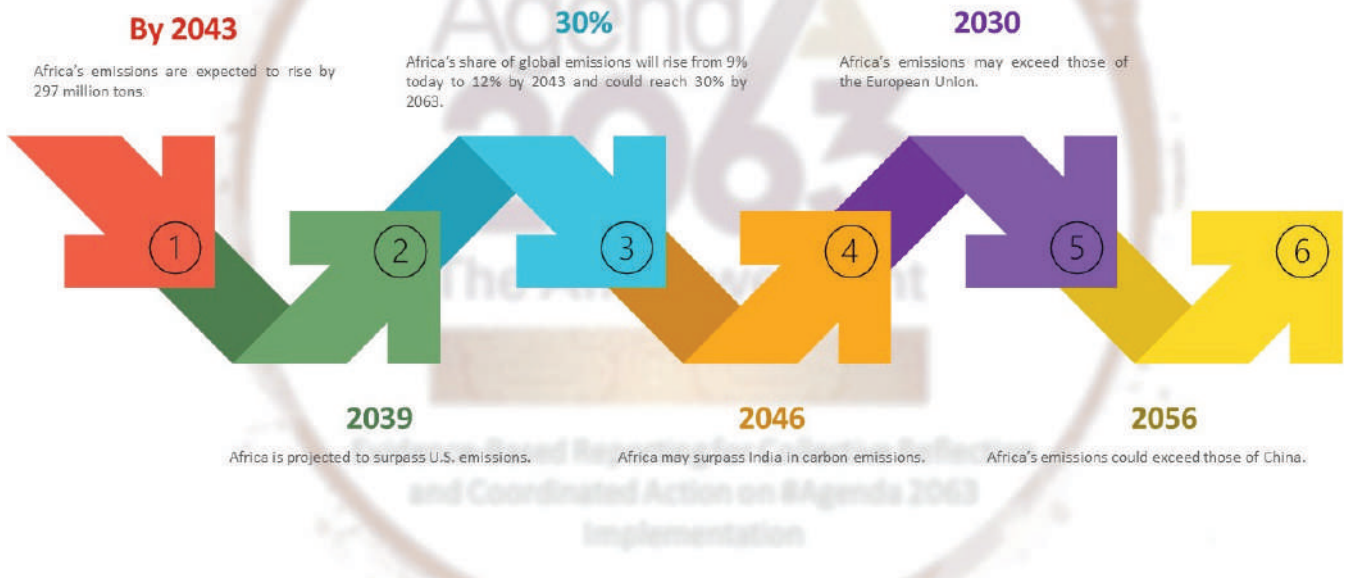
15 Dr. Adham El-Barmawy, "Regional Integration in Africa Between the Past and the Future: NEPAD 2063 Agenda," Information and Decision Support Center. <https://www.idsc.gov.eg/Article/details/8820>

16 Farouk Hussein Abu Deif, "Can the 2063 Agenda Withstand Climate Change in Africa?" African Readings, September 19, 2024.

17 Can the 2063 Agenda Withstand Climate Change in Africa?, *ibid.*

18 Can the 2063 Agenda Withstand Climate Change in Africa?, *ibid.*

Africa's Climate Future Under Agenda 2063



Strengthening the resilience of local communities and institutions is crucial to addressing climate risks and fostering sustainable livelihoods. Furthermore, improving governance frameworks is essential to ensure an effective response to climate change and mitigate conflicts arising from resource scarcity. The ambitious developmental goals of Agenda 2063 are directly and indirectly affected by climate change. Scenarios with high growth potential—such as industrial expansion and implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)—could lead to significant increases in carbon emissions. Therefore, the integration of development objectives with climate policies is indispensable. Climate change management is thus a central issue for achieving human security, supporting environmental stability, and ensuring sustainable development across Africa.

In response to these challenges, African nations are working to expand their international partnerships, aiming to secure approximately \$1.3 trillion annually by 2030 to address climate change, including \$220 billion per year for least-developed countries. Developed nations are also being encouraged to broaden the contributor base for climate finance to include economies that have experienced significant growth since 1992, such as China and oil-producing countries. African countries are increasingly focusing on climate financing, recognizing their urgent need for new and additional funding on concessional terms that do not exacerbate debt burdens. Efforts are underway to expand the scope of financial instruments related to foreign exchange risks, debt relief, and local currency lending.

¹⁹ Aimée-Noël Mbiyozo, Loss and damage still stuck in the mud, Institute for Security Studies (ISS Africa) 21 November 2024.
<https://issafrica.org/iss-today/loss-and-damage-still-stuck-in-the-mud>

The Potential Implications of a U.S. Withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on Climate Financing in Africa

A withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement could have significant repercussions on global climate financing, particularly for developing countries in Africa and other regions most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The U.S. had previously pledged \$3 billion to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), which aims to assist developing nations in mitigating carbon emissions and adapting to climate change. If a U.S. withdrawal led to a halt in a substantial portion of this funding, it could negatively impact the ability of many African nations to implement renewable energy projects and build climate-resilient infrastructure. The key potential consequences for Africa could include:

- **Reduced funding for adaptation projects:**

Many African countries rely on international funding to implement climate adaptation initiatives, such as developing drought-resistant irrigation systems or improving infrastructure to withstand floods. A funding shortfall could slow down or halt several of these critical projects.

- **Delays in transitioning to renewable energy:**

The Green Climate Fund was designed to support the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy in developing countries. With funding cuts, many African nations could struggle to

execute solar and wind energy projects, potentially forcing them to remain dependent on polluting energy sources.

- **Increased risks for vulnerable communities:**

African countries, especially those in the Sahel and other arid/semi-arid regions, are already facing severe climate impacts such as drought and desertification. A lack of funding could make it even more difficult to address these challenges, putting rural communities and impoverished populations at greater risk.

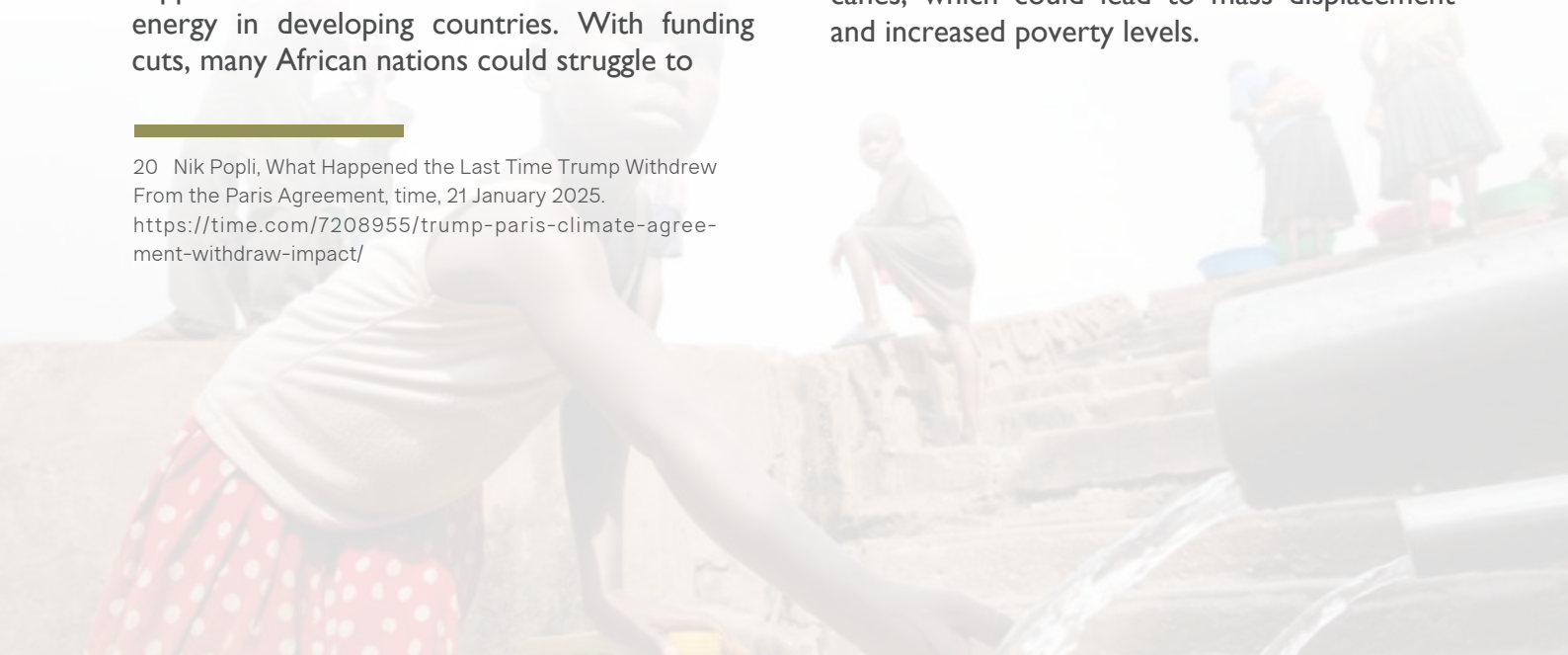
- **Erosion of trust in international commitments:**

A U.S. withdrawal could raise concerns about the credibility of financial commitments made by developed nations to support developing countries. This decline in trust could hinder future climate cooperation and undermine collective action.

- **Economic and social impacts:**

Without adequate funding, African countries are likely to face greater economic losses due to climate-related disasters such as floods and hurricanes, which could lead to mass displacement and increased poverty levels.

20 Nik Popli, What Happened the Last Time Trump Withdrew From the Paris Agreement, time, 21 January 2025.
<https://time.com/7208955/trump-paris-climate-agreement-withdraw-impact/>





Conclusion

The future of climate change in Africa presents an existential challenge that requires a comprehensive and decisive response. Under current scenarios, the continent will face severe consequences if climate risk management is not integrated into all aspects of development planning. However, there is still an opportunity to turn these challenges into catalysts for progress. Africa can contribute to global efforts in developing innovative and sustainable development models by investing in renewable energy, enhancing climate adaptation in agriculture and infrastructure, and adopting green technologies to reduce emissions.

Furthermore, strengthening regional cooperation through agreements such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) can serve as an effective means to share resources and build resilience. Nevertheless, climate change will likely remain a key driver of instability and may influence the activities of armed groups across the continent. Neglecting climate action could further empower these groups, leading to greater economic, political, and social pressures on Africa, and potentially exacerbating instability.

A U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, could negatively affect Africa by potentially weakening global efforts to reduce emissions and undermining financial and technical support for developing countries. Despite these challenges, Africa possesses the capacity to adapt by enhancing regional and international cooperation, adopting sustainable technologies, and advocating for more effective climate policies. Ultimately, combating climate change requires a global commitment, and Africa must be at the heart of these efforts to ensure a sustainable future for its coming generations.