African Civil Society Demand An End to Climate Colonialism With Spontaneous March Through Cop15 Bella Center

Copenhagen—Today African Civil Society groups met during the COP15 UN Climate Meetings to discuss the implications for Africa of the leaked “Danish text” also known as the ‘Copenhagen Agreement’. It had been rumored for days that a secret text generated by the Danish Presidency, as Chair of the Conference, had been prepared.

Outraged by the content of the text and the fact that the Danish Presidency is abusing its role as Chair of the Conference, the Africans launched a spontaneous march and protest through the middle of the Climate Conference at the Bella Centre. Negotiations are still on-going at the Climate Change Conference, and the Danish text pre-judges their outcome.

The “Danish text” includes provision to aim to limit the rise in global temperatures to two degrees, which would mean massive levels of harm to Africa.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change a two degree increase in the global mean temperature will mean a three or more degree increase for temperatures in Africa. Such an increase in temperature would lead to widespread devastation including predictions of a 50% reduction in crop yields in some areas, cutting food outputs in half, more than 600 million people left without adequate water supplies, and massive damage to coastlines, rural communities and cities.

Marching through the Conference Center African groups chanted: “Two degrees is suicide” “One Africa, One Degree” and “No to Climate Colonialism, No to Climate Genocide” in response to the proposal.

Speakers for the groups also condemned the process and the fact that the Danish hosts are taking sides in the negotiations and favoring rich developed countries over the world’s poor. African civil society groups expressed their outrage at what they see as a ‘bad deal’ being advanced by the Danish Presidency in the interests of the rich.

“It is literally a matter of life and death for the friends and families of those that are here. A bad deal is a crime against humanity and we won’t sign a deal if it means signing a death warrant,” said Mithika Mwenda of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance.

Speakers for the groups also condemned developed countries’ $10 billion climate finance proposal during the march.

“Copenhagen can only be called a success if it is a success for Africa and from an African perspective. We will not die in silence.” Mohamed Adow of Christian Aid Kenya said.

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