

African Climate Justice Manifesto **February 25, 2010**

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The [Pan African Climate Justice Alliance](#), c/o the All Africa Conference of Churches, recently released the following [manifesto on African climate justice](#).

We, the undersigned people and organizations of Africa, call on the Heads of State and Government representing the nations of Africa to embrace the cause of climate justice, and to ensure outcomes to the climate negotiations that implement the Kyoto Protocol and ensure the full, effective and sustained implementation of the UN Climate Convention.

Africa stands on the frontline of climate change. Across our continent, in villages, in towns, on coastlines and deep in the heart of Africa, people battle daily with a growing climate crisis. Our rivers run dry. Our crops turn to dust. Seasons shift and change. The effects of climate change are reflected in the expectant eyes of hungry children. In the lengthening footsteps of women carrying water.

Across Africa, a growing congregation of people suffers starvation and disease while others, after freeing themselves from the grip of grinding poverty, are shackled again by an increasingly hostile climate. It is a cruel irony indeed that a people who have lived for so long in harmony with nature, imprinting the lightest of carbon footprints on the earth are now suffering and living in abject poverty due to the damaging effects of greenhouse gases emitted by developed countries.

The effects of climate change are real, we are seeing the consequences; but they are not of our making. For over two centuries the industrialized world became wealthy by drenching the atmosphere in carbon. They plundered resources from every region of the world. On mountains of coal and oil, they built cities of plenty. In great buildings they constructed while triggering the climate crisis they shelter from its effects. Those left outside are now told seek another path to prosperity, while the sun beats down, or a perfect storm – not of their making – gathers on the horizon.

Responsibility for the causes and consequences of climate change lies principally with the developed countries. More than 70 percent of CO₂ from industrial sources was emitted by the 20 percent of people living in the industrialized world. Africa's contribution is less than four percent but still home to close a billion people. It's the industrialized world emissions that occupy the atmosphere and consume the capacity of oceans and forests in Africa and elsewhere to absorb greenhouse gases.

The developed countries seek to continue their excessive emissions, while neglecting their historical responsibilities. Based on their current proposals, the 20 percent of people living in developed countries would consume over 60 percent of the Earth's atmospheric space (historically to 2050) while the 80 percent who are poor will be consigned to live within the remaining 40 percent. Through a global carbon market, the wealthy would purchase more of the South's fraction to "offset" their pollution.

Economists from the developed countries have valued the Earth's atmospheric space or "emissions budget" annually at more than a trillion dollars. At stake in the climate negotiations is among the biggest distribution of resources among rich and poor countries in modern history.

As said by one official, “olden-day land-grabs are replaced by modern-day sky-grabs.”

To achieve their objectives, developed countries are seeking to end rather than implement the Kyoto Protocol, in violation of international law, while they build a new treaty under the Bali Action Plan. They propose global goals that risk untold suffering in Africa, while offering insufficient emission reductions, and inadequate funding. Expectations are downgraded. Processes are delayed. Pressure is mounting on developing countries. Those who suffer the injustice of climate change are encouraged to be “constructive,” while those who caused it “divide and rule” through new country categories (e.g. “most vulnerable”), or offers of early – but profoundly inadequate – finance, or other means.

We, the undersigned people and organizations of Africa, call for a fairer and more science-based solution to climate change. We, as Africans, stand ready to play our part. But cooperation must be based on justice. Climate protection cannot be negotiated and our development cannot be sacrificed. We see the Earth’s atmosphere as a shared “global commons” that should be fairly enjoyed by all – including the poor, future generations and all of life. The people of Africa have a right to a fair share of this commons and to the means to live well within it.

As the basis of this approach, we call on developed countries to honor a two-fold climate debt to developing countries:

We call on developed countries to acknowledge they have already used more than a fair and sustainable share of the Earth’s atmospheric space. They must repay their debt through deep domestic emission reductions and by transferring the technology and finance required to enable us to follow a less polluting pathway, without compromising our development (an emissions debt).

We call on developed countries to compensate us for the adverse effects of their excessive historical and current per-person emissions, which are burdening us with rising climate-related costs and damages (an adaptation debt).

The outcomes agreed at the climate negotiations in Copenhagen must ensure that developed countries address their historical responsibilities and debts, while implementing the Kyoto Protocol (through the Kyoto Protocol negotiations) and the Climate Convention (through the Bali Action Plan). To advance the interests of Africa they must at a minimum secure the following demands:

A double deal in Copenhagen: “Save the Kyoto Protocol.” Copenhagen must deliver a double deal: 1) a legally binding agreement to implement the Kyoto Protocol; and 2) an agreed outcome to implement the Climate Convention under the Bali Action Plan. Developed countries must honor their legally binding obligations for a second period of commitments under the Kyoto Protocol commencing in 2013. We oppose the efforts of developed countries to end rather than implement the Kyoto Protocol and to undermine the fundamental principles of the Climate Convention.

Mitigation: “Rich countries to cut over-consumption and pollution.” Developed countries’ historical emissions are denying Africa its fair share of atmospheric space. To curb the growth of their emissions debts, developed countries must halve their emissions by 2017 and go beyond carbon-neutral well before 2050. They must do so under the Kyoto Protocol. The United States, which continues to refuse to join the Kyoto Protocol, must find a solution under the Convention and Bali Action Plan. We oppose any effort to appropriate Africa’s fair share of atmospheric

space or to create a global carbon market to buy a further share.

Adaptation: “Compensate for climate harms.” Developed countries’ historical emissions are contributing disproportionately to climate change and its adverse effects on Africa. The costs of climate change have been grossly underestimated. Damage from disasters, droughts and other adverse effects in Africa are rising rapidly. To limit and repay their adaptation debts, developed countries must compensate Africa for the full costs of: 1) avoiding harms (where possible); 2) actual harm and damage; and 3) lost opportunities for our development. We oppose any effort to establish adaptation as an obligation not a right, or to use adaptation as a means to divide or differentiate between developing countries.

Finance: “Polluter not poor pays.” Developed countries have prospered through “cheap carbon” growth while externalizing their costs to the atmosphere and to developing countries. The costs are now born 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 five percent of their GDP. We oppose efforts to shift the burden of financing away from developed countries and towards developing countries or the market. We oppose the creation of “unsupported” or “market” NAMAs (actions) as inconsistent with the Convention.

Technology transfer: “Transfer the tools to adapt and develop.” Curbing global emissions within a decade requires technology transfers on a scale never before considered. We need a Marshall Plan for Africa and for the Earth. Developed countries must remove intellectual property rights and pay “full incremental costs” of technology transfer to protect developing countries and to peak and decline global emissions. As stated in the Convention, the extent of developing countries’ implementation depends on developed countries’ implementation of financing and technology. We oppose efforts to sell rather than transfer technologies, or to strengthen rather than relax Intellectual property rights.

Institutions: “Equitable and accountable to Africa.” We call for new and enhanced institutions under the Conference of Parties. We must move beyond the donor-driven arrangements of the past to build institutions accountable to all. We call for the following:

Adaptation: To enhance action on adaptation, we demand: 1) a new Subsidiary Body on Adaptation; 2) an Adaptation Fund under the Convention; and 3) a Work Programme on Adaptation.

Technology: To enhance action on technology, we demand: 1) a new Subsidiary Body on Technology (an Executive Body); 2) a Technology Fund under the Convention; and 3) Technology Action Plans in all sectors and all stages of the technology cycle.

Finance: To enhance action on finance, we demand: 1) an enhanced Financial Mechanism (and Operating Entity); 2) an Executive Board and Trustees; 3) funds for adaptation, mitigation, technology and forests.

We oppose efforts to extend the role of the World Bank or Global Environment Facility. In light of their donor-driven governance, and the persistent concerns of developing countries, these should be “rolled over” into new and accountable institutions under the authority of the Conference of Parties.

Other issues: “Fair not false solutions.” We oppose the use of false and unfair measures by

developed countries. They must not shift burdens to developing countries, or seek to “divide and rule” the countries of the South, or to penalize developing countries through trade or other measures. We oppose the 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.

Shared vision: “Keep Africa Safe.” We call for a shared vision that keeps Africa safe. We demand binding global goals for: 1) finance of more than five percent Annex I GDP; 2) technology transfer to peak and decline global emissions; and 3) adaptation compensation at full costs. These global goals must secure the full repayment of climate debts. And they must be sufficient to keep temperature increases on the African continent well below 1°C (as a 1.5°C temperature rise in Africa will have devastating effects, and as Africa will warm around 1.5 times the global average). We oppose a goal of “less than 2°C” as threatening Africa with catastrophic harm.

The outcomes of the Copenhagen climate conference must advance Africa’s interests. Africa must sign no suicide pact. Our longer-term interests must under no circumstances be sacrificed to short-term financing or to “beggar thy neighbor” outcomes that pursue the interests of some developing countries at the expense of others.

We call on our leaders 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. We will stand in solidarity with you.

For more information please contact:

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