Dear Ministers,

The disconnect between the climate talks and scientific reality is stark. In the UNFCCC process, progress is being made, but in real life your negotiators have been sleepingwalk as the world burns. The past week has seen negotiations moving slowly, with the peaks and valleys that typify these talks. We have walked the corridors, met in the large and small rooms, gone to side events, gossiped at exhibit stands, argued over tinker and tinkered with text.

Meanwhile, famine spreads, floods inundate homes and storms destroy livelihoods. The evidence shows that if we do not act within only a few short years it will be too late to curb dangerous climate change. To be blunt, we risk throwing away the 20 years of work and further delaying the action that is truly required.

Ministers, your negotiators have left you with a very clear choice: You can choose to step away from the edge or drag all of us over it.

Over the last few days, we’ve seen discussions of a timeline for action that would lock us into dangerous climate change. ECO was under the impression that the Durban COP was intended to discuss the post-2012 framework. Somehow the negotiations have shifted to post-2020. This is simply inconceivable. The world can not afford a ten year timeout in the negotiations.

To this end, the European Union can help: Agree a 5-year second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. Do it now. The US and others claim that the collective emission reductions ambition currently in place will allow us to avoid dangerous climate change. This is simply not true. A pledge and review world is a world of uncertainty. There is even backtracking toward a system where there is neither accountability nor assurance that actions will be taken. Let’s not go there.

Instead, we must raise ambition by 2015, otherwise the global average temperature increase will exceed 2°C and move inexorably to 3° and beyond – with all that entails.

The Kyoto Protocol second commitment period must be agreed, as it is the only instrument that legally binds countries to reduce their emissions.

Durban must also agree to negotiate a legally binding agreement to supplement – not replace! – the Kyoto Protocol as soon as possible, and by 2015 at the very latest. Those pushing anything else are seeking to avoid their responsibilities and delay urgently required action.

We have been talking since Copenhagen about how the process is “kicking the can down the road.” There is no more time for that. We cannot pretend action is being taken when it is being avoided. And it can be done! As we approach the dangerous edge, there is also positive movement.

China has signaled flexibility and a willingness to negotiate the difficult issues. The EU can accept a 5 year second commitment period, and they must continue to stand strong for the 2015 timeline as well. The small island states have, as always, pushed for what is needed, since they are closest to the dangerous edge.

There is another road and this is the time for us to choose it. And if the US and others try and pull you aside, don’t let them. Move forward and show the way.

Dear Ministers, we are relying on you this week to show true leadership and choose to pull back from the abyss, to kick off negotiations and take bold steps in a new direction that works for all of us, our climate and our planet.

Ambassador Janney from the Seychelles said it best: “During COP17, you opened the corridors, met in the large and small rooms, gone to side events, gossiped at exhibit stands, argued over tinker and tinkered with text. We have walked this road and this is the time for us to choose it. And if the US and others try and pull you aside, don’t let them. Move forward and show the way.”

Raise the Stakes!
**African COP, African Perspectives**

To commemorate the opening of the High Level Segment of the "African COP" in Durban, ECO invited African NGOs to submit thematic articles on the often urgent challenges of climate change and the compelling opportunities for resilience in the region. What are diverse and common ground: the readiness, given necessary and required support, to devise African solutions on the ground to the climate challenge.

**Overview**

Apart from ensuring plenty of air-time for advocacy and vulnerable people, the African COP raises the concerns of the in Durban. Do we honor the host for the COP? Could the outcome end up so far, so far from the principles and objectives of the Convention? That South Africa would prefer to denounce rather than defend the process?

Token reference to a 1.5°C stabilization level is meaningless to Africa as long as we remain so far from targets that are consistent with having half a chance of remaining below 2°. At this point deciding a time-bound process for robust review of ambition and action would be more useful.

Developed countries that are historically responsible for previous emissions now want to put their pay and their dues. An appropriate Shared Vision will be a mirage if not accompanied by the means of achieving it. Today, the climate and our natural resources for their survival, the need for a fundamental change in the way we use fossil fuels – it simply seeks to restore some balance, and efficient direction of resources to support public health and sustainable living. The powerful should not be so fearful of yielding leverage over others that the entire system is so profoundly compromised that it cannot support the majority of people alive.

by the way: How old will you be in 2050? It seems that very few negotiators have contemplated the world even one generation from now. Do NGOs really need to repeat that about the opportunities to put in place what is required. And is there any point when any of the needed text has already been written, but never required to read?

Most of the discussion in the first week has been about what we might hope to see in place it will immediately be needed. After this, defending a deadline for an agreement in four years is held out as a positive step.

Will there ever be a ‘make-or-break’ moment for the NDCs and the 2015 Framework? The meeting could be implementing it? Certainly it doesn’t look very good for Qatar serving as a big step up as Durban does not produce what we need.

So here’s an idea. What if scenarios of potential outcomes are discussed in advance, with the trees? Perhaps a positive outcome would be a Bioseb, certainly an ‘Acapa’ would have to feature as one of the most important lessons. Welcome shade and resilience. What would a poor outcome be? A Relwache – it is a new technology.

Poverty and growth, far from being complementary, or even sustainable, are two sides of the same coin. What would the alien invasive tree look like?

In South Africa, the Working for Water Programme and the alien and invasive trees, there isn’t a ready process for a COP Presidium to discuss or defend an unacceptable denouncement. And there is precisely what the alien invasive trees.

African NGOs hope to hear and see a lot more about what is happening before 2015, including from the beginning of 2012. If the initial high-level sessions in Durban are not able to provide a clear signal, giving clear direction not only on additional indigenous Knowledge. Respectively moving into a New Green Climate Pathway, African NGOs will be considering putting their host on notice that the outcome may face rejection.

**North Africa**

In the aftermath of the ‘Arab spring’ across the region, North Africa is spiraling upward and outward in many ways. To understand the contours of the region, it is also important to focus on the level of political, economic, social, environmental, and cultural dynamics at play.

The right to sustainable development is not asserted to shame or assign guilt to those who have not acted, but to give a sense of the use of fossil fuels – it simply seeks to restore some balance, and efficient direction of resources to support public health and sustainable living. The powerful should not be so fearful of yielding leverage over others that the entire system is so profoundly compromised that it cannot support the majority of people alive.

Droughts and famine in East Africa have been increasing frequently over the last three decades, threatening the lives of millions of farmers and pastoralists in the region. This is occurring in a country that is already severely affected by water scarcity and is currently below the water poverty line. The report also projects that these impacts will hit countries at a much faster rate than originally predicted, with sea levels rising almost 100% in 2050. This means that the delta in Egypt – the food basket of Egypt’s agricultural lands – will be inundated by up to 75%. These impacts will devastate the region and magnify the food and water security crisis for millions.

Earlier this year, the people of North Africa took to the streets to protest against increasing food prices, lack of jobs and insufficient food security. The need for a comprehensive and coherent policy framework is needed.

The recommendations made at this conference include:

1. Mobilising public finance is a clear imperative.
2. Much of the discussion in the first week has been about what we might hope to see in place it will immediately be needed.
3. After this, defending a deadline for an agreement in four years is held out as a positive step.
4. Will there ever be a ‘make-or-break’ moment for the NDCs and the 2015 Framework?
5. The report also projects that these impacts will hit countries at a much faster rate than originally predicted, with sea levels rising almost 100% in 2050.

**West Africa**

For most African countries, increasing vulnerability to the impacts of climate change is a priority and a major challenge. While the continent is home to over 80% of the world’s population, it is also one of the world’s most vulnerable regions to the impacts of climate change.

In 2011, the report projected that these impacts will hit countries at a much faster rate than originally predicted, with sea levels rising almost 100% in 2050. The report also projects that these impacts will devastate the region and magnify the food and water security crisis for millions.

**South Africa**

The agreement of a further two-year phase of the Nairobi Work Programme, including taking specific focus areas on ecosystem-based approaches on water, is a welcome development.

This brings the need for full consideration of the human cost of climate change, including the financial costs and the human dimensions. The agreement of a further two-year phase of the Nairobi Work Programme, including specific focus areas on ecosystem-based approaches on water, is a welcome development.

**Africa for Integrity**

At this African COP, it is gratifying to see the Africa Group tabling a number of constructive proposals aiming to bring environmental integrity back to the Kyoto Protocol.

On the issue of hot air, the Africa Group is proposing that the carry-over of surplus AAUs from the first to the second commitment period be limited to 1% of each party’s assigned amount for the first commitment period, and that parties be allowed to sell the carried-over surplus to other parties. This proposal may be a step in the right direction.

These proposals may not be perfect, but they put forward compromises that take us towards environmental integrity needed at the century of global climate efforts.