



23 September 2020

President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa
Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr Ebrahim Patel
Speaker of Parliament, Ms Thandi Modise
Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Mr Lechesa Tsenoli

On Tuesday, 22 September, the 10th meeting of the National Food Crisis Forum (NFCF) was convened by the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign and the Cooperative and Policy Alternative Center (COPAC), a vibrant alliance partner of the SAFSC and which is currently coordinating its response to Covid-19.

Call for National Action – 16 October, World Food Day – End Hunger, Thirst, Pollution and Climate Harm

During South Africa's Covid-19 hard lock down, hunger jumped from 14 million to about 30 million people. Many households have struggled to put food on the table. In the Eastern Cape and Limpopo provinces the ongoing drought further exacerbated the hunger crisis and also placed many communities in extremely difficult circumstances. Water has been unavailable to meet basic needs and to keep hygienic in the context of Covid-19. We continue to struggle alongside and in solidarity with 125 communities wanting their water needs met.

Household food stress was also confirmed by numerous studies including the main findings of the *National Income Dynamics Study – Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey* and our own mapping of food relief efforts in the country. The Level 1 'soft lock down' has not ended the hunger crisis. Unemployment has skyrocketed and it is incorrect to assume merely opening up the economy will address this crisis. We disagree with President Ramaphosa and his government. Mitigation of peoples suffering during the Covid-19 lock down did not work. The government did not do enough to cushion South African society, including through rapidly implementing a substantive basic income grant (#UBIGNOW). Moreover, the Ramaphosa government came short in many respects including not heeding the call from us for a nationally coordinated response to address the hunger crisis utilising the Disaster Management Act. Mobilising civil society to partner with government would have ensured we have a more effective response to the hunger crisis.

With input received from the Pietermaritzburg Dignity and Justice Group, it also clear that commercial farmers and supermarkets have made super profits during Covid-19. Food prices they have tracked show a serious squeeze on poor households. We support their call for a solidarity tax on food profiteers and will share their research widely as soon as it is released. We will also continue to champion an alternative food system based on food sovereignty, agro-ecology, defending the commons and solidarity economy principles that feed our communities, villages, towns and cities. Such a food system is central to the Climate Justice Charter (available here: <https://www.safsc.org.za/climate-justice-charter/>)

While the worst drought in the history of South Africa has continued, climate shocks in other parts of the world have also had devastating impacts. Wild Fires on the West Coast, as well as,

hurricanes in other parts of the US. One third of Bangladesh was flooded and fires in Siberia and the Amazon continue to accelerate climate change and undermine a stable climate system on planet earth. The further use of oil, coal and gas is destroying our life world. It is also polluting our communities and inducing all kinds of respiratory illnesses and cancers. From refineries adjacent to communities in Durban to carbon spewed out from coal fired power stations in Mpumalanga we are creating unliveable environments. This has to stop. Covid-19 provides the opportunity to build a post carbon society. We need a deep just transition based on the Climate Justice Charter.

Corruption is implicated in the reproduction of a coal driven energy system. We have all witnessed this in the context of Eskom. We need to step up efforts to ensure the corrupt go to jail and we address the systemic drivers of corruption. In the Climate Justice Charter we call for transformative socio-ecological alternatives that sustain life and a people led climate justice state, grounded in constitutional principles. Central to such a vision is a corruption free country. In this regard we endorse and support the Orange Mask Campaign. We call on all partners and allies championing Food Sovereignty and the Climate Justice Charter to stand up against corruption in any part of society; in any party and any institution. In the post-apartheid period, the 2014 Vukani-Sidikiwe Campaign took a stand against corruption and was declared treasonous by the Zuma government. The high point of this phase of anti-corruption struggle was in April 2017, when thousands took to the streets to march to parliament and the Union Buildings. This impacted on the recall of Jacob Zuma, but yet corruption by the ruling party has continued. The lesson from this is twofold: First, the anti-corruption struggle is not about strengthening a faction in the ANC. Second, this is a struggle that belongs to the people and must be mass driven. The people cannot be switched on/off to serve factional ends in the ruling ANC.

To all South African's we say let's stand together on 16 October, World Food Day, to demand an end to hunger, thirst, pollution and climate harm. Our common future is at stake. Endorse the Climate Justice Charter that emerged from six years of campaigning, during South Africa's worst drought, and which we are taking to parliament on 16 October to demand it be adopted as per section 234 of the South African constitution. Sign the petition here:

<https://awethu.amandla.mobi/petitions/together-we-can-help-ensure-parliament-brings-an-end-to-water-problems-hunger-and-pollution>

Also discuss it in your organisations and endorse here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScHTqGKwzVInVh6mrp83dZCnKZRG-VKFT5NKcogujYn05zcqg/viewform>

Organise local climate justice actions on 16 October, from 10am -12 noon. Share your plans with us here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScn_h46ZkGtAuPRcBwkBUAKqiquY0iyolgQEnmrAlwmZaYfgw/viewform

Join the online peoples Climate Justice Assembly on 16 October, with parliament, from 2pm-5pm. Details to follow shortly.

For more information, contact:

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