

Appeal to COP17 decision makers

We, representatives from fisher organisations on the African continent (countries listed in the annex), gathered here in Durban from 30 November to 2 December, herewith unanimously resolve to:

Call on all governments of national states of the world – especially those attending the COP17 on Climate Change - to take heed of the effects that rapidly changing climate conditions have on the livelihoods of the people of the world. In particular we draw attention to the impact that climate change has on fisher people whose basic life and livelihood depend on healthy marine eco-systems and the natural resources it has historically availed.

We draw special attention to the fact that the local and indigenous knowledge of our people as well as scientific knowledge concur that significant changes are taking place in our natural environment that impacts on the lives of all people in a variety of ways.

In this context we remind you that:

Millions of people depend on small-scale fishing in coastal and inland areas and yet, as small-scale fishers, we remain marginalised and excluded from decision-making processes that impact on us. Our voice remains unheard. This has allowed the destructive practices of commercial and industrial fishing to increase, jeopardising the livelihoods of small-scale fishers. Prioritising industrial fishing over small-scale fishing has only added to the degradation of the marine environment, pollution, declining fish stocks and loss of biodiversity. The many people dependent on fisheries, in both on inland or coastal areas, are left vulnerable at this ongoing exclusion from real decision-making processes.

Over many years now we have noticed that extreme weather conditions such as storms and floods are increasing at an unusual rate. Sea level rise (of particular concern to low-lying small island states), surface water temperature, loss of fish stocks, other marine life and biodiversity are all increasing at an alarming rate. Our homes, families and lives are under serious threat. And opportunities, for us, to make an income from allied ventures on our coastline are now fast becoming nonexistent. Consequently our right to food, as a basic human right, becomes compromised.

So, as you deliberate at COP17 here in Durban 2011, we want you to hear our collective voice. We urge you to steer your discussions and decisions in a direction that will save our seas, our water bodies and our planet as a matter of urgency.

We call on you to:




1. decide to act against industrial and all fishing practices that are harmful to our environment;
2. prevent pollution and ocean acidification;
3. compel all states to take steps to radically reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
4. take active steps to stop the use of genetically modified organisms that kill biodiversity in our environment
5. take steps to ensure that all fishing communities become more resilient to climate change

We call on you to protect our water bodies, nature, our lives – and yours.

The time is now!

Annex

Organisation	Country
Mtwara Umbrella People's Organisation (KIMWAM)	Tanzania
Katosi Women Development Trust	Uganda
Seychelles Apostleship of the Sea	Seychelles
Liberia Artisanal Fishermen Association (LAFA)	Liberia
Kambindingu Fisheries Association	Malawi
African Confederation of Small-scale Fisheries Professional Organisations (CAOPA)	Senegal, Mauritania, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, The Gambia, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cape Verde, Togo, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana
Masifundise	South Africa
Coastal Links	South Africa

CHRISTIAN ADAMS  - COASTAL LINKS
 Dawda Saini  - CAOPA
 NAMUCIGA YAAL B  - KWDI (UGANDA)
 EAST & CENTRAL AFRICA