

Open Letter

8th December 2007

Ambassador of United States of America to Tanzania
Dar es Salaam
Tanzania

RE: TAKE ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

We the undersigned organizations and individuals in Tanzania are today, 8th December 2007, joining in solidarity with organizations and individuals worldwide to call for action on climate change.

Climate change is among the most urgent issues facing current generations. It is an issue of social justice as well as of environmental protection as it threatens the livelihoods of the poorest and most vulnerable people on this planet. People in countries such as Tanzania are less equipped to protect themselves from extreme weather events such as floods, droughts and storms. Agriculture is the livelihood of 90% of Tanzanians and is highly vulnerable to changes in weather patterns. In Tanzania, many lives and livelihoods as well as our way of life is at stake. The melting of the snow on top of Mount Kilimanjaro is a most visible symbol of climate change.

Seasons in Tanzania have already begun to change – droughts are more frequent and floods are also more frequent. The climate is far less predictable than it was in the past. Water levels are decreasing every day. The rains come at the wrong time for farmers and it is leading to many problems.

The industrialized countries, which have released large amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere for 200 years since the industrial revolution, bear the primary responsibility for this problem. As the problem has been scientifically recognized for decades, there can be no excuses for not acting to mitigate this problem.

Mitigation of this problem involves large decreases in emission of carbon dioxide and burning of fossil fuels. We therefore call on world leaders to put in place incentives and regulations for reduction of burning of fossil fuels in the industrialized world and support the development of and adoption of alternative technologies which are safe and clean.

We call for “contraction and convergence”. Developing countries should not be restrained in their efforts at development and poverty reduction by being forced into a strict emission-reduction regime as is appropriate in industrialized countries who bear the primary responsibility. Developing countries should however, make every effort to go down the road of clean development and avoid use of fossil fuel technologies wherever possible. They should be supported in these efforts by industrialized countries.

The United States of America is the highest carbon-emitting country in the world. The United States of America is also the largest per-person carbon-emitting country among medium or large-sized countries. It is responsible for 22.2% of the world's carbon dioxide emissions despite being only 5% of the world's population.

We urge the Government of the United States of America to take real and meaningful leadership on this issue. In particular, we call on the Government of the United States of America to:

- legally bind itself to meaningful targets for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions together with other industrialized countries
- put in place substantial effective incentives and regulations to reduce the burning of fossil fuels in the US economy
- encourage and give substantial support the development and implementation of energy technologies which are clean and safe
- support clean development in developing countries through substantial increases in funding and capacity building for clean development

The time for action on climate change is now.

Signed:

- Centre for Energy Environment Science & Technology (CEEST)
- Envirocare
- Joint Environment and Development Management Action (JEMA) – University of Dar es Salaam
- Journalists Environmental Association of Tanzania (JET)
- Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC)
- Tanzania Association of NGOs (TANGO)
- Tanzania Coalition for Sustainable Development (TCSD)
- Tanzania Traditional Energy Development and Environmental Organization (TaTEDO)
- Tanzania Youth Environment Network (TAYEN)
- Umma wa Wapanda Baisikeli Dar es Salaam (UWABA)