

JOINT POSITION PAPER FROM CLIMATE JUSTICE CSOs IN AFRICA, TO GOVERNMENTS OF AFRICA, ATTENDING THE 26TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN GLASGOW

SUBJECT: ADVANCING
REAL SOLUTIONS
THROUGH CLIMATE
CHANGE POLICIES AND
ACTIONS



INTRODUCTION

As governments of Africa, private sector actors, and civil society organizations convene in Glasgow for the all-important climate change event in the globe, we have been articulating climate actions aimed at building resilience of our communities with a view to demonstrate commitment for the continent's fair share of global climate change action.

It's a fact that Africa contributed and still contributes most insignificantly to the current climate crisis, yet we are the most adversely affected by its consequences. It will only be strategic for the governments of the continent to project a harmonized position and engage the discussions with a 'common language' premised on uniform climate actions that won't compromise each nation's peculiarities. This common language should not fall short of placing stronger emphasis on just and equitable short term and effective climate policies and actions as shall be seen below from our aggregated demands.

OBSERVATIONS

We, civil society organizations promoting climate justice through advancing agroecology, corporate accountability, young environmental movements, and women farmers movements acknowledge that in the lead up to the 26th Conference of the Parties, it is imperative to share the aggregated climate action demands of front-line communities with our African leaders and leverage their voices for urgent actions and sustainable solutions.

It is common knowledge that Africa is the hardest hit by climate change, in spite of its evident insignificant contribution to this global problem. As advocates for climate justice, we have made the following observations that need critical attention from African governments and all:

- 1 Global warming is increasing at an exponential rate. Record global greenhouse gas emissions are putting the world on a path toward unacceptable warming, with serious implications for development prospects

in Africa. Drought, desertification, scarcity of resources, food insecurity to mention but a few, have become the new normal in Africa.

- 2** “Big Polluters are advancing a “net zero” climate agenda to delay, deceive, and deny,” here following a year packed with record announcements of “net zero” pledges from corporations and governments, and builds on a growing body of research that calls the integrity of “net zero” as a political goal into serious question. As more and more “net zero” plans have been rolled out, the scientific, academic and activist communities have all raised grave concerns about the inability of these plans to achieve the commitments of the Paris Agreement and keep global temperature rise to below 1.5 degrees Celsius.¹
- 3** The above problem trickles down to the most vulnerable persons in our societies, specifically women and the girl child. In a bid to diversify their income off the struggling farming businesses, women farmers face discrimination when they try to access finance to make the investments needed to cope with the impacts of climate change. Climate change effects also increases the burden of women’s unpaid care work and further devastates their ability to cope with the brunt of climate change. Women who lack fixed properties to use as collateral security are often turned away from accessing bank loans for any meaningful investment in agriculture.
- 4** To date, almost without exception, Global North countries are falling inexcusably short of their fair shares in climate action, including the delivery of their climate finance obligations.² Further, many Northern governments are facilitating the domination of climate finance by corporate interests.³ This has forced African governments to tap into their meager consolidated funds to mitigate climate crisis and sometimes even get into debt or grants that focus on false solutions like climate resilient agriculture, which is a fancy way of introducing genetically modified agricultural produce to the detriment of our health and original food species.
- 5** After years of the Global North stalling progress and watering down language of the Paris rulebook, Africa has yet another opportunity at COP26 to reject proposed false solutions under Article 6.2 and 6.4 which only seek to benefit the countries and the corporations most responsible for driving the climate crisis, while our people continue to unjustly pay the cost every day with their lives, their homes, and their livelihoods. Any so-called solution that enables Big Polluters to buy more room to continue to emit only binds people, especially in the poor regions like Africa, into decades of more devastation.
- 6** In a bid to fulfill the funding demands from most development partners, which often include embracing false solutions into our NDC mitigation and adaptation plans, African governments are led to plan for false solutions like market mechanisms, REDD+ programs, etc as embedded in many of our NDC reports, to our detriment. This not only contributes to the growing climate crisis but also creates a cycle of dependency on corporations’ front groups who exploit the crisis we many times find ourselves in by coming in as our saviors to fund our mitigation and adaptation programs.
- 7** We encourage African countries, along with less industrialized and poorer countries, to be allowed to channel much of their resources to adaptation programs. In addition, the wealthier and more industrialized countries should commit to providing funding to support the implementation of national adaptation and mitigation plans of African countries.
- 8** African countries come out with actionable measures to limit greenhouse gases emissions in line with the timescales prescribed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to prevent the climate emergency from spiraling out of control and resulting in irreversible anthropogenic interference with the climate system.
- 9** Should mainstream climate knowledge into formal education to raise a climate change awareness for sustained mitigation and adaptation benefits and create adaptation policy or review where in existence to accommodate peculiar concerns and challenges.

OUR KEY DEMANDS:

At this forthcoming COP26 therefore, we call on the attention of African governments to as a matter of urgency act on the following:

- 1** Challenge and reject pledges made by polluting corporations and governments to achieve “net zero” emissions, which are being used to shift additional burdens onto the African region and avoid responsibility for their role in the global share of emissions to-date.
- 2** Commit to achieving Real Zero emissions reductions, embracing the concept of equity (each country does their fair share).
- 3** Reject industry-driven attempts to ram through rules enshrining market mechanisms into the center of Paris Agreement implementation, via the guidelines for Article 6.2 and 6.4 of the Paris Agreement.
- 4** Governments across the region must come up with real climate change plans (adaptation and mitigation) and reflect the same in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
- 5** Secure concrete outcomes advancing policies to implement real solutions via Article 6.8 of the Paris Agreement.
- 6** Advancing a strong argument to commit industrialized and wealthy countries to provide adequate climate financing for the implementation of its adaptation and mitigation plans.
- 7** Ensure that the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of African countries are independent of false solutions and corporations’ influences, but rather accommodates workable and home-grown climate solutions on mitigation and adaptations.

CONCLUSION

It is a race against time. We live in a complicated and interconnected world, on a continent experiencing considerable economic, social, and environmental challenges. Among the most significant of the environmental challenges is climate change. Climate change threatens to derail the significant development gains that have been made over the last decades; climate change also threatens future growth and development.

Climate change is having a growing impact on the African continent, hitting the most vulnerable hardest, and contributing to food insecurity, population displacement and stress on water and other natural resources. The time for action is now! A continent that contributes so little to the climate crises shouldn’t be at the center of its mess. Climate solutions must be real, workable, realistic, and independent of suggestions from the polluting industry.

As African climate justice civil society, we call on African governments to heed to our petitions herein and advance for real solution. No African government should commit to the net zero scam, as this will be a death sentence to the African continent and the world at large.

ENDNOTES

- 1 https://www.corporateaccountability.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/The-Big-Con_EN.pdf
- 2 NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, “U.S. Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters,” 2017, <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/billions/> (accessed October 15, 2017).
- 3 https://www.corporateaccountability.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/PollutingParis_COP23Report_2017.pdf