



IBON International Updates #4
Climate Justice

Action, action everywhere but nowhere

(Marrakech, Nov. 17, 2016) – Touted as the ‘COP of action’, the 22nd meeting of the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP 22) is nearing the homestretch. Expectations that this annual meeting of the world’s leaders will set the wheels into motion on the Paris Agreement (PA), last year’s landmark deal on climate do not seem likely as huge disagreements on its interpreting have emerged between developed and developing countries.

The number of countries that have ratified the PA continues to increase, 111 out of the 197 Parties as of latest count, signaling its ‘early entry into force’. While this was a welcome development, the early ratification of the PA exposed an overall lack of clarity on what it will take to begin the work necessary to achieve the goal of keeping global temperature rise in check and to find ways the international community may address the adverse impacts to countries and communities.

And so the battle for interpretation of the Paris Agreement is on full swing, and is expected to intensify as Parties just agreed to move work on this next year. Among the key issues where consensus is needed would be around: will countries who have not yet joined the PA be part of the decision-making on how this will be implemented; what will become of those issues that have been rendered ‘orphaned’ or ‘homeless’ such as the collective goal of USD100 B climate finance (and this remains a hotly contested topic especially with an OECD report¹ that rich countries have almost already met their climate finance commitments by counting in export credits, loans and private sector investments.) There were also disagreements on seemingly procedural issues, such as adopting the agenda of the Conference of Parties to the Paris Agreement (now referred to as CMA), where developing countries have called out developed countries’ insistence that nationally determined contributions focus only on mitigation (emission reductions).

¹ <http://www.oecd.org/environment/cc/OECD-CPI-Climate-Finance-Report.pdf>

The leaders present welcomed the initiative of King Mohammed VI, the 'Marrakech Action Proclamation' to 'signal a shift toward a new era of implementation and action on climate and sustainable development.'² How this declaration will make a difference, if any, in the course of international negotiations on climate remains to be seen, especially in the midst of the uncertainty of a US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. US Secretary of State John Kerry, speaking at a press conference here spoke of how the 'outgoing Obama administration is preparing a fight to ensure that Donald Trump does not withdraw from the PA.'³

Civil society groups have also stepped up actions that call out on 'conflicts of interest' that make climate negotiations bolster corporations' profit motives over the public good. ⁴ Corporate lobbyists and climate science deniers such as the World Coal Association, International Emissions Trading Association (IETA), which included BP, Chevron, Shell, Rio Tinto, Statoil and Total ⁵among its members, are very much present and pushing their high carbon agendas in Marrakech.

Actions were staged throughout Bab Ighli, site of the UN meetings, to protest against the growing influence of corporations in the negotiations. Representatives of grassroots and non-government organizations also undertook actions to highlight the displacement and resistance of communities all over the world, such as the struggle of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe against the Dakota Access Pipeline, which they say, could pollute water supplies and destroy sacred historic tribal sites.
(Tetet Nera-Lauron) ###

² http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/marrakech_nov_2016/application/pdf/marrakech_action_proclamation.pdf

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/nov/16/john-kerry-we-will-fight-to-keep-us-in-the-paris-climate-deal>

⁴ <https://www.stopcorporateabuse.org/press-release/new-analysis-big-polluters'-have-back-door-access-un-climate-talks>

⁵ <https://www.stopcorporateabuse.org/news/meet-fossil-fuel-lobbyists-and-climate-science-deniers-marrakech-cop22-talks>