PRESS RELEASE
EXTINCTION REBELLION CAPE TOWN
EMBARGOED UNTIL 5 MARCH 2024

GWEDE MANTASHE — LIAR, LIAR, PANTS ON FIRE!

What? A protest action at AFRICA ENERGY INDABA which is taking place at CTICC1.

Who? Extinction Rebellion Cape Town & The Green Connection

Where? Outside CTICC1, 1 Lower Long Street, Foreshore, Cape Town

When? Tuesday 5 March 2024 from 8:00-8:30 (in the morning)

Contact people:

Jacqui Tooke 084 666 9566
Judy Scott-Goldman 082 789 2019
Isabelle Joubert 082 387 9016
Lisa Makaula 071 527 5751 The Green Connection
Cassi Goodman 083 2767596 (Logistics, not interviews)

Details of action:

Members of Extinction Rebellion will be staging a protest action on the OPENING day of the Africa Energy Indaba, specifically to protest all the **lies/myths associated with "GREEN GAS"**. The Gas Forum "side event" of the AEI is taking place on Mon 4 March (the day before).

Press Release

We demand a vibrant renewable energy industry and debunk three myths about gas as a "transition fuel"

The year 2023 was the hottest year on record and this February will be the hottest February in recorded history. We are accelerating towards a cliff edge. Cyril Ramaphosa in his 'From the desk of the President' of 19 February 2024 wrote that the worsening impacts of climate change on Africa were much discussed at the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from which he has just returned. In terms of South Africa, he mentioned the wildfires in the Western Cape, heat waves in the Northern Cape, continuing drought conditions in

the Eastern Cape, floods in Kwa-Zulu Natal and intense storms in Gauteng. He announced that South Africa has established a Climate Change Response Fund to help affected communities recover from these disasters.

We welcome this commitment to climate change adaptation but wish the government was as clearly committed to climate change mitigation. After all, if you find a flood in your bathroom, you would be wise to not simply mop up the damage, but to look for the source of the flood and turn it off. But President Ramaphosa had little to say about turning off the main source of the greenhouse gases (GHGs) that cause climate change, i.e. stopping the burning of fossil fuels. He did not castigate the many countries of the world which are expanding fossil fuel production, and in terms of South Africa's own fossil fuel policies, he fell back on the vague wording he has used before, which is that South Africa "will reach our ambitious emission reduction targets at a pace, scale and cost that our country can afford". This vagueness creates wriggle room for the profit-seeking oil and gas multinationals and their supporters in the South African government who, unmoved by the harm they will inflict, are rushing to extract some last profit out of South Africa before the world finally regulates them out of existence.

Yesterday, at the Africa Gas Forum, and during this week's African Energy Indaba, gas company executives will be intent on persuading South African decision makers to turn to gas as a "transition fuel" to replace the ageing coal fleet that we currently depend on for electricity, or they will be seeking licence to extract gas off the South African coast and ship it out to willing buyers, although it will be like selling armaments to be used against us. They will be repeating the myths that are used to persuade South Africans that we need this fossil fuel. We are here today to dismantle those myths and to say that our energy security, our economic security, our climate security and continued life on earth all depend on a speedy transition to renewable energy.

Myth 1 Because renewable energy sources are variable, for electricity systems we need gas-fired power plants to stabilise the grid and/or meet peak load.

Truth: Variable energy systems can achieve a secure power supply and are least cost, according to South Africa's Presidential Climate Commission

It is true that renewable energy is variable, i.e. the sun doesn't always shine and the wind doesn't always blow, but there is the technical ability now to achieve a secure power supply by oversizing the renewable generation capacity and

ensuring sufficient electricity storage capacity. A 2019 study by Ayobani Oyewo and colleagues titled "Pathway towards achieving 100% renewable electricity by 2050 for South Africa" showed that a 100% renewable energy-based system is achievable for South Africa. The Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) has advised the government that they "believe that variable energy systems, well-managed, are secure and least-cost" (PCC, 2023, p.8).They argue that both new coal-fired and new gas-fired power for electricity increase the cost of electricity and should not be built. They propose that "gas, **if any is needed**, should be kept to the role of peaking support" for a renewable-dominated electricity mix. (PCC, 2023, p.11). In other words, a small amount of gas may be needed but not high use. And gas may not be needed at all once the many different energy storage systems that are currently being developed become mainstream options.

Myth 2 Gas is a more climate-friendly fossil fuel

Truth: Use of gas as a fuel is leaking methane into the atmosphere which is strongly contributing to short-term global warming

At the point of combustion, fossil gas causes lower emissions than coal per unit of energy produced. However, when the whole gas value chain is considered, a different picture emerges. Methane can escape into the atmosphere at many different points in the supply chain. Leakage of over 1% of the total of gas can make total climate impacts as bad as some coal plants, with rates of over 5% making it as bad as even the worst coal systems (Gordon et al., 2023).

Produced gas is 70% to 90% methane. Methane has a far greater global warming potential than carbon dioxide (the gas released by burning coal) – 80-times greater over a 20-year period. If we reduce methane emissions globally, that will have a big impact on global warming in the short term, buying us time to advance other solutions to climate change.

Methane is also the primary contributor to the formation of ground-level ozone, a hazardous air pollutant, exposure to which causes 1 million premature deaths every year.

In 2021, a Global Methane Pledge was launched which is gaining momentum and 155 countries have now signed. Signatories commit to a collective effort to reduce global methane emissions at least 30 percent from 2020 levels by 2030. This is a global, not a national reduction target. If South Africa turns to gas as a major energy source, it is travelling in the reverse direction to the rest of the world. South Africa is not currently a signatory to the Global Methane Pledge.

Myth 3: Gas will swell the public purse

Truth: Investing in gas is a costly and high-risk proposition and is a net value destroyer

Gas pricing doesn't account for the true carbon cost (the climate change harm) of extracting, liquefying, transporting, re-gasifying and burning this fuel, or the environmental damage caused.

Countries that are decarbonising are imposing taxes on carbon-intensive imports which will make South African goods less competitive globally if we go the route of manufacturing with gas-powered electricity.

South Africa is likely to have limited markets for exporting gas because moving gas long distances makes its climate impact worse, according to a 2020 study led by Swanson. Because South Africa's gas fields are in deep water, late to develop and far from key markets, the gas will not be cheap (Rystad Energy Cube database).

If South Africa decides to exploit gas, it will require a huge investment in new infrastructure to support the industry, including pipelines, liquefaction facilities, export terminals and tankers. This will lock in fossil-fuel dependence over a long time as no-one is going to make such investment for a short-term return. If the gas proves difficult to sell, we could be left with stranded assets and wasted investment. Of course, locking in fossil-fuel dependence would be a climate disaster.

Fracking for gas inland threatens water resources in a water-constrained country. Gas exploration off the coast of South Africa will damage marine life which is a cost in terms of natural capital which is little understood and deeply undervalued. The building of massive infrastructure off the coast threatens damage to our coasts, bays and estuaries and risks existing jobs in fishing and coastal tourism. National accounts are flawed in that they fail to recognise value that is real but not monetised such as the livelihoods and cultural heritage of small-scale fisherfolk.

To summarise, we reject the exploitation of natural gas for the following reasons:

- Renewable energy is the least-cost option for providing South Africa with electricity.

- Renewable energy can provide a reliable and stable electricity supply.
- Renewable energy is better for water resources and air quality which has enormous benefits for human health.
- Investing in gas locks us in to fossil-fuel dependence for decades to come.
- Investing in gas as an electricity source risks undermining our global competitiveness.
- Investing in gas risks stranded assets.
- Investing in gas is investing in a hothouse Earth as it will increase GHG emissions.
- Investing in gas goes against our international commitments to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.
- Investing in offshore gas will damage our ocean resources and biodiversity.
- Investing in offshore gas will threaten our coastal public property and threaten the livelihoods and culture of people who currently live from coastal and ocean resources.

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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