

Eighth Annual Julius Nyerere Memorial Lecture
Presented by Kumi Naidoo in 2011



Biography of Kumi Naidoo

Kumi Naidoo was active in the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa as well as pursuing gender equality and labour rights. He has worked as a researcher, journalist, university lecturer, and youth counsellor over the years. For 1998 to 2008 he was the Secretary General of CIVICUS, and the World Alliance for Citizen Participation.

As well as his role within Greenpeace, Kumi is the Chair of the Global Campaign for Climate Action (GCCA) (www.tcktcktck.org) and the Co-Chair of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) (WWW.whiteband.org), two of the largest coalition organisations in the environmental and development spheres respectively.

Climate change can create jobs for Africa, says Greenpeace chief

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By Khanyisa Tabata

Climate change represents an opportunity for Africa to create jobs at the same time as creating a green future for our children — if the continent's leaders step out from the side-lines and take action.



This was the key message delivered Kumi Naidoo, International Executive Director of Greenpeace, when delivering the eighth annual Julius Nyerere memorial lecture at the University of the Western Cape last Friday.

The apartheid struggle stalwart argued that the potential to build new industries to support a “green economy” across the continent could do much to alleviate poverty and create jobs.

“In a truly green economy, the economy will be a mechanism to deliver societal goals that will grow it... In South Africa alone 149 000 direct jobs could be created by 2030—that’s 38 000 more than the government’s current job creation target.”

But to utilise this potential, stressed Naidoo, the continent’s leaders can no longer afford to be on the sidelines and need to be actively involved in international decision making platforms. Only then, he said, can Africa guarantee a future for its children and their children.

“Our continent needs to take leadership in international negotiations — nationally and regionally — and we need our political leaders to understand and accept that another nation’s action will impact their own people.”

He added that African heads of state needed to take a firmer stance to protect their countries from being abused.

“African governments should call for creating strong regulations and control for financial markets, and introduce restrictions on speculative products to stop harmful practices that lead to rising resources and commodity prices.”

The lecture, in honour of former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, was aimed at raising awareness about the dangers of climate change. © The Big Issue SA