

Marchers protest farmers relocation

MORE than 100 people from across the country marched on Thursday, 14 November in solidarity with the Airport Farmers Association, whose members face forced removal as a result of the city's dug-out port plans.

The People's Climate Camp Coalition, which was held from Thursday, 14 November to Sunday, 17 November shadowed the 19th Conference of the Parties (COP 19) in Poland, commenced with this protest. Members of groundWork, South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA), South African Waste Pickers' Association, Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance, Mpumalanga Youth Against Climate Change and Airport Farmers Association met to lend their support to the airport farmers and to discuss possible alternatives to increased industry, the dangers of climate change and how to survive should it reach a critical state.

"We marched in solidarity with the farmers because many of them will forcibly lose their livelihoods. In 2016 they will be removed from the land with no alternative place provided," said Megan Lewis, media, information and publications manager for groundWork.

Siga Govender, chairman of the Airport Farmers Association, who has been working the land next to the former Durban airport for 25 years, said: "The land means the world to me. I'm here six days a week from 7am till 5pm and when I get home, it's only my farm that I think of and nothing else. So it's my livelihood and I would like to remain on the land".

According to Lewis: "Big corporations have taken over the COP meetings and we can no longer trust these representatives to deal with climate change seriously.

We now need to come up with our own solutions, which is what this climate camp was about. The City of Durban and Transnet's proposed multi-billion rand port expansion will squeeze out many communities in the South Durban Basin, who will be inundated with increased trucks, logistics parks and the expansion of the already heavily polluting petrochemicals industry." -
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