



## **African Trade Union Demands COP 25, Madrid-Spain**

**2 – 13 December, 2019**

### **1. Introduction**

Climate change impacts on the African continent are visibly disturbing, as it begins to manifest one crisis after another. The Africa we want is crying for policy and climatic space to transform its economies, livelihoods and societies for the benefit of current and future generations. The global development commitments captured in or expressed in the sustainable development goals provide a useful framework within which to situate the aspirations and concerns of the people determined to realize the potentialities of the African continent amidst climatic challenges. Working people the world over and in Africa continue to create the wealth that holds together the civilization. All economic activities are currently under stress as a result of the direct effects of climate change as well as the necessary mitigation response measures seeking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. There are also critical adaptation measures seeking to reduce the adverse effects of global warming as the effects are already making a heavy toll on the livelihoods of people. The imperatives of climate change are thus challenging African societies to live up to its obligations within the global efforts of UNFCCC to deal with climate change. Trade unions and their social partners are at the same time alarmed by the pervasive unemployment and under-employment, especially among the youth and women; the precariousness of the burgeoning informal sectors, the weak coverage of social protection for large sections of the populations; the growing spatial, income, generational and other inequalities – all of which must be dealt with alongside the climate responses.

The Africa Regional Organization of the International Trade Union Confederation bringing together 16 million workers from 52 countries is committed to contributing to combatting climate change. Amplifying the position that there are no jobs on a dead planet, African trade unions are at the heart of efforts to transform African societies, build industries and other productive sectors for the benefit of its members. The imperatives of the climate change crisis notwithstanding, the social, economic, political and broader environmental challenges facing the continent underscore the fundamental necessity to invoke

the right to development, in accordance with the spirit and letter of the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.

**2.0. African trade unions are accordingly demanding:**

- Raise Climate Ambition
- Ensure a Just Transition to the low greenhouse gas emission economies and climate resilient societies in Africa
- Raise climate finance commitments and honor them
- Deal with the agricultural and forestry concerns of the African continent

**2.1. The Demands**

***The COP 25 should take forward the rules and mechanisms for the implementation of the Paris Agreement with the view to raising climate ambition, while addressing the social, economic, political and broader environmental challenges of the African continent. In this connection African trade unions make the following demands:***

- 2.1.1.** All parties should raise their emission reduction commitments in keeping with the findings and conclusions of climate science and take appropriate steps to realize them;
- 2.1.2.** All Parties should contribute to realizing the various conditionalities that would enable African and other countries of the global south capable of meeting their emission reduction commitments which are ambitiously outlined in NDCs
- 2.1.3.** Ensure consistent commitment in the formulation, implementation and review of NDCs, while addressing specific developmental challenges of African economies and societies, paying appropriate attention to the priority sectors such as agriculture; transportation; extractives, manufacturing and energy; water, sanitation and waste management.
- 2.1.4.** Cut out market mechanisms that inure to the benefit of rich industrialized countries and depress development options of African countries, without reducing the total global emission;
- 2.1.5.** Strengthen technology transfer and capacity building to enable and ensure consistent mitigation measures that address the sustainable development of agriculture; transportation; extractives, manufacturing and energy; water, sanitation and waste management;
- 2.1.6.** Strengthen adaptation measures that deal with the increased incidence of climate-related disasters and the associated

losses and damages to livelihoods, infrastructure and communities;

**2.1.7.** Strengthen infrastructural rehabilitation through enhanced financial mechanism and, in the process create more decent employment for millions of workers; and

**2.1.8.** Developed countries should raise their emission reduction targets beyond their current offer, noting that African countries have high ambitions, albeit conditional to the availability of climate finances which rich-industrialized countries have committed to raising

**2.2. *Ensure a Just Transition to the low greenhouse gas emission economies and climate resilient societies in Africa***

**2.2.1.** Ensure gains of the transition are equitably shared taking due cognizance of the needs of working women, men and their communities and the quality jobs;

**2.2.2.** Ensure that the losses and pains in the transition are fairly spread out in order not to burden working women, men, the vulnerable in society and their communities;

**2.2.3.** Ensure that **Just Transition concerns** feature prominently in all response measures be it mitigation or adaptation, in accordance with the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement and in keeping climate justice;

**2.2.4.** Ensure that mitigation and adaptation measures concretely seek to create more green jobs that are decent to replace unsustainable economic activities, targeting in particular the more climate-sensitive activities like agriculture and forestry, and the priority sectors.

**2.2.5.** Provide technological support basis for renewable energy and other industrial retooling and renewal processes that address industrialization needs along a sustainable path;

**2.2.6.** Provide training, retraining and lifelong education for working women and men to enable them respond to changes in a fluid social, economic, political and environmental context;

**2.2.7.** Conclude on Loss and damage mechanisms being negotiated to cater for losses and damages of physical infrastructure, and also provide for working women, men and the communities who lose their livelihoods;

**2.2.8.** Strengthen adaptation measures by including reparations for loss and damages arising from climate-related disasters as a binding feature of the transition to low carbon economy and climate-resilient societies.

**2.3. *Raise climate finance in keeping with climate justice and the commitments of industrialized countries under the UNFCCC***

- 2.3.1. Rich industrialized countries who have accounted for more than 75 percent of the historical accumulation of greenhouse gases should live up to their financial mobilization obligation of raising 100 billion dollars for climate action by 2020
- 2.3.2. Make guidelines for accessing funds more transparent;
- 2.3.3. Transparency in climate action entails timely information that enables all stakeholders to participate
- 2.3.4. Going forward trade unions need to step up action by how labour standards could be integrated in Green Climate Fund framework
- 2.3.5. Again explore how employment creation could be a criterion for various funding mechanisms
- 2.3.6. Explore the idea of green social fund
- 2.3.7. Trade unions should step up campaigns to raise appreciation of the limits and limitations of funds coming from outside to finance climate action so that African governments and the AU will pay more attention to financial sources within the African continent, given the outrageously huge amount of monies/wealth being “stolen” from the continent as clearly recounted in various reports on illicit financial flows (IFFs)

**2.4. *Deal with the agricultural and forestry concerns of the African continent***

- 2.4.1. Underscore the fact that agriculture plays a most critical role in the social, economic, environmental as well as political life of the countries in Africa;
- 2.4.2. Highlight the fact that agriculture contributes to greenhouse gas emission while suffering from the direct impact of global warming and requires mitigation and adaptation response measures;
- 2.4.3. Measures to build a climate-resilient agriculture with reduced emission should be negotiated into the process;
- 2.4.4. Address Land degradation through adaptation measures targeting agriculture and afforestation, being mindful of the pitfalls of monocultural tree planting and the role of communities of women and men who derive their livelihoods from forests.

### **3.0. Commitments**

The trade union movement in Africa and its allies within and beyond the continent accordingly commit themselves to:

- working assiduously before, during and after the COP 25 to further campaigns in support of these demands
- pursuing implementation pathways that turn out synergies between climate response measures and the sustainable development goals (SDGs)
- advancing the Decent Work Agenda, through the massive creation of green jobs in response to the employment needs of the growing youth population; the formalization of the informal economy; the promotion of rights at work; the universal application of social protection; ratification of International Labor Standards relevant for sustainable development; and the strengthening of social dialogue at the national and regional levels.

*Johannesburg, October 2019.*