

Communique from the South Africa FLEAT III Energy and Climate Justice Cohort

Date: 30 July 2026

I. Introduction and Preamble

The Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI) and the participants of the third cohort of Faith Leader Environmental Advocacy Training in South Africa (FLEAT SA III) issue this formal communique to demand a truly just, sustainable, and inclusive energy transition in South Africa. As moral stewards and community leaders, we recognise the existential threat posed by the climate crisis and the imperative for a transition that prioritises the dignity of the human person and the sanctity of the environment.

"More than ever we need to work together, to think of future generations, and take urgent action if we are to respond to the scale of the climate crisis — a crisis that affects those who are poorest and most vulnerable and have done least to cause it."

— Pope Leo XIV

II. Core Concerns and Moral Mandate

Climate change is fundamentally a matter of justice. It disproportionately burdens those who have contributed the least to global emissions. We challenge the status quo and express grave concern regarding:

- Top-down decision-making frameworks that marginalise local voices and exclude meaningful public participation.
- Inadequate social protections and transition support for workers and communities tethered to the declining fossil fuel sector.
- The persistent lack of accountability from mining companies regarding environmental rehabilitation and reparations.
- Insufficient financial and technical resources allocated to community-led Just Transition initiatives.

III. Demands to the South African Government

We call upon National Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, National Departments of Electricity and Energy, Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment, and Minerals and Petroleum Resources, and the broader Government of South Africa to implement the following critical measures:

1. Formalise the role of faith leaders in policy development and oversight to ensure a fair, community-centred renewable energy system.
2. Recognise and integrate houses of worship as Community Resilience Hubs within national emergency and climate response networks.
3. Prioritise and fund socially owned renewable energy projects, such as community wind and solar micro-grids, to retain jobs and benefits locally.
4. Mandate immediate and thorough environmental rehabilitation and reparations from extractive industries.
5. Expand clean energy access for public institutions, including clinics, schools, and libraries, and support climate-smart agriculture to strengthen food security.

IV. Conclusion

The faith leaders of FLEAT SA III and SAFCEI reject any "false solutions" that exacerbate climate injustice and inequality. We stand for a transition that is participatory, procedural, distributive, equitable, and restorative. It is time for the government to invest in a future where communities are empowered to own and govern their energy destiny. Together, we must ensure that South Africa's energy future leaves no one behind.

Issued by the FLEAT III and SAFCEI South Africa Energy and Climate Justice Cohort.