

**FOSSIL FUEL TREATY**

# HOW A FOSSIL FUEL NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY CAN PROPEL AFRICA'S RENEWABLE ENERGY TRANSITION

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NON-PROLIFERATION  
TREATY**

# 1. INTRODUCTION

**Fossil fuels are failing to power the African continent.**

**Despite decades of coal, oil and gas extraction, 600 million Africans have been left without power.**

Coal, oil and gas, responsible for 86% of carbon emissions released in the last decade, are fuelling climate catastrophe and economic collapse on the continent least responsible for the crisis.

**Africa's fossil fuel sector is dominated by foreign ownership**, while the majority of the continent's fossil fuels are exported to foreign markets, siphoning both wealth and energy out of Africa.

**This fossil fuel plunder is not inevitable.**

**Africa sits atop the largest renewable energy potential on Earth** — 39% of the global share<sup>1</sup> — and this potential is largely untapped.

International cooperation, through a **Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty**, can unlock the finance and technology essential for Africa to unleash its clean energy potential, light up the continent, and funnel this energy into improved development outcomes, economic growth, public health benefits and educational development.





## 2. FOSSIL FUELS ARE UNDERMINING AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

*a) Despite decades of fossil fuel extraction, 600 million Africans have been left in the dark*

**Sub-Saharan Africa is home to 75% of the world's population living without electricity.<sup>2</sup>**

Pursuing universal energy access through expanding fossil fuels has been a dead end.

The Fossil Fuelled Fallacy Report reveals that "some of the largest legacy fossil fuel producers in Africa are still grappling with low energy access. Approximately 85 million Nigerians (43% of the total population), have no access to grid electricity. As a result, Nigeria has the largest energy access deficit in the world [in absolute numbers], despite being one of the largest and most established oil and gas producers in Africa<sup>3</sup> [...] and, in 2018, Nigeria overtook India as the country with the greatest number of people living in extreme poverty."<sup>4</sup>

**Fossil fuels are not fit to deliver energy access to Sub-Saharan Africa's vast rural populations,** where electrification trails far behind population growth. According to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), in Sub-Saharan Africa "more than 80% of the 524 million people in rural areas are living without access to electricity."<sup>5</sup> IRENA recommends off-grid solutions to close this growing energy access gap in remote and rural areas. Such solutions cannot be powered by fossil fuels, which rely on massive centralised grids that are time-intensive to build and require significant investment. Instead, distributed off-grid and mini-grid renewables can fill this energy access gap.

*b) Most of Africa's planned fossil fuel production is destined for export to foreign markets*

Despite failing to deliver energy access to Africa's majority, the continent continues to be carved up for fossil fuel exploration and extraction, to fulfill foreign energy demand. **The majority of Africa's planned fossil fuel production is destined for export to foreign markets, failing to fill the energy access gap on the continent.**

Data from Oil Change International (OCI) and Global Energy Monitor reveals that, "**93% of currently operating liquid natural gas (LNG) capacity on the continent is for export.**

Meanwhile, 84% of currently planned or under-construction LNG capacity is slated for export."<sup>6</sup>

Mozambique's National Petroleum Institute reveals that "80% of the gas currently extracted from the southern production blocks in Mozambique is exported to South Africa. In the Rovuma Basin, in the north of Mozambique, only 12% of the extracted gas is planned for domestic use, with the rest going to export markets."<sup>7</sup> World Bank data highlights that, "despite a number of gas projects being given the green light in Mozambique on the grounds of improving energy access, the vast majority of extracted gas will head to export markets, while around 70 percent of its citizens remain without access to electricity."<sup>8</sup>

*c) Africa's fossil fuel sector is dominated by foreign ownership, siphoning wealth out of the continent*

OCI research found that **"60% of African oil and gas extraction is owned by corporations headquartered outside Africa,"**<sup>9</sup> including many of the multinational fossil fuel majors such as BP, Total, Shell, Eni, and Exxon.

*d) Fossil fuels are driving our climate and our economies to collapse*

**Coal, oil and gas are responsible for 86% of carbon emissions released in the last decade,** fuelling climate catastrophe that disproportionately impacts the least responsible, such as Africa.

At the same time, the African Development Bank (AfDB) estimates that **Africa is "losing between 5-15% of its annual GDP per capita growth due to climate change impacts [...]"** The AfDB concludes that these impacts will increase government expenditure and reduce tax revenues, ultimately increasing government debt burdens.<sup>10</sup>

**The climate crisis, driven by fossil fuels, disproportionately impacts Africans.** The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has found that "the observed average mortality rate from floods, droughts and storms is fifteen times higher for countries categorised as highly vulnerable, such as Mozambique, Somalia, and Nigeria, compared to countries with low levels of vulnerability such as the UK, Canada or Sweden,"<sup>11</sup> who are among the perpetrators of the climate emergency.

*e) Fossil fuel financing dwarfs and displaces renewable energy financing*

The Fossil Fuelled Fallacy Report reveals that, **"between 2016 and 2019, wealthy and industrialised G20 nations directed four times as much public finance into fossil fuels in Africa compared to renewables."**<sup>12</sup> In fact, "public and private financial institutions poured \$132 billion in lending and underwriting into 964 gas, oil, and coal projects across Africa,"<sup>13</sup> between 2016 and 2021. These perverse investments dwarf renewable energy financing in Africa, which has only received 2% of global investments into renewable energy over the past two decades.<sup>14</sup>

*f) The pursuit of fossil fuels risks stranded assets*

Continued pursuit of undiversified economies reliant on fossil fuel extraction will invite sunken infrastructure development costs and stranded assets. Current estimates indicate that **"71% of projected oil and gas projects in Africa are at risk of becoming stranded assets."**<sup>15</sup>

This is exacerbated by the macroeconomic forecast of a global decline in fossil fuel demand by the International Energy Agency (IEA)<sup>16</sup>, exemplified by continents such as Europe that have "set a legislative target to source 45% of its energy from renewables by 2030."<sup>17</sup>

*g) Fossil fuel air pollution is the driver of one in five deaths globally every single year.*

Data shows that across Africa in 2019, outdoor air pollution claimed 400,000 lives, and combined with indoor air pollution this climbed to 1.1 million deaths across the continent.<sup>19</sup>

# 3. RENEWABLES CAN PROPEL AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

## *a) Africa is sitting atop the largest renewable energy potential on Earth*

Africa is sitting atop **the largest renewable energy potential on Earth – a largely untapped 39% of the global share.**<sup>20</sup> World Bank data shows that **“Africa leads the world in solar potential, holding 60% of the best solar resources”**<sup>21</sup> [...] Despite this potential, Africa currently has just 1% of the world's installed solar capacity.<sup>22</sup> Wind energy faces a similar fate as **“Africa currently exploits 0.01% of its potential wind generation capacity.”**<sup>23</sup> An IFC study estimated the potential for wind power in Africa [...] is enough to satisfy the entire continent's current electricity demand 250 times over.<sup>24</sup>

## *b) Fossil fuel demand is set to decline globally*

According to the IEA, **2022 marked the first year in history that “the growth in global electricity demand was met entirely by renewable power generation** [...] halting a rise in fossil fuel usage.”<sup>25</sup> The costs of renewable technologies continue to fall and their deployment continues in stride, foreshadowing their displacement of the fossil economy within the global energy system.

## *c) Renewable energy is affordable*

“In 2019, roughly 62% of new renewable capacity had lower costs than the cheapest new fossil fuel generation option.”<sup>26</sup> With renewable energy generation costs expected to decline as production increases with economies of scale, **renewable energy can expand to provide affordable energy for Africa.**

## *d) Renewable energy creates more good jobs for communities*

“For every one dollar invested in renewable energy, two to five times more jobs are generated than when the same amount is invested in fossil fuels. [When combined] with other areas of low carbon development like energy efficiency measures and mass public transport, then **between 5–25 times more jobs will be created.**”<sup>27</sup>

The fossil fuel industry is on a downward spiral, making up only 1% of Africa's labour force.<sup>28</sup> Globally, **“jobs in fossil fuel production are estimated to fall by around 75% by 2050** in a ‘well below’ 2°C scenario, with 80% of the employment losses associated with declining upstream fossil fuel production.”<sup>29</sup>

## *e) Renewable energy brings cascading benefits to African countries, economies, communities and ecosystems*

“A rapid deployment of renewables in Africa will stimulate economies, create inclusive jobs for all, boost energy access, free up government revenues for the provision of public goods, and improve the health and wellbeing of human and non-human communities.”<sup>30</sup>

# 4. A NEW TREATY TO UNLOCK AN EQUITABLE ENERGY TRANSITION FOR AFRICA

As Africa continues to plunge deeper into a fossil economy that has failed over decades to power its people and has left 600 million in the dark, **international cooperation is essential to support a systemic and justice-based shift to renewable energy for the continent.**

The Paris Agreement focuses on emissions reduction and does not address the extraction of fossil fuels. This has led to a climate policy void on fossil fuel extraction, in which **countries are now on track to produce 110% more fossil fuels between now and 2030, than what can safely be burned to limit warming to 1.5°C.**<sup>31</sup>

The Paris Agreement must be complemented by a new international agreement that facilitates an equitable phase out of all fossil fuels and propels a global and equitable energy transition for all.

**A Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty can provide the missing international framework to power Africa's just transition to renewable energy for all.**

The proposed Fossil Fuel Treaty aims to develop and negotiate a new international instrument that will create the governance needed to ensure wealthy fossil fuel producers transition from fossil fuels first and fastest while providing financial and technical support to fossil fuel-dependent developing countries that is just, fair and with development at its core.

**The Fossil Fuel Treaty is grounded in three pillars:**



## *Global Just Transition*

**Support and finance a global shift to renewables,** technology transfers, economic diversification and development alternatives.



## *Non-Proliferation*

Stop making the climate crisis worse by **ending the expansion of any new coal, oil and gas** production and infrastructure.



## *Fair Phase-out*

**Equitably phase out existing fossil fuel production** to limit warming to below 1.5°C, with wealthy nations moving first and fastest.

**The end of the fossil fuel era is unstoppable.**

**For Africa to unlock its future as a renewable energy giant and harness its largely untapped and globally unparalleled clean energy potential, international cooperation, including financing and technology transfers, can be unleashed through a Fossil Fuel Treaty, lighting up the continent, creating decent jobs, building economies and protecting communities from climate catastrophe.**

“The average annual investment flows into renewable energy grew tenfold from less than \$0.5 billion between 2000 and 2009, to \$5 billion from 2010 to 2030.”<sup>32</sup> While this financing is still negligible compared to fossil fuel financing, **international frameworks such as a Fossil Fuel Treaty can help build policies and unlock finance flows from wealthy nations to developing fossil fuel dependent nations.**

**Momentum is building behind the Fossil Fuel Treaty proposal, now spearheaded by a growing bloc of 8 nation-states** who will join forces at COP28 and call on other governments to join them in seeking a negotiating mandate for a new treaty on fossil fuels. **Now it's time for African countries to join this growing coalition.**

These nation-states are backed by thousands of scientists, faith leaders and health professionals, over 2,200 organisations and institutions including the World Health Organisation, the European Parliament, 101 Nobel Laureates, and almost 100 cities and subnational governments globally.

*The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty proposal is supported by*

- 8** Nation-states
- 2,150** Civil society organisations
- 3,300** Scientists & academics
- 720+** Nationally-elected parliamentarians
- 101** Nobel Laureates
- 95+** Cities & sub-national governments
- 2,500** Youth activists and leaders
- 3,350** Faith institutions & leaders
- 2,800** Health institutions & professionals including the WHO



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Find out more at

*FossilFuelTreaty.org*



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