

## **Memorandum from the Rural women's Assembly to the UNFCCC, the government of the Republic of South Africa and the Governments of Africa**

We the Rural Women's Assembly of Southern Africa, meeting in Durban on the event of the 17th Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC in Durban 30 November to 5 December 2011 demand that governments take the following immediate steps to address the clear and present danger posed to rural communities by the climate crisis.

1. A climate deal that will take meaningful steps to halt the climate crisis by cutting carbon emissions. Historical emitters who are responsible for 75% of GHGs must face trade and investment sanctions if they refuse to cut emissions, particularly from African governments, as Africa has contributed least to climate change, but is the worst affected.
2. Recognition of women's critical role in fighting climate change and protecting livelihoods and the environment despite widespread violation of their equal right to land. Equal rights to land and natural resources is critical fight climate change. As the Rural Women's assembly we demand that governments implement the principle of 50/50 land to women through a radical programme of redistribution.
3. Women produce 80 per cent of the food consumed by households in Africa. 70 per cent of Africa's 600 million people are rural. Financial support for women farmers must be commensurate to their numbers and crucial role. We stress that adaptation strategies and building resilience starts at the household level. Governments must address the crisis in the care economy in order to build resilience to climate change. As women we demand 50 per cent of funding to agriculture to women farmers secured by a special allocation within the Green Climate Fund and public budgets.
4. We demand that climate change solutions put indigenous knowledge systems at the centre of policies to promote biodiversity, rehabilitate our ecosystems and rebuild the livelihoods destroyed by colonialism, apartheid and economic imperialism. Rural women are the holders of indigenous knowledge--our marginalisation from economic production, scientific knowledge generation and social systems has resulted in the steady loss of such knowledge to Africa, thereby making us more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
5. We demand an end to false climate solutions which are resulting in a deterioration of our environments, the destruction of marine life as well as land and resource grabs and the take over of food systems by corporations and speculators. We reject the participation of Africa in carbon markets, GMO projects and biofuels farming. Climate change can only be addressed by a change in our current economic system which encourages unsustainable resource extraction and consumption.

We commit ourselves to continue forward with the struggle against the injustices of climate change and build our movement to end the shameful marginalisation of rural women. We will continue to strive for the recreation of equitable vibrant, prosperous and healthy rural communities.

Signed on this day of 4 November 2011  
Rural Womens Assembly

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