

DECLARATION BY SOUTH AFRICAN FAITH LEADERS ON A JUST ENERGY FUTURE

1. We, 78 members of a wide cross section of faith communities (Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Quakers) representing a large part of South Africa's population, recently gathered in an indaba on "*a just energy future*". The sacred texts of all our faiths clearly call for
 - the establishment of justice, equity, and the pursuit of peace for people and the planet,
 - a just economy that serves all people and
 - a sustainable and just energy policy that is sensitive to the priority of the needs of people and the environment for this and future generations.
2. As faith communities, we are aware of our own need to reduce our carbon footprint and promote energy efficiency. We therefore bind ourselves to promoting responsible citizenship, ethical decision-making about energy use and the increasing use of renewable energy in our own communities and homes. We also call on the government to do its part in fostering a just energy future.
3. We believe it essential that as a matter of urgency our government invests far greater financial resources in renewable energy and energy efficiency, turns its back on any further development of coal or nuclear energy and prohibits all exploration for shale gas
4. We furthermore believe it essential that the government provides regulations, in consultation with civil society, that will further encourage the development of renewable energy, at both macro and micro level, so that we can develop decentralised energy production.
5. Informed by science and our own experience, we know the reality of climate change and recognise it as one of the greatest threats ever to confront humanity. It is essential that we start reducing our carbon and greenhouse gas emissions urgently.
6. We therefore demand that our government recognise the priority of taking steps to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. Nuclear energy is neither a clean nor safe option. "Fracking" threatens the environment and scarce water resources. Talk of a third new coal powered station is unacceptable. There is no need to invest in any of these environmentally destructive energy sources while scientific research shows that all of South Africa's energy needs can be met by renewable energy, the cost of which is steadily decreasing.
7. We believe our government's justification for pursuing new fossil fuels and nuclear energy as an answer to job creation is extremely misleading, as these fuels not only endanger the health of the planet, but can exacerbate unemployment with their dependence on technologies requiring advanced expertise. Renewable energy technologies, on the other hand, cover the range from high-tech to grassroots options including the use of indigenous knowledge, and there are several forms which hold a very high job creation potential. A low carbon labour intensive economy must be the priority.
8. We have among the best natural resources for renewable energy in the world. We must use these to empower the ingenuity and creativity of our people. We therefore urge the government to "scrap the cap" on renewable energy generation as per the IRP10.

9. In the face of the overwhelming evidence for a viable renewable energy future, we find it deplorable that the voices of big corporations and vested interests of government partners in new fossil and nuclear energy initiatives are given priority over the voices of the poor and those who care for the earth in the energy decisions that are currently being taken.

10. We can no longer accept vested financial interests, the imposition of multinational corporations and foreign direct investment (FDI), which exploit our people and natural resources, to hold us hostage and jeopardise the future of life on this planet. Let Africa arise and bring about its own development, freed from the enslavement of outside financial forces.

27 September 2012

Issued by the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference Justice and Peace Department (SACBC J&P) and the Southern African Faith Communities Environment Institute (SAFCEI)

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