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EMISSIONS | OMISSIONS

Open Letter from Climate and Environmental Civil Society Organisations to the President of the African Development

A call to immediately stop the financing of all coal projects on the African continent

Dear Mr Akinwumi Adesina,

We, the undersigned civil society organisations, call on the leadership of the African Development Bank to immediately put in place and publish on the AfDB website a policy that the bank will not fund, provide financial services or capacity support to any coal project on the African continent.

We welcomed your announcement made on Tuesday, 24th September 2019, in which you reiterated the AfDB's commitment to no longer fund coal plants on the continent, but rather to build the "largest solar zone in the world" in the Sahel region.

This announcement follows a series of [scientific reports](#) confirming that stopping the construction of coal-fired power plants and closing existing plants is a crucial element in achieving the Paris Agreement's objective.

Africa's vulnerability to climate change is well known and documented. According to the [2018 Climate Change Vulnerability Index](#), seven of the ten most climate-vulnerable countries are in Africa. During this year alone, two powerful hurricanes plunged Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi into a state of disaster, at a time when droughts have taken their toll in Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa.

Successive reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) confirm that after the polar zones, Africa is expected to be the second hardest hit region by the effects of climate change. These effects are already hampering economic development, sometimes eroding years of economic progress, exacerbating conflict and pushing hundreds of thousands of people every year into exile, especially those living in arid zones and areas affected by desertification.

Despite this gloomy picture, Africa remains one of the few continents where the development of coal-fired power plants continues while the latest [IPCC report](#) stated that all coal-fired plants must close by 2040 to reach the 1.5 °C target set in the Paris Agreement. If fossil fuel projects globally continue at the current rate, Africa is heading straight for an average warming of 3 to 4 °C; a scenario that would have disastrous consequences, with extreme heat that would affect the majority of the continent's land, increased risks of extreme drought (especially in Eastern and Southern Africa), a decline in agricultural yield, and extreme flooding as highlighted in the latest IPCC report. The same report made it clear that anyone who supports the fossil fuel industry knowingly contributes to untold suffering around the world.

In the face of these extreme weather events and associated risks that threaten the lives and livelihoods of millions of Africans, the youth and civil society organisations of Africa took action from the 20th to 27th September, calling for immediate and radical climate action in agreement with science, and an end to the fossil fuel era.

In this historic mobilisation called "Global Climate Strikes", people from all walks of life, including fishing communities, farmers, women, young people, civil society groups, traditional and religious leaders took part in diverse actions sending a strong message to their governments and financial institutions that **Africa does not need fossil fuels to meet its energy demand and grow its energy supply, but should rather lead the world in the energy transition fuelled by renewable resources**. Frontline communities affected by the coal projects of Bargny (Senegal), Lamu (Kenya) and South Africa have taken the lead in the strike mobilisations.

While thanking and congratulating you for your commitment to rid Africa of the coal influence and to accelerate the use of renewable energies, we are convinced that the AfDB can do more by officially and definitively disengaging itself from any current or future coal project, **starting with the Bargny project (Senegal) where the AfDB Board of Directors had approved a preferential loan of € 55 million on 25th November 2009. Subsequently, the same board approved an additional loan of \$ 5 million¹.**

By doing so, we will be truly convinced that the statement made in New York is not a mere announcement, but rather a firm commitment to actively and concretely support the renewable energy transition and development that Africa so badly needs to not only fight against the climate crisis but also boost its development and improve the well-being of its inhabitants.

That is why we, therefore, urge the AfDB to:

- Immediately put in place and publish on the AfDB website a policy that the bank will not fund, provide financial services or capacity support to any coal project on the African continent.
- Shift the AfDB's portfolio to 100% renewable energy projects and sustainable, low-emission agriculture and infrastructure;
- Publish a roadmap to reduce portfolio-wide emissions and align with 1.5°C goal.
- Increase transparency and access to information as well as increased transparency in stakeholder engagement and consultation in relation to energy finance;

¹ Source: Compliance Verification Report, Sendou Coal Project, Independent Inspection Mechanism, Request No. RQ 2016/2, pages 5).



- Release additional information or a timeline for the release of additional information regarding the construction of the "largest solar energy zone on the planet" in the Sahel region;

We look forward to hearing from you on what steps will be taken towards achieving these changes. Our hope is that we can all work together to create a brighter, sustainable future for the African continent.

Kind regards,

1. 350Africa.org
2. African Climate Reality Project
3. Action Solidaire Internationale
4. Hope Land Congo
5. Réseau des Associations pour le Protection de l'Environnement
6. 350 Cote d'Ivoire
7. JVE Cote d'Ivoire
8. JVE Niger
9. JVE Senegal
10. Volontariat-Action-Mobilite
11. Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement International
12. Collectif Bargny
13. Jeune Vert Togo
14. Jeunesse Unie pour le Progrès et le Développement
15. Actions en Faveur de l'Homme et de la Nature Côte d'Ivoire
16. AEV
17. JVE Rwanda
18. Actions communautaires pour le développement intégral
19. ENERGIES 2050
20. Plateforme de Plaidoyer, Recherche et de Renforcement des Capacités des ONGs
21. Association Malienne pour la Solidarité et le Développement
22. Association des Journalistes Professionnels pour l'Environnement
23. Plateforme de la Société Civile Changement Climatique et Développement durable Côte d'Ivoire
24. Association des Acteurs de Développement
25. Organisation Congolaise des Ecologistes et Amis de la Nature - RD Congo
26. Association Catholique pour la Protection de l'Environnement
27. PAWA254
28. Lawyers' Environmental Action Team
29. Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation
30. Global Initiative for Food Security and Ecosystem Preservation
31. Save Lamu
32. 350 Ghana Reducing Our Carbon
33. Africa Institute for Energy Governance
34. Sierra Leone School Green Clubs
35. Green Saturday
36. 350 Kenya
37. Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI)
38. Center For Justice Governance and Environmental Action (CJGEA)
39. Friends of Lake Turkana (FoLT)



40. Fahamu Africa
41. HAKI Africa
42. SAFCEI
43. Earthlife Africa
44. WESSA
45. groundWork
46. Project 90 by 2030
47. Greenpeace Africa
48. HOMEF
49. Natural Justice Kenya/Senegal
50. Abibiman Foundation
51. JVE International
52. Baruch Initiative for Transformation
53. Agro Tech Liberia
54. Action for Social Development and Environmental Protection Organization (ASDEPO)
55. Surge Africa
56. Coal Free Nigeria
57. Fossil Free South Africa
58. Global Media Foundation (GLOMEF)
59. DASCO - Design for Activism & Social Change Organization
60. Africa Green Concern Group
61. Kishoka Youth Organization
62. Arewa Youth Trust Foundation
63. Christian Aid
64. Light Ethiopia
65. Urgewald eV
66. Arab Watch Regional Coalition (AWC)
67. Environmental Friendly Initiative
68. ONG Gabon Environnement
69. Bank Information Center
70. Youth and Cultural Development Foundation
71. Climate Reality Leaders Zambia
72. Friends of the Earth United States

