

AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY COMMUNIQUE TO THE FIFTH AMCEN SPECIAL SESSION,

GABORONE, BOTSWANA – OCTOBER 2013

We, the representatives of African Civil Society Organizations and Networks under the auspices of Pan African Climate Justice Alliance met in Gaborone, Botswana, on October 12-14, 2013 for the Pre-AMCEN African Civil Society Consultative Workshop, ahead of the 5th Special Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN). The Workshop also served as the UNEP Regional Consultative Meeting with Major Groups and Stakeholders in the Africa Region (RCM) in preparation for the first United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and the 15th Session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF) scheduled to take place in 2014.

Aware that the IPCC-WG I released in Stockholm, Sweden in September 2013 raised the red flag on the rapidly heating earth and the certainty of man's contribution to the growing concentration of greenhouse gas into the atmosphere;

Further aware that the adverse effects of climate change manifested by prolonged droughts, shifting seasons, rising sea water levels, tropical cyclones, land slides, newly emerging environmental refugees, and diseases have compromised Africa's right to development and attainment of national sustainable development and poverty reduction aspirations;

Concerned that the last two decades have been characterised by unfulfilled promises and commitments by developed countries to Africa in particular hence breeding an atmosphere of ever-diminishing trust and confidence in international negotiations processes;

Further concerned of the cruel irony that a people who have lived for so long in harmony with Mother Earth, imprinting the lightest of footprints, now suffer a crisis they contributed the least towards it cause;

Inspired by the need to strengthen our voices as civil society and community groups to contribute to our Governments' positions on various global standpoints.

Acknowledging the efforts by Africa to speak with one voice during the UNFCCC-COP 19 in Warsaw, Poland.

Acknowledging the fact that non-state actors contribution to the UNFCCC process and its outcome is essential for informed policy formulation and monitoring of its implementation at all levels.

Desirous that the One Voice should be that of and be informed by realities of the local communities in the affirmation of the authority of the Civil Society and communities as the expression of the sovereign will of the people;

Appreciating, as a positive step, the COP18 outcome on decision made on promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations and related processes;

Recognizing the progress made so far by the Africa Group, African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and African Union through CAHOSOCC to harmonise African climate change response efforts;

Declares as follows;

1. Keep Africa safe:

We support the acceptance of “loss and damage” as a key area of discussion for the new climate agreement. Africa should also continue calling for the blanket of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere to be returned to well below 300ppm CO₂eq and warming to be limited to well below 1 degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels, with the objective of returning to pre-industrial levels in the longer term.

Based on the accounts we have heard from the local communities, women, youth, indigenous groups of the intolerable conditions caused by climate change including a case of a pastoralist who took his life after loosing all his cattle to a prolonged drought, and based on the report of IPCC Working Group I 5th assessment, even warming of this level globally risks warming of more than 1.5 degrees Celsius in Africa, dangerous interference with our climate, and loss and damage requiring compensation. A goal of “less than 2 degrees Celsius” is no longer ambitious as accepting it would be condemning Africa to incineration and to no modern development.

2. Ensure poverty eradication and food Security:

Climate change poses grave risk to Africa’s food security, and to the lives and livelihoods of smallholder farmers and rural poor communities. African leaders should thus ensure the decisions they support at global level leads to atmospheric concentrations stabilized in a time frame that safeguards food production and ecological systems to adapt naturally, and safeguards jobs and economic development. Agriculture remains one of the crucial sectors affected by climate change and which supports food and livelihoods security of millions around the world especially in developing countries. African governments should therefore put pressure to Parties and SBSTA to conclude the agriculture negotiations under UNFCCC with focus on adaptation and expand the remit to cover sustainable livestock production systems as part of solution to climate change.

3. Share the atmosphere fairly:

African people have the inalienable right to achieve sustainable development by making use of a fair share of the Earth’s global commons and resources. The carbon budget required to return to well below 300ppm CO₂eq should be shared fairly with Africa taking into account the accumulative historical use of these resources by developed countries and the finance and technology transfers made available to developing countries.

4. Industrialized countries to cut excessive consumption and pollution:

Comprehensive action to address climate change should constitute drastic emissions cut by industrialized countries at domestic level. The withdrawal of Canada, New Zealand, Russia and Japan from the KP2 and the continued refusal of United States to ratify the Kyoto Protocol are not good signals to the rest of the global community. These countries should accept their historical responsibilities, reconsider their position and recommit without further delay and conditions.

Though science points to the current emissions of some emerging economies exceeding the industrialized countries, we should recognize that current atmospheric concentrations are principally the result of historical emissions of greenhouse gases, the largest share of which originated in developed country Parties. There is an urgent need for emission cuts by having specific target for all Annex I parties to reduce emissions by at least 45% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 100% by 2050 below 1990 levels.

5. Protect and compensate affected communities:

African leaders should not compromise on their demand that ensures that industrialised countries compensate affected communities and countries for the full costs of avoiding harms, actual harms and damage, and lost opportunities for development resulting from climate change. Any effort to establish adaptation as an obligation and not a right, or to use adaptation as a means to divide or differentiate between developing countries should be resisted. An international mechanism for compensation on the loss and damage caused by extreme weather events related to climate change should thus be established. Though the Green Climate Fund has been established, many observers fear that it may follow the direction of other Climate Funds before it, which remain empty shells after they were shunned by industrialized countries, that favor undemocratic multilateral institutions the can control.

6. Polluter not poor pays:

Developed countries have prospered through “cheap carbon” growth while externalizing their costs to the atmosphere and to developing countries through what has been christened “offsetting”. The costs are now borne by Africa, as we mitigate and adapt to a crisis we played little role in causing. To avert a climate catastrophe and enable mitigation, adaptation and technology transfer to developing countries, developed countries must make available financing of more than 1.5% of their GDP. Efforts to shift the burden of financing away from developed countries and towards developing countries or the markets that have not worked should be avoided. Creation of “unsupported” or “market” NAMAs (actions) are inconsistent with the Convention and thus experiments that are not worth investing.

7. Transfer the tools to adapt and develop.

A “Marshall Plan for Africa and for the Earth” is an emergency that should awaken all stakeholders. Curbing global emissions within a decade requires technology transfers on a scale never before considered. African leaders should compel developed countries to remove intellectual property rights, pay full incremental costs of technology transfer to protect developing countries and contribute for peaking and declining of global emissions. Efforts to sell rather than transfer appropriate technologies,

or to strengthen rather than relax intellectual property rights should not be allowed. Developed and developing countries should support the adoption and development of indigenous and locally innovated technology as well as ensuring efficiency in technology transfer and deployment.

8. Fair not false solutions:

Industrialized countries must not shift burdens to address climate change to developing countries, or seek to “divide and rule” the countries of the South, or to penalize developing countries through trade or other measures. Creation of global carbon markets or sectoral trading mechanisms, by which the developed countries will take more of Africa’s rightful share of atmospheric space should be discouraged.

9. Systems change not climate change:

We should acknowledge the structural causes of the present crisis, and that the climate crisis will not be solved with the same level of thinking that created it. A new system that restores harmony with nature and among human beings should be the only sustainable way to comprehensively deal with climate change impacts. To balance with nature, there must first be equity among human beings. There is need for fundamental change to the current system of social and economic organization. A new order building on the wisdom of our civilizations to live well and to live in harmony with Mother Earth should be the common clarion call for our leaders.

10. Keep to the commitments made:

More pressure from African leaders to ensure developed countries honour and deliver on their commitment of providing US\$100 Billion by the year 2020 should be exerted. Industrialised countries must scale up their Commitments to fulfill their obligation to provide adequate, new and additional funds as this amount is far from all estimates of climate finance needed by developing countries. In COP19, Africa should ask Parties to the Convention to establish a clear and transparent mechanism for monitoring, verification, and evaluation of delivery of climate funds.

Our leaders should call for immediate establishment of an independent process to conduct transparent and consultative verification on developed countries’ claim that they have successfully delivered all FSF of over USD 30 billion to developing countries during 2010-2012 in accordance with controversial Copenhagen Accord, which metamorphosed into Cancun Agreement.

In light of the past failures and lessons learned from past and existing climate funds, the Green Climate Fund must ensure transparency, openness, local communities’ easy access, country ownership and respond primarily to the needs of vulnerable communities. The Fund must respect such principles as sovereignty, self-determination the fulfillment of State obligations; “Do no harm”, Financial integrity and anti-corruption, Public consultations, “Equity, non-discrimination and inclusion”, “Compliance with International Law and Upward Harmonization with the Highest National and International Standards”.

GCF must recognize that human and environmental rights obligations have primacy over financial obligations

11. Gender equity and enhanced stakeholder participation:

Though COP18 made some progress in recognizing gender in negotiating text, still much need to be done. Participation of women, youth, indigenous peoples and marginalized groups in UNFCCC negotiations and representation of Parties in bodies should be balanced between North and South, taking into account the respective differences.

12. Defend democracy:

Since the UNFCCC constitutes the fundamental legal framework on climate change, African leaders should demand for the establishment of effective and accountable institutions under the Conference of Parties. Any response to the climate crisis that is of the people, by the people and for the people should be the guiding principle of future efforts.

Governments across the world should end years of delay and meet their moral, historical and legal obligations. Movements, people's organizations, civil society groups and citizens from all walks of life are gradually coming together in a global campaign on climate and environmental justice. African civil society's desire is to stand in solidarity with the leaders of any nation who seek a solution to climate change that is founded on justice, builds on the best available science, and ensures the well-being of Africans and other peoples and countries.

13. Effective participation in Post 2015 and SDG process

Africa should promote a Single framework with poverty alleviation at the centre and the three dimensions of sustainable development (environment, economic and social). A comprehensive mechanism to deal with the environment should be developed at the level of the African Union Commission and the relevant institutional framework for sustainable development should be strengthened and the collaboration and sharing of information between the African missions in New York and the Capitals should be enhanced.

14. United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA):

As the strengthened and upgraded UNEP is poised to play an effective role as a follow-up to Rio+20 in integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development, the Committee of Permanent Representatives should allow full participation of Major Groups. Major Groups already accredited under UN ECOSOC should be recognized by UNEA, while elected MGFC and Regional Representatives should be accorded speaking rights at the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the UNEA. Broader partnerships between UNEP and other organizations in efforts to fulfill its mandate should always be promoted, with UNEP not limiting itself to policy formulation only but also supporting its implementation.