



Communiqué – 17 October 2022

FOREWORD: JOURNEYING TOGETHER FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

The climate crisis is a lived reality for people across Africa. Recent summer heatwaves in the north of the continent have caused massive social and economic losses and damages, breaking temperature records and severely disrupting agri-food systems in an already hungry region. Storms and cyclones early in the year caused devastation in Southern Africa, resulting in the destruction of homes and the loss of lives. Eastern Africa is facing the worst food crisis in a generation, precipitated by extreme drought. In West Africa, cities are flooded, communities in the creeks are submerged, conflicts which have simmered for years are now intensifying due to climate-induced displacement. Wherever you look on this continent, a continent already struggling due to an unjust global economic system, you see climate change holding back the potential for development.

Sometimes it is difficult to see the solutions to this complex situation. We can, however, be certain of a few things. For example, we know that the Global North is largely responsible for the climate crisis and must contribute their fair share to address it. This means leading the way in emissions reductions, providing funding for climate adaptation, loss and damage, and supporting countries in the Global South to achieve just levels of development within planetary boundaries. We know that the most promising solutions will reflect

key principles of Catholic Social Teaching, such as the common good, justice between generations, care for our common home and the preferential option for the poor. We also know what other solutions won't: the solutions to this crisis must not continue the business-as-usual approach that is responsible for creating the problem in the first place and will only enrich wealthy nations and individuals at the expense of the world's poor.

And yet, in the face of these certainties, it can still be challenging to understand the precise routes to change. In the latest Encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis proposed dialogue and encounter as a means of building a more just world. This was the inspiration for the African Climate Dialogues – a series of conversations hosted by Catholic Church actors and civil society in Africa to discuss, learn from each other and identify key policy priorities ahead of COP27 in Egypt. These dialogues included community and civil society representatives with lived experiences of climate change, researchers and professional advocates with policy expertise, officials from all levels of government, and leaders in the Catholic Church who could frame the pressing ethical questions raised by climate change in terms of the action of God and the demands of justice.

Climate change is a moral outrage. It is a tragic and striking example of structural sin, facilitated by callous indifference and selfish greed. The climate crisis is leading to the destruction of our planet, the devastation of the lives of the poor, and the detriment of future generations. We, Church leaders and civil society organisations in Africa and beyond, demand world leaders, business leaders and decision makers to heed to this important communiqué, and in so doing, heed to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'F. Besungu', with a large flourish above it and a small '11' below the signature.

His Eminence Fridolin Besungu Cardinal Ambongo
Archbishop of Kinshasa, DR Congo
Vice-President of SECAM and President of the Justice,
Peace and Development Commission (SECAM)

THE AFRICAN CLIMATE DIALOGUES

From July to September 2022, five sessions of the African Climate Dialogues were held:

1. False Climate Solutions and the Congo Basin - July 19, 2022
2. Food Systems, agriculture and adaptation - August 10, 2022
3. Climate Finance – August 30, 2022
4. Loss and Damage and Adaptation - September 8, 2022
5. Climate-Induced Migration and Displacement – September 15, 2022

Each of these invite-only sessions were hosted by organisations and individuals from the Catholic Church and secular civil society actors. Each session saw a diverse list of stakeholders and experts come together to discuss and reflect on their experience, with a special emphasis on the moral and spiritual dimensions of the climate crisis and what action is needed at COP27. Participants were invited to respond to expert presentations, dialogue with each other and contribute to a shared output. All of the comments and presentations from each session were then collated and distilled into newsletters, which can be accessed via the links beneath. This document, *the communiqué*, is a distillation of each of these newsletters – including only the key messages from each session.

An interpretivist approach was taken to synthesise and distill the information from the sessions and to generate key conclusions. This approach differs from positivist approaches of enquiry, which traditionally attempt to convert oral contributions to comparative units. Instead, our approach sought to discern meaning and arrive at conclusions based on experience, consensus and reflective conversation. These outputs have been agreed to by the African Climate Dialogues steering committee, made up of key event organisers, and therefore represent an uncontested summary of event outputs.

KEY MESSAGES FROM THE AFRICAN CLIMATE DIALOGUES

1. False Climate Solutions and the Congo Basin

- Transform Africa's fossil fuel energy system to one that is powered by renewable energy sources in order to fairly and equitably provide energy for people and promote energy sovereignty, all while protecting the inherent rights of communities and ecosystems.

- Promote peace and regional integration in Africa, especially in the Congo Basin, by protecting ecosystems, regenerate Lake Chad basin, respecting human rights, establishing and enforcing binding regulations and the rule of law, and sensitising the public on climate change impacts.
- Abandon all false solutions including net-zero pledges, failed emissions trading and offsetting schemes, nature-based solutions and unfounded technological optimism (i.e., geoengineering).
- Transition to new sources of energy that are locally produced, cheap, accessible and benefit local and Indigenous communities in Africa.
- Establish and restore community-based management of natural resources like forests, rangelands and fishing grounds and abide by established legal and ethical principles such as the rights to free, prior, and informed consent, fair compensation, and a clean and healthy environment.

➤ [Read the full report from the dialogue on False Climate Solutions and The Congo Basin](#)

2. Food Systems, Agriculture and Adaptation

- Recognise that agroecology puts farmers and vulnerable communities at the centre, pro-planet approach to food production underpinned by a philosophy of harmony among human and other-than-human beings, and that a transition to agroecology can help mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- Establish a democratic mechanism for the governance of agriculture, land and food systems under the UNFCCC.
- Make agroecology a prominent theme at COP27 and in any follow-up decision of the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture, as it offers clear co-benefits when addressing food insecurity and the impacts of climate change.
- Move away from the myopic focus on efficiency and profit maximisation in the food system and instead focus on human rights, nutrition, food justice, seed and food sovereignty and sustainable farming practices.
- Allocate more resources to support smallholders, family farmers and indigenous people, including extension services based on agroecological methods.

➤ [Read the full report from the session on Food Systems, Agriculture and Adaptation](#)

3. Climate Finance

- The Global North must pay the ecological debt it owes to the Global South.
- Provide new, accessible, adequate, predictable and additional climate finance from public sources that supports the needs of people and local communities.
- Improve and simplify access to existing climate finance funding mechanisms so that local communities and civil society organisations can more easily use and benefit from these funds.
- Provide climate finance in the form of grants rather than loans and increase funding for adaptation.
- Improve transparency and tracking of climate finance disbursement to strengthen democratic checks and balances and improve governance.
- Respectfully utilise Indigenous knowledge to design interventions that are locally-driven and context specific.

➤ [Read the full report from the session on Climate Finance](#)

4. Loss and Damage

- Recognise loss and damage as the third pillar of responding to climate change alongside mitigation and adaptation.
- Establish a loss and damage finance facility at COP27 funded by penalties levied against private and public sector polluters based on well-defined measurements including from public sources.
- Pay special attention to the issue of non-economic loss and damage and take immediate actions to avert the impending loss of heritage, cultures and languages.
- National Governments in climate vulnerable countries should immediately draft loss and damage strategies and assessment schemes for submission to the UNFCCC.
- Faith leaders, including the Holy See, senior Church leaders, and the Bishops of Africa, should speak out in support of civil society on the issue of loss and damage at COP27.

➤ [Read the full report from the session on Loss and Damage](#)

5. Climate-Induced Migration and Displacement

- The strong interconnection between climate, migration, conflict and food security requires urgent and greater awareness, comprehensive policies, better nexus between humanitarian and sustainable development aid, and adequate financing.
- The conflict and tension between climate-induced migration-displaced people and hosting communities require local policy, finance and action in sharing common resources.
- As transboundary migration increases over time, climate migration policy needs to be recognised as a human rights issue and an adaptation measure.
- Among the most affected community, young people should be given more opportunities to support their capacity to preserve cultural heritage and roots.
- Climate-induced migration and displacements from losses and damage are a justice issue and should be seen as part of the discussion on Loss and Damage.
- Finance for Loss and Damage must include climate-induced migration and displacement.
- Climate-induced migration and displacement exacerbate the underlying socio-economic and developmental crises.
- Job creation and tree planting initiatives, according to agroecology and agroforestry principles, should prevent environmental degradation and community exclusion/migration.
- NGOs and Catholic institutions should call for greater solidarity around these issues and should equip communities with legal assistance and tools to provide policy input into various governance processes.
- To have a stronger voice, the actors involved in climate-induced migration and displacements should collaborate and build synergies.

➤ [Read the full report from the session on Climate-Induced Migration and Displacement](#)

For general inquiries about the African Climate dialogues, please contact: Lydia Machaka, Climate Justice and Energy Officer, CIDSE (machaka@cidse.org)

The following organizations are part of the African Climate Dialogues steering committee



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