Food Justice is Climate Justice

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People of African ancestry who live in different regions of the world, South and Central America, the Caribbean, the United States, and Africa, constitute the collective Black diaspora. The impacts of climate change and environmental injustices borne by the African diaspora are vestiges of the transatlantic slave trade, beginning as early as the 1400s, that transported people out of Africa and created a Black presence throughout the world. Despite the abolition of chattel slavery, starting in the 1800s and its differential forms across regions, the lack of human rights tenets embedded within that economic system took form in various ways leading to systemic disparities in environmental exposures and impacts from climate change.

There is no shortage of social conflicts around environmental issues, most recently the Global South and Global North divide on addressing climate change that leaves some to perish while others prevail, or the surge of land-grabbing for the extraction of natural resources that has replaced food crops, deprived owners of their land, and caused environmental destruction (in the form of deforestation, water pollution, fires, and infertile soil)[[1]](#footnote-1). However, conflicts around energy and mining are also visible at the local and global levels impacting persons of the African diaspora.

When using the Global Goals for Sustainable Development[[2]](#footnote-2) coupled with the Human Development Index[[3]](#footnote-3), there is evidence, at the local level, of a lack of climate resilience throughout the diaspora (including poor urban areas in the United States). Whether it be food insecurity and related health outcomes, COVID swamps and vaccine deserts, or vulnerability to flooding, the processes are the same. Uneven development which manifests in the Global South as Neo-Colonialism or in the United States as residential segregation, created a global apartheid that puts the people of the African diaspora in harm’s way. By prioritizing indigenous[[4]](#footnote-4) growing practices It is conceivable that food security efforts[[5]](#footnote-5) can be combined with hazard mitigation best practices to increase both food sovereignty and climate resilience[[6]](#footnote-6).

Furthermore, to overcome the negative byproducts of the global political economy, there must be a top-down and bottom-up approach. The global economy[[7]](#footnote-7) has benefited from unevenness, hence it is incumbent upon Global North countries to make investments in both the physical and social infrastructure in the Global South (including poor urban areas in the United States). Additionally, NGOs must work to authentically build capacity on the ground. It is inadequate to respond to climate crises with donations and volunteers if the people are not equipped or permitted to act on their own behalf. As evidenced by the crises of 2020, the entire global community is impacted when local measures fail - whether it is a poorly managed pandemic, political strife, or an environmental hazard.

1. https://ejatlas.org/type/land-acquisition-conflicts [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.globalgoals.org/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/12/8/3493/htm [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. https://www.soulfirefarm.org/ [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. https://www.climatehubs.usda.gov/hubs/southwest/news/tribal-food-sovereignty-and-climate-change-preparedness-tribal-agriculture [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Wallerstein, Immanuel, *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*. University of California Press, 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)