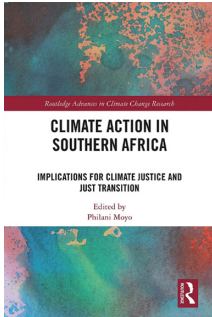


**BOOK TITLE:**

Climate action in southern Africa:
Implications for climate justice and
just transition

**EDITOR:**

Philani Moyo

ISBN:

9781032501604 (hardback, 239 pp;
GBP135)
9781003397120 (ebook, 239 pp;
GBP40)

PUBLISHER:

Routledge Taylor & Francis Group,
London, UK

PUBLISHED:

2024

REVIEWER:

Cornelias Ncube¹

AFFILIATION:

¹Institute of Development Sciences,
Faculty of Business and Economic
Sciences, National University of
Science and Technology, Bulawayo,
Zimbabwe

EMAIL:

ncube.cornelias@nust.ac.zw

HOW TO CITE:

Ncube C. Climate action justice in an
unequal and unjust world. *S Afr J Sci.*
2024;120(9/10), Art. #19127. <https://doi.org/10.17159/sajs.2024/19127>

ARTICLE INCLUDES:

- Peer review
- Supplementary material

PUBLISHED:

26 September 2024

Climate action justice in an unequal and unjust world

It is tempting for academics to jump on the bandwagon of globally topical and discursive development themes and rush to publish articles, chapters or books that lack analytical and empirical quality and are delinked from the world of decision and policymaking. Notwithstanding the dominant voice of the editor in 6 of 13 chapters, Philani navigates this temptation by assembling diverse and seasoned researchers and development practitioners whose multidisciplinary approach to interrogating the pertinent global policy issue on how to address climate change in ways that do not accentuate extant inequalities in the Global South, within and between communities, is insightful and timely. The book *Climate Action in Southern Africa* amplifies the voice of the Global South in the international discursive policy spaces on climate justice action, making it relevant for researchers, students, climate change activists, governments and financial actors.

The book acknowledges that the impacts of climate change are already acutely being felt across the southern African region, evidenced by the frequency of droughts, floods, and excessive temperatures among many extreme climate change induced weather phenomena. This has negatively affected the largely agro-based economies and livelihoods of vulnerable communities across the region. Smallholder farmers' agency and choices are limited and constrained in rural communities, which has negatively impacted their capacity to manage their rangeland carrying capacities for their livestock and to use resilient food production systems that guarantee food security. Climate change is negatively impacting water demand management practices in metropolitan urban centres. Poverty, inequality and job losses are being accentuated by climate change, putting the future of the youthful populations at great risk. Climate change induced mobility heightens gendered inequalities and compounds social cohesion in the region and communities. Across the region, several efforts to address climate change through strategies such as climate-smart agriculture, promotion of renewable energy use, and ecosystem renewal through reforestation projects have yielded differentiated outcomes. This is a problem caused as much by weak legal, policy and institutional frameworks and weak climate financing mechanisms by governments, as they are driven by the challenges to integrate climate justice and just transition considerations into climate action at global, national and community levels.

The chapters in this book collectively address the politics of achieving climate action justice in an unequal and unjust world. There is spirited resistance to the idea of 'historical responsibility' and 'climate debt' by some actors in the Global North. Philani and colleagues strongly push back and absolutely "... disagree with the argument ... that climate justice is merely about individual and collective climate action that simply takes account of different vulnerabilities, resources and capabilities without delegating primary responsibility for those actions" (p.5). This is a legitimate demand from the margins, at global, country and community levels. The severe impacts of climate change in the Global South are barely proportionate to historical and present responsibilities related to greenhouse gas emissions. In the Global South, the carbon-intensive sectors are a double-edged sword: they are major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and equally significant drivers for economic, industrial and social pathway transformations for southern Africa.

Drawing insights from a multipronged theoretical lens – inclusive of sustainable development, sustainable livelihoods, human rights, intersectionality and gender – the authors dexterously discuss the implications for climate justice and just energy transition for the southern African countries and their communities. First, they argue that, in order not to accentuate extant global inequalities and injustice, climate action justice necessitates that the Global North support and enhance the climate action resilience capacities of the Global South through just climate financing models and technology transfer. Second, just energy transition initiatives at country and community levels must be inclusive and participative to protect jobs, vulnerable communities and differentiated groups within the communities. The southern African governments' capacities and political will to foster collaborative climate justice action among key stakeholders, such as labour unions, civil society and the private sector, is crucial.