



**'We Can't Breathe!'**  
**Carbon Pollution Kills!**  
**Climate Justice Now!**

**A Call from South African Children and Youth for Climate Justice Action on 20 September**

Join us: #WECANTBREATHE! Non-violent action against Sasol and local actions against carbon polluters

On the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2019, the Cooperative and Policy Alternative Centre and alliance partners in the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign convened a roundtable of climate conscious youth from Gauteng, Cape Town, KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State to deliberate on a climate justice perspective on the climate crisis, the #ClimateJusticeCharter for South Africa and a climate justice action for 20 September.

This engagement affirmed the importance of recognising carbon capitalism as the cause of the climate crisis; and that it was necessary to advance a climate justice approach to the deep just transition now to ensure it is people led, affirms the needs of workers and the poor, protects ecosystems and provides inter-generational justice.

It was also agreed that United Nations political processes have failed to provide urgency, leadership and firm commitments from governments to address the worsening climate crisis over the past few decades. We demand the UN and its General Secretary isolate carbon criminal states like the US, Russia and Saudi Arabia amongst others that do not want the science of climate change to inform decisive action. Climate Justice sanctions need to be advanced against such states. Moreover, the UN needs to call on all carbon corporations to desist from further investments and extraction of carbon to ensure countries can achieve net zero emission targets.

Moreover, for South Africa we believe a more ambitious nationally determined net zero target needs to be put into place. We seek to build a consensus on such a target, given South Africa is the 14<sup>th</sup> highest carbon emitter in the world, as part of the #ClimateJusticeCharter process.

Youth and children present at the roundtable also reflected on how schools and universities are advancing zero waste, zero carbon and zero hunger transitions to become socio-ecological institutions leading just transitions from below. While more specific ideas were put forward for the Climate Justice Charter, progress was noted at Wits, UCT and the University of the Free State. However, it was agreed to also call on universities to accelerate the introduction of eco-mobility measures such as bicycles, car pooling and mass clean energy public transport also in partnership with local governments. Universities are also called upon to pass divestment resolutions from fossil fuels as part of the just transition.

Climate Justice activists - students, academics and workers - will continue to mobilise at universities to make this happen.

A consensus was reached to focus on #WeCantBreathe for the 20 September climate justice action to draw attention to the high levels of carbon and toxic pollution in Mpumalanga, the Vaal, Limpopo, North West and Durban. About 20 000 people die every year in South Africa from air pollution. There are various respiratory and health problems, including cancers in communities due to toxic air pollution. Air pollution in Mpumalanga is regularly higher than that in Beijing and Jakarta, two of the most polluted cities in the world. Important work has been done by various organisations at a local level such as SDCEA, Groundwork, Earthlife and MACUA. However, for 20 September our youth and children are calling on South Africa to make the connection between immediate carbon related pollution deaths and the worsening climate crisis, for which carbon corporations are not held accountable. These local 'pollution hot spots' are also climate catastrophe creating zones: #WECANTBREATHE #CARBONKILLS #CLIMATEJUSTICENOW!

Our national target on 20 September is Sasol:

- (1) Sasol emits 67 million tons of carbon a year. Sasol's emissions annually are more than the entire country of Portugal, placing it 45<sup>th</sup> on the Carbon Majors Report of top 100 fossil fuel corporations. For South Africa to achieve its net zero emissions target Sasol will have to shut down. **We demand a just transition plan from Sasol setting out clear timeframes and which includes climate debt repayments to South Africa, reparations to communities affected by its polluting activities and clear support for workers to ensure they benefit in the shut down process.**
- (2) Sasol is working with North West University on a 'green coal' project. This is about using coal stored in slime ponds and combining it with grass or animal waste to produce char. This is being hailed also as 'clean coal' and will be promoted extensively in South Africa and the world. **We demand Sasol and North West University desist from misleading the country and the world with this 'false solution'. Such techno fixes include carbon in the extraction process of the coal, when transporting the coal, making the product and even when it is burned. This is not a solution in a rapidly heating world. Socially owned renewable energy is cheaper, more effective and necessary for a deep just transition now.**
- (3) Sasol is heavily invested in Mozambique's gas fields (2.6 trillion cubic feet) in Inhambane Province. It is planning further investments to develop an integrated oil and liquefied petroleum gas project adjacent to its existing petroleum facility. The project includes 13 wells and an LPG production facility at an estimated cost of USD1.4 billion. With Mozambique having experienced cyclones Idai and Kenneth, and with more cyclones linked to climate change a distinct possibility, Sasol's carbon criminality is unacceptable. **We demand Sasol pay reparations to the Mozambican people for the cyclone devastation endured, stops its expansion plans and carbon extraction and pays its carbon debt to the Mozambican government on its way out.**

- (4) Sasol is also heavily invested in the Lake Charles petro-chemicals complex, in the US. It is increasing the US carbon footprint. Given Sasol's history which goes back to links to the Nazi regime in Germany, the apartheid regime and its ongoing carbon criminality, it needs to be resisted in the US. **We call upon the Sunrise Movement, the movement for a Green New Deal, #BlackLivesMatter, Climate Justice forces and other progressive US movements to demand that Sasol's US investment be shut down to assist the US achieve its net zero emissions target.**

More details about this national action will be released shortly by COPAC and SAFSC alliance partners. All social/environmental/climate justice organisations in Gauteng are invited to support this action.

Our Local Actions on September 20<sup>th</sup>:

Climate Justice partners at the roundtable have agreed to target local carbon polluters (Eskom coal fired power stations, refineries, incinerators, heavy energy users, local Eskom plants, local Sasol plants) local government offices (failing to address pollution challenges), petrol stations (BP, Chevron, Shell, Total, Engen – see this [fact sheet](https://www.safsc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Pollution-fact-sheet.pdf) for rankings amongst leading global polluters: <https://www.safsc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Pollution-fact-sheet.pdf> ).

In engaging Sasol and local targets, we will also be demanding from the state that carbon pollution can end through:

- the immediate roll out of socially owned renewable energy in South Africa and clean energy mass transport systems across the country;
- a people led deep just transition based on democratic systemic alternatives to take South Africa beyond carbon capitalism. Such a transition must meet the needs of workers, the poor and the most vulnerable. Hence we demand parliament must adopt the #ClimateJusticeCharter when it is ready.

All action plans developed for non-violent action (marches, pickets etc.) at a local level will be shared with COPAC ([copac2@icon.co.za](mailto:copac2@icon.co.za)) and publicised on our social media platforms:

Websites: [www.safsc.org.za](http://www.safsc.org.za), [www.copac.org.za](http://www.copac.org.za)

Facebook: @SAFoodSovereignty, @COPACSA

Twitter: @safoodsov @COPAC\_SA.

This program for 20 September will be shared with Faith Based Communities, Labour and Social and Environmental Justice Organisations during #ClimateJusticeCharter roundtables in coming weeks.

**Forward to the #ClimateJusticeCharter**

**Stand with our children and youth demanding #ClimateJusticeNow!**

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