

PEOPLE'S PROTOCOL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (2009)

The planet is experiencing a climate crisis of catastrophic proportions. Drastic action is required to reverse the situation. Global surface temperature has risen twice as fast in the last 50 years as over the last century and is projected to rise even faster in the coming decades. Thirteen of the last fifteen years [1993-2008] rank as the warmest years on record. This is disrupting weather patterns, endangering ecosystems and biodiversity], and destroying people's lives and livelihoods, especially of the poorest and most vulnerable.

With more frequent extremes of heat, changed rainfall patterns, stronger tropical cyclones, and sea-level rise, climate change will inflict the hardest impacts to millions of the world's poor and disadvantaged – women, indigenous peoples, farmers, fishers, small island and desert nations. Africa, Asia, and Latin America face shorter growing seasons, lost or degraded agricultural land, decreased agricultural and food production, and freshwater shortages. Droughts in Africa would bring widespread malnutrition, hunger, and famine. Asia is already confronting flooding and landslides, with mounting casualties from injury, death, and diseases. In Latin America, higher temperatures and reduced biodiversity in tropical forests will devastate indigenous communities. Rising sea levels and increased storm surges threaten small island populations and coastal communities, and warmer waters are diminishing fish stocks.

The destabilization of the planet's climate is driven by the unprecedented increase in human-generated greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere over the last two centuries. The most dangerous increase is in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, attributed to the unrestrained burning of fossil fuels for energy to feed capitalist industry, commerce, transportation, [industrial food production//industrial agriculture], and militarism. Widespread deforestation also contributes to emissions and cripples the planet's carbon-cycling capacity. The increased concentration of GHGs in the atmosphere is causing warming that fast approaches 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, the estimated threshold for catastrophic climate change.

The last two centuries are hallmarked with great strides in technology, production, and standards of living. But these advances were achieved by the lopsided use and overuse of the planet's shared resources, for the benefit of a minority of the world's population, and to the detriment and deprivation of the rest. At the forefront of this injustice are Northern TNCs, whose relentless pursuit of private profits demands the command of vast energy and natural resources, an arrangement that not only led to ecological destruction, but the dispossession and impoverishment of large numbers of people. Indeed, the two centuries of increasing emissions and ecological destruction coincide with two centuries of worsening economic inequality between and within countries; with the increasing concentration of wealth to a narrow global elite, and the universalization of want to the mass of humanity; with the colonial and neo-colonial subordination of countries; with the corporate takeover and exploitation of Southern natural and productive resources; with the loss of Southern economic and policy sovereignty to powerful economic and policy organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization, and so on. The system that has resulted in climate change is the same system behind structural poverty and underdevelopment which magnify the vulnerability of millions who have little or no responsibility for causing climate change.

Scientific evidence indicates that climate change and its impacts are being felt sooner and stronger than had originally been projected. Arctic, Antarctic, and Greenland ice are melting fast; oceans are rapidly acidifying; and higher surface temperatures in the Pacific and Atlantic oceans are spawning stronger cyclones. Drastic and socially just solutions are urgently needed. Emissions must peak and decline rapidly to stabilize CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere at 350 parts per million (ppm), and keep warming as far below 1.5 degrees Celsius as possible, in order to limit the devastating effects of climate change on the

world's poorest and most vulnerable. The global action in pursuit of this end must recognize and redress the socially unjust arrangements at the root of climate change; must be fair and equitable; must reflect historical responsibility and capability to act; must allow for the democratic representation and participation of the poor, and must truly meet their needs.

However, existing official efforts for climate action are far behind the pace with which climate change and its impacts are occurring. Northern governments and corporations have heretofore not only refused to fully honor their historical responsibility to reduce emissions and support climate actions in the South, but have notably exploited the climate crisis to develop, legitimize, and enforce self-serving solutions that create new profit opportunities, and sustain and expand corporate power over natural resources, production and energy systems, funds, and technologies.

Powerful Northern and corporate minority interests have undermined the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Convention's Kyoto Protocol has diminished responsibility and accountability for the climate crisis through the marketization of the atmospheric commons. The offsets and emissions trading system transfers adjustment costs from rich to poor, creates new dependencies, rewards corporations for polluting and increases their opportunities for profits. Northern TNCs and investors have sustained and even increased their energy intensive operations through relocation to Southern countries, capturing and co-opting local elites into the destructive process of capitalist-dominated production and consumption.

Moreover, current negotiations for a post-2012 climate regime appear headed towards worsening the problem rather than resolving it. Major powers have stalled on committing drastic emissions cuts that the scientific evidence requires, and the funding to cover the costs of adaptation and mitigation in developing countries. They are also aggressively pushing for an agreement that would expand the responsibility to make binding emissions cuts to developing countries, or worse, abandon binding emissions commitments altogether, in sheer disregard of equity, justice and their responsibility for causing climate change.

Therefore it is urgent to come out with a People's Protocol on Climate Change that captures the people's stand on this most urgent problem confronting humanity. This declaration articulates the values and principles that should guide international action and people's struggles against climate change and its associated ecological and socioeconomic destruction.

STATEMENT OF VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

We, the people, are united behind certain core development values and principles of social justice, democracy, equality and equity, gender fairness, respect for human rights and dignity, respect for the environment, sovereignty, freedom, liberation and self-determination, stewardship, social solidarity, participation and empowerment. This statement further articulates these principles in the context of the global climate crisis.

1. **Social Justice** must be guaranteed, acknowledging the systemic roots of the climate crisis, the disproportionate responsibility of a narrow elite, the disproportionate vulnerability of the majority to the adverse effects, the grossly uneven capacity to confront and respond, and the legitimate aspirations to development of the people apart from the crisis.

1.1 Climate change must be understood not merely as an environmental issue but as a question of social justice, its causes are rooted in the current capitalist-dominated global economy which is principally driven by the relentless drive for private profits and capital accumulation.

1.2 The current global capitalist order, driven by the Global North and their TNCs is the fundamental origin of over-exploitation and depletion of resources, of the gratuitous use of energy resources and the excessive release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. “Free market” policies of “globalization”, and its aggressive and intrusive expansion into every sector of the economy and into the global South, and the exploitation by TNCs of the people and the planet must be condemned.

1.4 Neoliberal policies are imposed particularly on the people of the global South by powerful foreign governments wielding influence through multilateral, regional and bilateral mechanisms such as World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements, regional and bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs), investment agreements, and aid conditionalities.

1.5 A very significant part of supposedly “Southern” emissions actually result from the energy-intensive operations of Northern TNCs located in the South for the purposes of exploiting local labor and natural resources. We further acknowledge that the severe deforestation across Latin America, Asia and Africa is most of all due to Northern TNC-driven commercial logging, plantation agriculture, mining activities and dam projects

2. **People’s Sovereignty** means asserting people’s power over resources and institutions as the foundation of the global response to climate change.

2.1 Central to the history and structure of global capitalism that caused climate change is the monopolization of resources, wealth, and institutions by privileged elite, and the consequent dispossession and marginalization of basic producers, peasants, workers, women, fishers, indigenous peoples. Through colonial and neo-colonial arrangements, Northern countries, TNCs, and powerful global bureaucracies such the IMF, World Bank, and WTO have wrested control of Southern economies and natural resources away from Southern peoples, damaging them in the process.

2.2 Communities and marginalized peoples also do not have proportionate control over planning, decision-making, and management of existing bodies and initiatives devoted to climate action, and in the conduct of the projects and programs they carry out. They do not have proper access to information, funds and technologies. Northern governments, international financial institutions, and aid agencies retain control of these.

2.3 Communities, worker, peasant, indigenous people, women and other marginalized sectors should assert democratic control over natural, intellectual, and financial resources, technologies, and reorient them towards serving social needs rather than increasing profits and corporate growth. Southern peoples should assert national sovereignty over their economies and pursue independent and sustainable paths toward national development.

2.4 Communities and peoples who stand to bear the worst impacts if climate change have a vital role in defining, guiding and determining the work of any climate action body at the local, national, regional and global levels. They should be afforded equitable representation, meaningful participation, and the power to decide over what means to use in mitigation and adaptation, and how best to use them in a way that serves their particular needs. Funds and technologies must be accessible to them.

2.5 People should actively participate through social movements and struggles to assert democratic control over resources and institutions that is indispensable to dealing with the problem of climate change.

3. **Respect for the Environment** means a rejection of market mechanisms that impose the cash nexus on ecological priorities. The needs of the planet and its people must take precedent over the push for growth and profits.

3.1 We recognize that nature is vital for the survival of all and that natural resources and their use are essential for sustained economic growth, sustainable human development, and the elimination of poverty, ill-health and hunger. We are committed to building societies where the people enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and in a way that the world we create does not unjustly deny the same for future generations.

3.2 We assert that the needs of people and planet must be placed above those of global capital and the wholesale pursuit of private profits. Property rights, which allow things to be traded, accumulated, and monopolized by a few for the sake of private gain, must not cover resources and assets upon which people's livelihood depend, including local and planetary commons.

3.3 We believe that population growth increases humanity's demands on nature but that the resources of the planet are sufficient to meet these demands if only production, resource-use and consumption are organized to meet the needs of the people for life and not of a select few for profits.

3.4 Corporations and international financial institutions have focused on developing, enforcing, and expanding market-based and profitable "solutions" that are unsustainable, unsafe, and which further the commodification of the environment, such as carbon trading, forest carbon offsetting, biochar, biofuels, carbon capture and storage, and "clean coal", nuclear and large hydropower energy, to name a few. Market arrangements and technologies that extend the privatization and enclosure of the environmental commons and pose new threats to ecosystems and the livelihood, health, and food security of communities should be opposed.

4. **Responsibility**, expressed in the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, requires a mechanism for globally-inclusive equity. Northern countries share a disproportionate responsibility for historic emissions.

4.1. The poor and marginalized communities are most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

4.2 Elite segments of society whose current levels of consumption are grossly excessive and cannot and should not be maintained, even as those large populations globally who are denied basic needs should have these met. These elite segments of society must bear the greatest responsibility for the climate crisis.

4.3 There are large parts of humanity who are more dependent for their survival on their access to and use of natural resources, as well as on the state of the climate and the natural environment. The specific needs of farming communities, indigenous peoples, coastal communities, fisherfolk, and other marginalized, poor and rural producers need to be given special attention in all adaptation efforts.

4.4 Adaptation is not acceptance of climate change but is necessary to provide urgent relief from the actual impacts of climate change that are already being felt by the most vulnerable communities and countries until global mitigation efforts are sufficiently developed to halt global warming.

**COMPREHENSIVE AND CONCERTED BUT DIFFERENTIATED AND EQUITABLE
GLOBAL EFFORT TO ACHIEVE DEEP, RAPID, AND SUSTAINED EMISSIONS
REDUCTIONS TO STABILIZE CO₂ CONCENTRATIONS AT 350PPM AND HOLD
GLOBAL AVERAGE TEMPERATURE RISE TO 1.5 DEGREES CELSIUS**

1. Northern states and corporations, having inordinately used and damaged the atmospheric space and the environment enough to cause climate change, should unconditionally carry out deep emissions cuts at a rate and scale that will swiftly reduce CO₂ concentrations to 350 ppm or below, with peak emissions reached no later than 2015. All Northern states should be part of an internationally enforced, regulated, and binding framework for emissions reductions.
2. Southern states should reorient their economies towards low-carbon development and carry out measurable, reportable, and verifiable (MRV) emission reductions utilizing compensatory financial and technology transfers from the North.
3. Rapidly transition away from fossil fuels as energy sources and towards new, renewable energy sources and systems such as wind, solar, geothermal, sustainable hydropower, and so on.
4. Abandon unsustainable agricultural and food production dominated by profit-seeking agribusiness and agrochemical TNCs. Industrial agriculture as practiced today causes major GHG emissions from land conversion and soil degradation, and the heavy use of fossil fuels for fertilizers, pesticides, and long distance transportation. Switch to ecologically-sound farming methods that keep carbon in the soil, within the context of diversified and community-based agricultural production that prioritizes achieving food security and self-sufficiency.
5. End deforestation once and for all. Stop large-scale mining and commercial logging activities by TNCs in the South, and the encroachment of export cash-crop plantations into forests.
6. Reject aid conditionalities and policy impositions by the World Bank and IMF, and revoke unequal multilateral and bilateral trading arrangements that undermine environmental regulations and allow for the unrestricted exploitation, pollution, and destruction of Southern resources by Northern corporations.
7. Immediately end all subsidies and investments by Northern governments and international public financial institutions to fossil fuel projects that will lock the world with carbon-dependent energy, production, and transportation systems far into the future. Redirect public funds to research and investments in developing environmentally-friendly technologies, renewable energy systems, sustainable mass transportation, and so on.
8. End wasteful and destructive wars and redirect military budgets in support of environmental conservation and the transition to sustainable technologies and systems.

DEMAND THE REPARATION OF SOUTHERN COUNTRIES AND THE POOR BY NORTHERN STATES, TNCS, AND NORTHERN-CONTROLLED INSTITUTIONS TO REDRESS HISTORICAL INJUSTICES ASSOCIATED WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

1. Demand the mandatory and unconditional provision and transfer of financial and technological resources by the North to support *adaptation* (coping with and covering the losses from adverse climate impacts, and building climate-resilient systems) and *mitigation* (transition to low-carbon and sustainable development paths, and carrying out non-binding MRV emissions reductions) in the South.
2. Northern states should provide sufficient, predictable, and mandatory climate financing to developing countries. Climate funds are compensation and not aid. Funds should be over and above longstanding and unmet official development assistance commitments by developed countries (0.7 percent of Gross National Income); should mainly come from public sources; should take the form of outright and unconditional financial transfers; and should be democratically governed and directly accessible to communities and their organizations. Carbon markets should have no role in climate financing.
3. Rechannel all resources from donor-controlled climate funds and funding mechanisms, and oppose the involvement of Northern aid agencies and international financial institutions in climate finance. Intended recipients have no power and meaningful participation over these funds' design, governance, and delivery; they add to the debt burden of many poor countries, and will be forced to accept policy conditionalities in exchange for access to these funds.
4. Reject private insurance schemes and the sale of debt instruments to capital markets as mechanisms to raise financing for adaptation. These schemes transfer the burden of financing to developing countries and individual entities, and allow private corporations and funds to profit from the vulnerability they face.
5. Remove intellectual property rights and trade restrictions that place severe constraints on the people's access to climate-friendly technologies and thus on the ability to promote low-carbon alternatives.
6. Reject the imposition of debt-creating climate funds and the neoliberal policy conditions tied to the access of these funds.

REJECT FALSE SOLUTIONS THAT ALLOW NORTHERN STATES AND CORPORATIONS TO CONTINUE HARMING THE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITIES, PROVIDE NEW AND GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFIT, AND REINFORCE AND EXPAND CORPORATE CONTROL OVER NATURAL RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGIES

1. Abolish all carbon markets. Put an immediate end to emissions trading and offsetting as mechanisms for Northern countries and corporations to meet emissions commitments. The cap and trade system has failed to deliver what little emissions reductions rich countries have committed to, and has effectively privatized and commodified the atmosphere. Northern carbon markets allow big historical polluters to evade making deep emissions cuts by trading among themselves rights to pollute the atmosphere which they had been given for free by Northern governments. Carbon offsetting allows Northern corporations to continue polluting by funding

environmentally and socially questionable projects in developing countries, offloading the responsibility and associated risks of cutting emissions to the South.

2. Oppose the expansion of carbon offsetting, which will transfer the burden of cutting emissions to the South, reward big polluters, and further weaken and delay efforts to curb Northern emissions through mandatory measures. Oppose its extension into Southern spaces, including
 - a. forests, which threaten to displace indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities; bring standing forests to the control of private corporations; promote the expansion of monoculture tree plantations that damage forest biodiversity and ecosystems; and reward deforesters;
 - b. agricultural soils, which threaten to further decimate forests and land devoted to food production; enclose communal lands and displace farmers and rural communities; reward landlords and agribusiness TNCs, and bring more lands under their private control; and intensify industrial agriculture. Oppose the large-scale deployment of corporate-controlled technology such as biochar and no-till agriculture that will facilitate the inclusion of soils into carbon offsetting mechanisms.
3. End the large-scale commercial production and use of agrofuels. Large-scale agrofuel production worsens GHG emissions by forcing the extensive conversion of good farmlands, forests, and grasslands into plantations that release carbon into the atmosphere – apart from reducing agricultural land for food production, driving food prices up, increasing food insecurity, and displacing forest and rural communities.
4. Reject “clean coal” and carbon capture and storage, nuclear power, and megadams as substitutes to fossil fuels as power sources. These projects are intended to supply the increasing energy needs of TNCs and global elites but do not stem dependence on fossil fuels and the increase in GHG emissions. They also pose huge risks to the safety and health of communities, and the stability of ecosystems.
5. Oppose geoengineering megaprojects that manipulate the environment and alter naturally operating systems on a large scale. These ill-conceived schemes are extremely costly, complex, and risky; and totally ignore sounder, realistic, and practicable measures to stem climate change. Such extreme technological fixes include ocean fertilization, spraying sulphates into the atmosphere, putting sunshades in space, and plastic-coating deserts.
6. Reject proprietary genetically-modified “climate-proofed” crops. Stop the extension of patent rights on farmer-developed climate-resilient seeds by biotechnology and agrochemical corporations, which would deny small farmers the ability to cope with the negative impacts of climate change. End the genetic manipulation of crops by corporations, and promote the increase of agricultural biodiversity as an effective way of increasing agricultural resilience to erratic and extreme weather.

STRUGGLE FOR ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE, SOCIALLY JUST, PRO-PEOPLE, AND LONG-LASTING SOLUTIONS

1. Ensure that official bodies for climate action become democratic, participatory, and equitable institutions. Allow for the sectoral representation and participation of groups most vulnerable to climate change (including women, indigenous people, small island and desert countries, the youth, farmers, fishers) in the governance of these institutions and the delivery of support and solutions.
2. Assert the people's sovereignty and democratic control over planetary resources and productive assets, and the equitable distribution of the wealth accruing from their use. Nations, communities, and sectors should be able to utilize their resources to meet their social needs, and pursue independent and ecologically sustainable paths to development.
 - Reverse neoliberal globalization.
 - Transform international economic and policy institutions, or replace them with democratic and accountable institutions that respect national sovereignty and people's rights, and emphasize international equity and solidarity.
 - Abolish unequal trade and investment arrangements that allow for the unrestricted Northern exploitation, privatization, and destruction of Southern natural resources, and lock Southern economies into dependence on export-oriented resource extraction and industrial agriculture which prioritize Northern and TNC demand over domestic needs, and at the same time are major GHG emissions sources.
 - Reorganize international trade and investment relations around rules that value economic sovereignty, self-reliance, people's rights, and cooperation over indiscriminate integration, dependency, corporate power, and ruinous competition.
 - Reform domestic trade and investment regimes in favor of people's rights and sovereignty over natural resources. Regulate foreign-corporate ownership and exploitation of natural resources, and hold corporations accountable to strict environmental and community standards.
 - Promote sustainable, community-based food production oriented towards achieving self-reliance and food sovereignty.
 - Countries, especially of the South, should adopt a comprehensive national policy framework for economic diversification and for meeting the collective needs of the present and future generations, especially the poor and marginalized in society.
3. Reorganize corporations and productive units along democratic and community-based forms of ownership and management. Replace the pursuit of profits and private accumulation with the fulfillment of social need and broader social goals such as education, health and food security as the goals of production.

4. Institutionalize democratic planning and participatory management in the use and conservation of resources for present and future production, consumption, and other social uses. Social planning ensures resources are utilized in such a way as people's rights are protected, and social needs are met in ecologically sustainable ways. Planning and management should incorporate scientific and locally-adapted knowledge and practices. Community-based resource conservation should be promoted.
5. Invest more public resources on research and development (R&D) of ecologically sustainable energy, production, and transportation systems. Reorient science, education, and R&D away from their current commercial and proprietary character towards producing knowledge for social welfare and development. Promote education on ecology and socially responsible consumption.
6. Institutionalize cooperative arrangements with other countries in the stewardship of global commons or shared resources such as oceans, rivers, forests and the climate, based on solidarity and shared commitments.

TOWARDS A PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

It is clear that solving the climate crisis requires far-reaching social transformation. Unequal patterns of power behind such injustices as poverty, hunger, exploitation, and colonialism are the same ones that have caused ecological destruction and climate change. And as with other injustices, the climate crisis and its roots can only be dealt with through political struggles by the people.

We affirm the importance of grassroots education, organizing and mobilizations to promote and realize our alternative vision and program. We retain our vigilance even where governments have expressed support for a progressive agenda, and hold them accountable through popular participation and mobilization. We are ever critical of attempts to compromise the interests of the majority and the marginalized.

We commit to building on the powerful networks of movements for climate action that have emerged worldwide. Localized actions against greenhouse gas emissions have spread across the globe and deepened everyday development struggles.

We shall further develop and advance a strong, broad, widespread, grassroots-based people's movement on climate change, in solidarity with other social movements, to promote the people's agenda on climate action and social transformation, fight for solutions that secure justice and democratic rights for the people, and challenge efforts from powerful elite and corporate interests that seek to divert and undermine our movement.



People's Movement on Climate Change