



African Journal of
**Climate Law
and Justice**
(AJCLJ)



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AJCLJ Call for Papers for Special Issue

Just Transition, Climate Change and the Law in Africa

Just Transition has emerged in global discussions and normative development about climate change, especially in energy transition, decarbonisation, green economy, climate finance and climate justice. Increasingly, state and non-state actors are making energy transition pledges and commitments at the global stage. Also, the term is used by various international institutions, from the United Nations (UN) to the World Bank, that now either have some policy statement, initiative or a task force dedicated to Just Transition. Regarding its normative development, the UN has established a global architecture for Just Transition, starting with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Just Transition Guidelines (2015). The Paris Agreement (2015), a pillar instrument in climate governance, urges parties to consider Just Transition following nationally defined development priorities. Just Transition also forms part of Resolutions of the UN Human Rights Council, including on the right to work (A/HRC/RES/55/9 of 2024); human rights and climate change (A/HRC/RES/53/6 of 2023); and the right to development (A/HRC/RES/54/18 of 2023). It features in General Comment No 26 (2023) of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child; and reports produced by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on climate change and the right to food (A/HRC/55/37 of 2024); rights of older persons and climate change (A/HRC/47/46 of 2021); and persons with disabilities and climate change (A/HRC/44/30 of 2020).

Despite the foregoing, the fairness in the application of the concept of Just Transition at a time when Africa faces energy insecurity, stranded asset risk, and developmental challenges is sometimes contested and often problematic. Yet, the concept is not devoid of normative standards at the continental level. The African Union (AU) Climate

Change Strategy, the African Common Position on Energy Access and Just Energy Transition and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), among others, are prominent instruments for Just Transition in the context of climate actions at the continental level. Also, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, a leading mechanism within the AU system, affirms the legal obligation of states to take appropriate measures individually and collectively on climate change, especially the obligation of countries that contribute the most to greenhouse emissions. More importantly, it calls for a scale-up of financial flow between states and the need to ensure agreement on modalities for a just energy transition. It also prioritises the needs of populations in vulnerable situations. At the domestic levels in Africa, climate laws, climate policies, and legal frameworks focusing on or featuring Just Transition are emerging to add to the plethora of normative attention to the concept. Climate policy and legal framework may clarify Just Transition and human rights due diligence standards and measures required of all participating actors.

However, the potential within the above development for the agency of law in enhancing the understanding of the meaning, nature and application of Just Transition is still undeveloped. Scholarship on Africa is limited on the engagement with the meaning, position and limits of law on the nature of commitments and obligations emerging on Just Transition and climate change across different levels of their governance. In addition, there is a dearth of academic scrutiny with a focus on how existing barriers test the adequacy of the emerging regulatory approach to Just Transition and climate change in Africa. Some of such barriers, which are real, particularly in Africa and may interface with different regimes of law, are listed in a Report of the Secretary General to the Human Rights Council. These include continued reliance and dependency on fossil fuels, instability and conflicts over critical energy transition minerals, inadequate labour rights and social protection, inequalities and marginalisation of populations in vulnerable situations (A/HRC/60/52 of 2025).

While solutions to issues arising from the application and process of Just Transition and climate change may be found within and beyond the courtroom, the interaction of Just Transition, particularly with the emerging trend in climate litigation, needs conceptual clarity. Climate change litigation scholars have recently defined just transition litigation as a particular subclass of cases. Scholarly engagement with the framing and nature of lawsuits regarding the justice and fairness of Just Transition between the developed and the developing states remains in flux. Also, with a particular focus on Africa, it merits academic scrutiny to define, explore and engage with whether potentials exist in international, regional and national human rights law or its overlap with other branches of law in advancing Just Transition in the context of how it may be done, who benefits from it, who bears the cost and burden and who is included in or excluded from the process.

Against the foregoing background, the third issue of the African Journal of Climate Law and Justice (*AJCLJ*) aims to contribute to the debate and improve the understanding of

the relevance and role of law in various issues relating to Just Transition in the context of climate change in Africa. We invite papers that engage with how law across different levels of governance may interact or relate to hinder or aid the application and process of Just Transition in Africa in a changing climate. Manuscripts may deploy methodologies including doctrinal, comparative, transnational or interdisciplinary approaches.

Manuscripts could address any or a combination of the following themes with a focus on Africa:

- ✓ The conceptual basis for Just Transition as a legal response to climate change
- ✓ Nature and legal implications of barriers to and opportunities for Just Transition
- ✓ Nature and application of legal obligations (state and non-state actors) under international and AU instruments related to Just Transition
- ✓ The rights of populations in vulnerable situations in the Just Transition process
- ✓ Contestations and tensions and the role of Just Transition law and litigation in African states from a comparative perspective
- ✓ Climate finance, energy poverty, stranded assets and Just Transition Law

Expressions of interest should be sent to Professor AO Jegede (ademola.jegede@univen.ac.za and ademolajegede@gmail.com) by the **30th of November 2025**. Complete manuscripts (with or without prior expression of interest) should be submitted by the **31st of March 2026** to the same address.

This Issue will accommodate pieces of various types (e.g., articles, case notes, review essays, or book reviews) and lengths (about 9000 words or 4000 for case notes)

Please follow the style guide at:

https://www.pulp.up.ac.za/images/files/publish_with_pulp/PULP_STYLE_GUIDELINES.pdf