African CSOs Demand #ClimateJustice4Africa

Statement by African CSOs attending COP26 and following proceedings from home.

Glasgow, 12/11/2021

After duly considering two weeks of debates, negotiations, and decisions, the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) expresses disappointment with a clear lack of foresight and determination by Parties at COP26 to squarely address the climate emergency. Most particularly, the Alliance is deeply concerned about the direction of the UNFCCC-COP processes, which continue to defer urgent action needed to strengthen climate resilience in Africa. COP26 was the hallmark of a clear Northern agenda to pursue half-measures that comfort the world's biggest polluters while oppressing African and other developing nation communities, which are among the most burdened by the adverse impacts of climate change. As representatives of more than 1000 African civil society organizations operating at grassroots levels in 48 and more African countries, we leave Glasgow feeling that COP26 was yet another COP that failed Africa. In our unyielding push for climate justice for Africa, we observe as follows:

1. *It is now clear to us that the UNFCCC-COP process has been tailored to ignore the urgent needs of Africa.*

Adaptation and loss and damage continue to remain low on the global climate agenda, despite strong evidence of the devastating impact of extreme climate and weather events on African people and economies. We welcomed with cautious optimism announced plans to halt and eventually reverse deforestation, along with pledges to cut methane emissions. Important as they are, these pledged mitigation actions fail to respond to the most urgent needs of protecting millions of people already affected by climate change across Africa.

As a vulnerability hotspot, Africa faces a wider adaptation gap than the rest of the world. Far reaching impacts are already being felt in agriculture, health, infrastructure, and livelihoods. In early September, Kenya declared a national disaster after a sharp drop in rainfall led the drought in semi-arid and arid parts of the country. Similar droughts are affecting the entire Horn of Africa, as well as Madagascar, where the worst drought in 40 years have triggered widespread famine and malnutrition. Since 2012, the number of undernourished people in drought-prone parts of Africa has increased by 44 per cent, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization. Elsewhere, Algeria and Tunisia are still reeling out of the impact of deadly wildfires orchestrated by a sweep of heat waves earlier this year. Floods and cyclones have killed more than 1000 people and affected millions on the continent in the past few years alone.

2. *Emission reduction pledges remain way off mark.*

While halting deforestation is critical in capping global warming at 1.5 degrees, significant progress is only possible through deep emission cuts from carbon-intensive productive and consumption sectors which account for two thirds of global emissions. While almost everyone agrees there is no place for fossil fuels in a Paris-Agreement-aligned world, world leaders have failed to signal strong commitments to phase out fossil fuels. Combined, current emission reduction pledges only take us to 2.8 degrees of post-industrial warming by the end of the century. This is way off the two-degree (and 1.5 ambition) target of the Paris Agreement-at which, Africa is still expected to experience a dangerous level of warming, droughts, and floods.

3. *Africa's special circumstances and needs are yet to be fully addressed in global climate change negotiations.*

For the second year running, the COP deferred discussions on the special needs and circumstances of the African Group to COP27, this indicates not only a lack of understanding of the urgency of protecting African populations already devastated by climate change, but it also shows a lack of concern on the part of Parties. We are particularly concerned that those we consider friends within the G77 Group hold hostile views towards this matter. We reiterate that despite accounting for barely four per cent of global emissions, African is both the region that is most vulnerable to and the least capable of protecting itself from the adverse impacts of climate change. Currently estimated to be warming 1.5 times faster than the global mean, the region is also experiencing disproportionate exposures to climate risks, which will worsen in a two to three-degree-future.

4. *COP26 excluded key voices from the discussion.*

Access protocols at the Scottish Event Centre hindered full and unrestricted participation. Despite assurances, the UK Government failed deliver an inclusive COP. Measures taken to ensure that COP26 took place in person were undermined by restricted access to important meetings and fora. This created procedural justice problems that have delegitimized the decisions taken at this COP.

5. *Global climate talks continue to ignore science*.

The global community must depoliticize the climate crisis and treat it as what it truly is - an existential threat to people and natural systems all over the world. Political declarations by world leaders failed to reflect the spirit and direction of negotiations. COP26 failed to address the mutual suspicion and mistrust that has characterized the climate debate so far.