

HAULT THE INVESTMENT OF FOSSIL FUEL PROJECTS IN GHANA

Alliance for Empowering Rural Communities (AERC GH), is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation committed to empowering local communities to develop innovative solutions for the developmental challenges in Ghana and Africa. Through empowerment programmes, training, research, advocacy and community development in the areas of environment and community based natural resource governance and rural development, local communities are able to build resilience and adapt to the changes in developmental situations in the country.

While AERC agrees there's an urgency to provide sufficient energy to meet increasing demand, we believe power generation through fossil fuels should be strongly opposed. Continual investment in fossil fuels could be detrimental to the future of Ghana. According to a press release by UK Export Finance, Department for International Trade and The Rt Hon Greg Hands MP published on www.gov.uk on the 16th of January 2017. The UK Export Finance (UKEF) is supporting the GE Oil and Gas contract with Ghana's Offshore Cape Three Points project with an amount of US\$400 million. If Ghana continues to take this route, it will violate the country's obligation under the Sustainable Development Goals which enforces countries to take steps that ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and clean energy for all. Though Ghana has committed to increase renewable energy by 10% into Ghana's energy mix by 2030, increasing investment in fossil fuels indicate lack of commitment to transition to the 10% target, for which we of AERC are calling for a 100% transition to renewable energy. Ghana needs US\$300 million as part of Ghana's Nationally Determined Contributions (GH-NDC) to promote clean rural household lighting which will aid in transitioning to cleaner energy but UKEF instead is supporting fossil fuel projects with US\$400 million which is far more than what we need to support clean energy development in the area of rural electrification in Ghana. We are of the view that such investment in fossil fuels is not what we need as a country to address our energy crisis. The recent Paris climate change agreement states that 'all Parties should strive to formulate and communicate long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies.'

The choice of increasing investment in fossil fuels raises serious concerns about Ghana's obligations under the Kyoto Protocol and COP 21 agreements. There are currently 192 Parties to the Protocol, including Ghana. The Protocol is based on the principle of common but differentiated

responsibilities: it puts the obligation to reduce current emissions on developed countries on the basis that they are historically responsible for the current levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Although developed countries do bear primary responsibility for cutting carbon emissions, Ghana should not use this as an excuse to increase existing carbon levels. This can be perceived as an irresponsible act by the Ghanaian state. Ghana has already been recording significant increases in greenhouse emissions. Ghana's total greenhouse gas emissions were 33.66 million tonnes (Mt) carbon dioxide-equivalent (CO₂e) in 2012. This represented an increase of 10.7% on the total emissions recorded in 2010, and an increase of 106.2% and 136.7% above 2000 and 1990 levels respectively so we should be rather seen as seriously reducing our emissions. In any case, we ought to be seen to be consistent with our commitment when former President Mahama at COP 21 in Paris said that Ghana is determined to achieve ambitious cuts in greenhouse gases.

The negative environmental, health, and social impacts of fossil fuel development in the country are well documented. More and more evidence shows that fossil fuel development in the production of electricity in the country has had its adverse impact. While promoters of fossil fuel use the issue of "cheapness" as a trump card, they fall short of outweighing the environmental and health hazards or consequences that fossil fuels create. Water management, impact on land and surroundings, poor waste management, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, wildlife threat, air pollution (air particles and gas flaring), heat generation, having a negative impact on economic growth, greenhouse gas emissions and radiation exposure are some of the major consequences of fossil fuel development in Ghana.

No individual will take poisoned food *knowingly*, simply because he or she is hungry. There are far cleaner and cheaper ways to meet Ghana's energy needs and these must be explored. Already, the fast falling cost of renewable energy is beginning to move global investments in the energy sector, including those from pension funds, church funds, and others. Climate change effects are already being experienced around the world. Our actions as a nation must reflect joint commitments by Parties in COP 21, to wit, a collective effort in cutting down greenhouse gas emissions.

We therefore appeal to the MPs on the Environmental Audit Committee to recommend that the UK Export Finance stop supporting fossil fuel projects in Ghana but rather support Ghana to achieving its Nationally Determined Contributions through the investment in renewable energy to promote a just energy transition. That is what we need as a country.

Ensuring a very friendly and safe environment for all cannot be compromised.

Richard Matey

Executive Director

Alliance for Empowering Rural Communities

matey.richard@aiasec.net / info@aecr.org

www.aecr.org