

PRESS RELEASE

EXTINCTION REBELLION CAPE TOWN

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**extinction
rebellion
CAPE TOWN**

AFRICA OIL WEEK ACTION

“The fossil fuel industry is killing us, and leaders are out of step with their people, who are crying out for urgent climate action.” Antonio Guterres, speaking to a private meeting of heads of state and government in New York on 19 September, 2022

What? An action to tell the oil and gas industry that we reject their selfish pursuit of planetary-wide death and destruction for their own short-term profit.

Who? Extinction Rebellion Cape Town

Where? Opposite the Cape Town International Convention Centre, CTICC2, Convention Square, 1 Lower Long Street, Cape Town, 8001

When? Tuesday 4 October 2022, at 8 am

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Rationale in brief

The Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) is currently hosting Africa Oil Week 2022 where oil and gas industry representatives gather annually to wheel and deal with government ministers from across Africa. In stark contrast to the welcoming atmosphere of 2019, the whole CTICC2 has been cordoned off behind tall barricades, with no visible AOW branding. (You would hope that they are ashamed of the dirty deals happening behind these walls, but that would be giving the fossil fuel industry too much credit.)

Today, some members of Extinction Rebellion Cape Town will stage a protest action outside the CTICC by pouring ‘blood’ and ‘oil’ over themselves. Our message is this: Despite loud warnings about the fragile state of our planetary home, the delegates at this conference are intent on seeking out and exploiting now sources of oil and gas in Africa. In so doing they are drawing down death and destruction on its people and the world for their own short-term gain and will have blood on their hands.

Our demands to the delegates to this conference are:

- 1 Do not explore and exploit new oil and gas fields in Africa.
- 2 Invest heavily and with haste in non-fossil fuel technologies that can secure access to energy, create jobs and distribute wealth without intensifying climate change and destroying life on earth.

Rationale in depth

The CTICC is currently hosting Africa Oil Week 2022 which runs from 3 to 7 October 2022. The function of the event is to bring together government ministers, investors and oil and gas companies to drive investment into oil and gas across the African continent.

The rhetoric of this conference is perpetuating four myths: that it is necessary to open up oil and gas fields to provide the energy that Africa needs, that they are creating much-needed jobs for Africans, that they will make everyone richer, and, fourthly, that the planet will be able to withstand the onslaught of ratcheting up oil and gas production.

Myth 1 Investment in new oil and gas is necessary to provide the energy that Africa needs

Africa has huge renewable energy potential. The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) has reported that Africa's resource potential in wind, solar, hydro, and geothermal energy is 1,000 times larger than its projected demand for electricity in 2040.¹ IRENA also reports that central and southern Africa have abundant mineral resources essential to the production of electric batteries, wind turbines, and other low-carbon technologies.² Africa has barely begun to harness this huge potential and is behind many countries in the world. These resources will only be unlocked when governments in Africa send a clear signal that the policy environment is consistently and unequivocally committed to a sustainable energy future. This conference is signalling the opposite.

Exploiting oil and gas is not a sure path to energy security. Those countries in Africa which have been investing in fossil fuels for decades have not gained universal, reliable energy access for their citizens. Nigeria is Africa's second-largest oil producer but has low electrification and frequent power black outs.

Myth 2 Investment in oil and gas will create jobs in Africa

As the world moves away from oil and gas, investing in fossil fuel industries risks stranded assets and therefore stranded jobs. South Africa is concerned about a fair deal for coal workers who will lose their jobs with the decline of the coal industry and about the impact on the small towns which have relied on coal and are at risk of becoming ghost towns. So why repeat the error by building new oil and gas industries, and thereby creating skills in industries that are destined to become sunset industries in future decades as the energy transition gathers momentum? Moreover, IRENA says that jobs created in the renewable energy transition will outweigh those lost by moving away from traditional energy. ⁴

The oil and gas industry also destroys jobs as degradation of the environment destroys existing livelihoods built around forestry, farming and fishing, devastating communities in the process. The impact of the oil industry in the Niger Delta has been catastrophic.

Myth 3 Everyone will be richer

The oil and gas industry claims it is creating wealth. It is not. It is destroying wealth because it is very destructive of the natural world. World Bank research estimates that Sub-Saharan Africa could experience a 9.7 percent loss in GDP every year by 2030 if vital ecosystem services, such as those of forests, fisheries, and pollinators, collapse. ⁵

We see the “resource curse” play out in Africa. Nigeria has been Africa’s largest oil producer for years (now overtaken by Angola) but its Human Development Index in 2022 remains low. In 2019, 40.1 percent of Nigeria’s total population were classified as poor. Angola has a rich elite while almost half the population is poor.

Then there is the cost of climate change adaptation. While a handful of companies get hugely rich on fossil fuels, fossil-fuel-driven climate change is forcing governments to add an extra expensive item to their budgets, which is funding to adapt to climate change, e.g. adapting infrastructure to cope with excessive heat, drought, floods and coastal storm surges.

Along with expensive adaptation, the cost of repairing damage from climate change impacts is increasing - think damage to infrastructure from storms, floods and wildfires. South Africa’s Department of Trade, Industry and Competition estimated in May 2022 that at least 826 companies were affected by the April 2022 floods in KwaZulu-Natal, with the cost of the damage estimated at R7 billion. ⁶ Toyota closed its premises temporarily leaving workers with no income for a period of months. 448 died and 40,000 were displaced. Many of the displaced are still homeless today. This is one incident among many that are playing out across the world.

Myth 4 The planet can sustain the impact of extracting and burning more oil and gas

The planet has now warmed by 1.1 degrees C and with every year of inaction, the speed at which we need to decarbonise increases. We have already passed an irreversible tipping point in the melting of Arctic ice according to Sir David King, a highly respected UK scientist. The UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, [told world leaders](#) gathered in New York on 19 September that the goal of 1.5 degrees C of warming is slipping away. He told heads of state that “The fossil fuel industry is killing us, and leaders are out of step with their people, who are crying out for urgent climate action.” ⁷

There are now about one million species threatened with imminent extinction, representing about 10% to 15% of all complex life on Earth. ⁸ The sixth mass extinction is accelerating. One of Africa's strengths is that it still has extensive wilderness areas and has better preserved its biological diversity, but much of it is threatened. When mainstream institutions such as the World Bank start raising the alarm on our destruction of nature, isn't it time to halt despoiling of wild lands, wetlands, nature reserves and ocean life to extract oil and gas? As we deplete natural resources, we also deplete the natural systems that capture carbon, exacerbating climate change.

Conclusion

The fossil fuel industry is a prime driver of climate change and biodiversity loss. Extinction Rebellion Cape Town cannot support the 'delusion of normalcy' which pervades this conference when in fact delegates are driving destruction for their own short-term interests. We will not condemn future generations to live in a world that is in a state of terminal decline which they no longer have the power to reverse, knowing that our generation had such power and chose not to use it. We have a short window in which to create a different future. History requires us to tell the truth and act now.

References

- 1 IRENA KFW and BMZ 2021 The Renewable Energy Transition in Africa. International Renewable Energy Agency and Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany (BMZ). Quote from Executive summary p. 5
- 2 IRENA-AfDB 2022 Energy Transition Central to Africa's Economic Future. Press release. International Renewable Energy Agency and African Development Bank. <https://www.irena.org/newsroom/pressreleases/2022/Jan/IRENA-AfDB-report>
- 4 IRENA-AfDB 2022 Energy Transition Central to Africa's Economic Future. Press release. International Renewable Energy Agency and African Development Bank. <https://www.irena.org/newsroom/pressreleases/2022/Jan/IRENA-AfDB-report>
- 5 World Bank Biodiversity. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/biodiversity>. Last updated: 2022.04.14
- 6 South African Government News Agency May 2022. Damage to KZN companies estimated at R7 billion.
- 7 UN News 2022.09.21. 1.5 climate pledge now on life support, Guterres tell leaders during frank exchanges.
- 8 Bradshaw, Corey. 2022.03.09. The sixth mass extinction is happening now, and it doesn't look good for us. Daily Maverick.

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Boiler plate

Extinction Rebellion (XR) is a global network and believes it is a citizen's duty to rebel using peaceful civil disobedience when faced with criminal inactivity by its Government. The Rebellion centres on demands for Government to tell the truth about our dire situation and to act accordingly, including to decarbonise our economy by 2025, in a mobilisation of war time like proportion.

We declare a non-violent rebellion on behalf of life itself and against our criminally negligent government. Our government's abject failure to protect citizens and the next generations from unimaginable suffering brought about by climate breakdown and social collapse is no longer tolerable.

The group's key demands are:

- The Government must admit the truth about the ecological emergency, reverse all policies inconsistent with addressing climate change, and work alongside the media to communicate with citizens
- The Government must enact legally binding policy measures to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2025 and to reduce consumption levels
- A national Citizen's Assembly to oversee the changes, as part of creating a democracy fit for purpose.

Website: www.extinctionrebellion.org.za