

## Church World Service Statement on the Outcome of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP-17) December 13, 2011

After two very contentious and demanding weeks of negotiations, the United Nations Climate Change Conference concluded Sunday morning in Durban, South Africa. Representatives from 194 national governments deliberated over several critical objectives that will affect everyone's future, most severely those of developing nations.

Church World Service appreciates that an accord was reached and a process put in place for future negotiations. However, as a global relief and sustainable development organization serving vulnerable communities who are already dealing with climate change effects, we are gravely concerned that the agreement concluded after arduous negotiations once again dangerously postpones meaningful action.

The global family is now in a perilous race against the clock on climate change. The lack of necessary action is mortgaging the lives of millions of people in developing nations and in vulnerable U.S. areas in the near term future, and in fragile areas such as the Asia-Pacific island nations and the Arctic even today. It gravely threatens the future of the earth, for which God has called us to be wise and responsible stewards. In view of this urgency, Church World Service is disappointed with the COP-17 outcome.

The time for decisive action by developed nations is now – by reducing emissions and in funding adaptation for vulnerable communities.

CWS advocated for the United States to play a constructive role in obtaining progress on mitigation commitments by major industrialized nations.

COP-17 agreed to extend the Kyoto Protocol (KP) -- the only international legal agreement for addressing climate change. But the United States was never a party to the KP, and is not included in its extension. At the same time, all representatives also pledged to work on a "universal legal agreement on climate change" to be adopted no later than 2015 and put into force no later than 2020.

This decision means that wealthy nations including the United States, and growing economic powers and producers of greenhouse gases such as China and India, will work together on negotiating a new legal agreement.

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Church World Service is concerned that the negotiators have pushed decisive action many years ahead. Furthermore, in view of the history of negotiations and current practice, it is not at all certain that even this longer term process will be successful. In addition, a new legal agreement outside of Kyoto could be much weaker, failing to utilize Kyoto's existing reporting and accounting mechanisms already in place.

Church World Service called on the U.S. government to agree to a specific long-term source of adaptation funding in Durban. In Copenhagen at COP-15, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton promised that developed countries would mobilize \$100 billion by 2020 for international climate finance. Developing countries desperately need that money now and in years to come. By the COP-17 conference's conclusion, however, there was no progress on securing a specific source of long-term funding.

CWS advocated that negotiators ensure that the Green Climate Fund (GCF) is administered in a transparent, democratic, and environmentally sound fashion that is accountable to vulnerable communities. At Durban, the Green Climate Fund mechanics about distribution were left undone.

In the wake of COP-17's agreement to postpone meaningful action for up to a decade, Church World Service calls once again on President Obama and the U.S. Congress to take bold new steps to reduce our emissions at a national level and to increase funding for low-income developing countries to be able to adequately adapt to the devastating impacts of climate change.

While disappointed in the COP-17 outcome, Church World Service will continue to be a passionate advocate for a more just and adequate climate policy, and we will continue to work with our partners around the world to improve the resiliency of impoverished communities to adapt to the challenges they face.