WHY A WEST AFRICAN STRATEGY ON CLIMATE CHANGE?

In the West Africa region, there are a high number of countries that are ranked among the world’s most vulnerable countries to climate change. In addition, the region has the largest number of countries where more than 30% of the population lives below the extreme poverty line (less than $1.90/day) and depends on activities that are very sensitive to weather conditions for their livelihoods: rain-fed agriculture, livestock production, and fishing. As a result, these people are particularly vulnerable to climate shocks that are increasingly recurring and of unprecedented magnitude in the region.

OXFAM’S INTENTION IN WEST AFRICA

Our regional climate justice strategy defends the rights and promotes the economic and social empowerment of the people most discriminated against and most exposed to the effects of climate change, particularly women and young people. That is why we want to make climate governance processes more equitable and inclusive, improve communities’ adaptive capacities, and make climate finance more accessible. In doing so, we will help to strengthen communities’ resilience in the face of climate change and to decarbonise West African economies.

HOW?

Our intervention strategy in West Africa is built around three change objectives:

**CHANGE 1**
Fair and sustainable climate policies and development models are adopted by public institutions.

**CHANGE 2**
The capacities of local communities to be resilient to climate change – particularly women and young people – are strengthened.

**CHANGE 3**
The people and collectives most affected by climate change have access to climate finance in an accountable way.
CHANGE OBJECTIVE 1:
FAIR AND SUSTAINABLE CLIMATE POLICIES AND DEVELOPMENT MODELS

Climate policies and development models adopted by states and government administrations recognize the rights of West African producers and citizens, support their efforts to adapt to climate change and contribute to the transition to low-carbon economies.

WHY?
The current climate policies in place are not robust enough in their ambitions for change. They do not protect populations from the impacts of climate change and do not contribute to reducing inequalities – particularly in terms of gender. Political actors must raise their level of commitment through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans that contribute to strengthening resilience and climate justice among the population.

HOW IS THIS ACHIEVED?
1. We advocate for strengthening and fulfilling the commitments made by states in climate change adaptation, and for adopting adaptation measures that reduce structural inequalities based on gender.

2. We influence public and political institutions in favour of the adoption and promotion of sustainable and equitable production models in the agricultural sector.

3. We provide support and advocate for the low carbon energy transition in the production and consumption sectors.

4. We are stimulating collective and civic engagement – particularly of women and young people – in the transition to local and sustainable food systems.

FOR EXAMPLE
the PROACT project in Nigeria has enabled 70 rural communities in the Adamawa and Kebbi states who are very vulnerable to climate change to develop community-based climate change adaptation plans (C-CLAP). These communities have also established climate risk registries as part of the early warning system developed by the project.
Local communities, especially women and young people, are becoming better equipped to address the risks and impacts of climate change, with livelihoods that equitably enhance their socio-economic opportunities.

**WHY?**

- In West Africa, the majority of the population living in poverty is mainly dependent on agriculture and livestock, both of which are very sensitive to climate conditions.
- Changing rainfall patterns, rising temperatures, increasingly frequent and intense extreme events (droughts, floods, etc.) and the gradual degradation of arable land affect agropastoral productivity and exacerbate populations’ food insecurity, forced displacement and conflicts over access to production resources.
- Women and girls are more seriously impacted by climate change because of discriminatory social norms and practices that limit their access to productive resources and socio-economic opportunities.
1. We analyse the risks, vulnerabilities and capacities of populations exposed to climate change in order to improve the quality of our programs and to carry out influencing actions. For example, the Vulnerability and Risk Assessment (VRA) methodology helps to inform the development of climate action plans in several countries and to adjust the implementation of our projects.

2. We deploy climate-resilient farming techniques by scaling up traditional practices and successful innovations, thereby increasing agricultural productivity. For example, we support the adoption of techniques such as improved seeds, agroforestry, agroecology, improved pasture management or hydroponic production.

3. We are fighting against land degradation and contributing to the regreening of the Sahel by promoting traditional soil conservation and protection practices, alongside agroforestry, and strengthening communities’ capacities for biodiversity management, including the natural regeneration of native and threatened tree species. For example, we are promoting community-based regreening initiatives through the “Regreening the Sahel” project in Mali.

4. We are improving the management of climate-related risks through the use of indigenous knowledge and by combining different approaches related to disaster risk reduction and agropastoral management. For example, in several countries we are promoting Village Savings and Loan Associations, community-based early warning systems, or the creation and management of cereal banks.

5. We are facilitating equitable access to renewable and clean energy to strengthen rural livelihoods and provide better economic opportunities for women and young people. For example, in Nigeria we promote the use of renewable and clean energy by women through the Fuelwood Balance (FuWoBa) project, which promotes the local management and restoration of natural renewable resources.
CHANGE OBJECTIVE 3: ACCESSIBLE AND ACCOUNTABLE CLIMATE FINANCE

Communities and public institutions have better access to sources of finance to help them adapt to climate change. They have the capacity to manage these funds effectively and transparently.

WHY?
• In Africa, the finance currently available for climate-change adaptation accounts for only 20% of the estimated needs in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which are $33 billion per year by 2030, according to the Global Center on Adaptation (GCA).
• Without investment in climate change adaptation, economic losses in the agricultural sector could reach 15% of West Africa’s gross domestic product (GDP) by 2050.
• Adaptation to climate change currently corresponds to only 25% of global climate finance from public sources. In addition, the loss and damage linked to climate change is not yet recognized in global climate financing instruments.
• There is a significant gap between the funds available globally and the funds actually disbursed and managed by the communities.
1. We conduct action research on climate finance to document inequalities in community access to climate funds, the management models in place, and to assess their level of transparency, accountability, and relevance for young people and women. For example, a research study is being conducted to assess the quantity and quality of global and national climate finance in West Africa.

2. We advocate and carry out campaigns at national, regional and global levels to increase the availability and quality of climate funds and to remove barriers to access by communities. For example, in Senegal, we support research into and efficient use of green funds by civil society.

3. We raise awareness and strengthen the capacities of civil society organizations and communities regarding access and management of climate funds. For example, in Mauritania, we support communities and partners to initiate local projects related to nature regeneration and to finance them through green funds.

4. We create mechanisms for the social accountability of climate projects, such as the creation of monitoring and accountability committees involving women and young people.

5. We promote Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) as a means of financing resilience and adaptation to climate change. For example, the Sahelian Youth for Climate Action (JESAC) project in Burkina Faso and Niger is piloting a PES system based on satellite monitoring of environmental indicators, from plots reforested by young people and women.