

ROADMAP TO DURBAN – AFRICA CIVIL SOCIETY PERSPECTIVES ON CLIMATE ACTION

As the dateline for the Conference of Parties (COP 17) of the United Nations Framework Convention Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting in South Africa approaches, a lot of renewed activity and consultations are going on at all levels.

At the global level the tempo of all meetings that involve main technical and working groups, committees and various Parties to the UN Convention on Climate Change have been intensified and given much acceleration to conclude any unfinished businesses from the previous Conference of Parties [COP 16] or speed up processes and agreements that may be needed for negotiations due at the Durban Conference in December.

At Continental levels, organizations such as Civil Society and Faith Based Organizations are also busy consulting their various constituents to agree on common positions before negotiations start in Durban, South Africa.

In Africa, the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance [PACJA] is leading about 350 major Civil Society Organizations including Faith – Based ones in discussing the major issues of climate change that confront the continent but for which much progress had not been made since COP16 at Cancun, Mexico to reiterate and reinforce earlier positions taken on major issues for presentation at Durban.

From the 9th – 11th September, PACJA convened a major **African Civil Society Forum** in Bamako Mali, alongside the Africa Ministers Conference on Environment [AMCEN] where Fifty representatives of major Civil Society Organizations including Faith Based to examine and interrogate all the key and outstanding issues that needed attention before the global summit slated for Durban, South Africa in December. This meeting is also to influence a common position with the African Ministers and Negotiators in order to present a common undivided front at the negotiations and towards the realization of the “One Africa, One Voice , One Position” strategy.

The major issues that are of great concern to Africa as represented in PACJA considerations include the drastic reduction of Green House Gases (GHG) that are responsible for global warming as provided for in the Kyoto Protocol, unimpeded access to global adaptation and mitigation funds, finance, technology transfer and capacity building . Other concerns include the structure and allocation of global climate funds, unredeemed pledges made by the developed industrial countries, [Annex 1] since Copenhagen, composition of governing boards for the implementation of the Africa Green Fund and other ancillary issues.

Regarding global warming, PACJA insists that global temperatures caused by polluting countries in the North be drastically reduced to well below 1.5 degrees as prescribed by climate scientists under the UNFCCC. PACJA further argues that any increase beyond 1.5 is injurious to Africa which is already reeling under the current levels and will have dire consequences for agriculture, health and food security. Climate science has proved that any further increases in global mean temperatures will result in temperature rise which is one and half times more in Africa than any other continent. Africa is therefore in the frontline of the devastating effects of climate change as already being experienced

through persistent floods, extensive coastal erosion, prolonged droughts, very low agricultural yields and crop failures in some African countries even though it is the least emitting continent of Green House Gases.

The Bali Plan of Action in 2007 recommended that Adaptation to climate effects is what was urgently needed in Africa to stem the tide of further destruction and provide resilience from such effects. Africa Civil Society has since then campaigned vigorously at all global, continental and national meetings that Africa must highlight and prioritize adaptation as the most essential and urgent intervention to climate effects before any other considerations. This position is further buttressed by the African Negotiators' and the African Ministers' Conference on Environment at their various meetings in and outside Africa and also expressed in their various declarations on climate change. Adaptation for Africa is therefore a sine qua non in any solution formula on climate change effects.

There are however, some recent developments across the climate change international arena that seem to suggest and propose that mitigation efforts should rather play a frontal role in seeking Africa's solution to climate effects. Indeed, this position that is being vigorously advanced by the developed countries, sought to suggest that Africa should be given funds to undertake large mitigation actions in the form of projects which go to cushion the effects of global warming. It also suggests by extension that the polluting countries will take little or no action in reducing emissions which are at the core of global warming. This suggestion also points to the shifting of the burden of mitigation from the developed polluting countries to poor developing nations which are not in any drastic way contributing to the cause of global warming. The net effect of this proposal if implemented might mean that the polluting countries will continue to pollute, while looking up to developing nations to mitigate the effects of such action.

The pressure in that direction is now so intense that some African governments including Ghana, are tempted to look in that direction, instead of pushing even harder for the financing of adaptation actions that are rather critically needed. This position is given further credence by the way some African Regional Economic blocks and governments including Ghana and ECOWAS are almost ready with their **NATIONALLY APPROPRIATE MITIGATION PLANS [NAMAS]** to the applause of development partners that are driving the agendas for their respective countries. This position can also be observed from the available National Policy Frameworks in which language and recommended actions on Mitigation seem to override that of Adaptation, whereas National Adaptations Plans and Strategies are yet to be outdoored and given any prominence. This trend is a great source of worry to African Civil Society on Climate Change.

At the just ended PACJA forum on Climate Change in Bamako Mali, Africa Civil Society Organizations reaffirmed their position on the need for more Adaptation action than Mitigation in Africa. Mitigation efforts although needed, PACJA posits that priority and pride of place must be given adaptation which will quicken the pace of building resilience and cushion the negative effects on poor citizens, especially African farmers and fishermen that are already facing the brunt of climate change. Although others also call for a balance in mitigation and adaptation interventions, African Researchers working on Climate Change have clearly stated that mitigation actions should be a secondary consideration for Africa.

At the Bamako forum which also served as the 4th Special Session of the Africa Ministers Conference on Environment [AMCEN] in which Ghana fully participated, finance for climate projects in Africa featured prominently.

PACJA noted that even the voluntary pledges that the Annex 1 countries made under the Copenhagen Accord and reinforced in the Cancun Agreement last year have not been met. Pledges and promises on fast start finance which was recorded to be \$ 30 billion for 2010-2012 and the \$100 billion to be realized by 2020 are all short on delivery.

According to PACJA sources, even the available fast track finance is being disbursed with some discretion by the fund trustees who are making allocations that are tilted towards mitigation while less than 1% [estimated at \$70 billion] of pledged funds have been deposited into the Adaptation Fund. There is therefore a big funding gap needed to assist Africa deal with the effects of climate change. One critical demand of developing countries is for the developed countries to cede 1.5% – 3.0% of their GDP for climate interventions in Africa by 2030.

The issue of “new and additional funds” crafted even before Copenhagen which was to govern the allocation of funds meant for developing countries is also now being interpreted differently to include previous development loans to countries. Africa Civil Society is therefore calling for the definition of “new and additional ” as it applies to climate finance and further argues that climate funds should be obtained from public sources and should come as grants and not loans.

On Technology, Africa Civil Society expects the transfer of modern technology that is appropriate and relevant which also takes into consideration indigenous knowledge that could be transformed to solve climate change challenges. They insist that ownership of patents and intellectual property rights should not be applied to the disadvantage of developing countries which would deny them their rightful demands. Building of capacity of developing countries in the various disciplines that would strengthen their skills in global climate negotiations, offer technical assistance to governments in the areas of Policy Development and Management of Climate projects are key.

Africa Civil Society under the umbrella of PACJA also considered equity and ethical considerations to climate change that are very pertinent for the continent. They indicated that the issues of common but differentiated responsibility; shared vision; polluter pays principle; historical responsibility and climate debt owed Africa through the inordinate appropriation of available atmospheric space are non-negotiable issues. Transparency and Accountability should be seen to be manifest in all stakeholder negotiations. Membership and representation in the governance of all funding mechanisms should reflect ‘bottom – top’ approaches, while Justice becomes the common denominator for all climate change transactions that affect vulnerable and indigenous communities in the developing world.

African Civil Society looks forward to the endorsement of a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol even though some industrialized countries including Russia, Canada, Japan and Australia have openly indicated that they would neither be part of any review of the commitments earlier made under the Kyoto Protocol nor subject their countries to any further commitments under a renewed Kyoto Protocol.

Africa demands that a second commitment period if achieved under the Kyoto Protocol as expected from 2013 onwards should not countenance voluntary pledges.

PACJA calls for gender balance and equality in all major negotiations and funding mechanisms, equality and women leadership in all capacity development actions, promotion of gender mainstreaming in all climate change actions and finally ensure that gender and indigenous components of the Cancun Agreement are fulfilled.

One major effort that Africa Civil Society under PACJA is undertaking to create awareness towards COP 17 in Durban is the launching of a Trans – Africa Caravan of Hope that is meant to mobilize African voices to deliver a common position at the world climate summit in December. The Caravan trail will go through Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia and finally land in Durban.

Africa Civil Society expects above all that a second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol , which is the only legally binding Instrument aimed at reducing emissions is achieved and would not in any way allow the Kyoto Protocol to be killed in Africa.

PACJA calls on South Africa to stand with Africa and not the polluters in Durban so that Africa will speak and negotiate with **“One Voice, One Position for One Africa”**.

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