Communique to the African Union Member States Towards Enhancing Greater Accountability for Climate Action in Africa

As released from the Conference on Climate Justice convened for Young People drawn From Across Africa

Kigali, Rwanda, 22-23 June 2022

At the invitation of the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance and partners, young African climate leaders met at Club House La Palisse in Nyamata, Rwanda, from the 22nd to the 23rd June 2022 for an African Youth Conference on Climate Justice.

The conference aimed to mobilize young leaders, both male and female from across African Countries to level their understanding of issues at stake in climate change negotiations and their implications on young people of the continent, build consensus on priorities for young people from Africa based on their realities and delineate key demands for ambitious and urgent action on climate change. The conference tracked all key decisions and commitments made during and after the 26th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26) and further discussed in details the emerging decisions from the just concluded discussions in SB56 in Bonn.

The convening further assessed the aspirations of the existing NDCs in advancing priorities for young people, their status of implementation and whether the NDCs are ambitious enough to achieve the 1.5 Degree Celsius Paris Agreement goal and sufficient tracking mechanisms are in place. The convening did an introspection on efforts being put in place on response and resilience building in Africa and their implications on young people and how these are reinforced by global Climate Financing under UNFCCC. It undertook a deep assessment on the prevailing vulnerability of Africa and its people to climate change and the losses and damages currently experienced across the continent as a result of climate triggered emergencies.

Based on the reflections from the conference, young people participating in the conference issued the following statement.

Cognizant of the growing climate crisis in the African continent and the little or lack progress that is demonstrated by global community in tackling climate change.
**Disturbed by** the unfolding climate triggered losses and damages happening across a number of African countries and the massive cross sectoral impacts of climate change on all facets of human lives, including extreme violations to human rights.

**Concerned that** climate change impacts in the continent is impacting directly on nature and nature-based resources, impacting sectors that are of immediate relevance in creating opportunities for decent work, income and livelihood opportunities for young people.

**Further perturbed** by the growing unemployment of young people and the worsening prospects for young people to find employment and livelihood opportunities as agricultural lands increasingly become arid, rivers and lakes that provide water dry up, drought decimate livestock and floods erode the remaining hope for resilience through irrigation in water fronts.

**Noting that** current response and resilience measures as proposed by state and its institutions, including the concept of circular economy have not been modelled with inclusion considerations for young people and promoting truly inclusive economies.

**Perplexed by** African governments prioritization of mitigation in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) plans at the expense of adaptation and addressing immediate climate crisis for communities in need of cushioning against losses and damages that they are already suffering.

**Alarmed by** the conspiracy of silence African governments have demonstrated in failing to use episodes of climate crisis to build a case for loss and damage and pursue this in UNFCCC.

**Noting** the inequalities in access in climate finance that is manifestly clear in the case of Africa and other parts of the world on one hand, and among African countries that continue to limit the ability of the continent to adapt. And further aware that African governments are relenting on their duty to hold rich countries to account for their commitment both in financing and cutting on emissions.

**Consciously clear** that Climate Finance is and will continue to be a mirage to a vast majority of young people and more so those in the frontline of climate crisis in Africa.

**Extremely disturbed** by the global inequality and the double speak of rich countries who are scaling exploration efforts in search of unclean sources of energy, relegating on their commitment to cut on emissions while Africa is being pushed, at her cost to cut down on the meagre emissions.

Based on our reflections, the conference placed emphasis on the need to step up the pursuit for climate justice for Africa to propel measures for addressing the climate crisis in Africa. Further the conference emphasized on the need for the upcoming COP27 to provide a unique policy space to African Governments, Sub-regional and Regional institutions on climate justice and youth-sensitive climate policies.
Pursuant our deliberations here generate a call to action as detailed:

1. Call on African governments to forge a common position towards COP27 and press for prominence of Adaption and Loss and Damage in the agenda of COP27. We cannot have an African COP in Egypt that relegates on the core priorities for its people, and the agenda for Africa.

2. Demand that young people be considered in the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of climate action interventions from grassroot to national level. Representation of the youth demographic should be a priority in our member states’ decision-making bodies including in all regional bodies.

3. Call on all governments in Africa to review our education system to inculcate climate change across all levels of education, broadening and heightening the need for urgent and sustained climate action in order to save our planet. Indigenous knowledge should be inculcated in the education programmes to enhance resilience building to climate change.

4. Demand immediate measures to channel investment and finance towards, addressing the adaptation priorities and losses and damages being witnessed across Africa.

5. Urge governments to scale up efforts to ensure that youth organizations and enterprises have adequate and tailor-made access to technologies that will enhance innovation, information and knowledge exchange so as to play a role in reducing damages to our environment and adapt to impacts of climate change.

6. As a minimum demand all governments adjust their NDCs to provide for creation of employment and green decent job opportunities for young people including jobs in circular economy. This must me an integral part of the Nationally Determined Contributions.

7. The youth of Africa demand that AU member states and Regional Economic Communities ensure Climate Finance incrementally flow towards adaptation projects and less towards mitigation considering that Africa only accounts for 4% of global GHG emissions.

8. Call on governments to strengthen social protection systems and safety net programs to address the vulnerability of young people, across the gender divide and children to climate change.

9. Call on African states that have not submitted their NDCs, urgently do so prioritizing adaptation and opportunities for creating jobs for young people in their implementation. In the same breadth, all states are urged to review their NDCs to align to this call.
10. Urge governments across Africa to forge a united front for advancing for the special needs and circumstances consideration. This cause can be pursued in solidarity with other countries in the North and efforts towards this should be demonstrated as we head towards COP27. For purpose of this call, the insular nations and territories, including, but not limited to Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar, Comoros, Cape Verde, and Sao Tome et Principe, that are part of Africa and are therefore part of the claim to special needs and circumstance consideration under UNFCCC.

With regard to the above, we the youth of Africa hereby submit our commitments and demands with a firm conviction that Africa will collaborate to ensure a cleaner, greener and safer planet for all.

**In our contribution as Pan Africans and playing our dutiful role to our nation states, we commit to:**

1. Unite as African youth movements, organizations and networks on environmental protection, awareness, agricultural development and other climate change related sectors. This unifying mechanism will enable us to achieve social inclusion in all climate change policy processes, as well as position us strategically for financial and technical capacity support, for the common goal of saving our planet by advancing a climate justice narrative.

2. Contribute to the education of our peers and constituents on climate change, its causes, effects as well as mitigation and adaptation responses in order to create a common understanding of the importance of this global phenomenon, regardless of literacy levels.

3. Commit to stimulate action from all stakeholders from grassroot to national level. With a clear vision to become a continent that is a global leader in the propagation of climate awareness and in locally led, socially just and inclusive actions in response and resilience building to climate change. We seek to emphasize the importance of highlighting global commitments towards addressing impacts of the climate crisis, across the continental states.

4. We pledge to make a contribution in gathering, documenting and publishing reliable information on key issues such as the loss and damage faced by African states, in order to strengthen empirical evidence on loss and damage.

5. Support governments in AU member states and other stakeholders to monitor implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to enhance accountable and transparent climate finance practices with a view to maximize the return on investment channeled towards climate action.
6. Apply our curious and innovative dispensation towards new technological practices that enhance learning and information flow as well as reduce carbon emissions from domestic to industrial levels.

7. We commit to support and collaborate with governments, youth organizations and other like-minded institutions to ensure that youth take part in discussions on climate change with full information and legitimacy. To this end we shall mobilize young people in Africa into formidable movements for their strengthened participation.

This statement is signed off by representatives from the CSOs, Alliances, Youth Organizations and Movements as represented below:

Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network, CYCN
Pan African Climate Justice Alliance
South South Youth Platform on Climate Justice
African Youth Initiative on Climate Change /AYICC
CAHOSCC Youth Network (Intrim Rep):
Afro-Caribbean Climate Alliance Network (ACCAN)
Women In agriculture Namibia
Action for Community Development
Botswana Climate Change Network
CAADP Youth Network
African Youth Initiative on Climate Change
FORUMCC
Conscious Generation
African Youth Initiative on Climate Change AYICC West Africa
African Youth Initiative on Climate Change /UNCCD Youth Caucus
Centre 4 Zero Waste & Development in Africa (CZWDA)
African Network for Policy Research and Advocacy for Sustainability /
AYICC Mauritius
Namibian Youth Coalition on Climate Change
Bakhita Radio,Juba South Sudan
National Youth Network on Climate Change (NYNCC)
ACTSustainable / AYICC
Young Volunteers for the Environment (YVE)
Club Vintsy Fanala
Save Environment Initiative (SEI)

Zimbabwe
Ethiopia
Namibia
Cameroon
Botswana
Zambia
Nigeria
Tanzania
Mozambique
Togo
Uganda
Zambia
Mauritius
Namibia
South Sudan
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<td>Environmental Youth Journalist</td>
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<td>YME Bahamas &amp; the Cat Island Conservation Institute</td>
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