

Kenya's Council of Churches launches climate change campaign ahead of Paris conference

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NAIROBI, Kenya (RNS) While calling for global carbon emissions cuts, Kenya's National Council of Churches has launched a multifaith campaign to lobby governments, industries, and multilateral agencies to agree on a binding treaty at the UN climate change talks in Paris later this year.

A new protocol is expected to be adopted at the meeting, known as COP21, to replace the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which is due to expire. That protocol required that state signers reduce greenhouse gas emissions, based on the premise that global warming exists and human-made carbon dioxide emissions have caused it.

A pan-African climate justice campaign, under the slogan "We Have Faith—Act Now for Climate Justice" seeks to mobilize African religious communities on climate justice, ahead of the December conference. It has launched a 1 million signature petition to push for a new treaty.

"As religious leaders, our commitment to the health of our planet is not an option. It is an obligation," said Peter Karanja, the Kenya church council's general secretary.

Karanja said there is enough scientific evidence that climate change is real and its impacts are affecting the entire humanity.

Anglican archbishop Eliud Wabukala of Kenya said churches should be proactive in lobbying for quick responses to global warming.

"Climate change is to blame for conflicts over resources and new epidemics," said Wabukala. "There will be no peace if we do not act to protect communities from negative impacts of climate change like hunger, water scarcity, and loss of natural beauty."