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The Honourable President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa
Office of the President
Union Buildings, Pretoria
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Dear President Ramaphosa,

Re: Integrated Resource Plan – A plea before finalisation

We appreciate the great task you have been dealing with and the many challenges facing our beloved country.

We know that you were not able to attend the United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York on the 23rd September. You will have heard that the outcome was a serious failure of leadership to meet the challenges of the climate crisis. You will also know that the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report warns against global temperatures exceeding 1.5 degrees Celsius, as does the just-released "Oceans and Cryosphere" report. The world has to make meaningful decisions about our future. Time is running out.

In your statement to the Action Summit you wrote: *"South Africa's blueprint for energy security, the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) calls for an energy mix that includes a significantly increased component of energy from renewable sources, as well as from traditional sources that includes coal, natural gas and nuclear energy."*

We write now to request urgently that the IRP excludes any new energy from coal. Neither do we don't want natural gas and nuclear in the next IRP iteration. We are urging Government to back the roll-out of renewable energy as a priority and, as a matter of urgency, to accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

We welcome the ANC's National Executive Council's (NEC) statement that the "IRP should articulate the lowest-cost option for the future energy mix for South Africa, with increased contributions from renewable energy sources." Also the announcements by Minister Creecy and the NEC of their intention to "develop a strategy on a just transition to a low-carbon path of development that takes into account the interests of workers, communities and broader society." We also welcome your commitment in your UN statement to mobilise climate finance for the decarbonisation of our electricity supply system.

We need to move away from the current emphasis on fossil fuel energy options in alignment with unambiguous scientific recommendations. We call for progress and rapid increase in earmarked funds for renewable energy and the just transition, in order to have the desired climate mitigation impact.

We are deeply concerned about the challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality in our country. However, the promotion of fossil fuels will only increase inequality while enriching a few. What is needed is a national rollout of renewable energy. This must be both on a large scale and at a local, decentralised and micro-grid level. This can be implemented everywhere, placing "power in the hands of the people," bringing with it new clean industrial development and significant job opportunities.

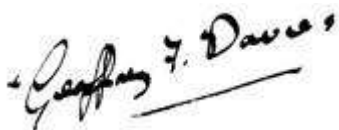
South Africa has some of the best renewable energy resources in the world. These now have the "least cost" advantage over non-renewable options. Furthermore, they can be installed quickly and can bring us rapidly closer to solving an array of pollution and health problems. Additionally, they will help meet essential mitigation targets and much needed development goals. Furthermore, the renewable energy 'least cost' option is also the least water-use and water polluting option. As South Africa is a water scarce country, this consideration in evaluating our energy options is of critical importance.

We don't have ten years to reduce global emissions. Safe levels of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases have already been exceeded. We are experiencing extreme climatic consequences: Devastating droughts in the Northern Cape and Karoo, destructive storms in the east of southern Africa, and temperature extremes and wildfires around the world. We have to reduce emissions urgently.

In your recent State of the Nation Address you mentioned the school climate strikes. We ask: What legacy do we leave our children? Without purposeful resolve to move away from mining and burning of coal and embracing a renewable-based economy, we can offer them little more than good wishes for an increasingly uncertain future. Our well-being is tied to the way we treat the natural world. Nature provides us with the resources we need, and will continue to do so if we approach her with a spirit of restraint and respect.

In conclusion, our energy policy is intricately connected to our economic policy. We urge that it be a policy based on the principles of justice and equity for people and planet. We kindly request that you meet with a delegation of us, as members of concerned citizenry, university and energy research bodies, civil society and faith communities.

Yours truly,



The Green Bishop, Geoffrey Davies
SAFCEI Patron



Francesca de Gasparis
SAFCEI Executive Director

For and on behalf of the following undersigned.

On behalf of the undersigned organisations and individuals:

Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI)

Project 90 by 2030

Energy Governance Initiative (EGSA)

Centre for Environmental Rights (CER)

African Climate Reality

GroundWork

WWF – SA

Fossil Free SA

Dr Nicholas King: Environmental futurist, global change analyst and strategist

Patrick Dowling: Environmentalist and Educator

Pete Atkins: Credible Carbon

Richard Worthington: Energy and climate change writer

