THE AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY POSITION FOR COP25

COP25 SHOULD DELIVER A HOLISTIC AMBITION THAT IS COMMENSURATE WITH THE CLIMATE CRISES FACING MANKIND

Introduction

COP 25 will be taking place in the Spanish city of Madrid, thousands of miles from Chile where it was originally scheduled to take place. This change of location does not change the central business of this very important meeting, which is mainly to complete the unfinished business of the COP24. Notably, COP25 must finish the work on the rules to operationalize the Paris agreement, and allow Parties and stakeholders to enhance their emission reduction ambition for 2020.

Scientific data is becoming increasingly compelling, especially the reports by IPCC and IPBES on 1.5°C temperature increase. The available data indicates to us the dangers and costs of a business-as-usual pathway and the benefits of urgent and transformative actions including halving emissions by 2030. Demand for urgent and decisive climate action has also soared. Through the global climate strikes of last September, young people around the world have clearly indicated they will not subscribe to the theory that we can still do business as usual and expect different outcomes.

We therefore need a holistic ambition approach that is commensurate with the climate emergency facing the world. In this regard, we the African civil societies would wish to address ourselves to the following issues;

1. **Africa should be recognized as a region with special circumstances and needs**

Climate change is affecting Africa disproportionately. The IPCC Fourth Assessment Report shows that if we stay on the current trajectory, Africa will warm 1.5 times faster than the global mean. Furthermore, the special IPCC report indicates that parts of Africa are already very vulnerable to climate change and already experiencing a 2 degree Celsius warming, way higher than the 1.5 degrees as previously thought. Yet Africa remains the least capable to deal with the adverse impacts of climate change.

We call on parties to take a decision recognizing these special circumstances and needs that go with them in terms of finance, emergency response and technology development.

2. **Enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) from the biggest emitters should in quality and quantity, aim at significant emissions reduction**

The New York Climate Summit was revealing in many regards. It did not only show that the smaller developing countries are determined to contribute to the fight against climate change, but that they are
even willing to do more (sacrificially) to make sure that climate change remains in the multilateral space and top on the agenda. Let us remember that these are countries whose desires and efforts for sustainable development are already being compromised by the impacts of climate change. In fact, as of 31 November 2019, at least 20 African countries had indicated that they will enhance their NDCs in 2020 (four of these African countries are also Small Island Developing States, SIDS). As with many of the SIDS, many African countries already face significant impacts from climate change and aim to build stronger clean energy and climate-resilient economies.

Seventy or so countries that have indicated their willingness to enhance their ambition are mostly small or medium countries. This suggests that the big emitters have still not come to the table with their enhanced commitments. Our expectation, therefore, is that in Madrid they should own up with NDCs that in quality and quantity aim to solve the climate crises and is not reduced to a “box checking” exercise.

The current NDCs can only put us on a 3 degrees temperature increase trajectory, we therefore call upon the parties and particularly the heavy emitters to enhance their NDCs and increase their ambition. The parties must ensure that COP25 gives a true interpretation of the guidelines for preparation of NDCs, which means that Parties revise and prepare subsequent NDCs in a participatory manner, consulting with all relevant groups and stakeholders.

As we gear towards implementation of the NDC, we should not forget that most of the NDCs that were submitted by African Nations are conditional which means that their implementation is subject to availability of funds. We call upon developed countries to avail the resources needed to kick start implementation of the NDCs through the mechanisms available in accordance with Article 4.3 of the UNFCCC and Article 9 of the Paris Agreement.

3. **In respect to Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, we call for robust social and environmental guidelines (Human rights based approaches) for all international corporations and carbon market mechanisms**

The Paris Agreement’s preamble states that all climate actions shall, inter alia, respect and promote human rights, the right to health, gender equality and women’s empowerment, indigenous people’s rights and the right to development and shall also contribute to sustainable development and poverty reduction.

We call for robust social and environmental guidelines for all carbon market mechanisms to ensure that they do not create or lead to adverse conditions that impact the livelihoods of local communities, or prevent communities from becoming truly climate resilient; for example, depleting or destroying local biodiversity and ecosystems. The parties must advance the human rights guidelines from the element to “promote sustainable development and ensure environmental integrity and transparency”.

4. **Review Warsaw International Mechanism on loss and damage to have a Clear Means of Implementation (Finance) especially for emergency response in Africa**

The Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and damage is relevant to Africa now more than ever before. We are experiencing increasing frequency and severity of climate-related disasters that have affected many countries, including heat waves, droughts, floods, tropical cyclones, dust storms and other extreme weather events. Africa host the latest victims of cyclone Idai; this was the worst tropical
cyclones on record to affect Africa and the Southern Hemisphere. The long-lived storm caused catastrophic damage in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi, leaving more than 1,300 people dead and many more missing. Idai is the deadliest tropical cyclone recorded in the South-West Indian Ocean basin. There is urgent need to avert, minimize and address these impacts through comprehensive risk management approaches through early warning systems, measures to enhance recovery and rehabilitation and build back and forward better, social protection instruments, including social safety nets, and transformational approaches. We call upon the parties to develop a clear means of implementation and operationalize the Warsaw International Mechanism on loss and damage and act with speed to deliver this at the earliest opportunity possible.

5. **Scale up finance and capacity building that can help African countries build resilience and take on their chosen low carbon development pathway in the spirit of Article 9.4 of the Paris Agreement**

We reiterate that adaptation remains to be a priority for African countries. However, the previous two SCF reports on climate finance flows, in 2016 and 2018, indicate that adaptation takes only a quarter of the global climate finance from developed to developing countries while mitigation taking over 60 percent. Developed country Parties should, therefore, provide enhanced, predictable, adequate and grant-based support (as opposed to loans that increase the debt burden of African countries) to developing country Parties to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change. The recent IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land highlights the high vulnerability of developing countries to climate change effects and high costs of adaptation.

We stress also stress that technology development and transfer should be accompanied with capacity building to facilitate both adoption of the technologies and knowledge for their usage in respective local areas. We further stress that Technology Needs Assessment should be linked with on-ground implementation and not end at identification level.

6. **Common Time Frames for harmonious Evaluation**

Monitoring and tacking of NDCs will be crucial in ensuring that we are on track to meet emission reduction that can preempt the breakdown of the climate system. The current practice characterized by different national timeframes for both emission reduction targets and periodicity of implementation reviews make tacking difficult. We therefore call on parties to adopt common timeframes for a harmonious evaluation of NDCs. We urge Parties to seek consensus on a five-year common timeframe, notably one that coincide with the global stock take, in order to respond to the urgency of action as outlined by the IPCC special report on 1.5 degrees.

7. **Gender**

African women and young people are most at risk from impacts of extreme weather. We need to be fully aware of traditional roles women and men play in the formal and informal economy as well as the household level and recognize that women are impacted most by climate change yet they are usually underrepresented in climate change negotiations and decision making.

African CSOs therefore call upon the parties to:
• Take action to implement the activities under the Gender Action Plan in order to strengthen consideration of gender aspects in climate related activities.
• Continue with Lima Work Programme in order to ensure the integration of gender considerations into processes under the Paris Agreement.
• Allocate adequate financial and human resources to build the needed capacity on gender dimensions of climate policy and action at national level and to comply with the requirements on gender under the Paris Agreement implementation Guidelines.
• Follow the recommendations in the Paris Agreement Implementation Guidelines to include gender-responsive adaptation action and traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems related to adaptation communications and to report on this.