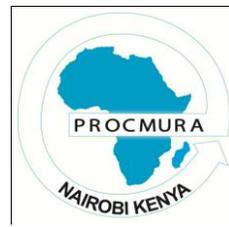




ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES
AACC



PROGRAMME FOR CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS
IN AFRICA (PROCURA)



SOUTHERN AFRICAN FAITH COMMUNITIES'
ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE (SAFCEI)



CLIMATE JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN AFRICA

**Venue: United Nations Complex, Gigiri,
Nairobi, Kenya**

Date: 7th to 8th June 2011

God has Provided Enough Resources for Human Needs But Not for Human Greed



Participants of the 'Pan-African Interfaith Conference on Climate Justice and Sustainable Peace in Africa' during a plenary session

embark on what may be described as an infinite exploitation of a finite earth resource. The conference which was in preparation for the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 17th Conference of Parties (COP 17) in Durban, South Africa, later on this year, was aimed at getting the religious leaders in Africa to be more proactive in terms of engaging with issues on climate change. Participants were emphatic in their assertion that the earth and its resources were entrusted to humankind for their sustenance and could not be abused to the extent of human self-destruction. The sanctity of the environment as an abode for all that exist on earth in the sea and the sky is recognised in Christianity, Islam, African Traditional Religions, Hinduism, Buddhism and the Baha'i faith all of whom were represented at the conference.



Rev. Dr. Karamaga (AACC) addresses the plenary

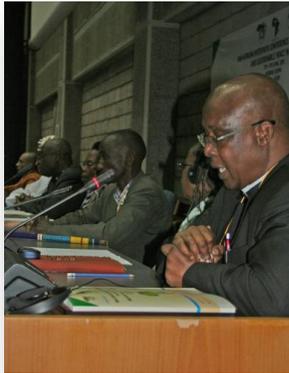
The impasse that seems to be crippling the negotiations towards a new accord to deal with the effects of climate change, demands a moral approach rather than an economic or political centred approach. The rationale of the conference was given by Rev. Dr. André Karamaga General Secretary (AACC) and Bishop Geoffery Davies (SAFCEI).

In this age of environmental degradation, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA), and the South African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI), organised a Pan-African religious leaders conference on climate change. The conference which had the theme '*Climate Justice and Sustainable Peace in Africa*' deplored the rampant exploitation of the earth's resources for profit. They wondered how humanity could be so irresponsible, so as to



Bishop Davies (SAFCEI) gives the opening remarks

The conference which was hosted by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) headquarters in Nairobi, brought together nearly a hundred and fifty religious leaders, men, women and youth of faith from 38 countries around Africa with some observers from Europe and Asia. The two day meeting (7th to 8th June 2011) was facilitated by specialist on environmental issues while the religious aspect was addressed by Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah, General Adviser, PROCMURA and Sheikh Ibrahim Lethome a Muslim theologian and Lawyer, who is a Legal Adviser of the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM). Dr. Mbillah and Sheikh Lethome made presentations on the Christian and Muslim faiths position on Climate justice and sustainable peace respectively. Members of the other religions present provide some brief reflections as well.



Rev. Dr. Mbillah (PROCMURA) giving the Christian Perspective on Climate Change



Sheikh Ibrahim Lethome (SUPKEM) speaks on the Muslim perspective of Climate Change



Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka addressing the participants

The Guest of honour who also officially opened the proceedings of the conference, His Excellency the Vice President of the Republic of Kenya Hon. Kalonzo Musyoka expressed his delight for such a gathering and urged the religious leaders to ensure that the result of their deliberations are made known to their governments so that ‘we will approach this important issue that impinges on our lives together.’ Mr. Achim Steiner, United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) Executive Director and Under- Secretary-General praised the organisers of the conference and entreated the religious leaders actively participate in the Climate change discussions.

The participants came up with clear resolutions that affirmed their commitment to preserving and safe guarding the earth for the present future generations. The religious leaders called on world leaders, politicians and policy makers to embrace positions that will set in place a legally binding accord during COP17. This would only be feasible, said the participants, if all stakeholders embrace a non-selfish, pragmatic position that addresses the key issues in Africa that fuel environmental degradation and foster sustenance of bio diversity and a sustainable exploitation of natural resources.



Mr. Achim Steiner (UNEP) giving the global overview of the environment

The conference came out with a Communiqué that would be circulated among governments no one state, party, bloc, or group can address Climate Change on its own; a cohesive effort drawing on all stakeholders have to be craved to make it a success.

PROCMURA used the opportunity to consult with its constituencies who were invited to participate in the conference and to build various networks which it can use to foster peace across the continent.

It is clear that climate change has precipitated various conflicts in human quest for fast depleting resources. Some of those conflicts come wearing a religious cloak which is the symptom and not the 'disease' itself.

For PROCMURA, the high side of this conference was its ability to (for the first time) bring Muslim leaders, women and youth from Mali, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, the Central African Republic, and the conflict-stricken Casamance region of Senegal to join all others who are conversant with PROCMURA's activities so that together with the Christian participants work out what they need to do together to promote peace and peaceful co-existence in the countries from which they come.

ANNEX

Annex I: Concept Paper

CONCEPT PAPER ON CLIMATE JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN AFRICA

1. Background

'Africa is one of the most vulnerable continents to climate variability and change because of multiple stresses and low adaptive capability'. IPCC (2007b: 2).

Africa as a continent of religion and religious people, on many occasions pray for rain when there is drought, pray to be protected when there are floods, pray for the restoration of the environment when pollution of the earth leads to environmental degradation. The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) the Southern African Faith Communities Institute (SAFCEI) and the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) recognise that we do not only have to pray for change but act for change as well.

The 9th AACC General Assembly held in Maputo, Mozambique from 7 –12 December 2008, saw this need for action when it identified “Environment and Spirituality” as one of the priorities for the African Church. The AACC has always held the view that environmental challenges, particularly climate change, have to be confronted with urgency, in view of the worsening impacts it exerts on poor people’s livelihoods across the continent. SAFCEI on its part recognises climate change as **one of the greatest challenges of our time** and has from its inception continued to provide information, education and advocacy to confront this **greatest challenge**. PROCMURA with its pioneering work on Christian and Muslim constructive engagement for peace in society and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Africa, has for two years running made environmental issues an aspect of its programmes for sustainable peace.

It does this with the theological understanding that as Christians believe that humankind are stewards of God’s creation so do Muslims believe that humankind are *Khalifas* (viceroys) of God’s creation as well.

During a workshop June 2008 in Nairobi, Kenya facilitated by leading scholars in the areas of theology, environment, academics and community development; delegates exchanged ideas on the pressing challenge of climate change, its manifestation and how it affects the livelihoods of vulnerable communities in Africa.

Participants explored various areas of intervention, and identified conservation, community-based water management as well as sustainable agriculture as key entry points in adaptation and mitigation.

For a continent which relies on rain-fed agriculture, and a region which has been cited by IPCC as the one to be most impacted by the adverse effects of climate change, the proposed conference is not only justified but timely.

2. Concern for Climate Change in Africa

The prevailing famine in many African countries, recurrent floods, drying up of rivers, shrinking of our valuable lakes, bleaching of coral reefs in coastal areas, depletion of our tropical rain forests should send warnings that we can no longer do business as usual. Climate change is here. Africa, like no other continent bears the brunt of these negative effects of climate change¹:

(a) Agricultural sector

Africa relies heavily on rain-fed agriculture and is highly vulnerable to changes in climate variability, seasonal shifts, and different forms of water stress (either floods or droughts). By 2020 many African countries could have their agricultural productivity reduced by as much as 50% due to changing climate patterns and between 75 and 250 million people exposed to extreme water stress. The El Niño flooding of 1998-99 is still affecting the food security of today and the worries are great.

(b) Health

Climate change has critical health implications. Changes in rainfall will affect the presence and absence of vector- and waterborne pathogens, causing meningitis and malaria. As highland areas have been warming up, new strains of Malaria commonly referred to as 'highland malaria' have begun to thrive. Malaria continues being the cause of the highest number of deaths in Africa; especially amongst vulnerable categories of populations and in African urban settlements.

(c) Migration and conflicts over natural resources

The vulnerability of nomadic and pastoralist groups to climate change has increased dramatically since the prolonged droughts in the 1970s. The result has been widespread loss of human life and livestock, and substantial changes to the social system.

There are increased cases of conflicts linked to climate change, especially linked to depletion of water resources and grazing land for nomadic communities. Many recent clashes with deadly outcome have been caused by climate induced migration of cattle and nomadic populations.

(d) Employment

Several reports have also shown that labour markets will be negatively affected by erratic hydropower resources, diminishing fishery resources as well as problems with pollution, waste disposal and water supply.

These are but some of the factors clearly indicating that climate change no longer is an isolated environmental issue, but a broader sustainable development and poverty reduction issue with equity and justice demands.

The call to all leaders of the world is to include climate change as a central component of any social-political decision in the foreseeable future.

3. A Synopsis of the AACC Engagement

The Church in Africa has for centuries been engaged in human and spiritual development, cultivating the land and helping communities to care for the creation. But each generation needs to internalise the stewardship of the environment as a core mission of the church and as the external challenges change, the response of the church needs to change likewise.

This challenge is taken very seriously by the AACC on the continental level to be a credible voice and to assist members in awareness creation and capacity building for climate change, adaptation and mitigation. In this process, AACC has in the past joined hands with the ecumenical actors like WCC, APRODEV and the Alliance for Religion and Conservation (ARC), as well as civil society networks and resource organisations.

In June 2008, AACC facilitated a consultation on Climate Change for the Eastern and Southern Africa regions. A similar consultation was held in West Africa in June 2009. In September 2009, another consultation was organised for Central Africa region and in October 2010 it facilitated a consultation for Lusophone countries. AACC has also participated in a number of the UN Climate Change Conferences; in Nairobi (2006), and in Copenhagen, December 2009.

This upcoming conference where PROCMURA and SAFCEI are involved is part of the AACC partnering where the Muslim community and other religious bodies which PROCMURA have worked with on various issues around the continent shall play an important role in climate justice and sustainable peace in our dear continent.

4. The Process toward Durban- December 2011

In December 2009 the whole world expected the big UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (COP 15) to come up with a suitable post 2012 Climate Change treaty to succeed the Kyoto Protocol - the Conference ended in disappointment.

The Kyoto protocol, the only legally binding emissions treaty in the world, expires in 2012. Developing a more comprehensive, legally binding replacement for the Kyoto Protocol is viewed by many as the most important step towards combating climate change. However, this seems unlikely as China has shown no interest in signing such a document, and the United States has very detailed set stipulations which would need to be satisfied in order for them to sign - including China being part of the agreement.

A legally-binding treaty has now lost more steam with Japan stating it has no interest in committing to extend the Kyoto Protocol beyond 2012.

In December 2011 COP 17 will be held in Africa, precisely in Durban, South Africa. Given the time available and lessons learnt from Copenhagen and Mexico Conferences, we believe we can together prepare well for this conference. Durban must produce a document that will take Climate Change a step forward.

It is in preparation for the June Pan-African Interfaith Conference and the COP17 that AACC is co-hosting the conference with SAFCEI and PROCMURA.

Objectives

- ❖ To evolve a common framework for African Ecumenical action on Climate Justice and Sustainable Peace in Africa;
- ❖ To mobilize Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) to understand and respond to Climate Justice and Sustainable Peace in Africa;
- ❖ To strengthen FBOs leader's competence on Climate Justice and Sustainable Peace in Africa;
- ❖ To explore synergy with state and non-state actors in joint advocacy efforts on Climate Justice and Sustainable Peace in Africa.
- ❖ To present to the COP 17 negotiators the essential moral principles required to reach a fair and just climate agreement.

On the weekend before the 2011 COP 17 commences, that is **27th November 2011**, we propose to have a major gathering of faiths – possibly a rally gathering in Durban's new football stadium – led by religious leaders of the world. The purpose is to issue a clear call to the political leaders of the world that for the sake of our people, our planet and in obedience to our Creator, COP 17 must

arrive at an agreement based on moral principles that will help protect and preserve the world for future generations.

We are also planning a worship service on **Sunday 4th December** to pray for the success of the talks and will call on other faith communities to set days of their choosing to do the same. Our prayer is that the faith leaders of Africa will recognize that climate change is such a threat that we, the religious leaders of Africa, can make our voices heard so that COP 17 is both a “people’s COP” and an African COP, uniting in a common call for justice and peace.

5. Expected Outcomes

The following are some of the expected outcomes:

- ❖ Common framework for African Faith Based Organizations action on Climate Justice and Sustainable Peace in Africa;
- ❖ Increased awareness of the causes, consequences, adaptation and mitigation mechanisms for Climate Justice and Sustainable Peace in Africa;
- ❖ Increased number of individuals, churches, mosques, temples etc. making lifestyle changes and choices toward responsible stewardship of resources for the integrity of creation;
- ❖ Increased visibility of the ecumenical family in local, regional, continental and international advocacy on the issues of Climate Justice and Sustainable Peace; and
- ❖ Increased appreciation of the role of religious communities in their advocacy for continental and international response to the issues of Climate Justice and Sustainable Peace.
- ❖ A just agreement and framework of action at COP 17 to move towards Climate Justice and Sustainable Peace.

Annex II: Communiqué

CLIMATE JUSTICE FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN AFRICA

A message from African faith leaders to the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), from 29 November – 9 December 2011 in Durban, South Africa.



You must treat the earth well. It was not given to you by your parents. It is loaned to you by your children. – Kikuyu proverb

1. Introduction

Africa is a continent of the faithful. We gathered as African faith leaders at UNEP in Nairobi, Kenya on 7th and 8th June 2011, to discuss climate change and how it will be addressed at COP17.

Scientific reports indicate that climate change may well be the greatest threat that humanity has ever faced, with, on current targets, probable increased global warming of 2.5°C to 4°C by 2100ⁱ – widely agreed to be disastrous. Yet progress in international negotiations has not matched the scale of the crisis. There appears to be a deadlock between competing political and economic interests from various power blocs. We believe that to break this deadlock, new perspectives are required.

Firstly, economic and political processes have to be based on ecological principles, and not vice versa. There can be no infinite economic or population growth on a finite planet.

Secondly, there is a profound need for a renewed moral vision for the future of humanity and indeed of all life. We debase human beings by seeing them only as economic instruments, and debase the sanctity of life by commodifying it.

We must realise that well-being cannot be equated with material wealth. The quality of life is not dependent on the quantity of material things or growth measured by GDP. Instead, our standard of living depends on our standard of loving and sharing. We cannot sustain a world dominated by profit-seeking, rampant consumerism and gross inequalities, and an atmosphere of competition where the powerful take advantage of the weak without caring for the well-being of every form of life. Development cannot be sustained if the affluent project themselves as examples to be copied by everyone else, and if the poor model their lifestyles on such examples.

These insights draw from the rich moral and spiritual traditions on our continent and elsewhere in the world. Despite the historical violence and disorganisation that Africa has suffered and inflicted on itself, these insights have been transmitted to us by our ancestors who believed in the harmony of vital forces, between human beings and the rest of creation.

In our African spiritual heritage and our diverse faith traditions, trees, flowers, water, soil and animals have always been essential companions of human beings, without which life and being are inconceivable. We express this in different ways through our understanding of the world as God's own beloved creation, and our sense of place and vocation within it.

Our ways of thinking and feeling deeply influence the world around us. As we find compassion, peace and harmony within ourselves, we will begin to treat the Earth with respect, resist disorder and live in peace with each other, including embracing a binding climate treaty. We pray that compassion will guide these negotiations.

2. Our commitments as faith leaders

Our African people and nations have to overcome the temptation of seeing ourselves as victims, who have no role and responsibility to play in reversing the current situation – we are part of the solution.

As African faith leaders, our responsibilities will be to:

- Set a good example for our faith communities by examining our personal needs and reducing unsustainable consumption.
- Lead local communities to understand the threat of climate change and the need to build economies and societies based on a revitalised moral vision.
- Draw on our spiritual resources to foster crucial ecological virtues such as wisdom, justice, courage and temperance, and to confront vices such as greed in our own midst.

- Acknowledge that climate change has greatly affected already vulnerable people (such as women, children, the elderly, the poor and the disabled), that it worsens existing inequalities and that this places an obligation on faith groups to stand in solidarity with the victims of climate change disasters, showing care, compassion and love.
- Plant indigenous trees and promote ecological restoration.

3. Our message to all world leaders

As citizens, we are asked to put our trust in representatives at COP17 to decide upon our common future. We have no doubt that the Durban COP must decide on a treaty – and second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol – that is fair, ambitious and legally binding, to ensure the survival of coming generations.

We therefore call on you to:

- Commit to the principle of inter-generational equity, the rights of our children for generations to come, and to the rights of Mother Earth as outlined in the Cochabamba declaration.
- Refute the myth that action to cut emissions is too expensive, when it is far cheaper than the long-term costs of inaction.
- Acknowledge that investments in sustainability are a better guarantor of peace than military spending.
- Abandon Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as an indicator of prosperity in favour of indicators that include human wellbeing, equality and the external environmental costs of human economies.
- Set clear final targets for phasing out the use of all fossil fuels, and deep interim reductions in carbon emissions that support the target of no more than one degree of global warming.
- Ensure that there is sufficient climate finance for adaptation in Africa, additional to existing development aid and that it is governed inclusively and equitably under the United Nations.
- Channel sufficient and predictable climate finance and technology from the historic polluting nations, in recognition of their ecological debt, to enable Africa to leapfrog into an age of clean energy technology.
- Close the gap between wealthy countries' pledges to cut warming emissions and what science and equity require.
- Assign for wealthy countries emission quotas that are consistent with the full measure of their historical responsibility.

4. Our message to Africa's political leaders

We further urge African political leaders, as many of you are members of our faith communities, to take these particular measures:

- To regain a united voice and abandon expedient allegiances with blocs that are scrambling to appropriate Africa's natural resources.
- Recognise in all policy statements that our long-term social and economic interests require the stability of our biophysical environment today.
- Prioritise measures and adopt policies to resolve environmental degradation in our nations.
- Acknowledge and pre-empt the violence at all levels that climate change and environmental degradation is already fuelling on the continent.
- Adopt and enact land policies that ensure equity and justice for all.
- Resist the approval of transactions with exploitative corporations that would cause serious environmental damage.
- Promote indigenous tree planting and protection of existing forests, lakes and rivers.
- Build much greater capacity within long-standing teams of climate negotiators.
- Greatly improve communications within and between African governments, and consultation with civil society, including faith communities, on issues of climate change.

5. Conclusion

Every human generation is faced by particular challenges and opportunities. If we do not secure a stable climate for the sake of future generations, we will be held accountable by them and judged by history.

On this very critical issue of climate change, we must not fail. Every lost moment increases an irreversible threat to life on Earth.

8 June 2011:- This Communiqué was compiled jointly by 130 faith leaders representing Muslim, Christian, Hindu, African traditional, Bahá'í and Buddhist communities from 30 countries across Africa.

¹ Joeri Rogel, Claudine Chen, Julia Nabel and others, "Analysis of the Copenhagen Accord pledges and its global climatic impacts— a snapshot of dissonant ambitions", *Environmental Research Letters* 5 (2010).

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