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Editorial

Open Letter: Call for a UN treaty to end fossil fuels

by Vishwas Satgar



Image Source: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-09-25-open-letter-call-for-a-un-treaty-to-end-fossil-fuels/>

This is an open letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, General Antonio Guterres.

General Antonio Guterres,

The recent UN Climate Action Summit which you convened in New York has been a disappointment. Major carbon-emitting countries are not rising to the challenge. These governments do not have excuses given that for more than 20 years they have been informed by the UN International Panel on Climate Change about climate science and growing urgency. On the streets, climate justice movements have been doing the same.

The problems with UN Climate multilateralism have to be engaged with openly and honestly. In

this regard, it is important to share with you a demand made to the UN by the children, youth and climate justice forces that took to the streets for #GlobalClimateStrike on 20 September in South Africa.

However, before I get there it is important for you to understand my orientation to the climate crisis. I am writing to you from a society in which youth unemployment (aged between 15-24) stands at 55%. Hope for many young people has been stolen by Nelson Mandela's party, the African National Congress (ANC). Widespread looting of state resources by many in the ANC has deprived large parts of the post-apartheid generation a place in democratic South Africa. When I was 11 years old in 1980, my family



home was surrounded by apartheid police who detained my elder brother for his anti-apartheid activism. As a child, I was terrified for what would happen to my elder brother given that many were being killed in detention. I was moved by this injustice and attempted a school boycott the next day. The boycott did not last long but it sparked an uncompromising commitment to social justice and emancipation which has stayed with me for almost four decades as an activist. I continue to feel a deep sense of inter-generational solidarity, given my politicisation at a young age. Hence, I am deeply concerned about the bleak economic future faced by our youth and these concerns are exacerbated when I think about the intersection with a worsening climate crisis. In this regard, Greta Thunberg's powerful call for urgent action at your recent summit cannot be ignored.

Let me also be open about my ideological approach to the climate crisis. I have a climate justice perspective which has largely been excluded from the mainstream discourse in the UN system. It has had its strongest expression among movements struggling against extractivism, for climate jobs, food sovereignty, transition towns, solidarity economies, rights of nature, zero waste, socially owned renewable energy and generally, system change. My climate justice orientation goes back 20 years when I worked on an eco-village in a township community and contributed to the Green-House project in the inner city of Johannesburg. I brought my ecological consciousness into my academic work and designed a postgraduate course on Empire and the Crisis of Civilisation, almost a decade ago. This has enabled me to expose my students to the various socio-ecological crises plaguing our world, including the climate crisis. In 2011, I took 120 of my students to the Conference of the Parties (COP) 17 Summit in Durban. We marched for a climate justice future and handed out pamphlets

to delegates going into the conference, appealing to them to ensure they take the fate of human and non-human life seriously. I also participated in the Peoples Space at the COP20 Summit in 2014 in Lima, Peru. I spent time with some of the leading climate justice activists from the Global South grappling with systemic alternatives which were not being considered inside the UN negotiations. We knew that after the Copenhagen COP (2009) we were defeated by the fossil fuel lobbies and pro-business agendas of most governments. The high point of the first cycle of climate justice activism was the Cochabamba Peoples Summit (2010) in Peru, which the UN also disregarded.

One cannot help but wonder: if the UN listened to climate justice movements over the past two decades, where would the world be today in terms of the climate crisis?

So, ecological politics and more specifically climate crisis and justice are not new to me. On Friday, 20 September, one of our main #SAClimateStrike targets was a protest outside the corporate offices of Sasol, the 45th highest carbon emitter in the world. I was proud of the children and youth gathered at this event and about 18 other such events across South Africa. This was historic for South Africa. Besides affirming the scientific urgency of the climate crisis, these mobilisations affirmed the democracy deficit in climate policy-making, both in South Africa and at a UN level. One of the demands made to Sasol was for a just transition plan to be developed so that the country knows how Sasol is going to ensure we achieve a net-zero emissions target while ensuring workers and affected communities benefit in this process. The South African government has failed in this regard and neither has the UN Paris Agreement compelled the likes of Sasol to put forward such a plan.



Despite South Africa being committed to the Paris Climate Agreement since 2015, according to Afro-Barometer, 54% of South Africans have not heard of climate change. This includes rural residents (63%), women (58%) and citizens without formal education (65%). The failure of the Paris Climate Agreement to engender urgency in South Africa is patently clear. Climate negotiations are elite negotiations, despite the climate crisis affecting all life forms on planet Earth. This disconnect between the UN system and local civil societies is an expression of the democracy deficit in climate negotiations and is certainly going to engender further conflict with increased planetary heating.

In South Africa, climate crisis governance is performative and made routine. South Africa has a few policies on climate change, including work being done on an adaptation strategy. These policies are not mainstreamed into governance. Moreover, the failure of the South African government's climate policy commitments is also expressed through a failed response to our current drought (2014 to the present). The El Niño (intensified through climate change) induced drought in South Africa has been the worst in the history of the country. The ANC government only declared the drought a national emergency in early 2018, after our food system nearly collapsed.

According to climate scientists in South Africa, the entire water system that the country relies on, including the Katse Dam in the Lesotho highlands, can handle a five-year drought. We are now in the fifth year of drought, and the Katse Dam, one of the main feeders into the industrial heartland of South Africa, has levels sitting at 16.9%. This is a serious crisis with "day zero" a looming possibility for the densely populated province of Gauteng (over 12 million). Yet the ANC government is maintaining a carbon-based development path, including building

one of the largest coal-fired power stations in the world, promoting fracking, offshore gas extraction and the importation of gas from Mozambique. South Africa continues to also have oil interests in Saudi Arabia, Angola and even in conflict-ridden South Sudan. The Paris Climate Agreement is not stopping any of this.

Actually, despite the excellent science from the International Panel on Climate Change, particularly the 1.5C report of 2018 and more recent work done on the risks, costs, benefits and consequences of addressing 1.5C, the ruling elites in South Africa are afflicted with cognitive dissonance. This is more than climate denialism but actually plain insanity. From the standpoint of the urgency raised by children across South Africa, we have an irrational and irresponsible ruling elite that has not comprehended the implications of IPCC science. Despite the diplomatic narratives, self-congratulatory discourses and sensational headlines, after the Paris Agreement was put in place, the UN process to tackle the climate crisis is not efficacious and is facing a legitimacy crisis. Least of all in relation to climate justice forces on the planet.

In my view, there are three reasons for this.

First, the Paris Climate Agreement is not legally compelling for signatory countries. The principle of voluntary co-operation has completely undermined the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. There is no regulated push for nationally determined targets to be achieved, which would have tackled immediately the major carbon-based industrial powerhouses on the planet. This is the triumph of neoliberal international relations, in which states are even understood as competitive market actors and therefore have the freedom to choose whether to act on the problem or not. Ironically, this is happening at a time when the eco-



fascist Donald Trump is deepening the crisis of the liberal intellectual project, including in its neoliberal incarnation.

Second, the entire UN system is founded on the primacy of nation-states. The nation-state is a product of the emergence of capitalist modernity, secular nationalism and the imposition of Western colonialism. Sovereignty has a chequered and dubious history which I do not want to get into, but just to say, the consensus among many critical international relations scholars is that the marketised neoliberal state has a functionality shaped by the sovereignty capital and is extremely weak to deal with democratic pressures arising from deep inequality.

The third wave of democratisation in the 20th century has also stalled in this context. African states that are fossil fuel (oil and gas) producers, are some of the most illiberal on the African continent and they will certainly not empower their citizens to understand, let alone shape, the climate policies and just transitions required in their countries. These countries are trapped; “resource curse” on one side, and worsening climate crisis on the other. Mozambique, Nigeria, Angola are all examples. The Paris Climate agreement with its present approach is not providing a way out for these countries.

Third, the carbon budget approach central to the COP process, while useful, merely expects countries to manage emissions through setting targets and implementing mitigation and adaptation measures. There is a huge gap in this logic. This has to do with holding nefarious fossil fuel corporations (gas, oil and coal) accountable. While divestment campaigns have attempted to put pressure on shareholder-based fossil fuel corporations, this has not gone far enough, and as long as there are profits to be made, as expressed in the global energy mix, in which

coal still dominates, with gas also beginning to be included, fossil fuels will not disappear any time soon. In the Global South where about 77% of fossil fuel reserves are controlled by state corporations from Petrobras, China's state-owned companies, as well as the fleet of India's state corporations, divestment of shareholders will not work.

The COP negotiations have not locked in fossil fuel corporations (state and non-state) in terms of their just transition plans. Pinning down fossil fuel corporations is crucial to give momentum to decarbonisation of all other sectors in the national and global economy. This is a civilisational and intergenerational necessity. There is an urgent need for an “End Fossil Fuel Treaty” that can be added to the Paris Climate Agreement, under Article 6 of the agreement, dealing with mitigation, and particularly Article 6.9 which seeks to elaborate a framework for non-market approaches. Such a treaty has to be based on the principle of climate debt owed by fossil fuel corporations to all of us. This will go a long way to addressing the weaknesses I have identified above, the failure of the UN process to hold fossil fuel corporations accountable, for more than 20 years, and it will ensure we move with greater haste to a peaceful resolution of the climate crisis.

Of course, this might be ignored by the UN, but this is how we framed the challenge in our memorandum handed over to Sasol:

A National and Global Call to #GridlockCarbon on May 1st, 2020 – 1.5C is Not Negotiable

We will be back next year to assess progress on Sasol's just transition plan but also to confront all other carbon corporations, investors and government institutions. Today is the start of ongoing and rolling action to #GridlockCarbon.



Hence we call on South Africa and the World to stand with us on 1 May 2020, to #GridlockCarbon corporations everywhere.

On 1 May 2020, we will stand together with workers in South Africa and the world to demand:

Ambitious just transition plans from all carbon corporations and polluters so we accelerate the realisation of net-zero emissions and prevent a 1.5C overshoot;

No new investments in oil, gas and coal;

All governments to withdraw subsidies from fossil fuel industries and redirect this money to socially owned renewable energy transitions;

The UN establish an “End Fossil Fuel Treaty” which ensures fossil fuel corporations pay the world a carbon debt for the harm they have caused, poor countries are compensated for a problem they did not create, including poor countries with fossil fuel reserves, and the oil, coal and gas industries are shut down in the next 10 years or sooner.

1.5°C is not negotiable. Our common future is in jeopardy and we are ready to fight for it. People and planet before profits.

Together with the children, youth, workers and citizens in the climate justice struggle in South Africa, we look forward to your response.



International News

Finance and wellbeing: could community banks help fill the existing gaps?

by Anca Voinea

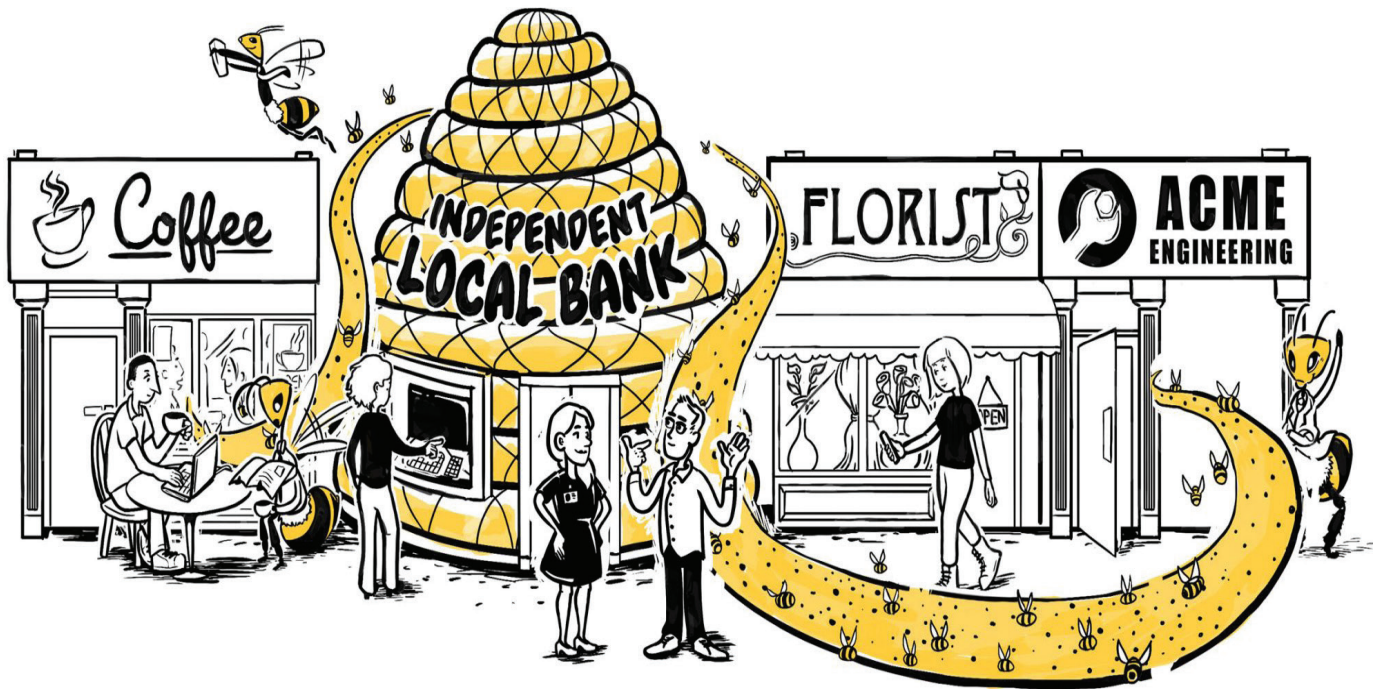


Image Source: <https://www.thenews.coop/144172/sector/banking-and-insurance/finance-and-wellbeing-could-community-banks-help-fill-the-existing-gaps/>

Plans for new community banks are under way across the UK in an effort to transform the banking sector and provide more financial support to small organisations. One of the key actors behind these initiatives is the Community Savings Bank Association ([CSBA](#)), which will act as a network for the new banks. There are currently 11 banks in the network, at various stages of development. One of these is [Banc Cumbria](#) in Wales, which would be owned and run by members on a one-member, one-vote basis.

With traditional banks closing branches across Wales, rural communities and small businesses are unable to access short-term loans. A recent research by consumer experts Which? found that some parts of Wales have lost 80% of their banks since 2015. Vulnerable communities are among the most affected. Another report by the National Assembly's Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee called

for intervention, arguing that bank closures are likely to impact certain marginalised and financially disadvantaged groups disproportionately. More than 200 banks have shut in Wales since 2008. The Welsh government is supporting the partnership between Banc Cumbria and the CSBA. Setting up a community bank for the country was one of first minister Mark Drakeford's commitments in his 2018 manifesto.

Banc Cumbria is busy with the first phase of work, which includes a detailed project plan, stakeholder engagement, initial market assessment and feasibility study with the assistance of the Development Bank of Wales and Cardiff University. A second, more comprehensive piece of market research will include market and consumer testing, says Ken Skates AM, minister for economy and transport. Mark Hooper, project lead at Banc Cumbria, has been involved in the co-operative sector for 10 years, running



Indycube, a community benefit society providing co-working space for freelancers. He says the project is currently at the pre-planning stage. "We want to go back to the communities that other banks have left," he says.

Banc Cambria has received initial funding from the Welsh government, which is keen to ensure that credit unions are also consulted during the process. Mr Hooper says the bank will aim to compete with the big financial providers not credit unions. How is Banc Cumbria going to be different from other banks? In addition to being member owned, the bank will also aim to promote a different approach to the provision of financial services. "We won't be offering credit cards, because credit card debt has a negative impact on society," says Mr Hooper.

Likewise, Banc Cambria will not offer mortgages for second homes due to the effect they have on first-time buyers. The bank will operate a different remuneration policy from the bigger players, says Mr Hooper, paying staff fairly without promoting huge benefits. "This may not be the normal way for the UK, but in other countries this normal way of banking," said Mr Hooper.

Once the bank is running, its main challenge will be to encourage people to switch accounts. "People are more likely to divorce than to change their bank account," warns Mr Hooper. But he thinks community banking is needed now more than ever in Wales; and to ensure its relevance, it will have a digital offer as well as a branch presence. Starting from scratch also gives the bank the opportunity to use the latest available technology, says Mr Hooper, who is confident the bank will have an IT infrastructure as solid if not more solid than other banks.

"There is a real need for community banking today.

People feel that big banks have forgotten about them – we have an opportunity to get into that market. The fact that it will take so long is a shame. But it's a chance to do banking quite differently. Most people have little choice but to use one of those banks and they are all similar, it will be good to have choice. The time is now." Banc Cambria expects to be able to progress its application for Authorisation with the PRA and FCA during summer 2020. It anticipates a launch date between mid 2021 and early 2022, provided it is granted a banking license.

In England, three regional community banks being supported by the CSBA are at more advanced stage of development. The new mutual banks that could emerge by 2021 include South West Mutual, which would serve Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset; Greater London Mutual for the capital's residents and Avon Mutual, for communities in Gloucestershire, Bristol, BANES and Wiltshire. Local authorities in the North West of England, including Preston and Wirral, are also looking to jointly set up a community bank.

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The co-ops of Argentina are fascinating, although they'd probably prefer not to be

by Anca Voinea



There are over 20,000 cooperatives in Argentina, and the most colorful ones are the 300+ that are known as “recovered businesses.” These are companies that went bankrupt and closed, but the workers re-entered the buildings and re-opened the businesses, now converted to worker co-ops. They’re found largely, though not exclusively, in Buenos Aires.

Mike Krause of Isthmus Engineering gave a presentation Monday night on his visits to some of these co-ops. One of his main points was that the government of Argentina dislikes co-ops in general and recovered business in particular... because they work. As the Argentine economy goes through rather predictable boom-and-bust cycles on a ten-year schedule, co-ops are one of the main ways people survive the bust years. But working-class people surviving — and presenting a viable alternative to neoliberal policies — does not serve the interests of the wealthy or the current right-wing government.

As Mike explained, this means that co-ops have to seek support elsewhere. The first place they find it is in each other. Co-ops don’t see each other as competitors, even when they provide the same goods or services. On the contrary, they join together into second and even third-tier federations to purchase in volume, to lobby the government (or hold street protests against it), to improve their internal processes, and even to find ecologically responsible ways to dispose of their waste products. Additionally, co-ops go out of their way to include each other in their supply chains.

The other main place co-ops find support is in their local communities. For example, all three co-ops Mike visited encourage children and other family members of current members to become members as well. One has an internship program and sponsors a local soccer team. Another is about to open a vocational school on its property, which is not limited to the products the co-op makes. In fact, education is a recurring theme among co-ops across Argentina — job training, co-op education, and general education are all considered important, both for members and for the broader community. The success of the co-ops and improvements in the quality of life of their communities are tightly correlated.

Co-ops in Argentina do find support in other places, as well. All the co-ops are on very good terms with labor unions, for example. Also, in spite of the conservative domination of the national government, the more progressive parties are long-time advocates for co-ops and recovered businesses.

All this support is crucial to the survival of co-ops, especially the recovered businesses. They face hostility from the President of the country, conservative media outlets, and often from courts as well. Ownership of the businesses and their assets is frequently contested. New co-ops commonly



that alone, but they're not alone. With cooperation among co-ops and concern for their communities, they're not only surviving, they're setting an amazing and important example.

Originally posted at: <http://www.mcdcmadison.org/2019/04/23/for-worker-co-ops-in-argentina-the-struggle-goes-on/>

India celebrates co-op week with a look at the role of the movement

by Miles Hadfield

India has been holding events across the country for its 66th national Co-operative Week (14-20 November).

Co-ordinated by the National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI), the apex body for the sector, this year's celebration looks at the 'role of co-ops in new India'. New India is a movement aiming to build a strong and prosperous country, free of poverty, casteism, terrorism and other problems.

With the co-op movement looking to increase its innovations to help drive this process, the week has seen workshops, discussions, presentations and award presentations across the country to drive home the co-op message and develop its future strategy.

NCUI has highlighted innovations already under way, such as co-ops helping to diversify the rural economy from farming to real estate, power, insurance, tourism, healthcare and communications.

Each day of the week has had a separate focus – innovation through rural co-ops; enabling legislation for co-ops; re-orienting training and education through success stories; strengthening co-operation among co-operatives; new initiatives of government

come into existence saddled with the debts of the old businesses. The cost of utilities skyrocketed recently for households and small businesses generally, and local authorities are known to be hyper-vigilant about health and safety regulations with recovered businesses. And all this is layered on top of the difficult economic position the country as a whole is in, plus the lingering effects of decades of dictatorship and corruption.

The fascinating thing about the co-ops of Argentina is that they are doing as well as they are. As Mike observed at the end of his talk, all the co-ops he visited had court dates or similarly important events in the immediate future. When they say *la lucha sigue*, the struggle goes on, they really mean it. There's no shortage of people who want to see cooperativism fail, and economic power even more concentrated in the hands of big businesses and their wealthy owners. No co-op could stand up to



through co-operatives; co-operatives for youth, women and weaker sections; and financial inclusion, technology adoption and digitalisation through co-operatives.

schemes as they have an extensive network and reach in all parts of the country.”

Originally posted at: <https://www.thenews.coop/144169/sector/regional-organisations/india-celebrates-co-op-week-with-a-look-at-the-role-of-the-movement/>



Examples of innovative co-ops highlighted by NCUI include Irula Snake Catchers' Cooperative near Chennai, which collects snake venom for which is commercially used for medicinal purposes; Dhundi Solar Pump Irrigators' Cooperative in Gujarat, which uses solar power to water crops and sells off surplus energy; Shri Mahila Udyog Lijjat Pappad, a women's co-op which has provided self-employment to urban women making poppadoms; and Swachh Cooperative in Pune, a waste-collectors' collective.

Chandra Pal Singh Yadav, president of NCUI, said: “The theme of National Cooperative Week clearly emphasises the significant role of co-operatives in building up a New India.

“Co-operatives have played an important role in poverty eradication, employment generation, creating social harmony and building up a society without any discrimination to a particular class or section of the society. “They are also playing an important role in the implementation of government



National News

Climate Conference- a convergence of grassroots activism

By Courtney Morgan

On the 19th and 20th of November, as most of the country was winding down for the last couple of weeks of the year, the Cooperative and Policy Alternative Center was gearing up for one of the biggest conferences of the year, the Climate Conference. The aim of this conference was to bring together climate justice forces from around the country, forces who have been on the ground for decades, forces who have just entered the conversation as well as those who are looking to take up this fight. The conference also had the purpose of launching the first Peoples' Climate Justice Charter for South Africa, arguably the first one in the world. Over the 2 days, the various constituencies broke up into groups and discussed pertinent issues facing the country in terms of climate change, as well as challenges for the movement.

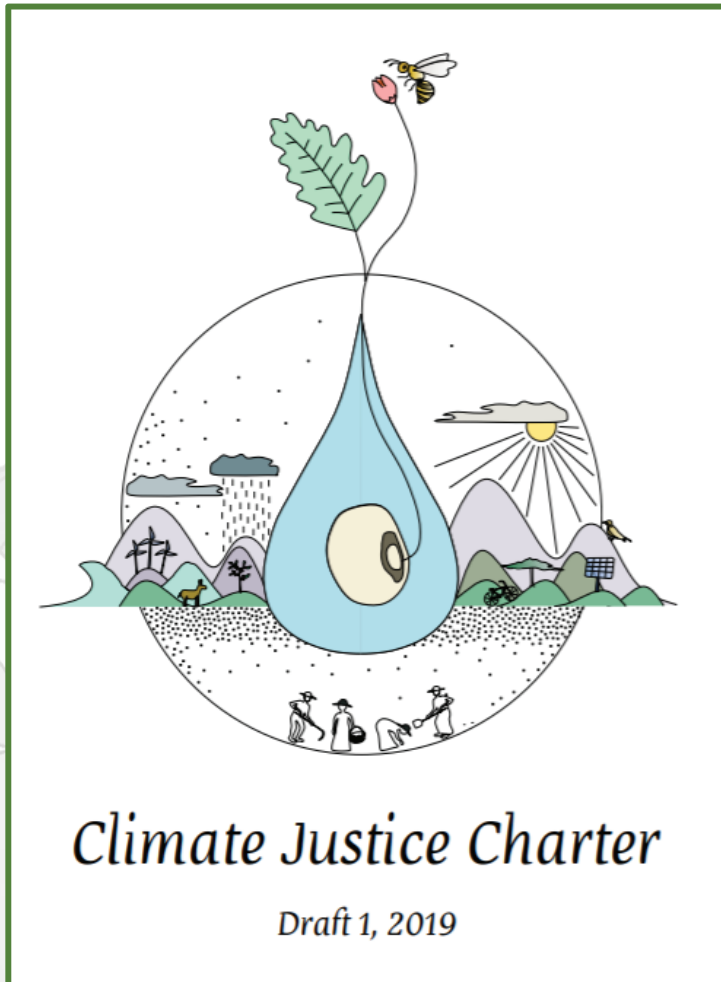
In September 2018, COPAC hosted a Water Sovereignty conference, where they launched their water sovereignty activist guide. This workshop was also aimed at starting a process to develop a Water Sovereignty Charter for South Africa, in the context of the drought. At this meeting, the conclusion

was met that there is a greater need, a need for a climate justice charter. The decision was taken at the meeting to begin this process. Throughout 2019, COPAC hosted roundtable discussions with various constituencies: Drought affected communities, media, youth, labour, faith based organisations as well as Environmental and social justice organisations to discuss the climate crisis and the need for a charter as well as what would go into such a charter. All of these constituencies as well as additional people were then invited into the climate conference space where the charter was ultimately to be launched.

Throughout the engagements, and within the conference, there was an emphasis on the science of climate change, and the importance for us, as activists to always make sure our claims are backed up by the science, which they are. Because of this, it was important that the first panel of the conference was by climate scientists: Bob Scholes, Coleen Vogel and Francois Engelbrecht. This panel, entitled Climate Science and Challenges for South Africa and the world spoke to the conference about the importance of centering the science, explained the unique and vulnerable position southern Africa is in and what we should be doing. The next panel was entitled Eco-utopia and Climate Justice Futures: Launch of the Draft Climate Justice Charter, this



was the official launch of the draft charter, where the alternatives and principles were presented by Courtney Morgan and Vishwas Satgar, this was followed by an hour long discussion about the charter where participants were given the chance to critique and give comments about the charter.



On day 2, we got down to planning our actions. The first panel Climate Justice Agency #GridlockCarbon was presented by Vishwas Satgar. He outlined a proposal for actions throughout 2020 and the group was given an opportunity to commit themselves to that plan, respond to the plan as well as contribute to the plans. This was a great opportunity for the participants to discuss real concrete plans for action and to discuss tactics for disruption. This discussion was very much needed, it was helpful to see the various tactics that people had in mind, their stances on being arrested and a legal strategy for the disruption. The final panel of the conference

was entitled Transformative network building for a climate justice movement presented by Ferrial Adam, speaking through the need for a strong, independent climate justice movement for South Africa. It is only through a movement that we, as the people can overcome the effects of climate change, and this panel was an opportunity for the participants who would make up this movement to discuss what such a movement would look like, how they see it constructed and how it would need to work.

This conference was a catalyst, it was the beginning of a long journey towards climate justice and the deep just transition. Throughout the conference it was made clear that the charter as well as the movement would be created and led by the people, not an NGO, not one person, but the people. It was also emphasised that we would need to act, not just symbolically, but real climate action was necessary, we cannot allow it to be business as usual. Finally, an important point coming out of the conference was also solidarity, we must stand with each other, we must stand with communities being affected now, and we must stand with our youth. All in all, the conference was a vibrant space where a multitude of voices were present, were heard and were able to articulate their interests without comprising the interests of the entire group. It was diverse, people from across sectors, age groups, professions, gender, race and class came together with one purpose, and in a divided world, where the ruling elites would wish to divide us even further, this was a great showing of unity and a glimpse into what we have the potential to build.

To read the draft climate justice charter, visit: <https://www.safsc.org.za/climate-justice-charter/>. You are encouraged to share your thoughts and comments with us before 1 May 2020.



Philippi Horticultural Area zoning battle continues in court

Tessa Knight

The Philippi Horticultural Area (PHA) case, which PHA Food and Farming Campaign chairperson Nazeer Soudy on Tuesday called “precedent-setting” had attorneys representing the PHA Campaign, the City of Cape Town, the province and the developers debating a 2011 provincial government decision to rezone the city’s urban edge. The decision resulted in urban land encroaching on agricultural land, located in what campaigners refer to as the Philippi Horticultural Area.

The piece of land under debate comprises 472.36ha in an area that the campaign argues forms part of the PHA, while the respondents argue that it is not part of the horticultural area. Developers intend on turning the area into Oakland City, comprised of 15,000 housing units, a private school, malls and other urban developments, according to advocate Michael Janisch, who represented the Oakland City Development Company.

The PHA Campaign, supported pro bono by advocate Murray Bridgman, claim that Western Cape Local Government, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning MEC Anton Bredell, who made the 2011 decision to shift the city’s urban edge and excise the land from the PHA, did so unlawfully. The PHA Campaign on Wednesday argued that Bredell cited the wrong statutory provisions in shifting the urban edge. He acted in terms of the Land Use and Planning Ordinance, and the Physical Planning Act. Had he acted in terms of the Development Facilitation Act his decision would have been lawful, argued Bridgman.

A year after Bredell amended the urban structure plan and changed the designation of the land from horticultural use to urban development, the MEC withdrew the plan. According to Ron Paschke SC, for the City, the applicants did not contest this withdrawal. Ten days after the withdrawal, City council adopted the Cape Town Spatial Development Framework. It included the Oakland land in the urban edge, marking it for urban development.

Although the City and province argued that the



2011 decision was withdrawn and therefore is moot, Bridgman argued that “the illegal decision tainted” further decisions.

The campaign wants Bredell's decision reviewed, but Paschke asked Judge Kate Savage to dismiss the request to review the 2011 decision.

The PHA Campaign also wants 3,000ha of horticultural land in Philippi to be protected. In 2018 1,884.8ha of the PHA, which the City considered the “core PHA” and excludes the Oakland land, was declared a Critical Natural Area and cannot be used for development. But the campaign wants the entire area protected, including Oakland land. Nazreen Bawa, representing the province, said in reference to the development the provinces was “damned if they do and damned if they don’t” allow development to occur.

According to Bredell's spokesperson, James-Brent Styan:

“The province's main goal is also to protect and look after the PHA farming area. Not a centimetre of land currently being used for farming in the PHA area is at risk of being taken over by the current developments under consideration.”

However, the campaign also charged that Bredell did not have enough information to make the 2011 decision to shift the urban edge, saying he should have erred on the side of a “precautionary principle”. In particular, the campaign emphasised the need to protect the Cape Flats Aquifer, which it claims has the potential to “support increased agriculture and to provide potable water for Cape Town”. But both the province and the City argued that farming in the area will have a significant detrimental impact on the aquifer, and that proposed developments will include necessary measures to protect the aquifer. “This is not a development which will prevent recharging of the aquifer. This is not a development



which will cause pollution to the aquifer in a way that cannot be mitigated,” Paschke told the court. Paschke also argued that the campaign is anti-development, questioning why they would want to prevent the creation of thousands of jobs in an area where people struggle to find work.

“Expert reports on food security say that the problem of food security is not a shortage of food, but [of] people not being able to afford to buy the food,” Paschke said on Tuesday, arguing that the development would create jobs that would provide residents in the area with much-needed funds. But the PHA Campaign claims the poorest of the poor are only able to feed their families because of food from the PHA, and the land under debate could be used to farm more food. Bawa, Paschke and Janisch all argued that the fact that the land has not been used for farming purposes and has instead been used for sand mining is a common cause. Paschke referred to the applicant's claim that the land could be farmed as a “myth”. Bawa also referred to the “erroneous argument that land will be used for farming”. Bridgman and Sondag counter that the land has irreplaceable agricultural worth, as indicated in a study by Indego Consulting.

Importantly, Janisch said the land will not be used for farming, saying:

“The developer seeks to create real value out of land that has only been used for sand mining. It has



no desire to develop farming land.”

After two days of proceedings, Judge Kate Savage has taken the case under review. Neither the City nor the province will seek costs from Sonday. However, Oakland City will.

Originally posted at: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-10-17-philippi-horticultural-area-zoning-battle-continues-in-court/>





Climate Justice News

Constitutional Court rules against coal mining in Mpumalanga Protected Area



The Constitutional Court has had the final say on the approvals for a coal mine inside an Mpumalanga Protected Area and Strategic Water Source Area. Earlier this month, the Constitutional Court refused the mining company's final challenge of a 2018 High Court decision to set aside Ministerial approvals for the proposal coal mine.

The Mabola Protected Environment near Wakkerstroom, is part of more than 70 000 hectares of grasslands in Mpumalanga, that was declared protected under the Protected Areas Act by the Mpumalanga provincial government in 2014. This followed years of investment, including extensive research and planning by a number of government agencies, including the then Department of Environmental Affairs, the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and the Mpumalanga Tourism & Parks Agency.

South Africa has 22 Strategic Water Source Areas (SWSAs) which comprise 10% of the land area that produces 50% of the country's fresh water. They supply water to South Africa's largest urban centres, agricultural areas and

support downstream economies and ecosystems. The Enkangala-Drakensberg Strategic Water Source Area specifically supports the economic hub of Gauteng as well as various towns and agricultural regions in Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State.

Atha-Africa Ventures (Pty) Ltd (Atha) was granted a mining right for coal after this area had been identified as a SWSA and after the Mabola Protected Environment (Mabola) was declared. Alarming, after the mining right was granted, the various government departments responsible for the environment and our water resources issued the other authorisations Atha requires for its proposed mine.

This is why a civil society coalition went to court to defend the area from proposed new coal mining. In November 2018, the Pretoria High Court set aside the 2016 decisions of the then Ministers of Mineral Resources and Environmental Affairs, Mosebenzi Zwane and Edna Molewa, to permit this new coal mine to be developed inside Mabola, with a punitive costs order against the Ministers and the



MEC for Environment in Mpumalanga.

Mining company Atha attempted four times to challenge that judgment. The Constitutional Court was the mining company's last hope. The civil society coalition defending Mabola was obliged to oppose all of those challenges and is delighted that the 2018 judgment remains intact. The Constitutional Court also awarded costs against the company.

"This is a significant victory. Our courts continue to recognise the importance of the protection of the environment, and our strategic water resources, especially at a time when we are already suffering the impacts of climate change. Decisions to authorise coal mines should be critically scrutinised and questioned," said Elton Thobejane, Chairperson of Coalition member the Mining and Environmental Justice Communities Network of South Africa (MEJCON-SA).

Coalition member groundWork's Director Bobby Peek said: "Defending the Mabola Protected Environment is more than an attempt to mitigate further climate change impacts. It is also about defending the rights of communities who will be impacted by the proposed mining activities. groundWork applauds this decision as it sends a strong message to decision-makers that mining and profits cannot come before communities and their sustainable livelihoods."

"The Endangered Wildlife Trust applauds this decision by the highest court in our land, in a time when upholding the rule of law has never been more important. South Africa has a strong and robust environmental legislation framework which is often not implemented by government departments and it is gratifying to see that our courts are prepared to stand firm in their application of the law to protect not only current generations but also future generations, from irreparable harm to our environment. In an era

when coal mining is being phased out globally for its devastating environmental and climate impacts, it is high time that South Africa's focus was on strategic resource management and not short term wealth at the cost of livelihoods and a healthy future. The EWT hopes that this decision marks this much needed new direction," said Yolán Friedmann, Endangered Wildlife Trust's CEO.

To proceed with its proposed coal mine in this Protected Area and Strategic Water Source Area, Atha would require a fresh approval under the Protected Areas Act from the new Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Barbara Creecy, and the new Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy, Gwede Mantashe.

However, they may not consider giving permission until the Director General: Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) has decided the Coalition's Appeal of Atha's Environmental Management Programme (EMPR) for the proposed coal mine, which the DMR approved in 2016.

Through the Coalition's challenges, records have revealed that officials in various government departments had recommended that approvals for the mine be refused, but these recommendations were overruled by their superiors.

In the case of the DMR, officials had recommended that the EMPR be rejected, but these recommendations were then overruled. Some of the reasons given by the DMR officials for their recommendation include:

1. The fact that the proposed mine is in a National Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Area;
2. "the proposed measures provided for the management of impacts towards water resources (i.e. wetlands, streams) cannot be considered reliable to contain or remedy the



cause of pollution or degradation resulting from the proposed mining operations”;

3. The proposed mine area is mostly characterised by wetlands and rivers which form an integral part of the fresh water system and has also been identified as a source of fresh water supply for the country;
4. The mine area comprises of irreplaceable sites that are characterised by highly threatened species and largely intact ecosystem, the loss or transformation of which preclude the meeting of specific biodiversity conservation targets within the Mpumalanga Biodiversity Conservation Plan;
5. The treatment of the anticipated post closure decant through a water treatment plant is not considered environmentally sustainable; and
6. The financial provision of R5 757 031 cannot be considered to be acceptable, since the measures provided are not sustainable to remedy the cause of pollution or degradation considering the sensitivity of the area.

In January 2019, the Pretoria High Court refused Atha permission to appeal the November 2018 judgment. The Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA) found similarly in April 2019 – that there was no prospect of successfully overturning the High Court judgment. In July 2019, the President of the SCA dismissed Atha’s application to her to reconsider the SCA’s April 2019 refusal. Now the Constitutional Court has held similarly.

The Coalition defending the Mabola Protected Environment against this proposed coal mine and that secured the High Court victory that the Constitutional Court has left intact, comprises the Mining and Environmental Justice Communities Network of South Africa, groundWork, Earthlife Africa Johannesburg, BirdLife South Africa, the Endangered Wildlife Trust, the Federation for a

Sustainable Environment, the Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD) and the Bench Marks Foundation. The Coalition is represented by the Centre for Environmental Rights.

Originally posted at: <https://cer.org.za/news/constitutional-court-rules-against-coal-mining-in-mpumalanga-protected-area>

Its business as usual as Sasol brushes off climate activist shareholders

by Leanne Govindsamy

Over the past few years, annual general meetings of shareholders in listed companies have become a common platform for environmental and climate activists all over the world. As long as they are able to purchase a share in that company, activists and affected people are able publicly to confront and challenge the leadership of companies whose operations cause environmental harm and contribute to global heating.

The questions to corporate leaders often require such companies to invest in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions, more sustainable operations, and in people and in the rehabilitation of the environment which it has sought to exploit and pollute. Since these are usually costly investments





that reduce profits, companies are inevitably slow and reluctant to make the commitments activists demand.

Last week, a number of environmental activists attended and participated in Sasol's AGM, asking critical questions about Sasol's failure to address the impacts of their pollution on the health of affected communities, as well as the company's massive climate impacts. The whole affair had a sense of wearisome indignity: ordinary people and activists who have for years tried to get Sasol to curb its massive environmental impacts in Secunda, Sasolburg, South Durban, Mozambique and its contribution to the climate crisis globally, still trying to have their voices heard; and senior executives and board members, glib and arrogant, spending as little time responding with as little information as possible, and committing to as little action as possible.



Outside the AGM, activists from Secunda and the Vaal, who suffer the health impacts of Sasol's pollution in those areas every day, peacefully gathered outside the gates of a large office park, asking to be let inside in order to hand a memorandum directly to the chairperson of the Sasol board and so that their lawful demonstration could be directly outside the building in which the AGM was held. They were prevented from doing so because inside private property, with police and private security on hand, their peaceful gathering was apparently a little too

far beyond established norms.

If one of South Africa and the region's biggest polluters were properly regulated and held to constitutional imperatives, instead of appeased and included in government's climate negotiation team, would activists and affected communities have to go to this kind of length just to be heard? Should concerned parents, whose kids are sick from air pollution, have to travel from Secunda and Sasolburg at 6am, only to be prevented from accessing private property and having their protest heard, despite an overwhelming police presence, because it is inconvenient for private property owners?

When the Sasol board chairperson decided after an hour of questions that only a further four out of 20 questions would be allowed, overruling objections from activists who had travelled a long way to raise important questions, the whole process seemed a sham — a reinforcement of unequal power relations between the company and those who sought to challenge it. It did not feel, sitting in that room, that Sasol was accountable to its shareholders, or to the people whose lives were affected by its operations. It did not feel like the dignity of those who were acting in the public interest was being respected and protected, or that people outside really had the freedom to demonstrate, and to present their petitions.

It certainly did not feel as if everyone had rights to an environment which is not harmful to their health or well-being, or that the environment would be protected for present and future generations. Instead, there was the tedious exhaustion of having to raise questions with the second-highest greenhouse gas emitter in the country, but which has only now started to develop a "roadmap" to address its climate impacts.



This is despite a new report from climate scientists that says that the world is on track for a temperature rise of more than 3°C, which will bring mass extinctions of species, and make large parts of the planet uninhabitable. This is despite the UN Secretary-General, speaking at the 2019 Climate Change Conference in Madrid, saying that “we stand at a critical juncture in our collective efforts to address the climate emergency, and either we stop this addiction to coal or all our efforts to address the climate crisis will be undermined.”

While we recognise that corporations like Sasol are important stakeholders in our economy and that it employs good people working towards sustainable solutions, their efforts need to be scaled up massively, and urgently. If anything is clear after its AGM, it is that Sasol will not take adequate measures fast enough without strong climate regulation — and bear in mind that we know from the experience with air pollution standards that Sasol will likely spend the next decade trying to set aside regulation designed to compel it to reduce its GHG emissions.

This show of corporate power, inaction and disdain cannot be allowed and tolerated within a constitutional democracy and within the context of a global climate emergency.

What we cannot do is continue to allow corporations to leverage power and control over those who are only seeking to protect our people and our planet. The age of unmanaged extraction and pollution by corporations under the guise of maximising shareholder value is over. We need a new way for business and for those who should be governing it.

Originally posted at: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2019-12-05-its-business-as-usual-as-sasol-brushes-off-climate-activist-shareholders/>



The Food Sovereignty Campaign

Agroecology recongised as the transformative solution for a food system in crisis by experts at UN



Civil society representatives from around the world successfully put agroecology on the agenda of the United Nations Committee on World Food Security, as the truly innovative pathway to resolving environmental, hunger, health and inequality crises, and ensuring the right to food.

This year's **Committee on World Food Security (CFS)**, 14-18 October in Rome, was held in the context of deepening crises. World hunger and malnutrition are on the rise. Since 2015, the number of **people without access to sufficient, nutritious food** has been increasing. **Over 800 million people** — that's one in every nine of us on Earth — experienced severe levels of food insecurity in 2018. Alongside this, **malnutrition due to obesity** is soaring, now at over two billion people. At the same time, the industrial food system is now recognized as a leading contributor to the multiple crises facing humanity. The CFS is the foremost inclusive,

intergovernmental and international political platform on food security and nutrition, with a vision to foster the right to adequate food for all. Since 2009, the **Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSM)** organizes the participation of civil society representatives - namely smallholder farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolks, indigenous peoples, agricultural and food workers, landless, women, youth, consumers, urban food insecure and NGOs. It is the largest international space of civil society organisations working to eradicate food insecurity and malnutrition.

"Here people from the global South, from the grassroots, come together with allies like Friends of the Earth International and La Via Campesina, to transform our messages into a political dimension, which we can take to negotiations with member governments." - Bertrand Sansonnens, Pro Natura-Friends of the Earth Switzerland



“There are two words that people must always respect to be a good advocate within civil society: inclusiveness and solidarity. You cannot get that alone.” - Musa F Sow, West African peasants and producers network (ROPPA)

Agroecology on the agenda

For several years the CSM has been demanding that governments gathered in Rome discuss policy recommendations to promote agroecology.

It marks a huge achievement for civil society — led by small scale food producers that have been practicing agroecology for decades, even centuries — that governments agreed to a year of negotiations to set out policy recommendations on agroecology. This is in the face of huge opposition and counter lobbying from agribusiness-led governments.

It was also a significant success that a **landmark report** by experts advising the CFS, on *“Agroecological approaches and other innovations for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition”*, clearly differentiated between agroecology and sustainable intensification approaches.

*“The **High Level Panel of Experts report** demonstrates that agroecology is the only transformational option to address all the structural changes needed in our food system in a systemic and integrated way. It shows that Sustainable Intensification and Climate Smart Agriculture can only provide one dimensional solutions via incremental change.”*

Ali Aii Shatou, Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC)

“It is heartening that there was broad acceptance for the report which reflects our vision of agroecology as system change, especially in the face of huge opposition from powerful governments such as the USA, Australia and Canada. This is the result of people building our political power and joint vision over several years – which itself is also a success of the food sovereignty movement.”

-Kirtana Chandrasekaran, Friends of the Earth International food sovereignty program coordinator

As leaders pointed to weather change, conflict, **weak markets** and migration as the drivers of food insecurity, civil society highlighted the structural causes behind these phenomena, including the contribution of industrial farming to ecological collapse, and the deepening inequality caused by **increasing agribusiness control** and grabbing of resources. The CSM highlighted that small-scale food producers in vulnerable regions face the worst impacts of droughts, **fires**, and **hunger caused by climate change**. Their call was for a fundamental transformation of our food systems, in favour of agroecology and food sovereignty, and based on human rights.

The CSM envisions agroecology as the transformative solution that encompasses widespread adoption of ecological food production and social and economic changes. It tackles unequal power relations whilst ensuring ownership of resources, **gender justice, socially beneficial innovations** and technology, and horizontal processes for knowledge, research and learning. They reject 'Sustainable Intensification', which co-opts the terminology of agroecology but in reality promotes biotechnology, industrial livestock farming and other agribusiness interests.



This year, member states also continued the process of elaborating national-level Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (to be adopted in 2020), and agreed the Multi-Year Program of Work for 2020-2023. Civil society encouraged these plans to remain ambitious in their scope to transition towards more people and community-centered policies. **Women** and youth led dynamic discussions at side events, including about the impact of extractivism on women's right to food and the struggle for a just transition, and the **future of food** and youth involvement in the agricultural sector.

Looking ahead to the CFS' 47th session in October 2020, the challenges are multiple. Multilateral state governance spaces like the UN are seeing increasing capture by the private sector, who are pushing 'multistakeholder' initiatives. Through these, corporations try to place the rights and interests of small-scale food producers and the public at the same level as corporate interests.. Governments with strong agribusiness and biotechnology investments have already used geopolitical tricks to block CFS processes. Civil society will need strong articulation, to bring evidence and coherent demands at the global level, and to put pressure on their national governments.

"The challenge would be how to bring this back to our countries, our localities, our communities; how to make our constituencies really mobilize themselves and act on the messages. Because without that, this will be just talk." -Sylvia Mallori, People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty

Originally posted at: <https://www.foei.org/features/agroecology-solution-world-committee-food-security>



The Growth of the Native Food Sovereignty Movement

Derrick Rhayn



Food sovereignty and food justice are issues that are important to many nonprofits. For native communities, the return of traditional foods and management of food systems is something that is increasingly recognized as a central element of sovereignty. Last week, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez spoke at an annual food summit, Diné Bich'iiya' Summit at Diné College in Tsaile, Arizona, and focused in part on the importance of establishing food policy and a food regulatory office with the goal strengthening the local food economy on the Navajo Nation. For nonprofits working on food justice, the elements of food sovereignty are critical to understand, especially for nonprofits working with native communities.

As part of his comments, President Nez stated the importance of having locally produced food for Navajo families by increasing their capacity to farm, and lessening their dependence on outside food sources. The summit, whose theme was "Food Is

Medicine," featured workshops and discussions on a wide range of topics including backyard gardening, traditional four foods, farm-to-school efforts, and other areas of interest. This theme reflects similar programs by other native nations, some of which were featured in the 2015 WK Kellogg Foundation report, Intertribal Food Systems, a National Intertribal Survey and Report. This report explores ways tribal communities are reclaiming their food sovereignty to create healthier choices and highlights 40 tribal-led projects focused on food systems. The vision put forth by President Nez echoes many of the survey's themes, which are:

1. Food as Medicine
2. Youth Development
3. Market Access
4. A Response to Health and Hunger
5. A Return to Roots

This latest food summit is part of a growing interest in healthy foods. Other efforts in the region have included a recognized farm to school program, a demonstration ranch dedicated to offering hands on training, traditional food workshops, and a community derived and managed development group called Hasbidito. These and other efforts point to the importance of establishing local control and development of food systems in native communities. As native communities look to strengthen their local food systems and increase their food sovereignty and security, several relevant issues need to be addressed and considered. As NPQ reported last year, there is a need for increased investment and financial capital to be available for native owned agricultural businesses. While native CDFIs are filling the financing gap for agricultural lending for businesses, there is still room for growth, and with good reason. According to the US Census of Agriculture's 2012 census for American Indian Reservations, there is a gap between the number of



farms located on reservation lands and the number of farms on reservation lands owned by native entrepreneurs. This means outside owners use farmlands to profit while food grown on native lands leaves for outside markets.

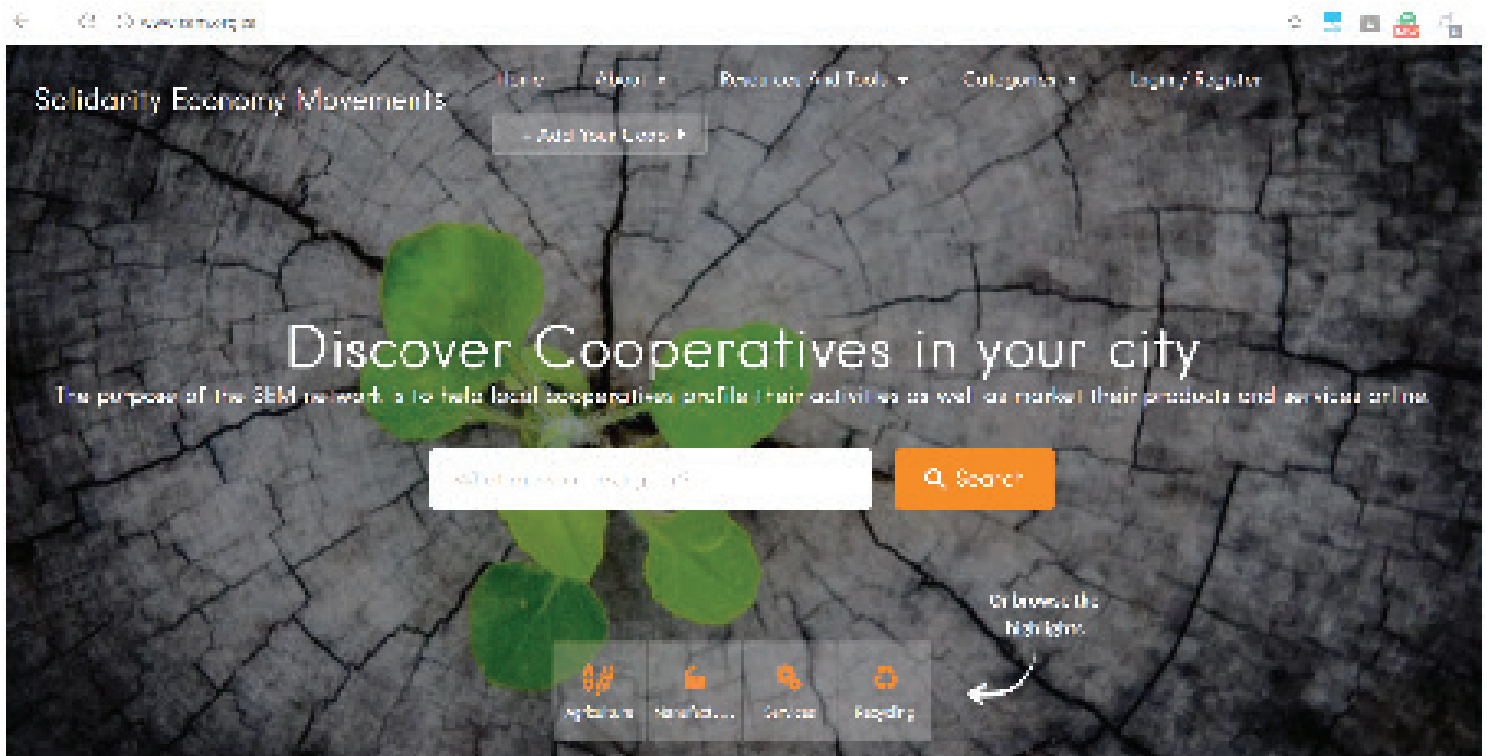
In addition to financing needs, there are several examples of discrimination at play that inhibit native farmers and agripreneurs from succeeding. Perhaps most notably, as NPQ reported last August, the Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF) was established as a result of a lawsuit, the *Keepseagle v. Vilsack* case, where claimants alleged that the US Department of Agriculture “discriminated against Native Americans in its farm loan and farm loan servicing programs.” The resulting \$266 million fund will begin making grants in 2019.

In addition to the *Keepseagle v. Vilsack* case, other efforts have been undertaken to ensure that Native communities are included in federal programs, such as efforts last year to ensure Native inclusion in the Farm Bill. The Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative at the University of Arkansas, which was a partner in the Intertribal Survey in 2015, authored a report called *Regaining Our Future: An Assessment of Risks and Opportunities for Native Communities in the 2018 Farm Bill*. The report discusses how the Farm Bill is organized, explores the importance of 638 authority for the USDA as a tool for tribes to engage more effectively with USDA programs, and looks at a range of Farm Bill components such as commodities, nutrition, rural development, and crop insurance.

Ultimately, food sovereignty reflects unique cultural values and histories, while returning control of food systems to local actors. Efforts that emphasize local policy and regulation, such as the ones recommended recently at the food summit in the Navajo Nation, can be effective tools for facilitating increased

capacity and bolstering efforts. At the same time, considerations about structural discrimination and addressing federal policy constraints are essential to the long-term efficacy of locally controlled food systems. For nonprofits working on food justice and sovereignty, these considerations and certainly others are worth noting and integrating into their efforts.

Originally posted at: <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/the-growth-of-the-native-food-sovereignty-movement/>



The Worker Cooperative Campaign

Call to Cooperatives: Join the Solidarity Economy Movements Website

The Co-operative and Policy Alternative Centre has launched a Solidarity Economy Movements website to serve as a marketing platform for co-operatives in South Africa. The website is a useful tool for all cooperatives as they can register and create a profile of their cooperative, describe their activities and market their products and services online at no charge.

The aim of this website is to promote the Solidarity Economy by providing citizens who want to support cooperatives with a portal that allows them to search for cooperatives near them.

Based on the idea of the Solidarity Economy the aim is to transform production, consumption, savings and ways of living to sustain life and advance transformative values in their practices.

We invite all cooperatives to register on the website by following these simple steps:

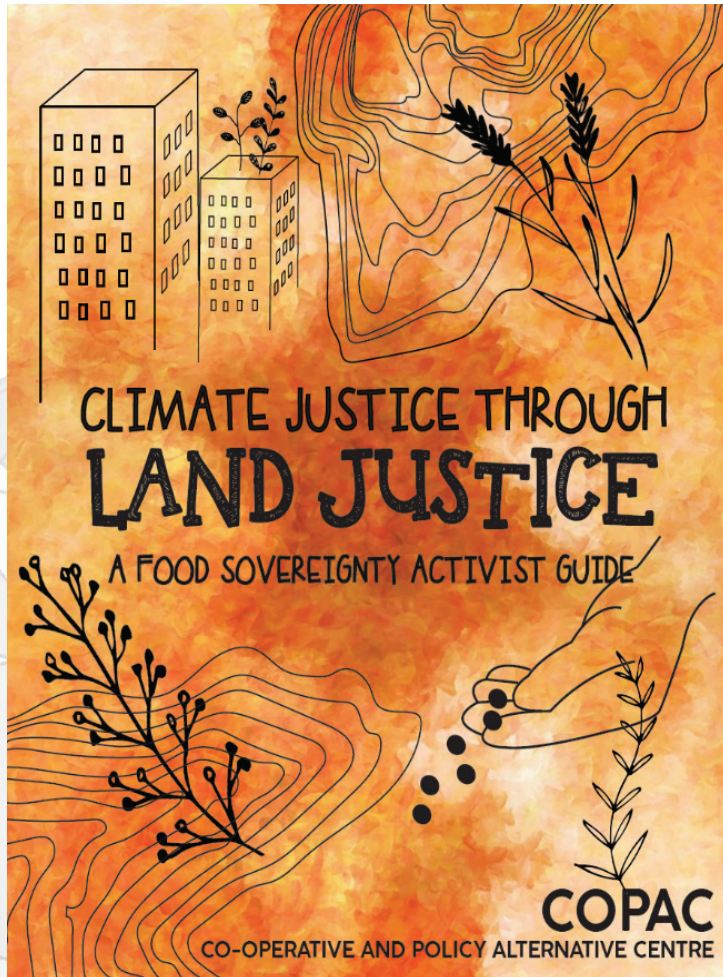
1. Type the following address into your internet browser: www.sem.org.za
2. Click on the block in the top right corner '+ add your coop'
3. You will then be asked to register so type in your email address and choose a password
4. Fill out all your coop details and press 'submit'

Share this link with co-operatives you know so that we can strengthen this platform for building the solidarity economy in South Africa.



Activist Resources to Advance the Solidarity Economy from Below

Climate Justice through Land Justice: A food Sovereignty activist guide



This guide is a popular education tool for communities and grassroots activists. It serves to:

- empower people to understand the land crisis and the power relations involved in controlling and destroying land;
- equip people with the basic knowledge and understanding of land as a source of life;
- empower communities to organise and respond to policies on land;
- provide user friendly and practical techniques to use land in an eco-centric way to sustain it

as the basis of eco-systems;

- protect, value and celebrate local and indigenous knowledge on land use;
- empower communities to strive towards systemic change through food, seed, and water sovereignty, land justice and a deep just transition.

The Land Guide can be accessed and freely downloaded at: https://www.safsc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Land-Justice-Guide-2019_Final-compressed.pdf

Seminars and workshops available for viewing on Youtube

Climate Conference

On the 19th and 20th of November, COPAC hosted around 80 grassroots community activists, academics and youth from across South Africa. The purpose of this conference was to spotlight the science around climate change, propose an agenda of action for 2020, how to build a climate justice movement in South Africa and finally to launch the draft of the climate justice charter. The open, panels and closure are linked below:

- Opening and welcome: <https://youtu.be/3NweLMIQTGw>
- Climate science and challenges for South Africa and the world: <https://youtu.be/SZAQs3ByQqQ>
- Eco-utopia and Climate Justice Futures: launch of the draft climate justice charter: <https://youtu.be/6cOROzMILHc>
- Climate Justice Agency- #GridlockCarbon: <https://youtu.be/bZN1pvw9FrA>
- Transformative network building for a climate justice movement: <https://youtu.be/vz-IP84KCsc>
- Closure: <https://youtu.be/Kw-oH8hKbzE>



Tobias Kalt Public Lecture: Struggling for a carbon free future: Lessons from Germany

On the 7th of November, we were joined by Tobias Kalt for a public lecture entitled: *Struggling for a carbon free future: lessons from the climate justice movement in Germany*. Year after year, thousands of protestors set out to block the coal industry in Germany, Europe's biggest source of carbon emissions, the climate justice movement in Germany works through mass actions of civil disobedience, demands to keep fossil fuels in the ground and makes explicit the links between climate change, capitalism and colonialism. This talk focuses on the movements successes in the building a radical climate justice movement and in putting the coal phase-out on the political agenda as well as the challenges in becoming a strong intersectional movement capable of advancing a radical just transition.

Public lecture: <https://youtu.be/XLVyt6QoEs4>

Expanding your activism on social media

Tips for posting:

- Always stick to the science about climate change. There are a number of websites and organisations who do good research on climate change, and have facts you can tweet. Use these facts and stats in your tweets. But make sure to move away from jargon and technical language, make the science accessible
- Look at existing narratives on social media, and link this to climate change. For example, any climate shock happening such as cyclone Idai, link that to climate science and climate shocks. Follow existing trends on social media. Also use current affairs to bring light to climate change alternatives. For example, use load shedding to promote socially owned renewables.

- Create FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out) for your events. When there is protest action or events, always create hype around the event and make people feel like they are missing out. Live stream on Facebook, and do live stories on Instagram to create in the moment FOMO.
- In addition to science, also post first person experiences of climate shocks, these are powerful and will gain a lot of retweets.
- Always link climate change issues to bread and butter issues. So when there is a hike in food prices, link this to drought (as an example).
- Ride on other hashtags, like political events. If there are indabas and manifesto launches, tweet about them and link to climate change.
- When dealing with trolls, don't waste energy. You can usually tell if they can be swayed, or if they are just trolling. If they seem to be able to be swayed, refer them to websites and other links that are helpful.

Technical tips:

- Use social media curating sites, to make your activism easier. For example, sites like Creator Studio, Content Creator which will allow you to schedule posts ahead of time
- When making posters, always use organisational colours to create unity on your feeds

Challenges:

- With limited resources, social media can become a big job for 1 person to do
- To make a big impact on social media, some budget is required, and for some organisations that is difficult to put together. There are prices attached to boosting posts and promoting tweets.
- There is a prevailing narrative that climate change is an elite, white concern, as climate justice activists we must constantly fight this narrative and always work to gain interest in our own causes. We must reclaim and decolonise the struggle for climate justice.



contact us

We invite organisations and activists to make contributions to the Newsletter by writing stories, contributing photographs or cultural contributions, such as poetry, art, songs etc.

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All back issues of the Solidarity Economy News are available on our website.