

Ethics for Climate Justice and Sustainability through Value-based Approaches: A New Tanzanian Model and Paradigm Shift

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Abstract

This article has a threefold purpose. Firstly, it underscores the unique importance of ethics and values in responding to the current challenges of climate justice and resource depletion in sub-Saharan Africa – and Tanzania in particular. These ethics and values include food insecurity, health hazards, prolonged and severe drought spells, hydroelectric power crises, destruction of human settlements, rapid extinction of wildlife, and invisible psychological consequences to humans.

Secondly, behind the ever-increasing threat of the climate crisis is a plethora of deep-seated philosophical, ideological and policy root causes of today's wanton climate injustices and unsustainable lifestyles. These include the radical anthropocentric, biocentric, cosmocentric, pathocentric, and hyper-post-modern consumerist lifestyles, as well as the weaknesses of present climate policies, locally and globally.

Thirdly, on a more formative and methodological note, today more than ever before it is becoming increasingly necessary (and evident) that humans need to use value-based, qualitative approaches in responding to the issues of climate justice and sustainability, i.e. to go beyond the hitherto quantitative (mathematical), functionalist and legalist approaches, which are neither exhaustive nor sustainable. In short, the major argument is that climate justice and sustainability are mainly value-based issues which first and foremost call for a rethinking of the value of values, beyond empirical and legal solutions and methods. The present situation calls for a radical paradigm shift to viable and sustainable ethics for climate rights if humanity and the earth are to survive.

A. Introduction

I. Terminology

1. Climate Justice

The broadest and deepest meaning of *climate justice* refers to the short- and long-term rights and abilities of the earth to regenerate and support all life forms, human and non-human, in a sustainable and dignified manner, with a fair distribution of resources and environmental burdens.

Briefly, in sub-Saharan Africa, *climate justice* simply means real commitment to the 1992 Rio Declaration¹ which was endorsed by 160 countries worldwide. The Declaration affirms that “human beings are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature” (Principle 1).² The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet the needs of present and future generations (Principle 3).³ Indeed, climate justice encapsulates a myriad of socio-human, economic, environmental, political, cultural, technological and ethical trajectories, using such mechanisms as rights and duties.

2. Sustainability/Sustainable Development

I have argued that *sustainability* or *sustainable development* is a highly complex, new and fluid concept which is often ambiguous and confusing.⁴ It is a new paradigm based on continued use of the earth’s natural resources in such a manner and degree that they are not overstressed, exhausted or used to the detriment of future human and non-human generations.⁵ Admittedly, in the last few decades, the word *sustainability* has widely and synonymously been used with concepts such as *sustainable development*, *integral development*, *sustainable economy*, and *sustainable growth* – but the list goes on and on. Fundamentally, *sustainability* is part and parcel of climate justice, both as a means and an end.

1 UN (1994:Articles 1–3).

2 (ibid.).

3 (ibid.).

4 Msafiri (2007:105).

5 UN (1992:1–20).

II. The Key Issues at Stake

Today, facts, figures, observations and feelings indicate that climate change is real and not fictitious. This is evidenced by floods, drought spells, stress on health systems, melting of ice, food insecurity, etc. Unfortunately, climate justice does not figure as prominently today on global media as, for instance, financial crises, global politics and elections. Yet, climate injustices pose direct threats to the planet and to all life forms, today and in the future, locally and globally. The earth has an intrinsic right and mechanism to sustain all life forms in a dignified way. Ever-worsening climate injustice dilemmas are a ‘wake-up call’ for humanity generally, and governments in particular, to urgently rediscover the inviolable dignity, sanctity and well-being of all life forms on earth.

Consequently, climate protection should be the first and foremost human obligation, i.e. the human as *homo conservator* and *homo intergralis* (responsible stewards of creation) as opposed to *homo faber* or *homo consumerismus*. There is an urgent need to go beyond the common view of ‘business as usual’. Our planet has inviolable rights. If they are infringed, all forms of life are subjected to potentially irreversible risks and consequences. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu aptly put it at an inter-faith rally prior to an international conference on climate change, “We only have this one planet. We do not have planet B”.⁶

III. Justifications/Rationale

Today, more than ever before, the entire world – and Africa in particular – continues to witness increased tragic life scenarios largely resulting from unsustainable socio-economic, technological, cultural and political world-views and lifestyles which threaten the very existence of humans, present and future. It is true that climate injustices and climate change are a result of human *habitus* (lifestyle) and activity. Climate injustices are essentially ethical crises which need ethical solutions. This requires deep and radical transformation within, and not outside, humans. Admittedly, the problems of climate change and wanton climate injustices cannot be solved in the cabins of large aeroplanes flying to international conferences on climate, or

6 Seventeenth Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, November 2011.

in the luxurious hotels which accommodate climate change experts and activists, but rather in the hearts and consciences of each and every human being on this planet.

IV. Structure

There are three main sections to this Pre-COP18 Doha reflection on the ethics of climate justice and sustainability. Section B attempts to identify the magnitude of climate injustices, both from a local (Tanzanian) and a global perspective. Section C offers a wide range of philosophical and ideological policy, as well as life views behind climate injustices and sustainable living. Section D unveils key value-based principles for a new model and paradigm shift, in sub-Saharan Africa in particular, but also in the world in general.

B. Climate Injustice and Vulnerability Scenarios: Local and Global Realities

I. A Tanzanian View

1. Negative Agricultural Impacts

Due to unpredictable rainfall patterns in Tanzania, average food and cash-crop production has decreased very significantly. This has not only threatened national food and health security (nutritional well-being), but has also caused a dramatic drop in foreign income.⁷ It was recently confirmed that, with increased mean annual temperatures and reduced rainfall, the production of maize – the staple food crop for most Tanzanians – has decreased by 34%.⁸ Furthermore, recent research by the Tanzania Meteorological Agency (TMA) indicate that some of the previously highly productive regions, especially the Southern and Northern Highlands, are badly affected year after year, especially by declining rainfall, acute droughts and massive rainfall variability.⁹

7 URT (2011:20).

8 (ibid.:21).

9 (ibid.).

As far as livestock activity is concerned, recent severe drought spells are reducing water availability and pastures for rearing livestock,¹⁰ causing increasing potential threats and risks to keepers of livestock and agro-based communities in Tanzania. Moreover, it has been claimed that, due to severe drought spells, savannah grassland is encroaching on natural forests and woodlands countrywide.

2. *Health Hazards and Risks*

Increased and fluctuating temperatures have a direct influence and impact, particularly as regards the survival of lethal vectors, pathogens and hosts for new, climate-driven habitats. These health threats include malaria, meningitis, dysentery, cholera, plague, Rift Valley fever, and schistosomiasis. Today, for instance, there are several potential incidences of epidemic malaria, particularly in the previously cold highland regions of Tanzania such as Iringa, Kagera, Kilimanjaro, Mbeya and Njombe.

Besides being a major killer disease in Tanzania, affecting especially children, malaria has recently been estimated to cost Tanzania potentially about US\$20–100 million a year by 2030, increasing to US\$25–160 million a year by 2050.¹¹

3. *Negative Effects on Freshwater Resources and Reliability of Water*

The levels of many lakes and basins in Tanzania are decreasing significantly. Recent predictions by the Tanzania National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan indicate that the actual water levels of most Tanzanian lakes, particularly Lake Victoria, but also Lakes Eyasi, Mayara and Rukwa, are decreasing, some at a rate of 0.6–5.0% annually.¹² This is mainly because many ecosystems, wetlands, groundwater aquifers and rivers in Tanzania and in neighbouring East African countries have been drastically affected by severe and recurrent droughts, coupled with immense water evaporation.

10 (ibid.:2–7).

11 Global Climate Adaptation Partnership (2011:30).

12 URT (2011:16).

Water is a finite resource. Due to increased pressure on water catchments, increased industrialisation and urbanisation, both the quantity and quality of clean water sources and resources in Tanzania have decreased noticeably.

4. The Hydroelectric Power Crisis

Recent data from the Tanzanian Ministry of Energy and Minerals shows that, due to prolonged severe droughts, the water levels in most of the country's hydroelectric power (HEP) stations have declined to their lowest ever.¹³ Indeed, 54% of electricity in Tanzania comes from water sources which have been exposed to prolonged dry periods. These include the Mtera HEP Dam, the Nyumba ya Mungu HEP Dam, and the Hale Pangani HEP dam.

From a socio-economic point of view, intermittent power blackouts and rationing have become commonplace, particularly in the large cities such as Arusha, Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, Mwanza, and Tanga. Prolonged power rationing for both domestic and industrial use definitely threatens the well-being of the Tanzanian people and exposes them and their economy to greater risks of poverty and social instability.

5. Negative Effects on Human Settlements

Reports indicate that there are several instances of sea-level rise and prolonged coastal erosion, particularly around the Island of Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam.¹⁴ This is spectacular in the northern part of Ras Mkumbuu Peninsula and New Chake-Chake, where several ancient commercial and religious centres have been completely abandoned. In Dar es Salaam, the threats of increased coastal erosion are escalating at a very rapid pace. Most of the beaches, such as those at Mbezi, Msasani and Upanga, are clear examples of this.

Unexpected heavy rainfalls caused by climate change have caused huge disruption, damage and loss, including loss of human lives and the destruction of homes, schools, industries, railways, roads, power lines, sewage systems, bridges, etc. The El Niño spells in Dar es Salaam in December 2011 were the worst Tanzania has ever seen.

13 (ibid.).

14 (ibid.:31).

6. *Negative Effects on Wildlife and Tourism*

Due to increased water shortages, large habitats, ecosystems and national parks which sustain diverse fauna and flora are under increased risk, including animals being threatened by extinction. This especially affects water-dependent animals such as hippopotami, crocodiles, buffalos and elephants, as well as bird species such as flamingos, which are either migrating to other countries in search of water or are vanishing. This situation causes endless conflict in human–wildlife relationships, especially around national parks and wildlife zones.

Climate change is a constant threat to the beauty of many places in Tanzania, including mountains, lakes, craters, hills, beaches, and coral reefs. It is also a threat to the tourism industry. It has been scientifically proven that Mount Kilimanjaro lost 80% of its ice cover between 1912 and 2005. It is envisaged that the melting of the ice on this mountain, coupled with sea-level rise which will submerge small islands and destroy beaches and coastal infrastructure such as hotels, will reach catastrophic proportions in the near future.¹⁵

7. *Long-term Negative Invisible Effects*

Besides the quantifiable effects of climate change on humans, there are also deep-seated psychological and socio-pathological effects which are just as real, but are often overlooked. These range from severe sound pollution to long and unpleasant traffic jams in most of the big cities of Tanzania, particularly in Dar es Salaam. Most city dwellers spend more time commuting to and from their place of work than they do sleeping. As a result, many people suffer from psychological disturbance and are becoming increasingly tense, impatient, selfish and unsympathetic. They are also becoming less careful. This has a direct and indirect negative impact on day-to-day relationships in the familial, societal, medical, professional, academic and religious spheres.

15 (ibid.:23).

II. Regional and Global Outlook and Effects

Recent findings indicate that, in East Africa, atmospheric dust is one of the key factors contributing to the subregion's climate variability and change:¹⁶

Dust storms over the eastern plains of Somalia, northern Kenya, northern Sudan and Ethiopia are common phenomena through most of the year. Dust is one of the least understood components of the Earth's atmosphere and it may have a greater importance for climate change than has been realised up until now.

Increased global temperatures are causing the world's fauna and flora to vanish more rapidly than ever before. Professor John van Klinken of the University of Groningen in the Netherlands claims that, between 1880 and 1950, one animal species became extinct per year; in 1989 it was one species per day; by 2000, it was one species per hour.¹⁷ Worse still, he shows that within 50 years from now, 25% of animal and plant species will have disappeared due to the effects of global warming and climate change.¹⁸

Franz Alt et al. argue that, due to wanton global climate injustices, the availability of quality water for human domestic and industrial use is at stake.¹⁹ It is affirmed that, today, chemical industries worldwide produce more than 116,000 types of chemicals, including agro-chemicals and pesticides. These have far-reaching toxic effects on our groundwater and on all forms of life.²⁰

From the perspective of the developing world, Franz Alt observes that, every year, due to water pollution and severe restrictions on fresh water, about two million people suffer from malaria, 4.6 million children under five suffer from acute cholera, 50 million Africans are confronted with the potential risk of contracting river blindness, 200 million people worldwide suffer from bilharziasis, and one billion people suffer from an acute pandemic of dysentery.²¹ All these are the direct causes, effects and consequences of climate injustices. The diverse visible and invisible consequences of climate change and injustices should serve as a 'wake-up call' for all of humanity. We are one common human species. Consequently, we are called to live in a just and sustainable relationship with each other for the benefit

16 UNEP (2006:647).

17 Cited in WCC (2005:41).

18 (ibid.).

19 Alt et al. (2002:148).

20 (ibid.).

21 (ibid.).

of all humans and non-humans today, tomorrow and in the future. This clearly makes climate change and sustainability justice issues par excellence. In Section C below, the deep-seated philosophical, ideological, political, psycho-sociological, socio-economic and technological root causes behind climate change and injustice as a whole are identified.

C. Anthropological Perspectives

I. Philosophical-ideological and Policy Root Causes and Lifestyles

1. The Anthropocentric Life View

Anthropocentric is derived from the Greek *anthropos*, which connotes the human person or being. Consequently, *anthropocentrism* is a radical philosophical life view which considers the human person as the nucleus, centre and key determinant of life, human actions and everything.²² This life view exploits the rights of creation (or the planet) and places human goals and whims at the forefront. Among others, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) is considered an ardent proponent of this life view.

2. The Biocentric Life View

According to this life view, which is based on the term *bios*, which is Greek for “life”, animal and plant rights are accentuated and safeguarded. Nobel Prize winner Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965) pioneered this view. As a radical life view centred on the *cosmos* (Greek for “natural”, thus “physical world” or “creation”), biocentrism places the rights of the natural world above the rights and dignity of humans (*anthropos*).

3. The Cosmocentric Life View

This life view places the rights of the physical world (*cosmos*) above all, while downplaying those of humans, plants and animals. A moderate, rational, anthropocentric life view would take into account the intrinsic inter-

22 Msafiri (2007:60).

relationship and interdependence between humans (*anthropos*) and other life forms (*bios*), including nature (*cosmos*).

4. *The Pathocentric Life View*

Pathocentric originates from the Greek *pathos*, meaning “pain” or “suffering”. The Australian scholar Peter Singer is the main proponent of this radical life view, which exaggerates the right and roles of animals over those of humans, plants and nature. Singer considers a purely carnivorous life style as one of the key factors behind ecological destruction. Briefly, it has far-reaching impacts, both direct and indirect, on the environment as a whole.²³

5. *The Hyper-post-modern Consumerist Life View and Lifestyle*

As far as the insatiable craving for the endless production and consumption of material things is concerned, humans are persistently being oriented into more of a ‘having’ than a ‘being’ culture. The Cartesian philosophical life view of *Cogito ergo sum* (“I think, therefore I am”) has radically been displaced by “I consume, therefore I am”, or “I buy, therefore I am”.²⁴ This has led to massive post-modern environmental risks and threats.

This post-modern consumerist syndrome is embedded in powerful theories, principles and views, of which I have identified the following:

- the You-Need-More-Than-One-Fashion Theory
- the Use-Once-and-Throw-Away Principle
- the Limitless-Technological-Advancement Life View. This entails a Constant-Commodity-Transformation-And-Betterment Life View, e.g. smartphones, ipads, high-definition TVs and hybrid cars.

A hyper-consumerist society is unsustainable, and it exacerbates ecological and climate injustices and burdens. It is deeply rooted in human selfishness, self-interest and greed, which drives the insatiable craving for material possessions.

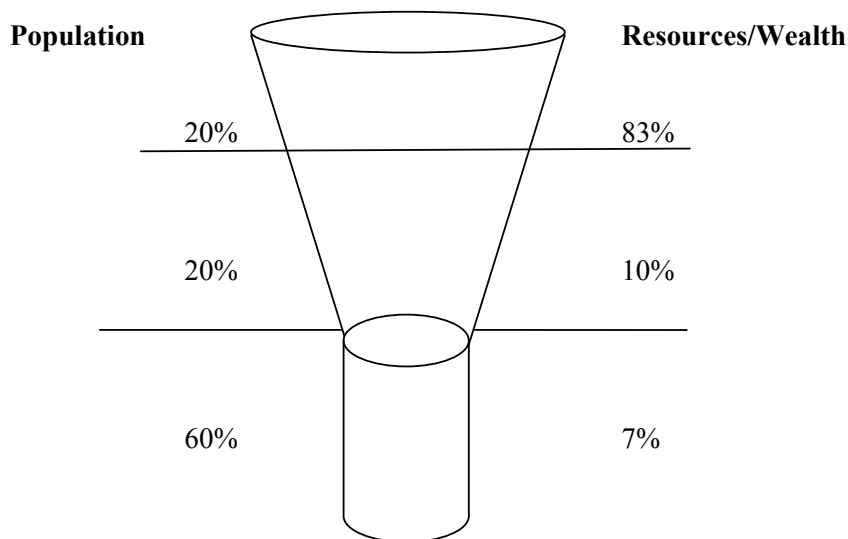
²³ (ibid.:70).

²⁴ Msafiri (2008:54–55).

6. The Curse of the Champagne Glass Economy²⁵ Model and Analogy

In the so-called Champagne Glass Model of the world economy, Figure 1 shows that, as far as global resources (both human and natural) are concerned, 20% of the world's population (i.e. the so-called First World) has amassed 83% of the world's resources, while 20% of the world's population (i.e. the so-called Second World) has access to 10% of those resources, and the remaining 60% (i.e. the so-called Third World) has access to about 7% only.

Figure 1: The Champagne Glass Model of the World Economy



Source: Justice, Peace and Creation Commission (WCC 2005:10)

Undoubtedly, the reality behind this model not only systematically manipulates and destroys life forms and resources, but also paralyses the planet's ability and mechanisms to regenerate resources and ensure their long-term sustainability.

²⁵ (ibid.:10).

7. *The Inherent Weaknesses of Environmental and Climate Policy Paradigms*

These can be summarised in three models which fail to address global climate injustice and sustainability challenges, as follows:

- The ‘Greedy Jackal’ Climate and Sustainability Policy Model: This represents a landscape with complex issues on climate injustices and sustainability, but exploitation continues regardless of sustainability imperatives.
- The ‘Ignorant Ostrich’ Climate Policy Model: This model represents exploitative and selfish interests at the expense of the rights of plants, animals and all the planetary resources, at present and in the future.
- The ‘Busy Bee’ Climate and Sustainability Policy Model: This represents a sensitive policy which is very keen to deal with the challenges of climate injustice and sustainability, but it lacks focus and does not result in real or deep change.

Using the above-mentioned paradigms, the following logical but candid observations can be made regarding eco-policy and sustainability weaknesses.

The global response hitherto largely lacks global synergy, common understanding, vision and true commitment. It does not promote inclusivity or solidarity with nature. For instance, greenhouse gases go beyond their producer and geographical boundaries. They roam from one country to another, from one continent to another, and eventually engulf the entire planet.

Climate justice and sustainability policies, both local and global, lack a holistic and transformative framework, especially in identifying their deeper causes. Furthermore, they lack in-depth and holistic approaches, particularly in analysing and responding to the ‘unknown unknowns’, or unquantifiable deeper causes, behind climate injustices, such as greed, selfishness, insensitivity and wanton indifference.

There is frequently a lack of common and coordinated, long-term, value-based climate change laws and policies. There is also a lack of strategic rights from the national, regional, continental and global perspectives. Referring to Hans Jonas, Jeffrey Sachs argues that “we need a whole new ethic for the future ... Futurology was once mocked as pseudoscience. Yet we must make

it operational, at least within the boundaries of our understanding and capacity.”²⁶

From a global perspective, it is true that —²⁷

... our response to climate injustice and sustainability challenges is remarkably ignorant and short-sighted, which will undoubtedly lead to disaster. Of course, worse than a death wish has been at play: the greed of powerful vested interests.

8. *The Negative Effects of the ‘High-speed Maniac’ on Climate Integrity and Sustainability*

The so-called high-speed culture of today is essentially energy-intensive: the higher the speed, the more the energy is consumed. For instance, Wolfgang Sachs claims that a “bicycle trip over 16 kilometres needs 350 calories of energy equivalent to a bowl of rice[;] a car trip over the same distance on the other hand may consume up to 18,000 calories.”²⁸

Speed is considered a virtue, slowness a vice. This ‘high-speed’ culture translates not only into more energy and non-renewable resources consumed, but also into more greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles, industry, aeroplanes, etc. Ironically, despite the fact that cars remain the major cause of environmental pollution, people continue to buy them.

Philip Vinod Peacock remarks that the increase of pollution caused by ‘high-speed’ societies means a decrease of biodiversity, as species are being killed by pollutants that enter the soil, air and water.²⁹ For instance, penguins have been found to be contaminated by DDT³⁰ and PCBs,³¹ even though neither of these is being used within hundreds of miles of the birds’ whereabouts.³² In the same vein, Jeremy Geedom remarks that the car —³³

... is emblematic of the human enterprise that is killing off so many species today. Many scientists are saying that biological diversity is declining at a dangerous rate. Meanwhile the artificial diversity of machines explodes as we humans repopulate with creatures of our own invention.

26 Jonas (1985, cited in Sachs 2011:176).

27 (ibid.:175).

28 Sachs (1995:14).

29 Peacock (2011:77).

30 Dichlorodiphenyl-trichloro-ethene.

31 Polychlorinated biphenyls.

32 Peacock (2011:77).

33 Geedom (1989, cited in Peacock 2011:77).

9. *The Quantitative, Mathematically-oriented Mechanistic Approaches to Climate, Development and Sustainability Issues*

Western (classical) formulae and views are profoundly compartmentalised and dualistic. They often overlook the holistic realities and truths inherent in the deep interconnectedness and interdependence of all creation. They cannot measure ethical and value-based humano-ontological altruisms such as dignity, welfare, well-being, and happiness. For this reason, John M. Itty, for instance, calls for a radical rethinking regarding the inherent weaknesses of the current neo-liberal formulae in measuring economic development, particularly by using the gross national product (GNP) and/or gross domestic product (GDP) paradigm.³⁴

Itty claims that the GDP increases even when human disasters occur (e.g. money spent to repair the World Trade Center in New York. Ironically, the GDP grows even as the environment is being constantly damaged. This is because it gives rise to a lucrative opportunity for the economically powerful to exploit and oppress the poor, who are at the Bottom of the Pyramid.³⁵ Hence, a need exists for a radical paradigm shift to value-based, qualitative approaches and indicators.

10. *The Commercialisation of Climate Change Non-governmental Organisations and Conferences Worldwide*

As the axiom goes, “The business of business is business”.³⁶ Some organisations and bodies that deal with crises related to climate and sustainability, both locally and globally, put more emphasis on self-interest and profit than on anything else. As I have pointed out in *Globalisation of Concern II*, most local and international conferences and symposia take place in academic halls for scholars, gurus, and special delegates and politicians only.³⁷ Worse, there is an ever-growing tendency to conduct such ‘lucrative’ events like the

34 Itty (2007:27–28).

35 (ibid.).

36 “Widely attributed to Friedman, and sometimes cited as being in his work *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962) this is also attributed to Alfred P. Sloan, sometimes with citation of a statement of 1964, but sometimes with attestations to his use of it as a motto as early as 1923”; cited from Wikipedia, http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Friedman,_Milton, last accessed 29 January 2013.

37 Msafiri (2012:43).

Conferences of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Olympic Games, and other mega-events in five- or six- or ten-star luxury palaces and beach resorts, very far away from the ‘real’ world of poor people and direct victims. Again, climate and sustainability rights will not be regained in such locations but in the very hearts of the good and willing populace.

The current mathematical, legalistic and mechanistic models and alternatives to mitigation and adaptation, used particularly by the greatest polluters (the West) of the Developing World – particularly sub-Saharan Africa – are neither effective nor exhaustive. These include, to mention a few, the Carbon Development Mechanism (CDM), the Prototype Carbon Fund (PCF), ‘The Polluter Pays’ Principle (PPP) and Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD). All these have their strengths and weaknesses. They place a price tag on carbon, i.e. a quantitative mathematical solution to a qualitative, ethically centred problem. In conclusion, I concur with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s observation to policymakers that Africa remains —³⁸

... one of the most vulnerable continents to climate change and climate variability, a situation aggravated by the interaction of ‘multiple stresses’, occurring at various levels, and low adaptive capacity (high confidence). Africa’s major economic sectors are vulnerable to current climate sensitivity, with huge economic impacts, and this vulnerability is exacerbated by existing developmental challenges such as endemic poverty, complex governance and institutional dimensions; limited access to capital, including markets, infrastructure and technology; ecosystem degradation; and complex disasters and conflicts.

D. Ethics

I. Rediscovering Ethics and the Value of Values for Climate Justice and Sustainability: Key Principles and Norms for Sub-Saharan Africa

1. The Principle of Care and Compassion

This value-based, ethical principle calls for us all to avoid the current insensitivity and ‘business as usual’ attitude. Care and compassion for the planet and awareness of climate change should necessarily “avoid the po-

38 Boko et al. (2007:435); cited in Ruppel (2012:34).

tential dangers of mal-development of the human person”.³⁹ Briefly, the values and virtues of true empathy and moderation need to be rediscovered and practised.

2. *The Principle of Globalisation of Concern*

A new ethos and values-based commitment to climate and sustainability is the foundation of this principle. It emphasises the values of human responsibility with and for nature. I advocate this life- and values-based principle which underscores the responsibility of humanity in the collective call or quest to globalise values, virtues and an ethos for human life and the planet using a profound, proactive and preventive approach. It underlines the axiom that “When good people do nothing, evil increases”.

3. *The Principle of Fairness and Equity*

This is an ethical value which emphasises and demands not only equal treatment regarding the use and distribution of resources, but also proper and viable stewardship of the planet’s resources, present and future. *Equity*, however, does not mean *equality*.

4. *The Principle of Personality*

This is a fundamental ethical value. It emphasises the inalienable dignity of every human to take into account his/her entire life without threatening the basic and necessary means for a dignified life. Furthermore, it refers to the unique intrinsic dignity, centrality and interrelationship of the human person with the rest of the created world. Hans Kueng aptly summarises this view by affirming that “being human must be the ethical yardstick for all economic actions”.⁴⁰

39 Hentsch & Shanata (2011:206).

40 Kueng (2009:5).

5. *The Precautionary Principle*

This is a key ethical principle which stresses a conscientious and proactive mindfulness in attitude and lifestyle, particularly in avoiding environmental destruction and depletion of the earth's non-renewable resources. It entails the prevention principle and calls for a systemic, in-depth, eco-climate and resource-impact assessment so as to prevent and avoid the worst-case scenarios of eco-destruction and climate change.

6. *The Principle of the Common Good*

This is a value-based principle which emphasises holistic approaches in particular, and calls for every individual's well-being. It fosters the new culture of solidarity, inclusivity and care, particularly in promoting socio-economic, cultural, environmental, planetary and technological welfare and integrity. This means fighting against human greed, self-interest and insensitivity to others, to climate, and to the future as a whole. It involves a radical shift from an 'I' culture to a 'we' culture, from exclusivity to inclusivity, and from equality to plurality and diversity.

7. *The Principle of the Value of Values*

This is a new ethical paradigm which tries to rediscover the indispensable role of value prioritisation, especially as a qualitatively viable and credible solution to the current climate and sustainability crises. Values do not simply fall from the skies: they are formed and internalised. This principle entails an ensemble of ethical and moral values, particularly faith, hope, prudence, fortitude, agape, justice, communality, integrality, a pro-life stance, peace, trust, solidarity, partnership, subsidiarity, transparency, honesty, moderation, fairness (justice), conversion and forgiveness.

This 'value of values' approach, especially in responding to the climate and sustainability crises, goes beyond the current quantitative, mathematical approaches, solutions and alternatives. It should be prioritised because it provides a more credible and effective alternative response than has been put forward to date.

8. *The Principle of Deep Change and the “Middle Path”*⁴¹

This is one of the most important principles in addressing today’s climate and sustainability challenges. Deep change goes beyond ordinary arithmetic and/or geometric change. Robert E. Quinn argues that “deep change differs from incremental change in that it requires new ways of thinking and behaving. It is change that is major in scope, discontinuous with the past and generally irreversible.”⁴²

In Judeo-Christian philosophy, *deep change* refers to the Greek term *metanoia*, or total conversion. Deep change is necessarily based on the virtue of moderation, especially towards climate and sustainability issues as a key to human fulfilment and true happiness.

In this regard, Jeffrey Sachs makes the following value-based observation:⁴³

The essential teaching of both Buddha and Aristotle is the path of moderation pursued through life-long diligence, training and reflection. It is easy to become addicted to hyper consumerism, the search for sensory pleasures, and the indulgence of self-interest, leading to a brief high but long-term unhappiness.

Moderation in the use of the resources of the planet demands mindfulness of self, others, nature, and the future.

9. *The Principle of Efficiency*

This is a value-based life view which tries to promote the balanced use and reuse of both renewable and non-renewable resources. It supports such approaches as the Reduce, Reuse and Recycle (3Rs) view, and the Planet, People and Profit (3Ps) model. The principle of efficiency is profoundly interconnected with the other value-based ethical approaches to climate justice and sustainability, like the savings, the rotation and the reversibility principles. According to Ernst Ulrich von Weizsaecker et al., the principle of efficiency has to start with a true efficiency revolution. It entails seven key foundations, namely better quality of life, less pollution, ethically based

41 Sachs (2011).

42 Cited in Anderson (2001:156).

43 Sachs (2011:162).

profit, resource reuse mechanisms, international security, justice, and the promotion of job opportunities.⁴⁴

10. The Principle of the 'Golden Rule' (Mt. 22:37–39) and the Right to Food and Water (Mt. 25:34–36)

The 'Golden Rule' remains the centre and zenith of all value-based approaches towards the Creator, fellow humans and the created world. It underscores both the verticalist and horizontalist trajectories, particularly of the human person towards God, environment, climate and sustainable living. Patricia Mische summarises it as follows:⁴⁵

[The love of] one's neighbor also includes respecting their need for and rights to water, food, shelter and adequate resources. By further extension, one can see that loving one's neighbor includes respect for the rights and need of future generations. Those yet to come depend on our proper stewardship resources on a finite planet

Furthermore, analogically, Mt. 25:34–36 encapsulates broad-spectrum ethics of climate justice and sustainable growth. It calls for food for the hungry, clean water for the thirsty, solidarity for and with the alien, empathy and true care for the sick and the marginalised, and total inclusion.⁴⁶ In its strictest sense, these ethics include not only the deontological dimensions (duties) of humans to fellow humans and nature, but also the teleological exigencies (results/consequences) of human action and inaction to the present and future generations of humans, plants, animals and the cosmos. The right to food and water helps to foster freedom from fear, want and need. Having identified the key facets which comprise the value-based principles for climate justice and sustainability, I shall now make some concluding remarks.

E. Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the quest for truly value-based ethics of climate justice and sustainability, locally and globally, cannot be exaggerated. The following

⁴⁴ Von Weizsäcker et al. (1995:21–23).

⁴⁵ Hessel & Ruether (2000:594).

⁴⁶ Stueckelberger (2009:20–21).

conclusions need special attention and priority as they constitute new climate-related ethics.

Firstly, climate and sustainability challenges are ethical issues per se. They cannot be adequately addressed through the Western (classical) mechanistic, quantitative approaches. Integral justice, particularly for climate and a sustainable world, must necessarily be built on deep change, ethos and *habitus* (habit), as these pillars remain key to behavioural change, individually and collectively. Therefore, there is an important role of the value of values as a key driver and indicator for present and future climate justice. This calls for a change of heart, mind, lifestyles and priorities. Value-based approaches revive the deeper aspects of human consciousness, which remind us that this earth is our only home, and that its life forces of millions of years cannot simply be allowed to be destroyed in a matter of decades, or even centuries.

Secondly, in the realm of politics, politicians maximise power above all else; in the sphere of economics, entrepreneurs maximise profit, the motto being 'business as usual' or 'the business of business is business'. But in life and ethics, we are obliged to maximise values above all else, i.e. the value of the values for climate justice and sustainable growth against the vices of greed, power, selfishness, short-term consumption lifestyles, lust, etc. Briefly, value based approaches and systems provide moral benchmarks for proper reflection and action.

Thirdly, there is a greater need than ever before to revisit the nexus and interdependency of climate on the one hand, and environmental justice and environmental peace on the other. Indeed, they are two sides of the same coin. Environmental peace necessarily entails not only peace as the fair distribution of natural resources, but also peace as holistic peace – socially, economically, politically, existentially – and that both locally and globally.

Finally, there is an urgent need to reaffirm ethical values, norms and life views for universal responsibility. This demands that every person should live with a deep sense of responsibility towards climate and sustainability issues as we are all citizens of this one world and home, regardless of our different nationalities, genders, cultures or statuses. Therefore, we need to synergise our various abilities and resources – both human and natural – for a life of community and dignity for thousands of years to come.

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