CIVIL SOCIETY STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH AFRICAN NEGOTIATORS: “DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, PUT UP OR SHUT UP”

BANGKOK – Today, leaders from African civil society were fiercely critical of the role of developed countries, particularly the European Union (EU) in the UN climate negotiations being held in Bangkok.

At a press conference hosted by the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), a network of over 300 organisations from over 45 countries, civil society leaders stood in solidarity with African negotiators. These negotiators were continuing to fight against the EU’s refusal to sign up to a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and against the United State’s blocking tactics over the adoption of a comprehensive work plan for the negotiations for 2011.

“Developed countries, with the greatest responsibility, can’t keep walking both sides of the street in these negotiations. This is time to build on - and not undermine – ambition. Parties need to find solutions in line with the global challenge. Now is the moment of truth, we need an outcome that can secure the lives and livelihoods of the world’s most vulnerable people who are already suffering the consequences of climate change.” Mohamed Adow, Senior Advisor for Global Climate Advocacy, Christian Aid said.

“The approach of the EU seems to be that they’ll set our house on fire – and when we complain they’ll tell us to take a shower to cool off. African civil society is here to say that now is the moment of truth, now is the time for the EU to show whether it cares about Africa at all.” Ms Maynard said.

“The US is blocking these negotiations by trying to force the entire negotiations to only discuss the Cancun agreements. At the most, Cancun dealt with the soft issues so as to re-establish the trust that was so badly shattered in Copenhagen. What is needed now is to use that trust to tackle the hard issues that we omitted in Cancun, but which are necessary for science-and equity based action to address climate change and save Africa from catastrophe – that is significant emission reductions in developed countries." Tetteh Hormeku, of the Africa Trade Network said.

“Curiously, while the US and EU negotiators play political games, vulnerable women and children in Kenya continue to be devastated by the growing impacts of climate change. The Red Cross reported before I arrived in Bangkok that around 5 Million people face starvation due to climate-inspired drought in North Eastern and other drier regions in Kenya. It seems like we are on the Titanic: we in Africa are at the bottom and sinking first, but those at the top – the US and the EU - should not feel so safe for they will also sink soon.” Mithika Mwenda, coordinator of PACJA, said.

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