DELIVERING AN AFRICAN PEOPLE’S COP

Key messages to the 35th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union

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Whereas at the invitation of the Pan-African Climate and Environmental Justice Alliance (PACJA), more than 100 civil society representatives (joined by representatives from government, the private sector, and the academia) from throughout Africa met in Cairo, Egypt on 16, 17 and 18 December 2021, to reflect on COP26 and develop strategies for mobilising African stakeholders to make COP27 an African People’s COP.

Conscious of the diversity of the African continent and its people and determined to ensure that the communique to the political leaders captures the spirit and imagination of all Actors to the extent that is possible, a cross-network consultative forum was held at the sidelines of the AU Summit to synthesize and polish the strategy and build a broader consensus on the recommendations made in Cairo.

Recalling that justly addressing climate change requires that States bear the burdens and duties of mitigation, adaptation, and reparations proportionately to their historic and current emission of greenhouse gases; that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities – a divisive issue in international climate negotiations - also requires that States with more resources do more to address climate change than those with weak capacities; and that International climate change negotiations boil down to operationalising this principle.

Noting that with barely four per cent of the global total, Africa has the lowest historical and current emission levels compared to every other region; that even then, emission levels are concentrated in a few countries so that most African countries are net zero and net minus emitters; and that the most ambitious mitigation actions by African countries are therefore highly unlikely to make any significant contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to levels commensurate with science and climate justice.

Concerned that despite little to no responsibility for climate change, African communities bear a disproportionately higher burden of its impacts than most parts of the world; that the recognition of its special needs and circumstances as spelt out in article 4(e) of the UNFCCC remains marginal to global negotiations; and that adaptation is a low priority in global efforts to combat climate change.

Disappointed that COP26 was a failed opportunity to spur ambitious action and secure protection for hundreds of millions of people at the frontline of climate crisis in Africa and other developing nations; that efforts to secure a healthy planet and resilient communities were
derailed by the narrow interests of powerful countries, notably those required to do more to address the climate crisis because of their past and current share of greenhouse gas emissions; and that COP26 focused on accommodating and comforting big polluters.

**Affirm that** Sharma-El-Sheikh presents a unique opportunity for the African people to showcase climate solutions embedded into their traditional, indigenous and local knowledge; and to close the widening North-South divisions stalling progress in climate action, particularly the implementation of NDCs.

**Conclude** that the Committee of Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) should seize the moment afforded by the 35th Summit of the AU to ensure COP27 embodies the aspirations of the African people. A COP27 responsive to African realities and priorities (The African People’s COP), will thus constitute the following minimum elements:

**Access, Participation, and Inclusion**

- Procedural justice should be an integral part of conversations in the build-up to COP27. In the spirit of “leaving no one behind”, the UNFCCC Secretariat and all constituent bodies charged with facilitating the negotiations should ensure that all stakeholders, including communities at the frontline of the climate crisis, are legitimately represented in the process. This entails that an enabling environment is created to ensure that critical voices, particularly those of women and girls, the youth, civil society, smallholder producers, people from small islands states, people with disabilities and indigenous people are effectively engaged in the dialogue processes. In this light, innovative ways should be explored to enhance women and youth participation, including the allocation of quotas to marginal communities in national delegations, and the UNFCCC should invest in additional schemes to enable this participation, especially from Africa.

- Every effort possible must be made by the COP27 Presidency and other agencies to get delegations from all parties to COP27 especially those from Africa. This effort must include enhancing the roll-out of vaccines, arrangements for hotel quarantine if necessary and added capacity for visa processing.

- To underscore the importance and pertinence of this COP to the African People, an exclusive physical space should be dedicated for African community-led activities, and there should be a day set aside as a day of the African People (which is different from the Africa Day).

**Adaptation**

- The UNFCCC and the COP Presidency should put Adaptation on top of the agenda at COP27. This entails among other that the Glasgow-Sharm-El-Sheikh work programme on Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) must be operationalised to elaborate on the GGA by COP28. COP27 must also deliver an ambitious plan on how to significantly increase climate finance for adaptation by 2025 and beyond. In this regard, COP27 should agree on a dedicated global adaptation finance goal.
**Finance**

- The COP-27 must move from rhetoric to demonstrable action and ensure that the target of 50:50 split between mitigation and adaptation finance is met. Additionally, Climate finance for adaptation must be delivered to African countries through grants and must be new and additional to Official Development Assistance (ODA), based on their needs and special circumstances.

- COP 27 must deliver an ambitious plan to deliver on the US$100 per year by 2020 from developed countries (US 1T) by the new deadline of 2025. Furthermore, access to climate finance must be significantly enhanced for African countries through more agile and direct funding mechanisms.

- The amount of climate finance reaching local communities must be urgently increased, and barriers to accessing climate finance must be removed. More investment is also required in local climate action, and the principles for locally led adaptation should be formally endorsed by all Parties to the UNFCCC. A new goal for the proportion of climate finance going to local-level actions should be considered at COP27. This will help in monitoring the progress on driving more climate finance to communities at the frontline of the climate crisis.

- COP27 must deliver a definition of climate finance in the lead up to the development of the new collective, quantified goal by 2024.

**Loss and Damage**

- Loss and damage due to anthropogenic climate change, symbolized by the prevailing cyclones ravaging Southern African countries as well as climate-inspired droughts in the horn of Africa and Sahel, is an unjust legacy for people in Africa.

- It’s an imperative of climate justice that a shared global responsibility for loss and damage should be expressed through a Loss and Damage Fund that channels financial support to those who need it most in Africa.

- An outcome in Sharma-EI-Sheikh should be the elevation of Loss and damage as a stand-alone pillar in the UNFCCC negotiation. The UNFCCC needs to move on from trying to understand the complexity of climate loss and damage to the necessity of addressing it.

**Mitigation**

- Energy access must be a key mitigation priority for Africa, accompanied by a just energy transition that is supported with affordable technology and financing.

- African leaders must continue to press their northern counterparts to undertake deep emission reductions commensurate to the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming at 1.5 degrees and in proportion to the historical and current emissions. Carbon neutrality targets distract from the urgent need to substantially reduce the emission of industrialized countries, particularly those that account for 80% of current emissions.

- Mitigation goal as envisaged in the Paris Agreement ought to enable African countries to reduce reliance on fossil fuel energy sources and increase access to sustainable energy sources as their contribution to the 1.5 degrees temperature goal.
• Demand for a stronger language on fossil fuel phase-out as opposed to fossil fuel phase down as a commitment to reducing emissions