

C/o: Africa Network for Environment and
Economic Justice (ANEJ)
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10th May, 2021.

The Most Revd Justin Welby

Archbishop of Canterbury
Canterbury Cathedral
Lambeth Palace, London, SE1 7JU

CC. The Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board and
other Church of England Leaders

Your Grace,

OPEN LETTER TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

We welcome the leadership that you are providing in this vital year for our climate, such as your work convening global faith leaders ahead of the Glasgow summit.

We fully agree with your statement that:

“We all have both a moral and financial responsibility to address the climate emergency and to use those tools available to us to support the goals of the Paris Agreement. For Christians and people of conscience, this is even more so when you see the impacts on the world’s poorest and least equipped to adapt to extreme weather, as well as the impacts on the beauty of God’s creation”.

In that context, we are extremely disappointed and concerned to see that the Church of England Pensions Board is lending its moral and financial authority to Shell, and plans to vote for Shell’s climate and energy plan at its 2021 Annual Meeting. We urge you to use all the tools available to you to encourage all parts of the Church of England to challenge Shell, rather than champion the corporation’s climate and energy plan.

In a recent article the Church of England Pensions Board’s Chief Responsible Investment Officer wrote that Shell’s “goal is clear and unambiguous, and Shell is accountable for delivering that target”. We strongly disagree. Nigeria has deep experience with Shell, and as representatives of Nigerian citizens’ groups we wish to tell you that we feel that the company is the opposite of accountable to most Nigerians, and has a track record of misleading statements and commitments.

Shell should not be rewarded for setting a long-term ambition to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050 - we need urgent action now, starting this year.

It is not acceptable for the Church to sign off on a Shell plan for this decade that makes no absolute carbon emission reduction pledges, includes huge increases in gas production, and relies on improbably large amounts of tree-planting. Indeed, Shell’s rush to find land for ‘nature-based solutions’ might well lead to further carbon colonialism, slavery and human rights violations in the global south. Aiming for net-zero carbon emissions has become another effort by polluting entities like Shell to avoid cutting emissions but rather continue in the harmful practices that drive global warming. Net zero is not zero emissions. It simply

means polluting and assuming the equivalent amount of carbon is absorbed by trees or is mechanically captured and stored by an assortment of risky and unregulated geoengineering proposals. Endorsing Shell's plan is akin to handing the corporation a right to toy with planetary systems while the poor and vulnerable continue to fight a losing battle against global warming.

The Church of England has an important voice in the world on many topics. And on Shell your responsibility is even weightier, as you lead engagement with the company on behalf of the Climate Action 100+, an initiative involving over 500 investors worth \$54 trillion.

With the effects of climate change more visible every year, the future of our children is at stake, in Nigeria, Africa and around the world. We hope that you hear our call, and take urgent steps to ensure that the church reconsiders its position on Shell. Endorsing the cynical climate plan offered by Shell would mean believing that Earth systems operate according to the principles of calculus and negates the truth that the Earth is a wonderfully created system of interdependent and complex systems that no man can control by mechanical contraptions or imaginations for the sole aim of meeting shareholder's pleasure.

We urge you to continue to support our demands for ecological justice and the protection of our environment and will be happy to continue the dialogue with you as we look forward to a positive response.

Our Sincere Regards:



Rev David Ugolor,
Convener and Executive Director,
Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice (ANEEJ)

For and on behalf of the following persons and organisations:

1. Rev. Nnimmo Bassey, Executive Director, Health of Mother Earth Foundation
2. Ken Henshaw,, We The People
3. Joel Bisina, Leadership Initiative for Transformation and Empowerment (LITE-Africa)
4. Bridget Emem, Kebetkache Women Development and Resource Centre
5. Edem Edem, Green Concern for Development (GREENCODE)
6. Umo Isua-Ikoh, Peace Point Development Foundation
7. Nelson Nnanna Nwafor, Foundation for Environmental Rights, Advocacy & Development (FENRAD Nigeria)
8. Amb. Clinton Ikechukwu Ezeigwe, Christian Fellowship and Care Foundation
9. Tijani Abdulkareem, Socio Economic Research and Development Centre (SERDEC)
10. Abiodun Oyeleye, New Initiative for Social Development (NISD)
11. Tijah Bolton Akpan, Policy Alert
12. Akinbode Oluwafemi, Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa
13. Mrs Nne Umoren, Women Initiative for Climate Change
14. Ms Idongesit Alexander, League of Queens International Empowerment
15. Mrs Nwindee Namon, Gbogbia Feefeelo of K-Dere
16. Mrs Regina Fabian Asanga, Rural Health and Women Development

17. Emeka Ogazi, Transparency and Economic Development Initiative (TEDI)
18. Dr. David Tola Winjobi, Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development.
19. Mrs Lilian Ekeanyanwu, CPDE Nigeria
20. Bako Abdullazeez Centre for citizen Rights
21. Aroh Silverleen, Save the Child Initiative
22. Olusola Adeosun , Community Heritage Watch for Development initiatives
23. Keme Opia, Bayelsa NGOs forum
24. Felix Ekhator New Apostolic Church Centre for Development
25. Israel Orekha, Connected Advocacy for Empowerment and Youth Development initiative
26. Inyingi Irimagha, Gender and Development Action, GADA
27. Bob MajiriOghene Etemiku, Civil Empowerment and Rule of Law Support Initiative, (CERLSI)
28. Dr. Jude Obasanm , Josemaria Escriva Foundation
29. Chris Azor, International Peace and Civic Responsibility Centre (IPCRC)
30. Grace Ese Obakina, Caring Hearts Initiative For Advocacy Development and Empowerment (CHIADE)
31. Onose Martha, Community Empowerment and Development Initiative
32. Abiola Daisy Igaga, Take a Cue Development Initiative (TACDI)
33. Batholomeu Okoudo, Keep Hope Alive Community Development Initiative
34. Doris Ogbeifun, Society for Empowered Youth Development
35. Philip Slabor, Development Initiators
36. Emeka Ezeigwe, Global initiative for Citizens Advocacy and Representation (GICAR)
37. Agatha Erhabor, Women Youths and Children Advancement Program
38. Mrs Deborah Olaolu Salami, CAFSO-WRAG for Development
39. Perseverance Umukoro, Oghara Centre for Social Justice