



PAN AFRICAN CLIMATE JUSTICE ALLIANCE

22 October 2009

STATEMENT TO THE SECOND MEETING OF THE AFRICAN HIGH LEVEL EXPERT PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE, 21 – 23 OCTOBER 2009, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA BY AUGUSTINE NJAMNISHI, PACJA REPRESENTATIVE, CENTRAL AFRICA

Your Excellency the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;

Distinguished Delegates;

African negotiators to UNFCCC

The able Secretariat of UNEP/ROA;

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The African civil society working on climate change through the platform of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), a network of civil society organizations operating in 43 countries thanks you for the honour of presenting our statement at this critical stage of negotiations. We would like to take this opportunity to affirm our support for the African common position. We further call upon our African governments to heed our earnest message and commitment to the cause for which we are all here today.

We have heard it many times from the many distinguished speakers in this meeting alone; yet it cannot be overstated -- The people of Africa are suffering! Our local and traditional communities, our women and children are already facing a myriad of stark challenges including poverty, inequality, underdevelopment, and unsustainable livelihoods. They are now also the most vulnerable people to the impacts of climate change in the world. Our water resources are drying up and our fertile land is being reduced and eroded by extreme weather patterns, there is a proliferation of water-borne diseases on already over burdened health systems and communities don't have any safety nets. In fact, all development efforts are being worsened and undermined by climate change. We also know that these impacts are only going to get worse over time if we do not take action now.

But what keeps haunting us is why we allowed ourselves to arrive at this catastrophic fate. We had opportunities from 1972 at the Stockholm Conference to challenge the overproduction and over-consumption patterns perpetuated by the global North at the expense of the global South. The rampant plunder and destruction of our natural resources has had profound detrimental impacts on us. It is something we should not forget especially as we forge ahead in these serious talks to develop a post-2012 global climate change treaty.

We are fortunate that the opportunity is presented again now, and *this time* we must stand firm and be guided by the fundamental understanding about the historical determinants of climate change in order to prevent repeating the mistakes of the past. We do not want to feel regret and shame when history judges us. Let the recognition of historical debt and injustices be a defining principle of a new agreement. Developed countries must make compensation by availing the necessary financial and technological transfers to respond to the impacts of climate change on this continent. This must also not be subject to barriers like intellectual property rights and patenting. Technology for the public good must be in the public domain so that it is accessible and affordable for urgent use in the developing world.

We implore our governments to resist selling our continent's water, land, air and forests. These natural resources are a precious gift to our children and are not for sale, not even to the highest bidder! Any attempts to take us back to the times when the rights to our land and other natural resources could be exchanged for mirrors, whiskey and other petty exploitative means should be resisted. Such manoeuvres in the present day are an insult to the communities we represent who are battling with climate change impacts without any cushioning and protection. We also urge our leaders to listen carefully to struggles of its people and make negotiations of a just and legally binding outcome a priority.

We view the Annex 1 countries proposal to *redefine* their responsibilities under the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities" as a distortion of this principle and an attempt to abdicate from their historical responsibilities under the Kyoto Protocol. This move poses a grave danger to developing countries especially in Africa. PACJA calls on our negotiators to resist all attempts to redefine this principle that was agreed to and reiterates that all parties must uphold the principles of the Convention that they entered into voluntarily.

We must not deviate from required-by science emissions cuts for developed countries of 40% by 2020 and 90% by 2050 both below 1990 levels. We must also recognise that *absolute* cuts means that we need to tread carefully in the application of the market-based mechanisms such as carbon trading. We should ensure that any offsets by developed countries do not impact on the overall global emission reductions needed and should be capped. We must insist that developing countries reduce the majority of their emissions domestically. Developed countries must achieve targets by committing to making verifiable, quantifiable and reportable domestic cuts.

Commitment to zero-carbon development must also be a priority in developed countries and they should support a just transition to a low carbon economy in developing countries. Supported by developed countries we must develop a vision

beyond Copenhagen that does not replicate the mistakes of the flawed development choices that the global North has already made. Prime Minister Zenawi was unequivocal on this: “we want to develop green technologies among other things because we do not want to have the dead weight of massive investment in dirty technologies.” We have the potential to revolutionise our economies with these green technologies, and to champion solutions from our people who have been living sustainably in natural environments for centuries.

We call for human rights and values to be central in all global, national and regional solutions fostered to the problem of climate change. Moreover, we call for climate justice in the crafting of the agreements and in the delivery of solutions.

On the future of the Kyoto Protocol we realize that there are uncertainties about its continuity, as depicted from the current geo-politics on the agreement. Should discussions on the Kyoto Protocol collapse it would take years to develop a new binding “integrated” agreement to address climate change challenges. We thus call upon our leaders and negotiators to resist any attempt to abolish or merge the Kyoto Protocol with the new proposed text. The spirit and the principles of the Bali Action Plan must be respected and must guide all negotiations.

On the attempts to undermine unity of the G77 and China Group we recognise that the divisive tactics by some Annex 1 countries threaten a consolidated, unified position. Moreover, it undermines all efforts currently embarked on to preserve the Kyoto Protocol. PACJA urges the African group to remain united and foster this unity with the bloc. We must be aware that these ploys can potentially halt and delay conclusion of fair outcomes in the negotiations.

On support and solidarity we believe that the on-going COP 15 negotiations require strong partnerships and collaboration of all stakeholders, including civil society organizations. PACJA acknowledges this new spirit of partnership with our governments, commends the countries that are already working with civil society organizations and urges others to follow suite. PACJA reaffirms the wish to strengthen working with specialized agencies, the UN bodies and regional bodies. We avail our expertise and wide network to support our negotiators to ensure that the African Common Position remains the guiding pillar in the negotiations and hope that we may be able to do so as part of the official delegation.

Finally, PACJA reaffirm her support for a fair, just and equitable climate change deal for Africa.

Thank you.