



zero
EMISSIONS | OMISSIONS

25 May 2020

Dear Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, members of the African Development Bank Board, and Country Office Managers

I am joining civil society organisations and climate activists to call on the leadership of the African Development Bank (AfDB) to immediately put in place and publish on the AfDB website a fossil fuel finance exclusion policy that states that the Bank will not fund, provide financial services or capacity support to any coal project on the African continent. We make this call in accordance with previous [correspondence](#) sent to you in October 2019, where civil society welcomed your [announcement](#) made on 24 September 2019, in which you reiterated the AfDB's commitment to no longer fund coal on the continent, but to rather build the “largest solar zone in the world” in the Sahel region.

While recognising your commitment to rid Africa of coal's influence and to accelerate the use of renewable energies, we are convinced that, given the climate emergency and the short timeline to achieve net-zero emissions, the AfDB can and should do more by officially and definitively disengaging itself from any current or future fossil fuel projects.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ([IPCC](#)), Africa is expected to experience devastating climate change impacts. These impacts are already affecting our continent and its people: hampering economic development, sometimes eroding years of economic progress, exacerbating conflict, and pushing hundreds of thousands of people every year into forced migration; especially those living in arid zones and areas affected by desertification and floods.

Recently, torrential rains triggered [devastating floods](#) and landslides across East Africa, aggravating an already challenging situation as countries in the region battle a triple crisis of climate change impacts, the coronavirus

pandemic, and the locust invasion. The destruction caused by the floods killed hundreds of people in Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, Rwanda, and Ethiopia, while displacing hundreds of thousands - and also ironically washing away a hospital in Uganda as people move into makeshift camps which make social distancing impossible. Migration also often depends on mobility and access to resources, which means those that were most vulnerable to the floods were unable to migrate. Instead, they have remained in the same locations, increasing their susceptibility to future climate-induced harms.

While these extreme weather events and associated risks threaten the lives and livelihoods of millions of Africans, the urgency to shift African economies' dependence on fossil fuel based energy generation to renewable energies has never been more crucial. A report by the [IPCC](#) highlights that if fossil fuel projects continue at the current global rate, Africa is heading straight for an average warming of 3 to 4 °C as a climate hotspot - and [a new study](#) shows that globally, up to 3 billion people will be living in a climate too hot for human survival as soon as 2070. This scenario would have disastrous consequences, ranging from extreme heat that would affect the majority of the continent's land to increased risks of extreme drought, extreme flooding, and a decline in agricultural yield; leaving millions of people with no food to eat.

The IPCC report also made it clear that anyone who supports the fossil fuel industry knowingly contributes to untold suffering around the world. Despite this scientific consensus, in November 2019, the AfDB approved a [long-term Senior Loan](#) of \$400 million to support the building of an integrated Liquefied Natural Gas ("LNG") plant, including a liquefaction facility in Mozambique. In doing so, the Bank is ensuring that Africa is locked into years of emissions that we simply cannot afford.

Recent [data](#) reveals that solar, wind and other green technologies now provide more than one-third of the world's power. While this signifies a positive trajectory for the future of renewable energy, the current economic crisis due to the coronavirus pandemic is likely to slow this process. However, experts show that there are [long term prospects](#) for renewables to emerge stronger than ever, especially if governments and major financial institutions integrate support for clean energy into COVID-19 economic-recovery programs.

Given the urgency of the climate crisis, 2020 has become a fundamental year in which the AfDB must support the African continent in increasing our ambition to leave fossil fuels in the past, and leap for the age of renewable energy and sustainable development. Therefore, we once again urge the AfDB to:

- Immediately develop an AfDB policy that the bank will not fund, provide financial services, or capacity support to any fossil fuel projects on the African continent;
- Following the development of a draft policy, immediately publish the draft on the AfDB website and allow a public comment period of a minimum of 30 days;
- Shift the AfDB's investment portfolios 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 Paris Agreement goal;
- Publish a timeline for the construction of the "largest solar energy zone on the planet" in the Sahel region before the end of 2020;
- Support recovery and response plans of the most vulnerable countries as grants, not loans to avoid worsening the debt crisis.



We look forward to hearing from you on the above-mentioned recommendations, including the steps that will be taken towards achieving these changes. Our hope is that we can all work together to create a more sustainable, climate-resilient, and just future for the African continent.

Kind regards,

