

'Defy the US', Africa CSOs' Bonn challenge

African civil society groups coalescing under the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, PACJA have challenged world leaders to rise and oppose the retrogressive stance against climate action spearheaded by the US President, Donald Trump.

Addressing the press at (see photo below) the ongoing UN Framework Convention on Climate change's 23rd conference of parties in Bonn, Germany, the CSOs said the options at the COP 23 are limited to support the people and the planet.

"Leaders have the liberty to make their own decisions but civil society represents the voice of the grass root communities and this is very important," Mithika Mwenda, Secretary General of the PACJA told the press.

The groups had hoped that COP 23 will see definite steps towards closing the finance gap, a raise in ambition for bolder steps on decreasing temperatures to stay below 2°C and other provisions as agreed in the Paris Agreement.

Instead, the African CSOs and a host of other delegations are met by inaction. They see the slow pace and ambiguity



in sequencing of work on the Paris Agreement Rule Book is creating unnecessary roadblocks in advancing its formulation.

"Inaction by any party is equivalent to alliance with Donald Trump," said the CSOs adding that the pullout decision by Trump from the COP 23 is an affront and travesty to climate justice, health of the planet and a threat to humanity in general and Africa in particular.

The African CSOs called

African CSOs address the press at the COP 23 in Bonn, Germany

upon the delegates to instead be focused and fulfill demands: pursuant to Article 2 of the Paris Agreement with pledges to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, all parties to practically commit beyond their current level of emission target in their NDCs to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius this century and resubmit.



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For or against Trump? Prove it—Activist

Augustine Augustine Njamshi, executive director of the Bio-Resource and Development Centre, Cameroon and a member of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, PACJA wants a declaration that equates climate inaction by any party to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to being in alliance with the US President Donald Trump. He castigated President Trump's ill-advised attempts at reversing climate legacies and the cold, conspiratorial silence of those who choose profit over the planet.

"Unless we see accelerated



Njamshi

action on the implementation of the Paris Agreement pursu-

ant to Marrakech Action Plan by industrialised countries, we will declare them silent allies of Trump and enemies of the people and planet, irrespective of the empty rhetoric they bring to the climate talks" Njamshi added.

Identifying with call by non-state actors from Africa, newly elected COP23 President, Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama said "all over the world, vast numbers of people are suffering – bewildered by the forces ranged against them". Our job as leaders is to respond to the suffering with all means available to us," said.

Photos of interest



Germany shores up climate funding

While the US President's action to pull his country from the COP 23 appear to have dampened the environment, there was however some glimmer of hope when Germany Environment Minister Barbara Hendricks seemed to appease anger by the delegation from the vulnerable countries when she announced her country's contribution to the climate change adaptation fund by 50 million euros.

"Vulnerable countries must be put centre-stage," she said while kicking off the conference.

German politicians meanwhile pledged to support the Paris Agreement and do more to help those most at risk from climate change.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, German Environment Minister Barbara Hendricks said the international community needed a greater focus on vulnerable coun-

tries, and pledged an extra 50 million euros to the Adaptation Fund this year. "Our goal is to make [the Adaptation Fund] a firm part of the financial architecture of the Paris Agreement," Hendricks said at a press conference ahead of the opening ceremony. "We're sending the clear signal that Germany stands in solidarity with people in the countries most affected by climate change," she added.

Germany had already committed 240 million euros, making it the biggest bilateral contributor to the fund. And German development cooperation minister Gerd Müller has now thrown another 50 million euros of German money into the mix, with a new pledge to the Least Developed Countries Fund used to finance adaptation in areas such as agriculture, climate information systems, and catastrophe risk management.

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