



African People's Statement on COP 26 - Rise Up and Demand Climate Justice!

Adopted at the African People's Counter COP, 27 October 2021

We, the African people, women and peasants, social movements, and community-based and civil society organisations have gathered at the first ever African People's Counter COP 2021 to build a unified understanding and shared political action towards real solutions to the climate and ecological and social crises facing Africa!

We are now calling on our African governments, including the African Group of Negotiators, and those in the Least Developed Countries (LDC) group to go into the forthcoming COP26 in Glasgow and negotiate in the interests of our African peoples and our planet, not in the interests of the elites and the polluters.

Africa is living the climate crisis now!

Our continent is being hit by heatwaves, droughts, wildfires, dried soils, cyclones, storms, locust plagues, flooding, sea level rise and other climate-related disasters. Since 2000, Mozambique, Madagascar, Zimbabwe and Kenya have been among the hardest-hit countries in the world, even though their emissions are minimal.

Our ten hottest years have all been recorded since 2005. The temperature across Africa is projected to be hotter than previously experienced in the recorded past, and will rise faster than the global average across most of the continent. With about 60 percent of our people depending on agriculture and local food systems to survive, most of whom are peasant women food producers, food insecurity levels are being intensified and African lives and livelihoods are at severe risk. Whilst Africa and its people continue to suffer the most devastating impacts of the crisis, the tragic irony remains that the region has contributed least to the climate crisis!

We must deal with the root cause of the crisis!

Climate change and its impacts are linked to our colonial past and imperialist development, which were and still are based on a capitalist, extractivist model. Indeed, the modern economy has created the climate, ecological, economic and social crises we face today. These intersecting crises continues to be deepened by a colonial, patriarchal and neoliberal model of accumulation- driven by a logic of domination, exploitation and destruction of human beings and nature.

The Global Climate Summits have failed us!

To make matters worse, we watch with dismay as over the last 26 years, the United Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Conference of Parties (COPs) - as annual spaces for intergovernmental negotiations - have been unable to progress towards real solutions to the climate

crisis. This is because its agenda and actions have been skewed to preserve the profit-driven, vested interests of powerful corporations and their allies in governments. They continue to undermine solutions that address the core causes of climate change. Corporate polluters and the government negotiators at the UNFCCC don't want to take financial, legal or any responsibility for the damage caused, or to genuinely reduce carbon emissions and pollution.

For these 26 years, climate negotiations have been blocked and curtailed at every turn. Big corporations have captured this space to promote false Solutions such as "net-zero", carbon markets, and supposed "nature-based solutions" (including timber plantations and genetic crop modification) which would provide them means to protect and expand their control over the global populations, their lands and territories and natural resources, all to profit off the crisis. In fact, these and other false solutions" are causing massive land grabbing across our continent, illegal logging is not decreasing and dangerous monoculture plantations are spreading. What is needed is an end to fossil fuels, the end to industrial agribusiness, rapid reduction in wasteful consumption and a fundamentally changed economy and society that centres care of people and Planet.

The COP26 in Glasgow is particularly worrying, as it is perpetuating global injustices and inequities even during this critical pandemic. The UK government has insisted on hosting the COP this year despite the likely poor participation of governments and especially civil society of the Global South because of high costs, lack of access to vaccines, now popularly dubbed "vaccine apartheid", visa difficulties and onerous, constantly-changing and biased quarantine and travel requirements. Calls for postponement to ensure a fully representative and participatory COP have fallen on deaf ears. The voices of Global South women, people of colour, working class, frontline communities and others vulnerable to the climate crisis are likely to be silenced at this COP. The big corporates and governments of the Global North will capture the negotiations with their destructive narrative and decisions. Our African delegation and Global South governments also suffer ever diminishing power, so it is safe to predict that the COP26 outcomes will be unfair, unjust, and lacking in needed ambition and justice.

We are calling on the world - and especially our African Delegation to the COP - to push for the following outcomes in Glasgow:

Cut Greenhouse Gases (GhG) to Zero: Adopt GhG emissions reduction requirements to keep the average global temperature below 1.5C - recognising that Africa is close to 1.5 degrees already and warming at twice the global average. Ensure that cuts are based on science and justice so that those who have polluted most must carry the brunt of drastic emission cuts at source and compensation costs. Hold those who continue to pollute to account by penalising them through legal means, as well as naming and shaming, divestment, and sanctions. Reduction of emissions from the military, maritime and air-transport should also be treated as urgent priorities since the UNFCCC has historically ignored them due to political pressure.

Ensure a Just Recovery and Transition: A Just Recovery from the COVID-19 health pandemic and its intersecting crises must focus on creating a 'new normal' that centres on people and planet, and not on profit. Ensure a Just Transition away from carbon intensive and high consumption economies which supports affected workers and communities and radically transforms our energy, transport (and tourism), education, agriculture, urbanisation, production, consumption and disposal systems. This agenda should include consultation with labour unions and informal worker collectives, with a focus on decent work, growing public sector jobs and livelihoods, and ensuring public investments in social protection and public services, such as early learning and care centres, education, welfare, as well as primary and secondary health services. There should be a special focus on mass education on climate change and systemic transition in all their dimensions.

Stop False Solutions: Abandon all false solutions including net zero, failed emissions-trading and offsetting gimmicks, so-called nature-based solutions and other tech-fix false Solutions like geoengineering, timber-plantation sequestration, dangerous genetic modification and manipulation. Nuclear energy, big dams, and 'Green' and 'Blue' Economy must be called out as scams and be abolished. Lands and forests must be removed as a way to implement Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which focuses on advancing false solutions to climate change. Governments, civil society and social movements must fight together for system change and demand real zero, not net zero.

Formalise the Rights of Nature: Legally institute the rights of nature and make ecocide a criminal offence so that the planet is restored for current and future generations. Ban any technological 'scheme' that aims to pervert and abuse the natural order including, for example, seeding clouds for rain, depositing iron filings in the seas to absorb sunlight, and injecting aerosols into the atmosphere to cool the planet.

Manage Technology as a Public Good: Allow the transfer of climate-friendly technology and localised production techniques without imposing any Intellectual Property restrictions or loan conditionalities. Commit to universal clean-energy and public transport access, and adopt far-reaching food-sovereignty reforms.

Leave Fossil Fuels Underground: Financiers, owners or managers of oil, gas and coal reserves must stop all new exploration (and phase out current extraction), and at the same time revalue the reserves that they are exiting from and account for this as 'stranded assets'. To do this, end the \$6 trillion worth of annual government fossil fuel subsidies. The Free, Prior, Informed and Continuous Consent of women, indigenous peoples and their communities, and their Right2SayNO to fossil fuels extraction and combustion projects, as well as harmful mega infrastructure projects, must be recognised and respected.

Honour and Pay Climate Debt: Ensure that the historical 'polluter-pays' responsibilities for the 'climate debt' that large emitters owe is honoured and paid to oppressed women, indigenous and other local communities in the Global South. Governments should develop sustainable participation mechanisms that bring small-scale food producers' voices to the policy table to create people-centred policies. Climate debt should acknowledge the ways in which the climate crisis impacts on different groups. Women carry the heaviest debt burden of Climate Change. Climate debt settlement must provide redress in the forms of particular support to the work of care, such as education, health services, land rights and support to household food production etc. and replace debt-based finance with grants. Climate debt should fully cover 'loss and damage' reparations, costs of climate-proofing adaptation and resilience, and compensation for the low-emissions countries' use of carbon space.

Make Climate Justice Possible with Economic and Debt Justice: The global transition to a more sustainable and equitable economy will not be possible without sustainable, sufficient, fair and non-debt creating finance. It is critical that the financing of the transition does not exacerbate debt vulnerabilities in the Global South. Cancellation of odious debt is needed for countries not only to be able to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to address the challenges of climate change and pursue a green and inclusive just recovery. Illicit capital flows away from Africa and the Global South must be urgently stopped and compensated for.

End Sacrifice Zones: Ban new infrastructure projects which displaces indigenous and other local communities from their territories, pollutes the water, air and soil and destroys nature, all in the name of so-called 'development'. Fenceline communities' Right to Say No to these projects must be heard, honoured and treated as a legally binding decisions. Recognise that we cannot mine our way out of the

climate crisis. Interventions must protect local people in areas affected by destructive mining activities and 'green' extractivism'. Those that inflicted harm must pay for damages caused and fair reparations must be given to those already affected. Special attention and support must be given to coastal communities, whose territories are among the hardest hit.

Stop Waste Colonialism: We must reject waste dumping in the Global South and exclude waste-to-energy incineration from national and other climate plans. Stop petrochemical expansion, reduce plastic production, and phase-out single-use plastic and packaging across different sectors. Plans must include investment in waste reduction measures and zero waste circular economy systems, including reuse-based alternative product delivery systems. Hold polluter companies accountable for plastic pollution and their enormous contribution to global warming, in line with the "producer pays" principle. Finance a just transition model with robust social protection and decent income for workers including waste pickers engaged in recycling, reuse, and waste prevention, recognizing their contribution to climate change mitigation, and protecting them from climate change impacts.

Recognize peasant agroecology and other truly sustainable food production and distribution models as alternatives to the industrialized food system. This is a core foundation of Climate Justice, and a part of real solutions to the climate crisis in Africa and the world. Governments should increase national budget allocations to agriculture, guided by the principle of Free, Prior and Informed (and Continuous) Consent by small-scale food producers and consumers. Governments and other actors should mainstream agroecology in its agriculture policies, and promote it through research and extension services.

Listen to solutions from the impacted and marginalized: We must support the youth, who will inherit the future, to be informed, speak out, raise their voices, and mobilize in solidarity to bring about change. Youth have a pivotal role to play in food production and must be urgently and effectively integrated into sustainable food production. The struggle for climate justice is feminist, so we must all fight for and support the meaningful representation of women and girls, children, youth, persons with disabilities and the poorest of the poor in policy and other interventions addressing climate change. We must be led by the stewards of people and planet- women and indigenous peoples. Advancing feminist economic and ecological alternatives and revalorizing indigenous knowledge systems is an existential priority.

Africa, 27 October 2021

Africans Rise Up and Demand Climate Justice!

CLIMATE JUSTICE NOW!

A NEW AFRICA IS POSSIBLE!

IT IS TIME TO TRANSFORM!

This Statement of the 2021 African People's Counter COP is open for endorsements. [Click here](#) to endorse it as well!

For more information contact:

Ubrei-Joe Maimoni - AfCG secretariat info@africaclimatejustice.org

Trusha Reddy - Womin trusha.Reddy@womin.org.za

Mateus Costa Santos - LVC SEAF lvcseaf.public@gmail.com