

Rich countries should commit more climate finance at COP28 to support African livestock systems to adapt, say experts

African Union Commissioner Josefa Sacko joins dozens in an open letter that argues the adaptation of Africa's livestock sector is a 'matter of climate justice'.

NAIROBI, KENYA, November 27, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- High-income countries at COP28 must agree to ramp up investments to help Africa adapt its livestock systems to sustain the fastest-growing population on the planet, African leaders, scientists and experts have said in an open letter.

The document, signed by more than 50 organisations and individuals and released ahead of the COP28 climate summit, describes livestock as a "climate solution with legs" for the 800 million herders and smallholder farmers they support across sub-Saharan Africa.

Signatories include H.E Amb. Josefa Sacko, African Union (AU) Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, as well as academics, scientists and experts in sustainable development.

They outline how livestock offer resilience to climate extremes, can help restore degraded land and support biodiversity, and also support communities to rebuild in the aftermath of disasters.

Despite this potential for sustainable livestock development to contribute to climate adaptation and resilience, Africa's livestock sector continues to receive just a fraction of overall climate finance.

In 2020, Africa received just [11 per cent](#), or \$30 billion, of its total climate finance needs, with less than [one per cent](#) reaching the livestock sector, the letter states. At the same time, more than [13 million](#) livestock have died during the ongoing and unprecedented drought across the Horn of Africa alone, endangering the lives and livelihoods of the communities they support.

"Livestock are the lifeblood of millions of people across Africa, supporting greater nutrition, economic opportunities, and adaptation in the face of rising climate extremes and food insecurity challenges," said Prof. Appolinaire Djikeng, Director General of the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), which coordinated the letter.

“Parties at COP28 must urgently recognize the full potential of climate adaptation for Africa’s livestock sector to sustainably feed and support a quarter of the world’s population by 2050, and direct funding accordingly.”

Signatories set out how improving the resilience of small-scale livestock systems across Africa can also help reduce the sector’s emissions. For instance, expanding simple, improved practices on smallholder farms and preventing livestock losses can reduce greenhouse emissions by up to 30 per cent, while boosting productivity, animal welfare, food security and incomes.

The open letter highlights a range of opportunities in the livestock sector that can help support sustainable development and climate justice across Africa. This includes developing more reliable forages and feed, more resilient breeds of indigenous livestock, more resilient animal health systems and support services, such as digital information tools, finance and index-based livestock insurance.

“Supporting climate adaptation in Africa through investment in livestock is not just an economic issue, but a form of climate justice, given Africa has contributed less than three per cent of historic global greenhouse gas emissions,” said Dr. Huyam Salih, Director of African Union – Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR).

“In this context, supporting greater adaptation and resilience for Africa’s livestock sector is vital for improving the livelihoods of the continent’s 800 million herders and smallholder farmers amid deteriorating climate conditions.”

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Notes to editors

About the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)

The International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) works to improve food and nutritional security and reduce poverty in developing countries through research for efficient, safe, and sustainable use of livestock. ILRI is a member of the CGIAR System Organization, a global research partnership for a food-secure future.

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