



# SOUTH AFRICAN FOOD SOVEREIGNTY CAMPAIGN

## Towards a Climate Justice Charter for South Africa

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## I. NATIONAL CAMPAIGNING NEWS

### 1.1 Workshop: Towards a Water and Climate Justice Charter for South Africa

By Aaisha Domingo



First Panel on Day 1 of the Workshop: From right to left - Ayanda Kota (UPM), Ferrial Adam (Activist and researcher), Nazeer Sondag (PHA, WCC), Jane Cherry (COPAC)

On the 27th and 28th of September, COPAC convened an event with students, grassroots activists, trade unions and religious organisations deliberating on the theme: *Water and Food Crisis: Towards A Climate Justice Charter for South Africa*. The idea of a Charter comes out of our activism on food, seed and water sovereignty which began in 2014.

The purpose for the climate justice charter and process is to:

- Unite important players in the fragmented civil society, environmental justice and climate justice and water sectors of South Africa, to encourage a re-alignment of climate justice forces.
- Ensure those most affected by climate change and shocks, particularly the working class, the poor, the unemployed and the landless have voice and lead this process of eco-centric transformation
- Develop a progressive; grassroots inspired Climate and Water Charter to:
  - Sustain life

- Recognise the class, racial, gender and ecological impacts of carbon and climate capitalism
- Advance generational justice
- Critique the failed role of political parties in the climate crisis
- Construct a narrative around climate justice and a transformative just transition
- Serve as a tool to engage government stakeholders to ensure that climate change is placed on the national agenda.
- Provide a compass to build pathways from below to achieve systemic change and advance systemic alternatives from below

Key themes for the Charter to be deliberated in grassroots dialogues relate to systemic alternatives that would bring down carbon emissions and ensure we sustain life as climate shocks hit. These themes include:

- Principles for the charter
- Our conception of the just transition for South Africa taking into account class, race, gender and ecological relations
- Systemic alternatives related to land use, water, energy, food, production, consumption, waste, transport, housing, finance;
- The role of the climate emergency state and our international relations as a climate justice society;
- Communication, education and awareness raising to mobilise society
- The role and form of people's power from below

These are the themes that were tackled over our two-day workshop in September. The workshop commenced with a Prayer for the Earth, led by Chaplain Kirun Satgoor (Arya Samaj), Sangoma Anelise de Wet, Fr Anthony Egan SJ (Jesuit Institute South Africa). Thereafter, three panel discussions were held in the following order:

1. *Drought, Water Crisis and Climate Change: Assessing our Role, Learning Lessons*
  - Panellists: Nazeer Sunday (PHA, WCC), Ayanda Kota (UPM), Ferrial Adam (Activist and researcher), Jane Cherry (COPAC)
2. *What is Government's Approach to Energy, Climate and Just Transition?*
  - Panellists: Makoma (Earthlife), Richard Worthington (FES), Vishwas Satgar (COPAC-WITS)
3. *Mining Affected Communities and the Challenge of transforming Eskom: Pathways and Challenges*
  - Panellists: Hassen Lorgat (Benchmarks), Thando Lukuko (Project 90by2030), Hameeda Dedat (Naledi), Vuyo Bikitsha (NUMSA)

On Day 2 of the Workshop, the Strategy Concept Document for the Water and Climate Justice Charter was presented by Prof. Satgar and Ferrial Adam, climate justice academics and activists, who outlined the ideas behind this People's Charter. The workshop then broke into groups, each engaging thoroughly on what the Climate Justice Charter means for advancing a deep and transformative just transition in South Africa.

"This initiative could play a very crucial role in terms of the future of the country. There is something inspiring in the fact that we are all rising to the challenge and trying our best. What is very crucial is that we deepen this convergence and share this process and all our tools with our communities", Prof. Satgar.

SAFSC and COPAC would like to encourage the public to take part in the activism around water and climate justice. It is important to get involved in dialogues, share knowledge and take action to protect our natural resources. We want alternatives, answers, viewpoints, inputs from below related to these themes.

South Africa has 18 million children, who need to be centrally engaging in this conversation. Moreover, every sector in civil society (faith-based, civic, cultural, sport, student, gender, NGO etc.), progressive movements and grassroots community organisations must be invited to input. We want self-organisation from below in schools, community halls, under trees, in taxi ranks and workplaces.

Have conversations on the above themes and share your ideas. Own this process and participate. Your inputs will feed into the drafting and adoption of the Climate Justice Charter for South Africa at a Peoples Assembly in 2019.

Charters are a part of South Africa's history, and we are at a historical moment where a people's charter for climate justice could change the politics of this country. We are not waiting for government, none of our political parties address the climate crisis! This People's Charter will speak to generational justice and have a nuanced perspective to the climate crisis. The time is now!

## 1.2 Open Letter to President Cyril Ramaphosa

### **Demand for an emergency sitting of Parliament to deliberate on the recently issued UN report on 1.5°C increase in planetary temperature and its implications for South African climate change policy**

The Cooperative and Policy Alternative Center, through and with alliance partners in the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign (<http://www.safsc.org.za>), has been linking the climate crisis and right to food since 2014. We have made efforts to educate the public about the connection between hunger, the drought and price increases in a corporate controlled food system. Our hunger tribunal together with the Human Rights Commission in 2015, food sovereignty festival and activist schools were all about this. Similarly, in 2016 we attempted

to make the link between the drought, water inequality and the need for a food sovereignty system. This we did through our drought speak outs, bread march and coal filled coffin left outside the Gupta compound. Through our Peoples' Parliament we also adopted a Peoples' Food Sovereignty Act for South Africa. The latter was handed over to seven government departments and to parliament earlier this year when we also launched a water and climate justice charter process for the country at a Peoples Dialogue on the Water Crisis in Cape Town. Out of nine portfolio committees invited to this dialogue only one person, the Chairperson of the Water Portfolio Committee, attended. Our activism has confirmed a lack of responsiveness and leadership from the South African government regarding the drought and climate change. There is a total disregard for the disproportionate impacts of the drought, as a climate shock, on the unemployed, the working class and the rural and urban poor. This is a crisis of leadership and does not bode well for a climate driven South Africa in which we will be having more extreme weather including droughts, heat waves, floods, wild fires and sea level rise.

The recent UN report (<http://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/>) on Global Warming of 1.5°C draws attention to the rapidly changing science on global climate change. It also underlines the imperative of bringing down carbon emissions to prevent catastrophic climate change through a 1.5°C overshoot. The report is clear that we are running out of time and decisive leadership is needed over the next 12 years to prevent such a dangerous shift in the Earth's climate. We believe this report needs to be deliberated through an emergency sitting of parliament as it impacts on the future of all human and non-human life forms in South Africa and on the planet. This is a matter of national interest for all present and future generations and we would like you to consider this demand.

We also believe this parliamentary sitting must consider the implications of the UN report for ensuring South Africa is placed on a climate emergency footing through the following:

Adjusting its peak, plateau and decline scenarios, which are out of step with the current science on a 1.5°C increase. Drastic reductions in carbon emissions are required now;

Adjusting the Integrated Resource Plan by removing the ceiling on renewable energy to enable an accelerated shift to socially owned renewable energy;

Amending the Climate Bill to ensure people driven sustainable development planning is enabled;

Going beyond government's 'death spiral' of ESKOM approach to restructuring ESKOM to protect the interests of workers while prioritising an end to the climate driven 'death spiral of society' through advancing the deep just transition;

Immediately ending all new investment in coal mining and fracking;

Scrapping the existing National Development Plan and developing, in a bottom up manner, a Climate Emergency Plan for South Africa as part of the deep just transition to advance the water, food, energy, production, consumption, transport, financial and health systems that will sustain life.



Your predecessor Jacob Zuma, turned his back on Africa, which has and will continue to be hardest hit by climate shocks. Instead he bought into Obama's stillborn 'pledge and review mechanism' entrenched in the Paris Climate Agreement which has not worked. The US, under Trump, has undermined this climate regime through promoting increasing eco-cidal carbon extraction and currently according to the International Energy Agency carbon use and emissions are still accelerating (<https://www.euractiv.com/section/climate-environment/news/bad-news-and-despair-global-carbon-emissions-to-hit-new-record-in-2018-iea-says/>). We need a new way forward that affirms climate justice, generational justice and the future of non-human life forms. In the spirit of Nelson Mandela and radical non-racialism, South Africa needs to display climate justice leadership that can unite every human being to face the difficult challenges of climate change.

Having a parliamentary debate on the UN report on Global Warming of 1.5° C also enables similar engagements to happen at provincial government, local government and ward committee level. The failure to act on our demand unfortunately will leave us with the conclusion that your government is either in climate denial or captured by fossil fuel interests or irrational about the current science of climate change. We look forward to your response.

Endorsed by the following organisations:

Children's Resource Center

WoMin: WoMin African Gender and Extractives Alliance

GroundWork

Friends of the Earth, SA.

Unemployed People's Movement

Young Women's Forum

Sustainable Innovations Africa

African Center for Biodiversity

Alternative Information and Development Centre

Media Monitoring Africa

Itumeleng Youth project

Batlabine Foundation

Ntinga Ntaba kaNdoda

Wits Inala Forum for Climate Justice and Food Sovereignty

Natural Justice

African Climate Reality Project

Earthrise Trust

Earthlife Africa, Johannesburg

Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance

Active Citizens Movement, Pietermaritzburg

West Coast Food Sovereignty and Solidarity Forum  
GreenHouse Project  
PHA Food and Farming Campaign  
African Earth Rights  
Ecobrick Deep South  
Support Centre for Land Change  
Karoo Environmental Justice Movement  
Consumer Action Network  
Inspire Elsie  
The Land Rights Organisation of South Africa  
The Association for Water and Rural Development  
SEED  
Gender CC Southern Africa- Women For Climate Justice  
Landless Peoples Movement South Africa  
Biowatch South Africa  
Project 90 by 2030  
Noordhoek Environmental Action Group  
South Durban Community Environmental Alliance  
Environmental Monitoring Group  
Sustaining the Wild Coast (SWC)  
South African Faith Communities Environmental Initiative (SAFCEI)  
Midrand Solidarity Economy Education and Communication Cooperative (MSE ECC)  
Global Environmental Trust (GET)  
EarthLore Foundation  
Save Our Imfolozi Wilderness  
Mfolozi Community Environmental Justice Organisation  
Youens Attorneys  
Mining Affected Communities United in Action  
Southern Africa Green Revolutionary Council  
Assembly of the Unemployed South Africa  
Middleburg Environmental Justice Network

**Additional Endorsements:**

Federation of Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA)  
South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU)

Active Citizens Movement  
Equal Education  
Newcastle Environmental Justice Alliance  
Greenpeace Africa  
Loreto Sisters  
Waterberg Environmental Justice Forum (WEJF)  
Waterberg Women Advocacy Organization  
Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute  
Fossil Free South Africa  
Market Users Committee

**For further information, contact:**

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1.3. Call for Civil Resistance against ANC Government's Blanket of Secrecy around Climate Science and Our Possible Extinction

**Convene People's Parliaments to Discuss the UN-IPCC 1.5°C Report and Input for a Climate Justice Charter for South Africa**

A week ago over 50 organisations, now joined by FEDUSA, SAFTU and several other organisations, sent an [open letter](#) to President Cyril Ramaphosa calling on him to convene an emergency sitting of parliament to debate the most recent UN-IPCC report on 1.5°C heating and its implications for South African Climate Policy. Up to now we have not received a formal response from the Presidency nor the Speaker and Secretary of Parliament.

We would like to re-iterate our demand to the President, the Speaker and Secretary of Parliament as this is a matter of life and death. The prospect of the extinction of the human race and other life forms cannot be treated as 'business as usual'. The present Climate Bill is not going to be a solution for South Africa, especially if the government plays host to coal fired power stations for countries, like China.

Globally, governments are taking action on climate change. The Spanish Government has just taken decisive action to stop coal mining and has agreed to invest in mining communities as part of the transition. The German government has also set up a commission with unions and mining affected communities to reach consensus on ending the use of coal and devising transition strategies for coal mining communities. The New Zealand government has banned off-shore drilling for oil and gas. South Africa needs to learn from this and do the same.



Parliament needs to have the debate informed by these experiences to drastically cut our emissions and stop the extraction of fossil fuels.

We are also aware of the emergence of a campaign in the United Kingdom called the 'extinction rebellion' involving academics, workers and ordinary citizens willing to engage in mass civil disobedience to stop our extinction. We are inspired by this and will also be moving in the direction of disciplined mass civil resistance including going to jail, if necessary, until serious action is taken to ensure systemic change to address the climate crisis.

Hence, we are calling on the organisations that have endorsed our open letter and the wider South African public to do the following:

(1) As a first step in mass civil resistance against the ANC governments blanket of secrecy around climate science, we say convene people's parliaments in your communities and workplaces to discuss the climate science and deep just transition. Let's remove the blanket of secrecy and learn about the impacts of coal, gas and oil. Even if the President agrees to convene parliament we must continue with people's parliaments at the grassroots. Use the following tools:

This two-page summary [document](#) with key points of the IPPC report.

This short [animation](#) that can be screened on hunger and the climate crisis.

The Coal Kills [Report](#).

(2) We are calling on all South African's to participate in the twitter referendum we have initiated regarding our call to the President to convene an emergency sitting of parliament to deliberate on the UN-IPCC 1.5°C report. Please go to @safoodsov to vote and retweet the referendum.

(3) Send us your ideas for a mass civil resistance campaign to stop the corporate and government caused climate extinction of life. We will roll out this campaign next year including during the national elections given that none of the parties take climate change seriously. We will also consider approaching the courts – like in the Netherlands – to force legal reductions in carbon emissions, the Human Rights Commission, the Public Protector and other important legal institutions. Send your ideas to [copac2@icon.co.za](mailto:copac2@icon.co.za). Also let us know if you are willing to volunteer your time to make this mass civil resistance campaign happen.

(4) Send in your input for the Water and Climate Justice Charter for South Africa which would be adopted at a People's Assembly in 2019. There are systemic solutions to solve the climate crisis. Let us know what needs to be done to ensure a deep just transition that sustains life in a heating world. Send your inputs to [copac2@icon.co.za](mailto:copac2@icon.co.za).

Feel free to use the following tools to facilitate a conversation in your family, amongst friends, in the community, in your organisations and workplace:

[Water Sovereignty activist tool](#)

[Water Sovereignty animation](#)

## For further information, contact:

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## II. LOCAL CAMPAIGNING NEWS: BUILDING FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN CITIES, TOWNS AND VILLAGES

### 2.1. Launch of Communal Eating Space at Wits University

*By Courtney Morgan*

On the 28th of September, COPAC along with Wits Inala Forum for Food Sovereignty and Climate Justice and the Wits Citizenship and Community Outreach (WCCO) hosted the launch for the communal eating space at the Wits Food Sovereignty Centre. The event was mainly attended by the beneficiaries of the WCCO, Inala volunteers



and key members of the Wits community. COPAC also brought along members of a workshop they had convened on climate justice to visit the space. This event was one that was aimed at centring the students, and emphasising that this space is one which will restore their dignity through self-organising and ownership. Having the students centred meant that the event was an amazing experience filled with the vibrancy that the youth bring. To a lot of us, it was also an encouraging site to see young people taking pride in the space, and speaking about concepts of food sovereignty with such passion.

Although the event had a number of short speeches, the aim was not to have lengthy interventions, it was about beginning to build connections and community around the space. One thing that built solidarity was the sharing of a meal, where all those in attendance, students, academics and activists alike, all sat down at tables and ate a meal together. Although this warm meal is something that is provided to the students on a daily basis, having space to sit and eat those meals, with live entertainment was a new and welcomed change. As mentioned, short speeches were made by an Inala volunteer, Vishwas Satgar from



COPAC and an Amnesty International Wits volunteer. There were also messages of support given by two activists that attended the Climate Justice workshop, one from the Children’s Resource Centre and one from the Green House Project. For the rest of the afternoon we were entertained by amazing performers while some students played indigenous games. The first performers were the musical duo Identity Disorder who performed 4 songs to welcome the guests and received a

warm reception. While everybody ate, members of Us is Us, a group of young artists, performed a variety of songs including some African songs. All in all, the afternoon was a good start to the kind of cultural program that will be a regular thing at the Food Sovereignty Centre. In addition to being a space that is a step in the journey for Food Sovereignty in the inner city, a space of agroecology and an eco-demonstration for the university, the food sovereignty centre is also intended to be a space of cultural exchange and research.

The launch was a vibrant afternoon which gave us a glimpse into the future where students of all backgrounds will come together, sharing knowledge and experience and be enriched by the sense of community and self-sufficiency. This was truly a reflection of Food Sovereignty and how it could drastically change the university experience for vulnerable students.

## 2.2. The PHA Food and Farming Campaign Soil Workshop: Towards Achieving a Just and Soil-sensitive Farming

*By Elgin Hlaka, Wits Inala Forum Member*

“The land, our purpose is the land; that is what we must achieve”, this is a direct quote from a Judgement delivered in the Gauteng Division of the High court in Pretoria, by Judge Basson. The applicants to this dispute were arguing for the attainment of their consent to the usage of land in their ancestral land. Although the above quote was taken from another Judgement (Daniels v Scribante &





Another), it nevertheless resonates with the struggle regarding attainment of the land and the dignity of our people.

On the 22nd to the 24th of November 2018, we attended the PHA (Philippi Horticultural Area) Food & Farming Campaign workshop with 45 other activists, farmers and experts in Cape Town. The overall experience and information we received regarding the struggle of the local small scale farmers was indeed eye-opening. And, like the broader scheme and narrative that is going on in the country, regarding land reform,



the local story which is being advocated by the PHA, hits home, as the rich land lying under an aquifer is vulnerable to be gained and used by developers for commercial use.

The PHA Food & Farming Campaign is an organisation that is fighting for the protection of the land and in particular the protection of the soil, against the use of chemical use to grow crops. The protection is a larger campaign to advocate for the rights of small scale farmers in Cape Town, against the big developers who seek to use the land for housing and other commercial developments. The PHA seeks to help small scale farmers to get land and be able to earn and produce a good livelihood.

Indeed, this is a broader campaign that resonates with the larger portion of many small scale farmers either in the outskirts rural area or even within the city. Small scale farmers are being drowned in the sea of big commercial farmers who use chemicals. Therefore, organic farming has been the epitome alternative to the usual large scales of commercial farming, which is often unhealthy for the soil.

Therefore, in order to protect the soil and to use it in ways through which healthy food can be produced for the people, who often do not have an alternative to turn to because of financial constraints, organic farming was highly advocated for and emphasised.

Amongst the many techniques that were taught, such as covering the soil, was compost making – instead of farmers purchasing the manufactured compost, which is often not compost. The facilitators of the workshop, through a thoroughly planned exercise, showed us all the manner and ways through which compost can be made. Compost is described as the “heart and soul of organic farming”. This is in pursuit to have healthy soil for the sake of having healthy crops.

It is prudent for us to thus emphasise organic farming as a tool and way against the usual unhealthy pesticides which are often used by large commercial farmers, who seek to gain money faster than usual. This damages the soil, and creates a mess out of a damaged situation already. Thus, the advancement of soil protection through organic farming thus became a factor, a resonance of what needs to be done and what needs to be achieved. The matter of eating local and buying local food would enhance the broader idea of building a sustainable ecology which would produce healthy food, for all local people

Part of the aim, which is important as well, is the use and extraction of carbon from the air into the soil, and thus this would be beneficial for both the air and the soil.

Agroecology instead of commercial agriculture thus became another viable alternative towards achieving a just transition for the use of soil. This aims to consider ecological principles in the process of agriculture, and the health and importance of ecological protection.

We must keep in mind that this workshop and indeed many others like it are part of the larger scheme of debates around the country and indeed the world regarding climate justice, and the many factors concerning this perspective. In the world of geo-politics and international concern, climate justice does not only concern the matters around climate, but have largely got to do with the manner in which we have designed our world, which is centred on a capitalist formation of existence and living.

This matter was well portrayed and conveyed by Prof. Lesley Green from the University of Cape Town, who empathised the matter of rethinking and reshaping our known world, in order to fit the sustainable system that will take care of the soil. Taking care of the soil would ensure that we too are taken care of and that our local people would consume healthy fresh produce.

Comments from the floor at the workshop included the concern around the monopoly power that large pharmaceutical companies have, over much of the local economies. They also abuse their power by providing antibiotics to people, and often these antibiotics do not digest or break down completely within the human body and thus end up being harmful to either the soil, or even the fish in the sea. Much to this contribution is the lack of development and deterioration of infrastructure of the local towns.

Portia Phohlo, a PhD student at Stellenbosch University, gave a thrilling scientific overview of the importance around soil testing, with all the needed micro organisms in the soil, which we often think to be harm to the soil, happen to be healthy for the soil and much needed indeed. Portia thus portrayed the need to view the soil and our companions mentioning that we are stewards for of the soil and should aim to always be in a protective guard for the soil.

The facilitators of the workshop who head the PHA, were able to summarize the protection campaign for soil in five principles namely:

1. No Till
2. Soil Cover

3. Plant Diversity
4. Living Root
5. Small Animal Integration

What became of particular importance at the workshop was the fact that much the education which was given, is known by small scale farmers. Thus, small scale farmers have the ability and the knowledge regarding the use of land, and the protection of soil. This thus should be nurtured and propagated to the many small scale farmers around our communities.

### III. SOLIDARITY WITH STRUGGLES

#### 3.1 Victory for Xolobeni Community: Right to say NO to Mining



Picture source: Twitter - @LRC\_SouthAfrica

On 22 November 2018, the Pretoria High Court ruled that the minister cannot issue a mining right in Xolobeni, in the Eastern Cape, without the consent of the residents.

The Daily Vox's Fatima Moosa writes:

Cromwell Monwabisi, a member of the Xolobeni community said: "We are here as the voice of the community so that we can fight for what is ours. Our land will always be our land and that is why we are here as the voice of the community. We demand our rights."

Monwabisi said this case is important because there is another generation coming who they have to pave the way for so they can have the land. "It will be very important to [win this case] because it is what drive us from Eastern Cape to Pretoria. For us to be there, it shows us how



important it is for us to have the right to say no. It will be very exciting as a community to win the case. If they grant us our right back, it will be very important,” added Monwabisi.

As for what it will mean for other communities, he said the Xolobeni community can be an example for them to say they fought for their rights and got them back.

Monwabisi says even if people aren't physically supporting the cause, they can support in spirit. “The land is very important to a human. Land is our right. Everybody has a right to live and our land is our right,” Monwabisi said.

Francine Nkosi from the Waterberg Women Advocacy Group said this case is important. “As communities they say we own the topsoil and the other soil is owned by the government. We want to change that because as communities there is nothing about us without us. We have the right to say no to that because we want to keep the land for the future generations,” she said.

Duduzile Mkwanazi from the South African Green Development Council was there to support the Xolobeni community because she knows the effects of mines first-hand. “As someone who grew up in the area where there are mines I know the effects of the mines on our communities, so I say no to mining,” she said.

Mkwanazi said that mines usually destroyed the land and this puts a greater burden on women who are forced to take care of their husbands who get sick from working on the mines. She said it will be a victory for all mining communities if the Xolobeni community wins the case.

Another supporter of the community, poet Siboniso Dlamini, said the victory of the Xolobeni community will mean a victory for all communities.

Source: <http://www.thedailyvox.co.za/mining-affected-communities-come-out-in-support-of-xolobeni-fatima-moosa/>

### 3.2 Bo-Kaap Residents Protest Against Gentrification

Cape Town - Bo-Kaap residents will continue to protest and fight for their heritage rights to be protected until the day they face Blok Developments in court on December 6.

This is according to Bo-Kaap Civic Association (BKCA) secretary Jacky Poking, who spoke on the community's stance going forward, after civic organisations in the area were served an interdict from Blok last week, prohibiting community members from entering erf 2970.

A demonstration against gentrification in the area last week turned sour after four people were arrested and some injured following police brutality. Poking said the community was

preparing to demonstrate every evening in coming weeks and had also created an online petition called “Save our Bo-Kaap, Save our African Heritage, Stop all Developments”.

“We are going to oppose the interdict Blok took out against the community, we encourage community members injured in the protest to write down their stories and we want to document that and take it to SAPS.

“The petition is to show the amount of support there is for the heritage overlay zone in Bo-Kaap and show the new mayor the support it has. We want the petition to show the big outcry there is on why heritage overlay zone is needed in Bo-Kaap.”

Article source: <https://www.iol.co.za/capeargus/news/residents-vow-to-fight-to-protect-bo-kaap-heritage-18284595>

## IV. INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### 4.1 UN’s 8th Harmony with Nature Interactive Dialogue to Celebrate Mother Earth Day

*By Method Gundidza*

In this recording, made on 23 April 2018, Method Gundidza, EarthLore’s programme director, finds himself in New York speaking to heads of state and to the world at the UN’s 8<sup>th</sup> Harmony with Nature Interactive dialogue to celebrate Mother Earth Day.

When Method moved to South Africa in 2008, his expectation was to lead a successful life as an accountant. Little did he know that his response to an advert for the position of Finance Manager of a small NGO working with rural farmers in Venda would be a huge turning point in his career. He discovered that his passion is the revival of traditional seeds and farming practices which is based on the indigenous understanding of how farming isn’t an end in itself but a human activities that both derives and contributes to Earth’s life supporting system. As he puts it in his UN presentation farming “...is about participating with humility in the dance of life; working in harmony with Nature; contributing to the food system of the land, and sharing with other species as they are part of the web of life.”

Method felt compelled to go back to his roots in Bikita, Zimbabwe to implement what he had learned while working in Venda. This vitally important work involves accompanying rural farmers, mainly women, to become seed, food and economically sovereign. It recreates supportive, caring communities and reweaves the basket of life. It also leads to the recovery of “lost” indigenous seeds and ancient wisdom and knowledge, as well as the revival of associated rituals, like first fruits and rain ceremonies, and the restoration of sacred natural sites. All these elements have long been considered by indigenous people as very important elements of the ecological governance of their territories.

Method is an Earth Jurisprudence graduate and views our Mother Earth as the source of everything that exists on this miraculous planet. He understands that Earth’s natural lores

govern creation in its entirety. This contrasts sharply with the anthropocentric world of our modern society, where human-made laws are rapidly leading to the devastation and destruction of our living planet.

In this compelling presentation, Method shares his journey back to his Bikita roots and the rich fruits this is bearing.

Listen to the recording at this link: <http://webtv.un.org/search/part-2-interactive-dialogue-on-harmony-with-nature-during-the-commemoration-of-international-mother-earth-day-general-assembly-72nd-session/5775799160001/?term=Interactive%20Dialogue%20on%20Harmony%20with%20Nature%20during%20the%20commemoration%20of%20International%20Mother%20Earth%20Day%20-%20General%20Assembly,%2072nd%20session&lan=english&sort=date>

## 4.2 SAFSC's Visit to Kalamzoo College

*By Itumeleng Mogatusi*

On the 8<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> October we had the pleasure of being invited to the Arcus College in Kalamazoo, Michigan to their With/Out- Borders? Global Convention. We were part of 11 other organisations from Colombia, Palestine, USA (5), Canada, Puerto Rico, Fiji and SA (2) Ntinga Ntaba Ka Ndoda. Prof Satgar and I represented SAFSC.

The purpose of the 2018 With/out –Borders? Conventions which are held biannually was to bring together grassroots activists from across the world who envision a world free from oppression and are actively working towards that vision, in order for them to learn from one another and support each other in future through nurturing meaningful relationships.

The theme for 2018 was “Towards a futureLand” that is

- Land as essential for indigenous sovereignty
- Land as contested through the forced dislocation of people within and outside the USA
- Land as strength and nurturance.

This was based on the fact that Global struggles for land allows us to deeply examine the commodification and consumption of space as well as the reach and watch of colonial and corporate power.

During our stay we visited Black Oaks Centre for Sustainable living in Chicago Illinois run by Fred Carter and his wife which is off the grid and advocates for anything sustainable.

We also had the pleasure of being welcomed by the three fire nations Council of indigenous tribes Odawa, Ojibwe and the Potowadime on whose land the College was built.

We visited local community food gardens in Detroit, developed on housing spaces whose owners were evicted or moved due to the economic crunch affecting the area, as well as the Jimmy and Janet Boggs Museum who were Civil rights activists, through the assistance of Shay Church the curator.



We had the pleasure of interacting with the college students and also observing the manner in which the college develops Social cohesion and Lateral thinking.

The learning experience for us coming from South Africa and still grappling about the land issue was enlightening, and also encouraging on why we need active citizens in order to develop.

#### 4.3 Food, Coops, Capitalism

*The following article has been cross-posted from Food First, and was written by Eric Holt-Gimenez on 6 November 2018. In this article he explains the history of food co-ops, the state of co-ops today and how they are rising to the challenge to usher in a powerful countermovement to challenge our food system and capitalism.*

Last week, I travelled to Portland, Oregon to give a keynote presentation to the [Consumer Coop Management Association—CCMA](#). My first experience with cooperatives had been in 1983 when I worked as a manager for the Stockton Farmers' Market Coop. Long before the



rise of the food movement, we used to sell fresh produce to the Berkeley Coop's supermarkets. This allowed a small group of struggling farmers to sell a lot of good food to a big group of affluent consumers. But that was long ago. I needed to study up to face 500 experts in coop management.

When I did background research, I was struck by the obvious: Capitalism and food coops emerged together.

The first known food cooperative, the [Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers](#), was formed in 1844 by a small group of craftspeople who had been de-skilled by England's great textile factories in the thick of the Industrial Revolution. Of course, cooperative forms of food sharing dates to the dawn of our species. But the consumer cooperative as we know it today was a desperate response by starving workers laboring in the 'Satanic Mills' where they earned "[enough for their daily crust and not a penny more.](#)"

These workers originally came from rural communities and grew their own food. But large landowners [enclosed the village Commons](#), fencing off communally-managed fields to raise sheep and produce wool for the emerging textile industry. Country people resisted these land grabs for over a hundred years, but the power of the industrialists steadily impoverished them, driving them to the cities where men, women and children were literally worked to death. This starving "reserve army of labor" provided early industrial capitalism with the cheap labor subsidy essential for making Great Britain a global industrial power.

Early cooperatives were not only a way for workers to survive, they were hubs that rebuilt the social relationships destroyed by the Industrial Revolution—radical "[public spheres](#)" where people helped each other, learned to read and write, and where ideas like universal suffrage, an end to slavery, and labor rights were discussed—and acted upon.

Just before the end of the U.S. Civil War, formerly enslaved Africans were given a huge swath of unused land on the Georgia-Carolina coast by General William Tecumseh Sherman (40 acres and a mule). A year later, with the North victorious, President Andrew Johnson rescinded the order, leaving them landless. After Reconstruction, southern states introduced segregationist [Jim Crow laws](#) to disenfranchise and incarcerate African-Americans, forcing many into chain gangs. But African-Americans pulled together. They organized [not just food coops](#), but production, marketing and credit coops. By 1910 they had purchased over 15 million acres of land—without a penny from the government and in the face of brutally violent discrimination. During the Great Migration (1916-1970), six million African Americans moved to northern states, fleeing racial terror and severe economic oppression. Food coops like the [Wedge Community Foods Cooperative](#) of Minnesota provided essential food security for Black communities. African-American coop federations, like the [Federation of Southern Cooperatives](#), continue to this day. At its core, the Black cooperative experience has not just been about survival, but about independence, dignity, and economic sovereignty:

"There exists today a chance for [Blacks] to organize a cooperative State within their own group. By letting Negro farmers feed Negro artisans, and Negro technicians guide [Black] home industries and [Black] thinkers plan this integration of cooperation, while [Black] artists dramatize and beautify the struggle, economic independence can be achieved. To doubt that this is

possible is to doubt the essential humanity and the quality of brains of [Black People].” – [W.E.B. DuBois, 1935](#)

When 13 million people lost their jobs during The Great Depression, there was an [increase in cooperative activity](#). While coops saw a 17% rise in employment, 25% of the nation was unemployed. The nation was falling apart. In the three years following the 1929 stock market crash, the U.S. saw over 10,000 bank failures and 10,000 labor strikes. The government of Franklin Delano Roosevelt teetered on the brink. As the Depression worsened, unions and socialist parties grew in strength. Coops were seen as the “middle way” (between socialism and fascism) that could help strengthen Roosevelt’s New Deal reforms.

In the 1970s the food coops experienced another renaissance. Consumers began rejecting the unhealthy industrialized food being sold in the vast supermarket networks that had sprung up after the Second World War. These “Second Wave” coops, largely white and “counter-cultural,” were instrumental in ushering in organic food across the country.

Today, over 300 food cooperatives in the U.S. control about one half of one percent (.05%) of the retail market share. A diverse reflection of their seven-decade history, these coops are big, small, consumer or worker-owned, local, state-wide, and national in scope. There are coops in poor as well as affluent neighbourhoods. Many cater to primarily white, middle class communities, but some are ethnically diverse, or anchored in [communities of colour](#). There are radical cooperatives forging alternatives to capitalism, progressive coops that support social causes, and reformist cooperatives that just want to get a better deal for their members.

What unites them? Aside from the Rochdale [cooperative principles](#), all coops come from a long history of communities and counter-movements that stood up to the injustices of capitalism. Today, they face a food system in which 80% of our food is sold by a handful of retail monopolies and one in seven people in the U.S. are going hungry—largely women, children and people of colour.

Coops are also united—and divided—in their diversity. Two hundred years of racism, sexism and classism under a series of capitalist food regimes has not left the movement unscathed. Like the rest of the food movement, if the coop movement is to become a powerful force for food system transformation, they will also need to reach out to the nation’s 2.3 million farmers, 800,000 farmworkers, 46,000 workers in processing plants, and the over 3 million workers in retail grocery who together make up over 12% of the national workforce.

The good news—as I discovered when speaking with coop managers at the CCMA conference—is that this conscious convergence is already underway. Many coops have become “radical public spheres” that prioritize social and economic democracy, equity and radical social inclusion.

The food movement is searching for a catalyst to help bring us all together into a powerful countermovement, capable of transforming not just our food system, but the capitalist system in which it is embedded. As in the past, today’s coops are being called upon to rise to the challenge.

Article source: <https://foodfirst.org/food-coops-capitalism/>.



## V. CLIMATE JUSTICE STRUGGLES

### 5.1 Launch of the #BanFracking Campaign

*By Courtney Morgan*



*Image source: Twitter @groundWorkSA*

From the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> November, COPAC attended the launch of the #BanFracking campaign hosted by SCLC (Support Centre for Land Change) in beautiful Wilderness. The meeting brought together NGOs, civil society formations, community members, first indigenous leaders and activists. Some of the groups in the room along with COPAC were the Karoo Environmental Justice Movement (KEJM), GroundWorks, Earthlife, Friends of the Earth Mozambique, Vaal Environmental Justice Association (VEJA), South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA), AFRA and 350.org. The aim of the meeting was to build a strong alliance for the #BanFracking campaign and develop a declaration for the campaign.

On Friday night we had an introduction to the issue, with 4 comrades from various communities sharing their experiences, and what fracking would mean for them. We also covered all the logistics and objectives for the weekend. On Saturday we were treated to a number of presentations on the dangers of fracking, and the science behind the actual

process as well as the general dangers of the climate crisis. Bobby from Groundworks started off the day with a presentation on the national perspective about fracking, followed by a short panel by some NGOs present, speaking about their work and what they could contribute to the campaign. Dipti Bhatnagar from Friends of the Earth Mozambique then shared with us the dangers of the climate crisis, including reference to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's report on a 1.5° degree increase in global temperatures. After some scary stats and concerning prospects in terms of what fracking would do to our country, and some news from Mozambique we went into some international successes. International statements of solidarity and encouragement were read out and we watched short clips of various mobilisation and protest methods.

On the last day of the meeting, we sat down and got to planning. We developed a strategy for a campaign to be rolled out in 2019, identified allies and opponents and got commitments from various NGOs on what they could contribute to this process. Among capacity building and knowledge dissemination, COPAC and SAFSC committed to taking the call to ban fracking seriously, by adding this into the Climate Justice Charter they are in the process of developing. Finally, there was a declaration written throughout the weekend, finalized on Sunday and endorsed by all the members in the room, the declaration is as follows:

*Sunday, 18th November 2018*

*We the people and organisations from the Karoo met from the 16th - 18th November in the Wilderness to discuss our response to the increased push for fracking in South Africa. We were joined by community people from throughout South Africa and international and national NGOs.*

*We remember the families that have lost loved ones in the October 2018 fires in the George area. We recognise that the severity of these fires, like the ones in California are because of climate change. We also recognise that despite this reality, the South African government, and the Ministry and Department of Environmental Affairs continue to facilitate the extraction of fossil fuels, despite the overwhelming evidence and call by various international bodies such as the International Panel on Climate Change and the International Energy Agency that we need to get to zero carbon emissions urgently.*

*We recognise that we have come a long way since Steytleville in 2012, when we the people of the Karoo supported by the Support Centre for Land Change (then known as the Southern Cape Land Committee) met with community people from throughout South Africa. From the coal fields in Mpumalanga, the oil refinery area in south Durban, the petrochemical area in the Vaal, the mine areas in Gauteng, together with national and international NGOs, people stood in solidarity with the*

*people of the Karoo. We said NO TO FRACKING and YES to transformative development determined by the people of the Karoo through meaningful participation.*

*In 2013 we met again in the Karoo and launched the "Black Thursday Land Campaign - Mawubuye umhlaba wethu" which was clear: "Don't Frack with The Karoo".*

*In 2015 we revisited our positions, further educated ourselves, linked with local community people challenging fracking in The Netherlands and we once again confirmed our position of NO TO FRACKING and we committed to push for alternatives which foster food and energy sovereignty including renewable energy and agro-ecological food production.*

*In 2016, we together with community people from KwaZulu Natal, with local government, local traditional leaders, political representation from National Parliament, national NGOs we gathered in solidarity with the people of Matatiele challenging proposed fracking on their lands and we reaffirmed that our lives and livelihoods are supported by the ecosystems we are destroying, so we will do all it takes to safeguard them for future generations. We said NO to exploration and extraction.*

*In October 2018, we the people from the Karoo, KwaZulu Natal, the Vaal and international and national NGO's met in south Durban in solidarity with the south Durban community challenging offshore gas exploration. We said no more fossil fuel exploration, no more coal mines, oil and gas wells and no more associated development such as pipelines, refineries and coal power stations.*

Our vision is where we live in harmony with each other and the earth, and the home, community and youth is our bedrock upon which we build a democratic, inclusive and fossil free society and where:

*People receive fair remuneration for engaging in productive and creative livelihoods, where the work they do is not demeaning or exploitative but is safe, rewarding and secure;*

*Communities enjoy decent levels of affordable basic services and infrastructures to be enjoyed by all in society as a basic human right – and not only by 'consumers' who can afford them;*

*Individuals and families are able to access, at minimum, the basic goods of human life starting with the most basic levels of goods like nutritious food, and safe and comfortable accommodation and energy that is affordable and socially owned;*

*There are clean healthy environments where people live and work that are nurtured by the very way in which people live and work; and*

*Government is accountable to the people.*

*The there state the following.*

*We say no to extractives, privatisation of renewable energy, to profits over people, to capitalism, racism and patriarchy.*

*We want a South Africa without fracking. We want a world without fracking. We want a life without fracking.*

*We want fracking criminalised.*

*We want system change - not climate change!*

*We hereby reaffirm our history and call for a Ban on Fracking in South Africa.*



## 5.2 Children's Resource Center: Launch of Wonder Bag and input for Climate Justice Charter

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of November, the Children's Resource Centre held an event to launch their Wonderbag Project. The Children's Resource Centre was established in 1983. After 1994, when the government finally acknowledged the importance of having children's rights in the constitution, they started focusing on issues that directly affected our children in the communities, such as poverty, HIV/Aids, unemployment, high crime rates, drug abuse and gangsterism. Their goal therefore is to help children ages 7-14 years to build a social movement of children within schools and communities. By developing the potential of children to become active change agents in the effort to create and ensure safer environments and prevention and awareness of social ills and norms- (Socio economic rights) and creating wellness with healthier and responsible attitudes for themselves, their families and communities. To enhance unity, peace, love, friendship and solidarity. Health within the Children's Movement means more than just being free from illness and sores. It means being healthy in mind, body and spirit; and helping to look after the environment.



The "Wonder bag" is an Eco friendly, safe heat retention, slow cooker. You can cook anything from meaty stews or curries to simple rice and soups. It is manufactured by the child members of the children's Movement, under supervision of adult Coordinators. Saving energy and strengthening the struggle against climate change.

At the event, the children participants deliberated the issue of climate change and provided input regarding the Climate Justice Charter. Some of their ideas are as follows:

- Stop smoking
- Save water e.g. fix all the taps with leaks
- Keeping the environment clean by throwing dirt in the dirtbins
- Limit the amount of fossil fuels being burnt
- Stop air pollution
- Use a Wonderbag to reduce electricity usage
- Reduce the number of cars on the road so that we can have less Ozone depletion.

It is the hope that the children of CRC will convene a Children's Parliament to encourage children to have a position on and participate in the development of the Climate Justice Charter for South Africa.

### 5.3 The 'New' Climate Politics of Extinction Rebellion



*Image source: Twitter @ExtinctionR*

*The Extinction Rebellion is a key initiative which has emerged in response to the IPCC's latest report on climate change, which shows that we need urgent action to stop further planetary crisis.*

*The article following describes the Extinction Rebellion's birth, it's campaign priorities and highlights how the campaign seeks to make governments accept the responsibilities for climate change (rather than international bodies – who have not done enough thus far). This article was written by Joost de Moor, Brian Doherty and Graeme Hayes on 27 November 2018 and was featured in Democracy Now. It is a lengthy article so we are only providing selections of it in this newsletter. To read the entire article, follow this link: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/joost-de-moor-brian-doherty-graeme-hayes/new-climate-politics-of-extinction-rebellion>.*

During October and November 2018, a new environmental campaign Extinction Rebellion (XR) has attracted widespread mainstream media attention in the UK, with its call to 'Fight for Life' in the face of an 'unprecedented global emergency

Currently, it is trying to set up chapters in many other parts of Europe and the US as well. A series of high profile actions, including a blockade of the UK government's Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, culminated on Saturday, November 17, in a day of mass civil disobedience, as 6000 activists shut down five major road bridges over the Thames in central London.

For those following the histories of protest, this type of action is nothing new. But it does appear that XR is currently able to attract exceptional attention and participation. Part of this might be due to timing. In October, two devastating reports on the global environment were published: the latest IPCC report made it clear that there would have to be major and immediate social and economic changes to keep global warming below 1.5°C. Then, WWF released its annual The Living Planet report which showed an average decline of 60% in vertebrate species populations since 1970. At the same time, long prison sentences for three protesters who had disrupted fracking for shale gas in Lancashire received major national coverage, although their sentences were later overturned on appeal. In addition, the election of Jair Bolsonaro as President of Brazil, and in particular his plans for the Amazon, deepened the sense of crisis.

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/joost-de-moor-brian-doherty-graeme-hayes/new-climate-politics-of-extinction-rebellion#>

Making use of this perfect media storm, XR's 'Declaration of Rebellion' on 31 October was supported by well-known UK environmentalists including Green Party MP Caroline Lucas, journalist George Monbiot, and the ex-Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams.

But there have been many moments of global attention for environmental crisis before, and these have not led to this kind or scale of mobilisation. So what, if anything, sets the 'extinction rebellion' apart from previous campaigns? There are at least three ways in which XR occupies a remarkable position in this context, relating to its framing of the problem, its understanding of who has the responsibility for taking action to deal with it, and its strategic call for making those responsible act (or as social movement scholars like to call it: diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing).

### **Catastrophism and disaster**

Firstly, in its framing of the climate problem, XR is exploring new ground for an environmental movement in the UK. While environmental movements typically combine urgency and optimism ('if we act now, we can still solve this problem'), XR is clearly emphasising catastrophism and disaster ('We will not be led quietly to annihilation by the elites and politicians', write the group)... XR remains committed to battling climate change, as if to say: we're screwed, but we still have a choice, even if it is only a choice over how bad it will get. While somewhat awkward, this framing may resonate well with the emotional experience of many who are concerned with climate change and mass extinction today; people who feel



trapped between a sense that they're fighting for a hopeless cause (especially considering the lock-in effect of so-called 'tipping points'), and a refusal to accept defeat and its planetary implications.

While XR's talk of extinction and annihilation is arresting, it is also depoliticising: it frames the question as a moral one which affects us all equally, passing over the questions of who is most vulnerable to climate change, over the power structure of climate politics, and over questions of history and justice, debt and inequality.

It has already been criticized for this framing. Referring to XR's apocalyptic message on the banner it dropped on Westminster Bridge, Jamie Henn of 350.org argued that "It is one thing to say such things from the safety of London, but it's another if you are living on the frontline of climate impacts. Some people don't have the privilege to give up."

In this way, XR breaks with recent radical climate actions in the UK which have explicitly sought to connect public policy and consumption practices with questions of social class, poverty, ethnic minority exclusion, and neo-colonialism. Activists who occupied the runway at Heathrow in July 2015 stressed that whilst 'the victims of climate change are black and brown poor communities in the global South', those who benefit from airport expansion are 'a tiny elite'...

### **'bringing the (nation) state back in'**

Beyond its diagnostic framing, secondly, XR is also somewhat exceptional in its understanding of responsibility. Its tactics represent a break with recent trends towards DIY (Do It Yourself) environmentalism. Faced with decades of inadequate government policy, many citizens have embraced types of action that pursue a direct positive effect on environmental goods, such as by adopting or promoting more sustainable lifestyles, or by opposing environmental bads through direct action against things like open cast coal mining and fracking. Though very different, both DIY-strategies share the virtue of not appealing to, and relying on, governmental action, instead preferring unmediated intervention...

### **Unusual suspects**

Finally, XR stands out in how it seeks to make governments accept these responsibilities. Instead of using traditional forms of lobbying or climate marches to advance policy change, XR promotes the widespread use of mass civil disobedience. There are precedents in recent climate activism, such as the sit-in outside the White House in 2011 to protest the Keystone XL Pipeline. And similar to the annual "Ende Gelände" shut down of open cast lignite coal mines in Germany, one main goal in these protests has been to get concerned citizens from outside the hard core of environmentalists to engage in more radical tactics...

### **Mass movement?**

XR fits in a longstanding tradition of transgressive environmental action; but it is also novel in the British and wider European context, notably in its emphasis on grief, its alarmism, and

its privileging of moral action over political analysis, as well as its emphasis on demanding action from government through civil disobedience.

This is perhaps precisely what makes the campaign so potent now. Its success in getting thousands of people to undertake civil disobedience is impressive, but as with any new movement, it remains to be seen whether it can maintain this momentum, particularly in the absence of an underpinning mass membership.

Of course, XR's stated aim is to build a mass movement. This month's events may have kick-started this, and like all movements, if it develops, it will come in part from existing networks. But creating a movement that can have the impact XR aims for will require confronting the political as well as the moral challenges posed by climate change. First and foremost, to achieve XR's aim of reducing actual (not 'net') carbon emissions to zero by 2025, there will need to be other kinds of democratic political action beyond a demand that governments act.

## VI. SAFSC IN THE MEDIA

### List of SAFSC's Latest Media Engagements

**24 October 2018** Times Live publishes SAFSC and COPAC's open letter to Cyril Ramaphosa 'Environment group demands urgent parliament debate on UN climate change report'. Read the article at this link: <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2018-10-24-environment-group-demands-urgent-parliament-debate-on-un-climate-change-report/>.

**24 October 2018** Daily Vox publishes SAFSC and COPAC's open letter to president Cyril <http://www.thedailyvox.co.za/an-open-letter-to-president-cyril-ramaphosa/>.

**24 October 2018** Vishwas Satgar was interviewed on 90.4fm on The Bottom Line show with Dr Clint Le Bruyns. Vishwas spoke about the climate crisis and the open letter to Cyril Ramaphosa.

**28 October 2018** Vishwas Satgar is interviewed on Channel Africa on UN day about the UN and the climate crisis. Listen to the discussion at <https://iono.fm/e/617920>.

**29 October 2018** Daily Vox profiles the Wits food sovereignty center in the article 'Wits Project Aims to Create Sustainable and healthy eating on Campus'. Aisha Domingo and Courtney Morgan are interviewed for this article. Read the full article at: <http://www.thedailyvox.co.za/wits-project-aims-to-create-sustainable-and-healthy-eating-on-campus-fatima-moosa/>

**1 November 2018** Vishwas is interviewed on Prime time on SAFM about the climate crisis and people's parliaments.

## VII. ACTIVIST RESOURCES

### 7.1 E-book: Biowatch South Africa's Agroecology is Best Practice

*By Biowatch South Africa*



*At the Durban launch of Biowatch's new book are (left to right): Mpho Ncube, Biowatch Farmer Support; Thokozile Mvubu and Rhoda Mvubu, both smallholder farmers from Ingwavuma; and Samu Zuma (Biowatch Agroecology Administrator).*

We're excited to announce that our new book *Agroecology Is Best Practice: Biowatch South Africa's work with smallholder farmers* is now available!

The book, which explores the workings of eight homestead farms in northern KwaZulu-Natal, illustrates Biowatch's agroecology best practices through the personal experiences of each of the smallholder farmers. These farmers have shown that the land can take care of its people - if its people take care of their land.

Published by Biowatch South Africa, the 64-page book showcases the organisation's work with farmers in four key areas: diversity; soil and water; seed; and advocacy. The book speaks to what agroecology is and how it is undertaken in very challenging areas in KwaZulu-Natal; but this is not to say that these best practices are only applicable in such contexts - indeed, agroecology is needed locally and globally if we are to address the calamities of climate change (drought and floods; destruction of biodiversity; and increasing global food and nutrition insecurity).

We hope this book will inspire you, the reader, and catalyse you for action, whether you are a farmer, a policy-maker, in civil society, or are interested in how we can transform our current destructive food and agriculture systems."

Download the free e-book at this link:

[http://www.biowatch.org.za/docs/books/agroecology\\_is\\_best\\_practice.pdf](http://www.biowatch.org.za/docs/books/agroecology_is_best_practice.pdf)

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