**Road to COP31: Centre Disability, Centre Albinism**

**Advocacy message**

This message comes out of the continental webinar convened by the Africa Albinism Network (AAN) on 29 October 2026. Participants and speakers are welcome to use it, in full or in part, in statements, side events, meetings with negotiators and social media at COP31 and in other climate engagements.

**Centre disability. Centre albinism. There is no climate justice without the rights of persons with disabilities.**

Climate change is already harming persons with albinism and other persons with disabilities in Africa. In Kakamega County, Kenya, the climate has become hotter, and most persons with albinism farm in the sun. In one door-to-door awareness campaign, 16 of the 64 persons with albinism reached had serious sun damage, and all 16 were later diagnosed with skin cancer. Across the continent, persons with disabilities miss early warnings they cannot access and face evacuation centres they cannot enter. Yet their organisations are rarely in the rooms where climate decisions and climate finance are agreed.

Persons with disabilities including persons with albinism also bring solutions. In Kakamega county, 40 persons with albinism and parents of children with albinism are building a shade-grown mushroom farming cooperative that protects their health and earns them an income.

At COP31 and beyond, we call on governments, the African Group of Negotiators, funders and climate organisations to:

1. Recognise the Disability Climate Caucus as a formal constituency of the UNFCCC. States that have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are obliged to ensure that persons with disabilities take part in decisions that affect them, including climate decisions.
2. Include persons with disabilities, including persons with albinism, in adaptation, loss and damage and just transition measures, with clear targets, budgets and indicators.
3. Recognise sunscreen, sun protection and skin cancer care for persons with albinism as part of climate adaptation and health planning.
4. Make climate information and early warning systems accessible to everyone.
5. Fund organisations of persons with disabilities directly and treat accessibility and reasonable accommodation as standard costs in every climate programme and event.

Nothing about us without us applies to climate action too.

**Short version for social media**

Rising heat is already raising the risk of skin cancer for persons with albinism in Africa, and persons with disabilities are still left out of climate decisions. At #COP31, recognise the Disability Climate Caucus as a

UNFCCC constituency and fund disability-inclusive adaptation. Centre disability. Centre albinism.

## Advocacy brief

### Purpose and background

This brief gives participants, speakers and partners a common set of evidence and asks to use at COP31, held in Antalya, Türkiye, from 9 to 20 November 2026, and in other climate engagements with the African Union, national governments and funders.

It draws on the continental webinar *Road to COP31: Centre Disability, Centre Albinism. A Continental Webinar on Climate Change and Disability*, convened by the Africa Albinism Network (AAN) on 29 October 2026 with the support of Global Greengrants Fund. Over 70 participants took part, with interpretation in English, French, Portuguese and sign language interpretation. The speakers were:

- Bonface Massah, Executive Director, Africa Albinism Network
- Sherleen Tunai, founder of Ana Antami, a community organisation working with persons with albinism in Kakamega, Kenya
- Anthony Kimathi, Humanitarian Coordinator, CBM Global Disability Inclusion, Kenya
- Catherine Hyde Townsend, Ford Foundation
- Shitaye Astawes, Director of Advocacy and Communication, African Disability Forum
- Muhammed Lamin Saidykhan, Climate Action Network International

- Josephine Mwatibo, co-focal point, Disability Climate Caucus to the UNFCCC

The brief reflects the views expressed during the webinar.

**Why this matters now**

Climate change is already affecting the health, income and safety of persons with albinism and persons with disabilities in Africa, and their organisations are still largely outside climate decision-making.

**Rising heat is a health emergency for persons with albinism.** Persons with albinism have little or no melanin to protect their skin and eyes from ultraviolet radiation. In Kakamega County, Kenya, a forest area once known for its mild climate has become hotter. Most persons with albinism there farm or herd livestock in the sun. During a door-to-door awareness campaign, Ana Antami's team met 64 persons with albinism. Sixteen had serious sunburn or sun damage. After referral through Kenya's National Council for Persons with Disabilities to a dermatologist at Kakamega County General Hospital, all 16 were found to have some form of skin cancer, and 8 have since died.

**This is one county.** These figures come from a single campaign in one of Kenya's 47 counties.. Persons with albinism across Africa face similar conditions: outdoor work, rising heat, and little access to sunscreen, screening or treatment. This suggests that far more persons with albinism are dying of preventable skin cancer than any current record shows. Climate change is making an existing risk worse, and without data

disaggregated by albinism and disability, these deaths remain invisible in climate planning.

**Sun protection is scarce and hard to keep up.** Government-supplied sunscreen in Kenya is limited and hard to obtain, and people who grew up in a milder climate find it difficult to keep reapplying sunscreen and wearing protective clothing. Bonface Massah noted that persons with albinism across the continent lack access to sunscreen, skin care, prevention programmes and treatment, which affects their rights to life, health and an adequate standard of living.

**Persons with disabilities are left out of preparedness and response.** Speakers pointed to early warnings that deaf persons cannot access, evacuation centres that wheelchair users cannot enter, and climate infrastructure such as water points designed without input from persons with disabilities.

**Organisations of persons with disabilities are underfunded and under-represented.** Catherine Hyde Townsend explained that many climate donors have never considered disability-led organisations as grantees. Requirements on budget size and track record shut out organisations that have never been funded. Donor consultations often reach only existing grantees, so disability is not raised at all.

**Persons with albinism and persons with disabilities also bring solutions.** In Kakamega county, 40 persons with albinism and parents of children with albinism have been trained in shade-grown mushroom farming and are forming a cooperative. The project reduces sun exposure,

provides income and nutrition, and gives persons with albinism a visible place in the local economy. Anthony Kimathi Ngari urged organisations to document such initiatives as evidence for wider climate policy.

**There is momentum to build on.** The UNFCCC recognised the Disability Climate Caucus in February 2026. At the Bonn Climate Change Conference in June 2026 (SB64), Parties including Guatemala and Kenya, alongside the African Group, called for the first time for a disability constituency (CBM UK, July 2026). COP31 is the next opportunity to turn this support into a decision.

## Legal and policy basis

These asks rest on obligations that most African states have already accepted.

| Instrument | What it requires or offers |
|---|---|
| UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) | Article 4(3) requires states to closely consult and actively involve persons with disabilities, through their representative organisations, in decisions that affect them. Article 11 requires all necessary measures to protect persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including natural disasters. |
| Protocol to the African Charter on | Article 12 requires specific measures |

| Instrument | What it requires or offers |
|---|---|
| Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa (African Disability Protocol) | to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including forced displacement, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters. |
| Paris Agreement (2015) | The preamble calls on Parties to respect and promote their human rights obligations, including the rights of persons with disabilities, when taking climate action. Article 9.1 commits developed country Parties to provide financial resources to developing country Parties. |
| COP30 outcomes, Belém (2025) | Parties called for efforts to triple adaptation finance by 2035, adopted indicators for the Global Goal on Adaptation and created a just transition mechanism, the Belém Action Mechanism (UNU-EHS). Each is an entry point for disability inclusion, including disability-disaggregated data. |
| African Union Climate Change | Africa's continental framework for |

| Instrument | What it requires or offers |
|---|---|
| and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2032) | climate action. It commits to a people-centred approach and support for the most vulnerable groups, but does not yet set out how persons with disabilities will take part (UN Digital Library). |
| African Union Plan of Action to End Attacks and Other Human Rights Violations Targeting Persons with Albinism in Africa (2021–2031) | Covers health, education, social protection and awareness raising. According to Bonface Massah, only about seven or eight countries have adopted national action plans, and these do not yet address climate change. |

Josephine Mwatibo noted that the Disability Climate Caucus has a legal opinion arguing that, under the CRPD, recognition of a disability constituency is an obligation of states parties, not a favour.

**What we are asking for**

The central ask for COP31 is a decision recognising persons with disabilities as a formal UNFCCC constituency. The other asks follow from the webinar and apply at COP31 and beyond.

| Who | What we ask |
|---|---|
| African governments | Support recognition of a disability constituency |

| Who | What we ask |
|---|---|
| and their UNFCCC national focal points | at COP31 and say so in negotiations. Include persons with disabilities, including persons with albinism, in Nationally Determined Contributions, National Adaptation Plans and loss and damage requests, with targets, budgets and indicators. Collect climate data disaggregated by disability. Make early warning systems and climate information accessible. Integrate sun protection, sunscreen and skin cancer screening and treatment for persons with albinism into heat and health adaptation plans and national essential medicines lists. Add climate change to national action plans on albinism. |
| African Group of Negotiators | Maintain the call for a disability constituency made at SB64 in June 2026. Raise disability inclusion under the Global Goal on Adaptation, the just transition mechanism, loss and damage and adaptation finance. |
| African Union and regional economic communities | Set out how persons with disabilities will take part in implementing the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan. Link it with the African Disability Protocol |

| Who | What we ask |
|---|---|
| | and the AU Plan of Action on albinism. |
| UNFCCC Parties and the Secretariat | Recognise the Disability Climate Caucus as a constituency. Ensure accessible participation at COP31, including sign language interpretation, accessible venues and documents, and support for participants with disabilities. |
| Funders and philanthropy | Fund organisations of persons with disabilities directly for climate work, including organisations without a track record of climate funding. Treat accessibility and reasonable accommodation as standard eligible costs. Make grant portals accessible and include organisations of persons with disabilities in donor consultations. |
| Climate networks and civil society | Bring organisations of persons with disabilities into coalitions, working groups and side events as partners. Include disability in shared policy demands. |
| Organisations of persons with disabilities, including organisations of persons with albinism | Join the Disability Climate Caucus and speak with one voice. Build knowledge of the negotiations. Document community solutions as evidence. Work within the wider climate movement, beyond disability-only spaces. |

| Who | What we ask |
|---|---|
| | Engage national focal points before, during and after COP31. |

**How to use this brief**

The most useful step before 9 November is to share this brief with your national UNFCCC focal point and ask for their support for a disability constituency.

**Before COP31**

- Send this brief and the Disability Climate Caucus advocacy brief to your country's UNFCCC national focal point and your ministry responsible for climate change. Ask whether your delegation will support constituency recognition.
- Join the Disability Climate Caucus so you receive coordination updates and can add evidence from your country.
- Prepare one or two examples from your own community, with data where you have it. Remove names and other identifying details unless people have agreed to be named.
- If you hold a COP31 badge, tell AAN and the Disability Climate Caucus so that delegates can coordinate.

**During COP31**

- Attend the Disability Climate Caucus's daily coordination meetings.
- Raise disability and albinism in every meeting you attend, whether in negotiation rooms, side events, pavilions or civil society spaces.

- Meet your national delegation and members of the African Group of Negotiators, using the asks in this brief.
- Work with allied constituencies and climate networks, including Climate Action Network, which offered at the webinar to connect organisations of persons with disabilities with negotiators and to support side events.
- Ask organisers of every event you attend about accessibility, and report barriers to the Disability Climate Caucus.

**After COP31**

- Follow up with your focal point and with any government that supported the disability constituency, and keep the contact going until COP32.
- Track what was agreed on the constituency, the Global Goal on Adaptation, the just transition mechanism and adaptation finance, and share it with your networks.
- Bring government officials and climate actors into national dialogues on climate change and disability, so they hear directly from persons with albinism and persons with disabilities.
- Share your experience and evidence with AAN for future reports and advocacy.

**Contacts**

- **Africa Albinism Network:** Kwame Andrews Daklo, Advocacy Manager. kwame@africaalbinismnetwork.org
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