

CLIMATE JUSTICE NOW!

A CALL FOR PEOPLES' ACTION AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

Representatives from organizations and peoples' movements from around the globe came together in Durban, South Africa October 4-7, 2004 to discuss realistic avenues for addressing climate change. The group emerged from the meeting with this call for a global grassroots movement against climate change.

Twelve years ago governments took serious note of and agreed to address the issue of global warming. They signed and ratified the Convention on Climate Change. Five years later, they agreed on the Kyoto Protocol, which was to establish concrete commitments to reduce fossil fuel emissions from Northern countries. This Protocol has yet to come into effect¹.

The emission reductions that the Kyoto Protocol established for industrialized countries were only 5.2% below 1990 levels—which most scientists agree is completely inadequate to effectively address global warming. Even these inadequate targets are being evaded through schemes such as carbon trading including the establishment of carbon “sinks” like monoculture tree plantations—mainly in the Global South. These schemes are being embraced by the very entities that are destroying the Earth. Meanwhile destruction of true carbon reservoirs like native forests continues unabated, leading to yet more releases of greenhouse gases.

For this reason, the Durban Group calls on grassroots activists and organizations around the world to stand up for real action on climate change.

Communities disproportionately impacted by climate change and the false “solutions” put forward by the Kyoto Protocol (including carbon sink projects and continued fossil fuel exploration, extraction and burning) include small island states, whose very existence is threatened, as well as indigenous peoples, the poor and the marginalized, particularly women, children and the elderly around the world.

The refusal of governments and international financial institutions like the World Bank to force corporations to phase out use of fossil fuels, and which in fact encourage accelerated use of increasingly limited fossil fuel stocks, is causing more and more military conflicts around the world, magnifying social and environmental injustice.

Just as peoples' movements are rising up around the world against the privatization of water and biodiversity, so must we rise up against the privatization of the air, which is being promoted through the establishment of a massive “carbon market.”

If we are to avert a climate crisis, drastic reductions in fossil fuel investment and use are inescapable, as is the protection of remaining native forests. The current flawed approach of international negotiations must be met by the active participation of a global movement of Northern and Southern peoples to take the climate back into their hands.

We therefore call on activists, organizations and communities to sign on to the statement that emerged from the Durban meeting and join this growing global movement.

To sign on to the Climate Justice Now! statement please send an email to
info@fern.org or visit www.sinkswatch.org

¹ The Kyoto Protocol is expected to enter into effect later this year.