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Largest Global Call for Climate Action in History

Nearly 400,000 march in NY, events in over 150 countries

Hi-res photos and B-Roll:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/peoplesclimate/sets/72157647432670290/>

NEW YORK — Today, the world marched for climate action. From Manhattan to Melbourne, more than half a million people took to the streets in a unified global move to demand ambitious commitments from world leaders in tackling the climate crisis.

By end of day estimates, the flagship march in New York City drew approximately 400,000 people—more than quadrupling the pre-march estimates of 100,000—just two days before world leaders converge here for an emergency UN Climate Summit.

At 3:00pm, march organizers released an initial count of 310,000 people based on the crowd density along the march route, which stretched across Manhattan from 93rd Street and Central Park West to 34th Street and 11th Avenue. But as the day continued, reports came in of tens of thousands more protesters marching outside the official route, streaming down avenues in midtown Manhattan. At 5:00pm, march organizers had to send out a text asking marchers to disperse from the march route because the crowds had swelled beyond the route's capacity.

“We said it would take everyone to change everything — and everyone showed up,” said **Eddie Bautista, Executive Director of the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance**.

The New York march was led by indigenous and frontline communities who came from across the globe to highlight the disproportionate impact of climate change—from communities hit hardest by Superstorm Sandy to people living in the shadow of coal-fired power plants and oil refineries to those living in Island Nations already faced with evacuating their homes.

“The frontlines of the climate crisis are low-income people, communities of color and indigenous communities here in the US and around the globe. We are the hardest hit by both climate disruption—the storms, floods and droughts—as

well as by the extractive, polluting and wasteful industries causing global warming,” said **Cindy Wiesner, Co-Director of The Climate Justice Alliance**. “We are also at the forefront of innovative community-led solutions that ensure a just transition off fossil fuels, and that support an economy good for both people and the planet.”

Once an issue seen as dividing environmentalists and labor, today’s march was also notable for the number of unions that joined the climate fight. Nearly every labor union in New York helped organize turnout for the march, including SEIU, the largest union in the city and the second largest in the country.

“Our members are marching because climate change affects all of us,” said **Héctor Figueroa, president of 32BJ SEIU**. “We live in the communities that get destroyed by storms like Sandy. We work in the buildings that get flooded. We get hit by health epidemics like asthma that are rampant in our communities, and we care about the world that we will leave for our children and grandchildren.”

Notable participants in today’s march also included:

- UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon
- NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio
- Former Vice President Al Gore
- Leonardo di Caprio
- Mark Ruffalo
- Edward Norton
- Sting
- U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse
- U.S. Senator Bernard Sanders
- U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer
- New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito
- U.S. Representative for Minnesota, Keith Ellison
- U.S. Representative for New York, Nydia Velázquez
- U.S. Representative for New York, Jerrold Nadler
- New York State Attorney General, Eric Schneiderman
- Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Christiana Figueres

“Today, civil society acted at a scale that outdid even our own wildest expectations. Tomorrow, we expect our political leaders to do the same,” said **May Boeve, Executive Director of 350.org**.

The global day of climate action comes just two days before a UN Climate Summit, which is hosted by UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, and attended by more than 125 world leaders, including US President Barack Obama, French

President Francois Hollande, South Korean President Park Geun-hye, and UK Prime Minister David Cameron. The summit is intended to kickstart a process that will end with significant agreement at next December's global negotiations in Paris.

The organizing for The People's Climate March required the coming together of 1574 groups in an effort akin to electoral campaigns. Just in the last week, 1,000,000 flyers were handed out across New York City. A total of 550 buses from nearly all 50 states flooded into Manhattan as well as two dedicated trains, one from DC and one from California. For the last month, 1 out of every 10 subway cars in the city also ran ads for the march.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

[1] Global highlights include:

In **Australia**, 30,000 people took to the streets of Melbourne, while locals went on a 50 km beach march on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, and a 700 km march from Melbourne to Canberra. Over ten thousand more participated in events in over 100 other cities and regional towns.

More than 2,500 people from across **India** hit the streets of **New Delhi** on Saturday, making the march the nation's strongest ever call for climate action.

In **Tanzania**, the Maasai marched across their traditional lands to call for action to protect their homelands in the Serengeti from the impacts of climate change. Simultaneous events also happened across **Africa** including **Johannesburg, Togo, Niger, The Ivory Coast**, and **Benin** as well as a march planned in Africa's largest city **Lagos**, taking place on Monday.

In **London**, the bells of The Church of London rang out across the city as 40,000 people combined forces to create an historic march to the steps of Parliament.

In **Paris**, 25,000 people took part in the "Paris Marche pour le Climat," with parades, marches, and bicycle rides across the bridges of the Seine.

On the **US / Canada border**, thousands of marchers from First Nations groups and local organisations will make the trip from **Vancouver** and **Seattle** to join hands in a truly international event, showing that "climate change knows no borders".

In the **Pacific Islands**, from Tonga to Tuvalu to Tokelau, people rallied calling for Action, Not Words, to protect the Pacific Islands. In rural **Papua New Guinea** students from a primary school marched to a nearby lighthouse, which has recently become semi-submerged due to rising sea levels. Even as they marched, people all across the Pacific are also preparing to send 30 Pacific Climate Warriors with their canoes to block the world's largest coal port in Australia in October.

In **Istanbul**, close to 3000 people marched through Istanbul's Taksim Square, with impacted communities from across Turkey at the forefront.

In **Berlin**, over 10,000 people participated in three parallel marches which converged for a colourful festival at the Brandenburg Gate.

In **Rio**, thousands are marching on the beaches of Ipanema, after images were broadcast on the statue of Christ the Redeemer for the last week building up to the march.

In **Jakarta**, thousands of people marched to send an urgent demand to the newly elected President for a commitment to build an economy that is powered by renewable energy. Other events in **Asia** include **Seoul, Taiwan, Manila** among others.

Quote Sheet

Cindy Wiesner, Co-Director of The Climate Justice Alliance said, “Climate Action must be rooted in justice. The frontlines of the climate crisis are low-income people, communities of color and indigenous communities here in the US and around the globe. We are the hardest hit by both climate disruption—the storms, floods and droughts—as well as by the extractive, polluting and wasteful industries causing global warming. We are also at the forefront of innovative community-led solutions that ensure a just transition off fossil fuels, and that support an economy good for both people and the planet. That is why Climate Justice Alliance members are here in the thousands, to march and say to global leaders: we have the solutions to ecological and economic crises.”

Eddie Bautista, Executive Director, NYC Environmental Justice Alliance, “Climate change affects everyone, but will not impact everyone equally. The NYC Environmental Justice Alliance is proud to join the hundreds of organizations in the historic People’s Climate March to advance climate justice. Its not every day you can help secure humanity’s future just by showing up—but this is one of those days.”

Elizabeth Yeampierre, Executive Director of Uprose: “With so much at stake and a historical opportunity, this is the time to gather family, friends and neighbors and let them know that what’s at stake is our livability. Now is the time build momentum and roll in deep with our loved ones into the Peoples Climate March!”

Dr. Marcela Tovar-Restrepo, Chair, WEDO Board of Directors said, “The People’s Climate March was a moment to place power back into the hands of people and movements. Collective action gives us extraordinary power to transform the world in the way we want it to be. At WEDO, we work across with women’s groups and alliance around the work to learn from women’s creativity, courage and resilience to face conflict, discrimination and environmental injustice. This day was a start, and we must keep working at the frontline of climate justice, equality issues, human rights and peace.”

Mary Kay Henry, International President of SEIU said, “Working families and their communities bear the brunt of the impacts of climate change. It’s time for world leaders to heed the call of working people everywhere for action on climate now — so we can count on a clean energy future with its promise of more jobs, better jobs and stronger communities.”

DC 37 Executive Director Lillian Roberts said, “DC 37 was one of the first unions to endorse the People’s Climate March. For us Climate Change is not an abstraction. In 2013, many of our members were victims when Hurricane

Sandy flooded streets and subways, damaged homes and destroyed communities. Then, we were forced to close DC 37 headquarters for over 8 months and redeploy staff to other locations. Still, in spite of the devastation our dedicated city workers reported to duty as 9-1-1 operators, EMS first responders, sewage treatment workers, librarians, school aides and more, so they could keep fellow New Yorkers safe. That is why District Council 37 has joined the People's Climate March. Working families and the most vulnerable are often among those hardest hit by climate disasters. Our members and countless other workers risk their lives to help victims, repair infrastructure and provide essential services in their aftermath. We are sending a message to our city, state and federal elected officials to take the necessary steps to decrease global warming pollution. They must act now!"

Héctor Figueroa, president of 32BJ SEIU said, "Our members are marching because climate change affects all of us," said "We live in the communities that get destroyed by storms like Sandy. We work in the buildings that get flooded. We get hit by health epidemics like asthma that are rampant in our communities, and we care about the world that we will leave for our children and grandchildren."

George Miranda, President of Teamsters Joint Council 16 said, "Teamsters marched in the People's Climate March to tell our story. Workers are the ones who are most vulnerable to climate change impacts, and we are the ones who lead the cleanup after events like Sandy. Here in New York, Teamsters are working with the environmental justice movement to clean our air and protect workers at the same time. We have seen what climate change can do and we are part of the solution."

Tomás Garduño, Political Director of ALIGN: Alliance for a Greater New York said, "The People's Climate March told the true story about the movement for a healthy planet. We showed that the climate movement is led by a diverse array of communities, including workers, people of color and poor people, because we are the ones most negatively impacted by the results of climate change...Frontline communities such as healthcare & electrical workers, people of color and public housing residents are also the ones proposing solutions to the climate crisis by demanding that their buildings be retrofitted to be more energy efficient and to stop burning dirty fossil fuels and transition to solar and wind power that will create good local jobs for our communities."

Stanley Sturgill, Retired Coal Miner, and member of Kentuckians for the Commonwealth said, "I may be an old coal miner, but I know that global warming is real. I also know that things can be changed. I know we don't have to destroy our world. That's why I'm joining the Climate March."

Bill McKibben co-founder of 350.org, "This is the most important day yet in the history of the climate movement—around the world and across New York people have said 'enough is enough—we demand serious action now.'"

Annie Leonard, Executive Director of Greenpeace USA said, "Shell is set to drill for oil in the American Arctic waters next year. More oil to burn means more global warming, so what happens in the Arctic affects us all. Communities near and far, from the Rockaways, to Alaska, to Kiribati, are suffering the impacts of climate change... Greenpeace is joining the People's Climate March to stand in solidarity with our friends, allies, and partners that are fighting for environmental justice, and say to the polluters that "enough is enough."

Michael Brune, Executive Director of the Sierra Club said "The People's Climate March has given tens of

thousands of passionate and dedicated allies an opportunity to let the world's leaders know that we support setting the highest possible goals to address climate pollution, and that the United States must fully embrace and lead a worldwide effort to accelerate the 21st Century's complete transformation to a prosperous clean energy economy.”

Frances Beinecke, president of the Natural Resources Defense Council said, “The sea of humanity on the streets of New York today sends a powerful, impassioned message to the world: The time to act on climate is now. These marchers are living proof that climate change is more than an environmental issue—it’s about justice and job creation, our health and communities, and ultimately about our future. Our leaders must take urgent action to protect our children, defend our future, and change the world.”

Patricia Gualinga, international relations director for Kichwa indigenous community of Sarayaku, Ecuadorian Amazon said, “Brothers and sisters, we’re calling out to the world to join together for true change. Let’s leave the oil beneath the ground. The Sarayaku indigenous people believe that instead of bringing ‘development’, the oil industry is destructive for indigenous society, non-indigenous society, the planet, and nature. It disrupts our indigenous worldview and destroys our ecosystems. That’s why we vociferously fight so that oil is not extracted from our territories.”

Atossa Soltani, Executive Director of Amazon Watch said, “Since humanity’s survival depends on not burning two-thirds of our global oil reserves, it is imperative that we take action now by limiting fossil fuel extraction, especially in highly sensitive regions. Some places should be entirely off-limits to oil drilling. The Amazon basin is one of those places. This diverse biosphere is a keystone area in combating climate change since it regulates our planet’s health. If we protect the Amazon, we can prevent compound disastrous effects across the globe. The People’s Climate March is our opportunity to send a clear and united global call of action to keep the oil in the ground, starting with the Amazon.”

Maura Cowley, Executive Director of Energy Action Coalition said, “Throughout history, young people have risked everything to force major social change. The climate crisis is no different. We will march en masse. We will use our financial power to make college university’s divest from fossil fuels. And we will use our bodies, and risk arrest to stop business as usual for fossil fuel profiteers on Wall Street. The massive showing at the People’s Climate March demonstrates we are ready to shut down the big polluters, and we will stop at nothing less.”

Wael Hmaidan, Director, Climate Action Network International said, “Climate action – our fair and full switch from fossil fuel dependence to 100% renewable power – has become a no-brainer because the science is in and it’s unequivocal, the technology is available. So support for climate action across all levels – from politicians, to scientists, UN agencies, private sector, local authority and civil society – has never been so high, not to mention amongst the people from all walks of life who participated in over 2000 actions this weekend. We are going to win the climate fight for sure, but the question is who will be the world leader that will trigger this victory in time to avoid the worst climate impacts? The UNSG’s Climate Summit on Tuesday is the first opportunity for leaders to follow the example set by this inspiring movement. Their choice is between ignoring the biggest risk we face, or joining the ongoing transformation of our societies. Do they want to be on the right or on the wrong side of history?”

Keya Chatterjee, WWF’s Director of Renewable Energy Outreach said, “All the big social movements in history have had people in the streets –women’s voting rights, the civil rights movement – and even more recently, on climate issues, our big successes have happened when people left their homes and went out in the streets...Leaders must

seize on this rallying cry and find a way to give the people what they want: climate action now.”

Steve Kretzmann, Executive Director of Oil Change International said, “When people lead, leaders listen. In fact, it’s the only way to be sure they will. The hundreds of thousands of people in the streets of New York today are only a fraction of the millions around the world who are blocking pipelines, stopping coal plants, and building a new clean energy future one solar panel at a time. An obvious next step would be for governments to stop wasting billions of taxpayer dollars to make the problem worse. “Stop Funding Fossils” should be at the top of every climate leaders’ to do list.”

Marc Yaggi, Executive Director of the Waterkeeper Alliance said, “I marched today on behalf of my two children and the clean and safe world I want them to inherit, and the 226 Waterkeeper organizations around the world who are on the front lines of climate change. As we’ve seen, the climate crisis is really a water crisis. Waterkeepers urge the world leaders meeting here in New York this coming week to finally stop talking about climate change and take the action necessary to protect our collective future. The whole world is watching.”

Kim Glas, Executive Director of the BlueGreen Alliance said, “Today’s March was a clarion call from the American public to world leaders that if we’re going to lead the charge to address climate change, we have to work together... Finding the right solutions means we’re also creating family-sustaining jobs in construction, manufacturing, and other economic sectors along the way. This is just the beginning—we have more work ahead that will require us all to roll up our sleeves and implement solutions to address climate change and grow the economy.”

Wenonah Hauter, Executive Director, Food & Water Watch. “We join the People’s Climate March to let global climate leaders know that in order to address the threat of climate change, they cannot underestimate the climate impacts of methane leaks from fracking. Fracked gas cannot be viewed as a ‘bridge fuel’ to a better climate future, as transitioning from one fossil fuel to another will not reverse the climate crisis. It is time to move beyond fossil fuels to a renewable and sustainable energy future.”

Patti Lynn, Managing Director, Corporate Accountability International said, “No more broken promises and empty rhetoric—now is the time for action. Today’s march was just the beginning; we are taking this momentum right to the climate talks in Lima to demand the perpetrators of the climate crisis — the world’s biggest polluters — are kicked out of the talks permanently. We cannot continue to negotiate for a meaningful, binding climate treaty if those with a financial stake in its failure are at the table. Now is the time to show Big Energy the door.”

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) said, “The thousands of Americans converging on New York City today will help to send a clear message: it is time to wake up and act on climate change,” said “It’s time to tell the special interests that continue to deny the science and mislead the public to step aside, and make way for progress. I am proud to be lending my feet and my voice to this effort, and I thank all Americans who will be making the trip.”

Sen. Bernie Sanders (D-VT) said, “In a few days, more than 100 heads of state and government leaders from around the world, including President Obama, will convene in New York City for a United Nations summit on climate change. They will discuss the planetary crisis of global warming and the dramatic steps we must take to reduce carbon emissions and leave a habitable planet for our kids and our grandchildren. Looking toward the summit, The People’s

Climate March on Sunday will be the largest climate action in history. Environmental organization, unions, faith groups, social justice groups, schools, businesses, government leaders and grassroots organizers will all send a message that world leaders need to hear at the United Nations on Tuesday and that the Congress needs to hear when it returns to Washington, D.C. in November. I am proud to participate in this urgent, historic event.”

Rep. Keith Ellison, Congressional Progressive Caucus Co-Chair said, “If Congress won’t take meaningful steps to slow dangerous climate change, then the people must demand action by organizing. The People’s Climate March is an act of self-defense.”

Rep. Nydia Velázquez said, “During the ‘People’s Climate March’, New Yorkers from all walks of life will march through Manhattan in support of a more sustainable future,” said “The backdrop for the New York event will be the United Nations Summit on Climate Change, where representatives from around the globe will convene to discuss this matter. Locally, this timely event will underscore the importance of working now to preserve our planet for future generations. However, this will be a global event with actions taking place throughout the world. From London to Rio to Johannesburg to New Dehli, people everywhere will speak with one collective voice in calling for environmental justice, an economy that works for people and the planet, clean air and good jobs.”

New York Attorney General Eric T. Schneidermansaid, “I am proud to be joining tens of thousands of people, including many, many New Yorkers, at the People’s Climate March. This is truly be an inspiring demonstration of popular demand for world leaders to take meaningful action to stop climate change in its tracks. My office’s Environmental Protection Bureau has been fighting hard to stop polluters who spew toxic greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, and to push our state and national officials to fortify our bridges, our towns and our electrical power systems against the increasingly regular rainstorms that are flooding our basements and leaving us in the dark.”

Nicole Dallara Outreach Coordinator for the New Jersey Sierra Club said, “Sadly after nearly two years since Hurricane Sandy nothing has been done in New Jersey to combat climate change. Instead Governor Christie has closed the Office of Climate Change, removed us from RGGI, and has done nothing to curb emissions from power plants, and subsidized the construction of 3 new natural gas plants. For New Jersey’s future and the future of our planet we need to move toward renewable energy. Energy that does not cause spills or irreversible damage to our environment. Energy that will create jobs, grow our economy, and ensure we have a livable planet for future generations. This is the future we are marched for on Sunday. This is the future we want our world leaders to start to work towards. At the People’s Climate March we had the chance to tell all the leaders from Governor Christie to our local Mayor to President Obama – we want action on to be taken on climate change and we want it now.”

Laura Hanson Schlachter of 350 Madison said, “Although we are part of a global movement, each of us working in our local communities rarely has an opportunity to come together in person. 350 Madison has worked with allies from Nebraska to Maine to halt the expansion of Enbridge Line 61 – Wisconsin’s Keystone – but it wasn’t until our group of more than 150 Wisconsinites marched with the tar sands hub today that it hit me: *we truly are part of a global movement for climate justice, and that movement is finally coming of age.*”

Interfaith Moral Action on Climate “...celebrates The People’s Climate March, thanks all those who have enabled this event to happen and the millions of people here and around the world who will be participating in this momentous

event. We will be marching, adding our sounds to the Global Chorus at 1:00 and continue in our ongoing actions and prayers for the healing of the earth, God's Creation!"

Rabbi Mordechai Liebling of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College said, "Choose Life' proclaims the Bible- we must pressure our decision makers to choose sustainability over destruction of resources, renewable energy over finite sources, biodiversity over species extinction."

A joint statement from Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW), Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC), Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA), American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and many local Quaker Meetings agree, "This week, we join the People's Climate March as members of this beautiful human family, seeking meaningful commitments from our leaders and ourselves, to address climate change for our shared future, the Earth, and the generations to come. We see this Earth as a stunning gift that supports life. It is our only home. Let us care for it together."

Women for Climate Justice Contingent said, "An opportunity for global transformation is within reach, and it will neither start nor end with one day. But we know that when the challenge is greatest, and the moment is right, there is power in taking to the streets. A brighter future will not be realized unless we demand it, and our demand will best be heard with all women's voices in a powerful chorus together."

Katherine Garcia, Co-President, Metro NY Chapter of the U.S. National Committee for UN Women said, "Today, the Metro NY Chapter of the U.S. National Committee for UN Women marched for climate justice. While the effects of climate change are felt around the world, women bear a heavier burden. Effects such as drought, flooding, and unpredictable temperatures impact women who are providing food, water and firewood for their families. In the context of climate change, supporting gender equality and women's empowerment is as vital as ever. The People's Climate March showed the world how critical and timely the climate movement is right now."

Noelene Nabulivou of Fiji, Diverse Voices and Action for Equality, DAWN, said, "Women of the Global South are tired of hearing politicians and other development partners give one excuse or another for why the strongest and useful climate mitigation target of 1.5 degrees is not possible, why adaptation measures do not concentrate on gender equality, human rights and social justice, why there have not been fundamental changes to our global economic and development systems, why climate finance is not easily accessible, and a loss and damage mechanism is not yet ready. The truth is that we are suffering now, our communities are already dealing with all kinds of economic, social and ecological damage because of the actions of the few, and the impacts on the world majority, indigenous peoples, and people from small island states, among others, are many and immediate. We need urgent national, regional and global action, and this march is to let everyone know, that the time is NOW!!"

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