

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
- Ensure a Just Recovery and Transition
- Stop False Solutions
- Formalise the Rights of Nature
- Manage Technology as a Public Good
- Leave Fossil Fuels Underground
- Honour and Pay Climate Debt
- Make Climate Justice Possible with Economic and Debt Justice
- End Sacrifice Zones
- Stop Waste Colonialism

- Recognize peasant agroecology and other truly sustainable food production and distribution models as alternatives
- Listen to solutions from the impacted and marginalised

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!

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