Dear Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu,

**Open letter to Lagos State Government on Fossil Fuel Treaty**

We are writing to you today to support a just energy transition by endorsing the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty* on behalf of the Lagos State Government.

As a continent, and as a country, we are far from immune to climate chaos. In fact, the reality of climate injustice in Africa is that we have “only contributed 2% of cumulative global emissions from 1890 to the present. Yet relative to other continents, it is projected to be hardest and fastest hit by climate change and to have the least resources to manage its consequences,” (Tucker & Resich, 2021)

The main culprits driving this climate emergency are coal, oil, and gas. "Fossil fuels are, by far, the largest contributor to global climate change, accounting for over 75% of global greenhouse gas emissions and nearly 90% of all carbon emissions," (SEI et al., 2019) and these trends are not abating. The world is currently on track "to produce more than double the amount of fossil fuels in 2030 than would be consistent with limiting warming to 1.5C," (SEI et al., 2021).

This threatens our lives, our communities, our ecosystems and our economies. To stave off these threats, the world is moving in a new direction, one that is powered by renewable energy. More than 190 nations have become signatories to the Paris Agreement to limit emissions fuelling climate change. Countries such as Costa Rica, Denmark, Belize and New Zealand and many others are ending new licensing and placing moratoriums to phase out fossil fuel production. The [Beyond Oil & Gas Alliance](https://beyondoilandgasalliance.org), or BOGA, created by Costa Rica and Denmark, is a growing international coalition of governments facilitating a managed phase out of oil and gas in their countries.

This momentum and the imperative of climate action to stabilize our planet is redirecting the global economy to transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. We acknowledge that the
fossil fuel sector is Nigeria’s primary source of foreign exchange income and around 50% of government revenue. However, we also understand the danger of an undiversified economy which relies on an industry without a stable future such as that of fossil fuels. “Changing regulatory environments, climate policy implementation, and the increasing competitiveness of renewable energy sources are lowering current and projected demand for fossil fuels globally.” (Tucker & Resich, 2021). In addition, recent phenomena such as COVID-19 and the oil price wars of 2020 have put much of Africa’s remaining oil and gas “production at high risk of becoming stranded assets,” (Tucker & Resich, 2021). This moment calls for economic alternatives that stimulate equitable development, community wellbeing and planetary health. To continue to pursue an undiversified economy reliant on oil production is to invite sunken infrastructure development costs and stranded assets, with the potential for massive job losses and shortages in public revenue, with “cascading losses across the economy” (Tucker & Resich, 2021) particularly for fossil fuel dependent countries such as Nigeria.

Nigeria’s oil-dependent economic model has not translated into direct benefits to communities. “In 2018, Nigeria overtook India as the country with the greatest number of people living in extreme poverty.” The World Bank estimates that 85 million Nigerians lack access to the electricity grid, making “Nigeria the country with the largest energy access deficit in the world.” While Nigeria is an oil producing state, the country still depends on foreign nations to supply its refined products for local consumption. Given this dynamic, Nigeria is currently on route to build one of the world’s largest oil refineries. Not only would this carbon bomb further provoke climate catastrophe, it faces significant risks of stranded assets and sunken costs by investing in a sector without a stable economic future, as the world transitions to renewable energy sources. In fact, estimates indicate that “71 percent of projected oil and gas projects in Africa are at risk of becoming stranded assets”. Multiple illegal refineries operate across the country and Nigeria has ranked among the top seven world gas polluters, with untapped and flared gas, for nearly the past decade. Communities living near gas flaring face contaminated water, failed crops and damaged health, such as the more than two million Nigerians living mere kilometres from gas flares in the Niger Delta. Most recently, “a vessel with a storage capacity of two million barrels of oil exploded off the coast of the Niger Delta,” provoking socio-environmental disaster.

While wealthy countries such as Norway, Canada, the US, and the UK, who hold both historic and present day dominance in fuelling the climate emergency, “must move first and fastest to phase out their fossil fuel production and pay their fair share for the global energy transition,” (Tucker & Resich, 2021), the urgency of the climate crisis and our rapidly shrinking carbon budget means that there cannot be any further fossil fuel expansion and exploration
anywhere. A fair phase out of fossil fuels must be based on principles of global equity and climate justice, as well as financial and capacity support, and climate reparations for a just transition to a renewable energy economy.

The good news is that the benefits of a transition to clean energy are boundless. "There is more than enough renewable energy potential worldwide to meet growing energy demands ... Even with conservative estimates that account for environmental safeguards, land constraints and technical feasibility, solar and wind energy could meet primary energy demand more than 50 times over, indicating no new fossil fuel development is needed (see map below)," (Teske & Niklas, 2021). Africa is endowed with abundant renewable energy potential, tracked at "39% of the world's total renewable energy potential," (Tucker & Resich, 2021) higher than any other continent on Earth. The International Energy Agency’s *Africa Energy Outlook* indicates that, “to date, the continent with the richest solar resources in the world has installed only 5 gigawatts (GW) of solar PV, less than 1% of the global total.” The report forecasts that, “Africa’s vast renewable resources and falling technology costs drive double-digit growth in deployment of utility-scale and distributed solar photovoltaics (PV), and other renewables, across the continent,” (IEA, 2019). While “Africa’s extractive sectors are estimated to employ less than one percent of the continent’s workforce ... Globally, every dollar of renewable energy investment generates two to five times more jobs than the equivalent investment in fossil fuels,” (Tucker & Resich, 2021)
As the continent’s economic powerhouse, Nigeria has the potential to position itself as a leader in the future renewable energy economy, and Lagos can catalyze this energy transition. Already the Lagos Climate Action Plan and Resilience Strategy, as well as your recent statement that, "it is incumbent upon us to cooperate with the government in the efforts to address climate change as the solution starts and ends with us," indicate that there is political appetite and policy direction, backed by strong civil society mobilization, to build a different economic path that is grounded in renewable energy. Lagos State is providing important leadership in the path to clean energy with the launch of an electrification policy that is based on renewable energy, and we believe this can multiply.

Major cities across the world are calling for an international mechanism to manage a fair phase out of fossil fuels. Vancouver, Barcelona, Los Angeles, Cambridge, Sydney, Bonn, and Toronto are among a rising tide of cities who have endorsed the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty* — a global mechanism to manage a just transition away from coal, oil and gas. Lagos would become the first African city to join this global movement, demonstrating leadership to fairly transition our communities and economies to equitable renewable energy for all. This global campaign has been supported by 101 Nobel Laureates, 2,750+ scientists and academics, 170 parliamentarians from 35 countries, 35+ cities and sub-national governments, more than 1,300 civil society organisations, and health institutions representing more than 100,000 doctors.

*About the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative

The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative is spurring international cooperation to end new development of fossil fuels, phase out existing production within the agreed climate limit of 1.5°C, and develop plans to support workers, communities and countries dependent on fossil fuels to create secure and healthy livelihoods.

The proposed Treaty draws on lessons from global efforts to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and ban ozone depleting chemicals, landmines and other threats to humanity. It will advance action under three pillars:

1. **Non-Proliferation: Don’t Add to the Problem**
   An immediate end to the expansion into new reserves of coal, oil and natural gas would limit the globe’s production of carbon emissions (which if left alone would create more than twice over the limit set by the United Nations and other organisations).
2. **Fair Phase-Out: End the Existing Threat in an Equitable Manner**
   Since already operating oil and gas fields and coal mines contain more carbon than can be burnt under a 1.5°C target, phasing out those current stockpiles is a much needed step to keep the world under the Paris Agreement’s temperature limits. This must be done in a manner that is fair and equitable, with countries with the historical responsibility and economic capacity leading the transition by phasing out their fossil fuel production fastest.

3. **Just Transition: Accelerate an Equitable Transition**
   Every worker, community, and country must be taken into the deepest consideration on the way to fast-tracking all solutions. Only a proactive plan to enable economic diversification, implement renewable energy and other reliable, cost-effective low-carbon solutions will be able to meet the needs of a sustainable future.

For more information on the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, please visit the website and view the introduction video.

As the Governor of Lagos State, we (the undersigned) collectively request that you seize the momentum of the global shift to clean energy, harnessing the unparalleled renewable energy potential of our continent to position Nigeria, and Lagos as a global leader in the global energy transition, by:

- **Endorsing the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty on behalf of the Lagos State Government.**
- **Popularising and democratising the electrification policy by Lagos State Government to involve all stakeholders and reduce the dependency on polluting energy sources such as diesel generators.**
- **Recognising and communicating the threat of the climate emergency to Nigeria’s coastal states, rally these states to support the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and pressure the national government to take action on equitable fossil fuel phase-out and a just energy transition.**

**References**
- Teske S, Niklas S. (2021), Fossil Fuel Exit Strategy: An orderly wind down of coal, oil and gas to meet the Paris Agreement. [https://fossilfueltreaty.org/exit-strategy](https://fossilfueltreaty.org/exit-strategy)
● SEI, IISD, ODI, Climate Analytics, CICERO, and UNEP. (2019). The Production Gap: The discrepancy between countries’ planned fossil fuel production and global production levels consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C or 2°C. 

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