

## Making the 27<sup>th</sup> COP an African COP

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The 27<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties holding in Egypt has been called the 'African COP' principally because it is holding on African soil. However, this is not sufficient to make a COP African. For this to happen, climate justice activists and heads of government and negotiators from Africa must insist that the peculiarities of Africa in the context of climate change are taken into consideration and acted upon.

Africa is one of the world's most vulnerable regions to climate change impacts including in energy sustainability, agriculture and other livelihoods, health, water, sanitation, security, ecosystem resilience, migrations and population shifts, etc. The challenges of climate change in Africa is not only found in how the weather is changing, but also how these changes are interacting and influencing the way people live, including how they provide for their livelihoods, their security, their habitation, their migration patterns and wellbeing. The reality is that current responses from international frameworks and national governments to climate change fail to adequately address the African peculiarities and have rather compounded the problems and further entrenched the negative conditions of local communities. For instance, warming in Africa is greater than the global average, and this trend is expected to continue into the near future. Current temperature targets being promoted and pursued by those not directly impacted, spells outright doom for Africa.

For the 27<sup>th</sup> COP to truly have an African colouration, it must come to terms with the fact that Africa has contributed the least to causing climate change, but it is nonetheless the most affected by its negative impacts. It follows necessarily that those most culpable in causing climate change must also take the largest share of responsibility in solving the problem. To this effect, loss and damage must become an integral part of all climate change response policies.

The 27<sup>th</sup> COP must also take action to reverse the emergence of a new wave of climate colonialism which has African countries bearing the brunt of maintaining facilities for addressing climate change, while

countries in the global north continue on the same trajectory of pollution. Climate colonialism policies such as REDD+ which has resulted in a new wave of land grab and the reversal of community land ownership rights must be reversed.

The 27<sup>th</sup> COP must address the fact that Africa is at the centre of a new wave of extractivism focused on the exploitation of new hydrocarbon finds, as well as moves by fossil companies to abdicate legacy ecological responsibilities through a new wave of divestments. An Africa friendly climate policy emerging from the COP in Egypt must seek to hold fossil companies accountable for the ecological damage they have caused, and their contribution to the climate crisis. Currently, these companies are braving new odds to extract even more fossils in deep waters, while outwardly adorning the garb of new 'energy companies'.

The 27<sup>th</sup> COP must go beyond rhetoric and take real action to confront climate change. It must drastically cut emissions; it must seek sanctions against companies who fail to record real action. It must expose false solutions to climate change for what they are, it must disincentives the commercialization of climate solutions by market forces and the continues promotion of a faulty 'net zero' over actions towards real zero emissions. It must genuinely care about saving the planet and all that depend on it. That is how this COP becomes an African COP.