



May 10, 2023

To: All Heads of State of East African Countries

Dear Your Excellencies,

**RE: OPEN LETTER REQUESTING EAST AFRICAN PRESIDENTS TO STOP FOSSIL FUEL INVESTMENTS IN EAST AFRICA**

**INTRODUCTION**

We are East African civil society organisations (CSOs) working to promote renewable energy, environmental conservation, human rights observance and climate action. We are joined in solidarity by our brothers and sisters on the African continent.

We are writing to you today because this week, between May 9 and 11, 2023, the seven East African states and their partners are hosting the 10<sup>th</sup> East African Petroleum Conference and Exhibition (EAPCE) in Kampala. The EAPCE is being held under the theme, “East Africa as a hub for investment in exploration and exploitation of petroleum resources for sustainable energy and socio-economic development”.

Among others, the EAPCE will showcase the oil and gas investment opportunities in East Africa with a view of attracting investments in East Africa’s petroleum sector.

**CONCERNS**

Your Excellencies, while we appreciate your efforts to promote energy access and socio-economic development for East Africans, we are worried that your focus on exploiting the region’s petroleum resources stands to undermine your goals. This is because of the following:

- (a) **Energy transition and economic risks:** Your Excellencies, to tackle the huge threat of climate change, countries have made pledges to reduce their use of coal, oil and gas. Consequently, in its 2021 World Energy Outlook report<sup>1</sup>, the International Energy Agency

<sup>1</sup> World Energy Outlook 2021: <https://www.iea.org/reports/world-energy-outlook-2021/fuels-old-and-new>

(IEA) indicated that “Oil demand, for the first time, shows an eventual decline in all scenarios”. The IEA noted that the demand for oil is expected to level off in the mid-2030s and decline [in] 2050. As regards coal, the IEA notes that “coal faces structural decline in all scenarios.” Faced with projections of declining demand for fossil fuels, continued investment in oil and gas poses an economic risk for East African states, majority of whose citizens are poor. It would therefore be best if Your Excellencies prioritised investment in the green economic sectors.

**(b) Ecological disasters:** Further, Your Excellencies, it has been variously demonstrated that oil and gas exploitation is more harmful than useful to local communities. This is evident in countries such as Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Nigeria, Mozambique and Ecuador to mention but a few. Oil exploitation harms nations’ ecological balance through causing forest loss, biodiversity destruction as well as air, water and soil pollution. This destruction hurts livelihoods, increases poverty, worsens climate disasters and increases public as well as household expenditure on health, disaster management and others. This does not translate into socio-economic development, especially for the oil and gas host communities.

**(c) Economic impacts:** Further, the exploitation of oil and gas has economic impacts as it causes land loss with insufficient compensation being given to local communities and indigenous peoples. This has been seen in Uganda. It also accelerates land grabs and negatively impacts economic sectors such as farming, fishing, tourism and others through the pollution of soils and waters, stopping fisherfolks’ access to fishing areas, degradation of national parks and others. In addition, international oil companies take advantage of the naivety of local communities and rarely respect their commitments to ensure prosperity.

**(d) Jobs:** The above brings us to the issue of jobs. While oil companies often make big promises about creating jobs for locals, available evidence indicates that the oil, gas and mining sectors only [employ about 1%](#)<sup>2</sup> of Africa’s labourforce. Meanwhile, the continued investment in oil and gas stands to result in job losses in the agriculture, fishing, clean energy, tourism and other sectors. Your Excellencies, you will recall that agriculture employs [60-70%](#)<sup>3</sup> of Africa’s labourforce. Oil and gas exploitation, and the climate change it is fueling, is a threat to 60-70% of Africa’s workforce. We request that you protect these workers by investing in renewable energy instead of oil and gas.

**(e) Conflicts:** Further Your Excellencies, we are concerned about the conflicts that arise due to natural resources exploitation by multinationals in Africa. Such conflicts have been seen in

---

<sup>2</sup> UNCTAD: [Africa's oil, gas and mining sectors must create more direct and indirect jobs to drive prosperity](#)

<sup>3</sup> African Development Bank (2017): [Africa’s Agricultural Transformation: Identifying Priority Areas and Overcoming Challenges](#)

countries such as Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Mali and Mozambique to mention but a few. In East Africa, the discovery of oil in Uganda resulted in border disputes between Uganda and the DRC. Both countries claimed Rukwanzi island, with the DRC accusing Uganda of wanting to take its land and oil. The two countries' differences resulted in conflict that caused the [death](#)<sup>4</sup> of an oil worker in 2007. Conflict in the Cabo Delgado region in Mozambique also worsened following efforts to exploit the region's gas resources.

**(f) Pipelines out of Africa:** Your Excellencies, on the issue of continuing to invest in oil and gas exploitation with a view of promoting energy access, we would like to draw your attention to the fact that no African country has addressed energy poverty by investing in coal, oil and gas. South Africa, which meets some of its people's energy needs from coal, is currently struggling with load shedding due to insufficient energy and mismanagement. In addition, Nigeria, which is one of Africa's largest oil producers, has the highest number of people in the world without access to power. Moreover, pipelines such as the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) are being planned to evacuate Uganda and possibly DRC's oil to export markets. Such pipelines don't meet the energy needs of Africans. Furthermore, the said pipeline, being the longest heated in the world, will cause environmental and social disaster.

**(g) Climate change and renewable energy access:** On the issue of sustainable energy Your Excellencies, we would like to draw your attention to the fact that scientists have warned that climate change could hamper renewable energy access through causing silting of dams, destruction of forests and others. Moreover, resources that could have been invested in renewable energy are being invested in oil and gas. As you are likely aware, Your Excellencies, Africa has immense renewable energy potential including "solar capacity (10 TW), hydro (350 GW), wind (110 GW), and geothermal (15 GW)."<sup>5</sup> This potential largely remains untapped and in 2020, only 9%<sup>6</sup> of Africa's energy came from renewable energy sources. Further, investments in renewable energy in Africa are limited with only 2%<sup>7</sup> of global investments that were made in renewable energy being made in Africa within the last two decades. This needs to change.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Your Excellencies, to enhance sustainable energy access and promote socio-economic progress therefore, we are calling on you to do the following:

---

<sup>4</sup> Reuters (2007): [Lake Albert gunmen attack Heritage Oil, 1 dead](#)

<sup>5</sup> African Development Bank: <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/why-africa-is-the-next-renewables-powerhouse-18822>

<sup>6</sup> WeForum: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/04/renewable-energy-africa-capabilities>

<sup>7</sup> IRENA: <https://www.irena.org/publications/2022/Jan/Renewable-Energy-Market-Analysis-Africa>

**(i) Abandon any investments in oil and gas projects** such as the EACOP and the auctioning of oil blocks in the DRC. This is very important as East Africans also need to avoid the risk of stranded assets, a threat that is imminent due to the just energy transition plans of some of the countries that are the biggest markets for oil and gas.

**(ii) Redirect private and public investments into renewable energy** through working with your governments to put in place enabling policies, increasing budget allocations to renewable energy and lobbying investors to invest in renewable energy.



**(iii) Promote green economic alternatives that employ** the majority of East Africans such as agriculture, fisheries and tourism.












## CONCLUSION







Your Excellencies, the promotion and or further development of oil, gas and coal should have no space in African countries. We need to shift to clean energy projects that are people-centered and would benefit local communities first and foremost. We need to promote approaches that strengthen energy access and land rights for all Africans, while ensuring the protection of nature and our common goods.

We thank you for considering our requests.



## SIGNATORIES

No.	ORGANISATION NAME	COUNTRY	LOGO	CONTACT
1.	Innovation pour le Développement et la Protection de l'Environnement (IDPE)	DRC		<a href="mailto:idpe_kc@yahoo.fr">idpe_kc@yahoo.fr</a>
2.	Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO)	Uganda		<a href="mailto:afiego@afiego.org">afiego@afiego.org</a>
3.	Cadre de Concertation de la société civile de l'Ituri sur les Ressources Naturelles (CdC/RN)	DRC		<a href="mailto:jimmyjudi@gmail.com">jimmyjudi@gmail.com</a>

4.	Environment Governance Institute	Uganda		<a href="mailto:info@egiuganda.org">info@egiuganda.org</a>
5.	Youth for Green Communities (YGC)	Uganda		<a href="mailto:info@ygcug.org">info@ygcug.org</a>
6.	Center for Environmental Research and Agriculture Innovations (CERAI)	Uganda		<a href="mailto:info@ceraiug.org">info@ceraiug.org</a>
7.	Laudato Si' Movement Africa	Kenya		<a href="mailto:ashley@laudatosimovement.org">ashley@laudatosimovement.org</a>
8.	Guild Presidents' Forum on Governance (GPF OG)	Uganda		<a href="mailto:gpfoguganda@gmail.com">gpfoguganda@gmail.com</a>
9.	Alerte Congolaise pour l'Environnement et les Droits l'Homme (ACEDH)	DRC		<a href="mailto:meolivier.acedhrdc@gmail.com">meolivier.acedhrdc@gmail.com</a>
10.	Extinction Rébellion université de Goma	DRC		<a href="mailto:xrunigom@gmail.com">xrunigom@gmail.com</a>
11.	Oil Refinery Residents Association	Uganda		<a href="mailto:orakabaale201@gmail.com">orakabaale201@gmail.com</a>
12.	Be Empowered, Kyotera	Uganda	-	-
13.	Fridays For Future MAPA	Africa		<a href="mailto:mapa@fridaysforfuture.org">mapa@fridaysforfuture.org</a>
14.	East African Crude Oil Pipeline Host Communities (EACOPHC)	Uganda		<a href="mailto:info@eacophc.org">info@eacophc.org</a>
15.	National Association of Professional Environmentalists	Uganda		<a href="mailto:nape@nape.or.ug">nape@nape.or.ug</a>

	(NAPE)/ Friends of the Earth Uganda			
16.	Women For Green Economy Movement Uganda (WoGEM)	Uganda		<a href="mailto:info@wogemuganda.org">info@wogemuganda.org</a>
17	Tasha Research Institute Africa (TASHA)	Uganda		<a href="mailto:tashacommunity@gmail.com">tashacommunity@gmail.com</a>
18.	Abibinsroma Foundation	Ghana		<a href="mailto:kamoateng@gmail.com">kamoateng@gmail.com</a>
19.	Voice of The Vulnerable	Nigeria		<a href="mailto:smithnwokocha@gmail.com">smithnwokocha@gmail.com</a> , <a href="mailto:voiceofthevulnerables@gmail.com">voiceofthevulnerables@gmail.com</a>
20.	African Initiative on Food Security and Environment (AIFE)	Uganda		<a href="mailto:info@aifeuganda.org">info@aifeuganda.org</a>
21.	Forum des Engagés pour le Développement Durable (FORED)	DRC		<a href="mailto:foredbunia@gmail.com">foredbunia@gmail.com</a>
22.	Dynamique Communautaire pour la Protection de l'Environnement dans le Rift Albertin (DYCOPERA)	DRC		<a href="mailto:ongfored@gmail.com">ongfored@gmail.com</a>
23.	Waterberg Women Advocacy Organisation	South Africa		<a href="mailto:wwao.org@yahoo.com">wwao.org@yahoo.com</a>
24.	Coalition des Organisations de la Société Civile pour le Suivi des Réformes et de l'Action Publique	DRC		<a href="mailto:emmamus42@gmail.com">emmamus42@gmail.com</a>
25.	GreenFaith International	Tanzania		<a href="mailto:baraka@greenfaith.org">baraka@greenfaith.org</a>

26.	Organization for Community Eng	Tanzania		<a href="mailto:admin@oce.org">admin@oce.org</a>
27.	GreenConservers	Tanzania		<a href="mailto:greenconservers@gmail.com">greenconservers@gmail.com</a>
28.	Ensemble pour la Justice climatique et la Protection des Défenseurs de l'Environnement (E.J.P.D.E)	DRC		<a href="mailto:Environnementdefender2@gmail.com">Environnementdefender2@gmail.com</a>
29.	Synergie de Jeunes pour le Développement et la Défense de Droits Humains (SJDDH)	DRC		<a href="mailto:synergie2jeunes@gmail.com">synergie2jeunes@gmail.com</a>
30.	Union de Familles pour la Recherche de la Paix (UFAREP)	DRC		<a href="mailto:ufarep_asbl@yahoo.fr">ufarep_asbl@yahoo.fr</a>
31.	Solidarité pour la Réflexion et Appui au Développement Communautaires (SORADEC)	DRC		<a href="mailto:soradec@yahoo.fr">soradec@yahoo.fr</a>
32.	Synergie des Vanniers et Amis de la Nature (SVAN)	DRC		<a href="mailto:svanature@gmail.com">svanature@gmail.com</a>
33.	Bureau d'Ecologistes Impacts Environnementaux (BEIE)	DRC		<a href="mailto:beienature003@gmail.com">beienature003@gmail.com</a>
34.	Synergie des Ecologistes pour la Paix et le Développement (SEPD)	DRC		<a href="mailto:sepdrdc@gmail.com">sepdrdc@gmail.com</a>
35.	Coopérative des Apiculteurs et Vendeur3s du Miel au Kivu (C.A.V.M.K)	DRC		<a href="mailto:coopérative-apicole@gmail.com">coopérative-apicole@gmail.com</a>

36.	MAIDENI	DRC		<a href="mailto:maideniasbl@gmail.com">maideniasbl@gmail.com</a>
37.	350Africa.org	Africa		<a href="mailto:350africa@350.org">350africa@350.org</a>
38.	Buliisa Peace Development Initiative	Uganda	-	-
39.	Strategic Response on Environmental Conservation (STREC)	Uganda		<a href="mailto:info@strec.org">info@strec.org</a>
40.	Friends of the Earth Africa	Africa		<a href="mailto:info@foeafrica.org">info@foeafrica.org</a>
41.	Nature Talk Africa	Uganda	-	-