



WoMin
AFRICAN WOMEN UNITE AGAINST
DESTRUCTIVE RESOURCE EXTRACTION

**AFRICAN WOMEN UNITING FOR
ENERGY, FOOD AND CLIMATE JUSTICE!**

DECLARATION

OCTOBER 2015





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The WoMin African Gender and Extractives Alliance convened this gathering in partnership with Kebetkache Women's Development and Resource Centre, Home of Mother Earth Foundation, Centre for Children's Health Education, Orientation and Protection, and Environmental Rights Action.

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African Women Uniting for Energy, Food and Climate Justice! is a regional gathering of more than 60 women activists (and some men allies) from Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. This year we met in Port Harcourt, Nigeria from 28 September to 2 October 2015 to deliberate on the negative social and environmental impacts of fossil fuels extraction, refining and combustion, and the cumulative effect of climate change on women's bodies, livelihoods and communities.

As a broad collective of African women, we told our diverse stories, shared our experiences, witnessed the impacts upon our sisters in communities of the Niger Delta, and strategized together.

We express our strong commitment to stand together in solidarity, to work in our communities and countries to build a powerful movement of African women, and to unify our struggles through a women-led regional campaign for climate, energy, food and gender justice.

African women cultivate 70 to 80% of the food produced and eaten by rural households. We steward the natural resources and eco-systems upon which communities depend and which sustain the planet. And our labour of unpaid care ensures the well-being and reproduction of families and communities.

African women have engaged in uninterrupted resistance against dispossessions and encroachments upon our land and natural resources. We resist war and organise for peace. We support families, communities, nations, our continent and other women. In spite of the conflicts amongst our peoples created by patriarchal capitalism and corrupt politicians, women stand together as sisters, friends and allies.

Preamble

Fossil fuel extraction and use is the major contributor to the greenhouse gas emissions which cause climate change. And the biggest climate polluter is the global power sector which is responsible for 37% of global emissions. Coal is the fastest growing fossil fuel and the largest single contributor (40%) to carbon emissions.

At all points of extraction, refining and energy production, it is women and workers who most immediately suffer. Our predominantly poor, indigenous, rural and black communities in the Global South (including parts of the geographical North) carry the burden of social and environmental devastation – this includes oil spills; land grabs; devastated livelihoods; water and air pollution; poor health, early and high mortality; lack of state services or high-priced commercialised services; and high levels of interpersonal, domestic and sexual violence.

There is deep injustice in a model of development based on the extraction of fossil fuels and minerals and their export, in raw form, to the West as well as to elites and corporations of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) on highly unequal terms. This is especially true now that the returns are about half as high as they were in 2011 due to the commodity price crash, a factor that makes 'extractivist' corporations even more desperate to avoid paying living wages and exercising ecological stewardship and social responsibility.



Powerful transnational oil, mining and energy corporations are the major beneficiaries of the new African resource grab under a globalised neo-liberal capitalist system, and their export of capital through Illicit Financial Flows as well as excessive (legal) profit and dividend repatriation must be stopped. This is the new form of colonialism that Africans, and African women in particular, suffer but also resist. We do so usually without the support of our national elites, who remain 'comprador' allies of the transnational corporates.

The extractivist model of accumulation leads to an extremely high dependency on fossil fuel extraction and mining for national revenues. Because it artificially inflates the currency (known as the 'Dutch Disease') it destroys other productive sectors of our economies, sectors which would otherwise generate more employment and support many more livelihoods than the polluting fossil fuel industries. This dependency on fossil fuel revenues gives the transnational corporations enormous power over our governments. And when the revenues crash, our currencies collapse, and the imported inflation is rapidly passed to our poor people, along with the burden of interest rate increases, budget cuts, privatisation pressures and other forms of government austerity.

Our governments and economic elite work hand-in-hand with transnational capital to exploit our planetary wealth for profit. This also leads to the militarisation of our communities and societies as the political elite deploys the police and military against those resisting the theft of our land and the destruction of eco-systems and livelihoods. Women across Africa report sexual harassment, bodily strip and searches, and rape by the security arms of the state and private security firms of the fossil fuel and mining corporates.

Poor communities and women carry the negative impacts of energy production, yet we do not enjoy its benefits. Transmission lines carry energy from major hydro dams and coal-fired power stations past communities to the energy corporations, mining companies, smelters and industries in the Global North and parts of the South.

Corporate-led, profit-oriented renewable energies (solar, agrofuels and large hydro) do not present a real alternative to traditional fossil fuel-based energy. Like fossil fuels, this renewable model causes large-scale land dispossession, the transfer of vast tracts of land from food to energy production, and the reproduction of deep inequalities in energy access. We are also opposed to other 'false solutions' – nuclear energy, carbon trading and offsets, so-called Carbon Capture and Storage, and geo-engineering – which fail to address the roots of the problem and present huge technological dangers of their own. We blame carbon emissions from fossil-based energy production, the liberalised global trade regime under capitalism, industrialised agriculture, and over-consumption in the Global North (including parts of the geographical South such as elite neighbourhoods in Africa's main cities) for the climate crisis, and demand that the disease be treated at the roots.

The hundreds of eminent International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) scientists tell us that climate change is a reality with current levels of carbon emissions setting us on course to a 4.00C temperature increase globally, and a 6.00C increase in Africa. Even the voluntary emissions cuts (INDCs) to be announced at the Paris climate summit in December 2015 will, at the time of writing, raise world temperatures by 3.60C, and violations are inevitable given the non-binding nature of that deal. This will cause unprecedented, large-scale disruptions of human and natural systems, food and water insecurity, and untold loss of life. In Sub-Saharan Africa climate change is projected to contribute to the premature death of 180 million Africans by 2100 if current trends continue, and already according to Kofi Annan's Africa Progress Panel, more than 300 000 deaths per year can be attributed to climate change.



Climate change is the cause of increased erosion, drought and water scarcity, and rising sea levels all of which have negative impacts on the forests, lakes, seas and land that women depend upon for our productive activities and residential life. And it is women, because of the patriarchal-capitalist division of labour and our greater responsibility for agricultural production and social reproduction, who continue to carry the climate change burden.

The multi-lateral climate negotiations platform (the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties, or COP) has failed to deliver binding agreements for emissions reduction. The failure is mainly due to the rich countries that carry historical liability for a looming climate change catastrophe, but the BRICS are also implicated with four of the five being party to the 2009 Copenhagen Accord which dispensed with binding emissions reductions in favour of 'bottom-up' pledges. We share the analysis of the wider Climate Justice movement that our governments and multilateral forums will not deliver what is needed to save the planet and its people.

African women are living the REAL alternatives to this deeply destructive capitalist, patriarchal, extractivist model of development in the ways we produce food, conserve and steward natural resources, and take care of our families and communities. A powerful vision of development built from the needs and perspectives of the majority of African women will lie at the centre of our strengthened national and regional movements of women. We, African women, hold the solutions to the many crises of ecology, climate, food, water, energy, transport and development that the planet and its people confront.

Defining justice for African women

Our aspirations, as African women, are for a model of development in which we achieve justice – energy justice, food justice, climate and ecological justice, and gender justice. We commit to work in unity and solidarity to achieve this vision through our organising, movement-building and campaigning.

Energy justice for African women means:

Leaving 80% of all known fossil fuel reserves in the ground!

Developing a rapid global transition from fossil fuels as the primary source of energy to a transformed renewable energy system which:

- Respects the land and natural resource rights of communities, and women especially
- Guarantees work and decent livelihoods for local communities, and women in particular
- Treats energy as collective wealth from which all citizens must benefit
- Guarantees clean energy that is affordable and accessible to all
- Derives from government-supported research and financial investment in popular, democratically controlled, decentralised, socialised renewable energy options in which we play a leading role given our gendered interest in energy.



Food justice for African women means:

- Independent access to and control over land
- No land dispossessions of an involuntary and/or coercive nature
- Compensation for historical dispossession which recognises our land and natural resource rights, offers use-based as opposed to market-based compensation, and prioritises land-for-land compensation
- Implementation of laws and policies that protect all lands from grabbing by the elites and corporates and which are respected and adhered to in practice
- Seeds being banked, shared amongst and controlled by women and other small-scale farmers
- Implementation of laws, policies and government programmes that support an agro-ecological small-scale family-based model of agricultural production
- Provision by the state, as a matter of urgency, of a full range of gender-sensitive services (research, extension, marketing and finance) which farmers need
- Fair economic value from our crops based on government price-setting and regulation
- Sufficient nutritious, culturally appropriate foods – zero hunger!
- Protection (including through local subsidies) of local and national food markets from food dumping, subsidised food imports, and genetically modified seeds and produce
- State investment in local infrastructure (small dams, local renewable energy solutions and transport) that supports flourishing local economies and markets that are connected through local trade and exchange
- A ban on the cultivation, import and export of genetically modified (GM) crops that is agreed upon and enforced throughout Africa
- Women are fully involved in all decision-making that relates to the food system given our deep knowledge of and central role in food production, processing, preparation and provisioning.

Climate and ecological justice for African women means:

- A binding, international climate treaty of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to reduce carbon emissions to a maximum 1.50C global average warming, and which clearly reflects the principle of differentiated historical responsibility
- All communities enjoy clean living environments that guarantee good health and general well-being
- Our governments develop, implement and enforce environmental laws and policies, which hold corporates fully accountable for all social and environmental costs of their activities
- A binding global treaty on transnational corporations which is ratified and enforced by all governments acting in unity to curb the power of corporates
- Full compensation, with specific provisions for women, by polluters for environmental devastation and social impacts of fossil fuels extraction, refining and combustion, and related climate change effects
- An international court which prosecutes corporates for their transgressions of the environment, people's livelihoods, and women's bodies
- An end to international finance institution (IFI) financed fossil fuels investments
- A development paradigm, expressed in development plans at all levels, which puts at the very centre the livelihoods, cultural interests, health and well-being of citizens, and poor women in particular, over the profits of corporates
- The majority of women in Africa – the farmers, traders, care workers – are the primary beneficiaries of climate debt reparations, adaptation funds and mitigation strategies.



Gender justice means that women:

- Enjoy full equality with men in all parts of life including the family, community, economy, state, religious institutions, schools, and cooperatives
- Enjoy the results of the implementation and enforcement of all existing declarations, laws, policies and programmes that have provisions which support our vision of justice for African women
- Have voice and are able to participate in decision-making in all areas of our lives and in development institutions at the local, national, sub-regional, regional and international levels
- Are treated with respect and dignity by our family members, communities, and local, national, sub-regional, regional and international governing institutions
- Enjoy freedom from all forms of violence and obtain full justice when these rights are violated, including by the military and police
- Benefit from gender-sensitive state laws and policies which are respected, implemented and adequately resourced.

Our key demands of responsible national, regional and international bodies

We demand from our governments, and multilateral institutions at the sub-regional, regional and international levels that our vision of development justice outlined in the sections above is respected and advanced through laws, policies, plans, regulations and supporting budgets.

We specifically demand the cancellation of illegitimate debts accumulated through corruption, undue influence of corporates, and the mismanagement of state resources.

What we ask of our menfolk

We ask that you:

- Stand in solidarity with us in our struggle for equality and justice
- Join our campaigns in a supporting and not a leading role
- Take on a fair share of domestic house work
- Respect our right to exercise control over our bodies – we demand an immediate end to sexual harassment, sexual violence and domestic violence!
- Respect our abilities, our knowledge, and our contributions to all aspects of development
- Bring an end to social and cultural practices that undermine our rights.

Our key resolutions and actions from this meeting

We resolve to:

1. Strengthen women's organising and movement-building where we find ourselves – in our families, communities, nationally and internationally
2. Strengthen an African sisterhood – a movement of African women in solidarity which takes forward our vision of justice for African women outlined above
3. Build a women-led Africa-wide campaign for climate, food and energy justice which will aim to strengthen an African sisterhood and deepen our regional movement for total transformation of the dominant development paradigm.



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