



Press Release

Another Call to the President and ANC Government to Place the Country on a Climate Emergency Footing.

28 August 2023

Today marks three years since workers, activists, the youth, climate scientists, grassroots women and different organisations from all walks of life came together to adopt the Climate Justice Charter; the first charter in the world dedicated to climate justice. In just three years, the charter has been endorsed by 282 organisations and affiliates representing thousands of concerned constituents. Unlike the ANC-led government, these organisations appreciate the urgency of the climate crisis and the need to put the country on a climate emergency footing.

Despite section 234 of the constitution enshrining the right for civil society to take charters to parliament for adoption, the ANC-led government has ignored the Climate Justice Charter. But this was not new. The failure of the ANC government to take the climate emergency seriously is also reflected in the following:

- In 2018, we brought a People's Food Sovereignty Act to parliament for a new food system, given the collapse of our commercial agricultural system during the drought. We were ignored.
- Later in 2018, when the UN issued its 1.5C report calling on governments to cut emissions by at least 45% by 2030, we called on the President to convene an emergency sitting of parliament to discuss what this means for our climate preparedness and policies. We were ignored.
- In April 2022 almost 500 people died from a climate-related 'rainbomb' in Durban. This did not have to happen if the ANC government took our calls to place the country on a climate emergency footing seriously. We tried to charge the President for culpable homicide but the corrupt criminal justice system did not facilitate this.

According to the 6th cycle of reporting of the International Panel on Climate Change, climate shocks are going to get worse and many innocent people are going to die. This means democratic governments have to act now in the interests of their societies.

July was the hottest month on record in terms of global mean annual temperatures, with devastating heatwaves in parts of the global north and Latin America. We are heading towards an extremely hot summer with El Nino conditions. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations have declared that an El Nino will return later in 2023. It will make the heatwaves worse and will impact the poorest and most vulnerable the most. Hurricane-like conditions, rain bombs, flooding and droughts will worsen in the next few years. South Africa is not prepared for this. These are not natural disasters; they are climate shocks. We call on the President to convene an emergency sitting of parliament to put the country on a climate emergency footing to prevent harms from an extremely hot summer, as forecast by climate science.

Today, as the CJCM we held a workshop on fourteen policies which are based on the systemic alternatives for transformative change that are outlined in the CJC. These are policies to accelerate the deep just transition in South Africa. Through these transformative policies, we will work together with progressive forces to build a liveable, democratic and just world for human and non-human life forms.

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