

Memorandum by Civil Society to the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa.

No Faith in False Solutions Campaign.

To: Members of Parliament of the Republic of South Africa.

From: The Southern Africa Faith Communities' Environment Institute, Fossil Free South Africa, The Natural Justice, African Climate Alliance, The Green Connection, Project 90 by 2030, Greenpeace Africa, Earthlife Africa, Extinction Rebellion, Green Anglicans, South Durban Community Environmental Alliance, The Social Change Assistance Trust and Masifundise Development Trust.

Date: 22 April 2026: Earth Day

1. Executive summary

This **No Faith in False Solutions Memorandum**, submitted on **Earth Day**, represents the collective voices of South African civil society organisations, faith leaders, communities, and environmental justice organisations. It is a unified call to Parliament to oppose and reject false solutions to the climate crisis, including nuclear energy, oil and gas expansion, clean coal, carbon capture, industrial agriculture and factory farming. These false solutions exacerbate inequality and fossil fuel dependence, and will result in greater extreme climate impacts.

This year's **Earth Day** theme, "Our Power, Our Planet", recognises that climate progress happens through communities' immediate actions and advocating for climate justice. Civil society urges the Parliament to prioritise true, people-centered alternatives such as agroecology and community-owned renewable energy sources. This Memorandum emphasises the important role that Parliament plays in the effective enforcement of the Just Transition Framework and the Climate Change Act 22 of 2024 to ensure accountable, transparent governance that upholds distributive, procedural and restorative justice and protects marginalised communities from environmental and socio-economic harm.

2. Background

South Africa, like the rest of the world, is grappling with a multifaceted and interconnected crisis of climate change, unaffordable energy and food, socio-economic inequalities, environmental degradation, high levels of poverty, and unemployment. These escalating crises are disproportionately experienced by the poor and the vulnerable, who are on the frontline.

Detailed as follows¹:

- Increased loss of biodiversity, and pollution of air, soil, water, and reduced ecosystem services (e.g. clean water), leading to negative health outcomes.
- Increased poverty, unemployment, and reduced access to basic services, including affordable food.
- Far greater vulnerability of the poor to climatic and environmental shocks.
- Erosion of socio-economic rights and development, especially of vulnerable communities.
- Unequal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable energy, especially for the vulnerable.

These collective impacts threaten human rights and sustainable development².

As mandated by Section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, **legislators have a critical role in decision-making and shaping policies** in this context on climate change, energy, food access and the just transition.³ Legislators' mandate also covers the protection and conservation of the environment for present and future generations, and ensuring a sustainable environment and economic system that benefits everyone, especially the historically and structurally marginalised and vulnerable, as provided for in Section 24 of the Constitution.

The **No Faith in False Solutions Campaign** focuses on challenging, opposing, and providing evidence-based alternatives to the false solutions commonly presented as legitimate climate solutions, but that perpetuate poor governance and dependency on fossil fuel extraction, production and use.

¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability – Chapter 8: Poverty, Livelihoods and Sustainable Development (Working Group II Sixth Assessment Report, IPCC 2022) <<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/chapter/chapter-8/>> accessed 16 April 2026.

² "The concept of "sustainable development" is the fundamental building block around which environmental legal norms have been fashioned, both internationally and in South Africa, and is reflected in section 24(b)(iii) of the constitution. That is "ecologically sustainable development" which can be categorised as (i) the need to preserve natural systems for the benefit of future generations; (ii) the aim of exploiting natural resources in a manner which is "sustainable" or "prudent" or "rational" or "wise" or "appropriate" (the principle of sustainable use); (iii) the equitable use of natural resources (the principle of equitable use); and (iv) the need to ensure that environmental considerations are incorporated into economic and other development plans, programmes, and projects (the principle of integration)" Therefore pure economic economic principles will no longer determine in an unbridled fashion whether a development is acceptable. Development, which may be regarded as economically and financially sound, must according to section 24(b)(iii) in future be balanced by its environmental impact, taking coherent cognisance of the principle of intergenerational equity and sustainable use of resources in order to arrive at an integrated management of the environment.

³ Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, sec 24 (b).

False solutions deepen social inequality, exacerbate environmental harms, and divert the country and its resources from pursuing just and equitable climate action and advocating for a safe climate future.

3. Demands: We Reject False Solutions to the Climate Crisis

The **No Faith in False Solutions** Campaign is an opportunity for civil society and parliamentarians to convene and engage with false solutions to the climate crisis and the alternatives.

As part of this engagement, **we call on Parliamentarians to recognise that real solutions already exist that we can deploy now: community-owned renewables that create jobs, cut costs, and strengthen resilience.**

Therefore, we demand the progressive phasing out of fossil fuels, and an immediate stop to the pursuit, endorsement, and subsidisation of the following false solutions:

2.1. Nuclear Power Expansion

- The government is asking communities to trust a technology that is slow, costly, and deeply exclusionary. Nuclear expansion cannot solve today's energy crisis, nor is it an answer to the climate crisis.
- New nuclear plants take decades to come online and create thousands of years of radioactive waste, while people need affordable, reliable, sustainable, safe, renewable and modern power now.
- Nuclear energy will lock South Africa into massive debt, diverting public funds from real community-level solutions, and the cost will be paid for by electricity users who already cannot afford to pay their monthly bills.
- Furthermore, decisions and procurement are happening without transparency, real and meaningful public participation, or accountability.
- Nuclear energy keeps power in the hands of the elites in a culture of secrecy, instead of empowering households, workers, and communities.
- Radioactive Waste remains dangerous for generations with no long-term disposal plan in place.
- **Dirty, dangerous nukes have no role to play in a clean energy future.**

2.2. Oil and Gas

- South Africa stands at a crossroads, pushing for major onshore and offshore oil and gas expansion, as seen in the Integrated Resource Plan 2025.
- However, further development of oil and gas is not part of a clean, just, and sustainable future. Seismic surveys and onshore fracking threaten marine life, scarce water resources, and coastal livelihoods.
- Oil and gas are a false solution to our energy crisis; they have long-term environmental and social risks and distract from essential renewable energy investments. The domestic production of oil and gas will not shield consumers from high energy costs, as global markets regulate costs. Conversely, transitioning from a stable transport system, such as electric buses and taxis, offers a viable strategy to protect consumers from market volatility.
- The long-term economic implications of oil and gas investments could create stranded assets as the global economy steadily transitions away from oil and gas.
- The government **must prioritise** developing the country's abundant renewable energy potential as a faster, cheaper, and sustainable alternative to the energy crisis, thereby limiting the hazardous impacts of climate change and fulfilling international and domestic commitments.
- **The government must put an end to fossil fuel subsidies and expansion, with social protections in place, and the prioritisation of true climate solutions.**

2.3 So-called "clean coal" technologies (CCTs)

- The Government promotes "clean coal" as if coal can be made emissions-free or climate-safe. Most of these technologies exist more in theory rather than in practice, and the few that do work are too costly, too slow, or barely functioning in South Africa.
- Clean Coal Technologies (CCTs) are a mix of high-efficiency boilers, gasification, scrubbers, and carbon capture.
- However, only some reduce pollution, and almost none meaningfully cut climate-warming emissions.
- Carbon capture is the flagship claim, yet it is the most expensive and least proven technology, with no successful large-scale examples.
- CCTs keep money tied to old polluting infrastructure rather than real solutions that create local sustainable jobs and community power.
- **Clean coal doesn't clean coal; it delays the transition and deepens the harm.**

2.4 Carbon Capture and Storage projects

- South Africa must act boldly to prevent catastrophic climate change from exceeding the 1.5 degrees Celsius⁴ threshold.
- Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) is a false solution, championed by the fossil fuel industry to protect profits over people and the environment, diverting resources from cheaper, cleaner, renewable energy.
- CCS is energy- intensive, often relies on dirty power, and extends the life of fossil fuels, thus deepening the climate crisis and harming communities.
- This is risky, expensive technology that relies heavily on government funding to prolong fossil fuel use.

Thus, we **demand the immediate rejection of CCS. Call for the redirecting of funds to a truly inclusive Just Transition.**

2.5. Industrial agriculture

- Despite producing sufficient food for its population, South Africa faces a high rate of stunting and malnutrition in children under five.
- This paradox is exacerbated by the current system, where South Africa exports its best food while simultaneously importing 2,154 tonnes of pesticides (that are banned in Europe).
- This reliance on harmful chemicals represents a false and unsustainable solution. The practice of poisoning the soil and polluting rivers and biodiversity carries a high cost, extending beyond mere prices to include severe biodiversity loss and the creation of chemical-dependent soil that will be extremely difficult to rehabilitate.
- Given the ongoing struggle of the South African population to access adequate and nutritious food, agroecology offers a genuine solution that works in harmony with nature and assists rural populations in both mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change, while crucially improving nutrition levels among low-income communities.
- **We urgently call upon the government to implement policies that do not rely on pesticides and other harmful chemicals.**

⁴ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 °C available at <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/> accessed 18 April 2026

2.6. Factory farming

- Factory farming prioritises agribusinesses and profit, creating market concentration, climate impacts, and a broken food system that overlooks animal welfare and food safety and security.
- Factory farming has exacerbated farm animal suffering, which was worsened by the rise of industrial agriculture and factory farming, which kept the harsh conditions of billions of animals invisible to consumers and most advocates.
- Egg-laying hens are amongst the most abused farm animals, due to battery cages. In South Africa alone, a staggering 95% of layer hens are confined to caged systems, with free-range and barn systems accounting for a mere 4% and 1% respectively, according to the South African Poultry Association (SAPA).
- **Factory farming is not only harmful and cruel to animals, but it is also harmful to the environment and climate, and a threat to the food system; therefore, it is a false solution to industry-manufactured challenges.**

3. Solutions: Commitment to a Sustainable Just Energy Transition

We demand that Parliament, through policy, budget, and fiscal oversight and decision making, enact a truly just, equitable, and people-centred energy transition by:

3.1. Accelerating and decentralising renewable energy

- South Africa's abundant solar and wind power potential offers significant benefits, such as reducing electricity costs and alleviating Eskom's generation constraints.
- **Access to energy is not a commodity but a foundation for accessing other constitutional rights**, including human dignity, access to water, healthcare, food, and education.
- Energy access and affordability are vital for community adaptive and resilience capacities for the future and the climate crisis.
- Decentralised renewable energy systems, such as socially owned renewable energy cooperatives, mini-grids, and solar homes, are crucial for closing the energy access gap and are essential for adaptation, mitigation, resilience, and inclusive development.

- Accelerating the deployment of decentralised solutions requires making affordable financing for off-grid solar and mini-grids, in rural areas and townships, as a vital mode to combat electricity poverty and rising tariffs.
- This strategic shift will help reduce energy costs, enhance grid stability, and, combined with efficient infrastructure, offer a rapid solution to the country's energy shortages.

Energy security is vital not only for our economy to function optimally, but also for the inclusion and benefit of all communities.

3.2. Implementing a Just Transition Framework

- We remain dedicated to our country's goal of transitioning to a low-carbon economy and a climate-resilient society, thereby confronting the serious and imminent threat of climate change. This framework must be founded on a people-centred approach that champions and prioritises distributive, procedural, and restorative justice⁵. It is essential that it actively puts measures in place to prevent the perpetuation of past inequalities, instead, forging an equitable and inclusive future for all.
- This requires ensuring that no person is left behind, meticulously accounting for historical, structural, and systematic challenges, including the climate change impacts and the persistent marginalisation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities.
- Furthermore, this framework must tackle the entrenched legacy of unequal accumulation and resource access. This requires a firm commitment to transforming ownership, distribution, and access to resources, thereby establishing clear pathways where benefits, opportunities, and resources are shared equitably.
- Significantly, the implementation of this Framework must prioritise the redirection of resources to essential sectors for climate change adaptation, such as climate-resilient agriculture and infrastructure, including agroecology.

3.3. Agroecology- towards sustainability

- Agroecology brings sustainable ways of crop and food production that do not rely on harmful chemicals, pesticides and fertilisers, reducing negative impacts on people and the planet. The intervention is grounded in an **eco-justice framework**, which understands pesticide governance as an

⁵ PCC. (2022b). A Framework for a Just Transition in South Africa (Issue February). Johannesburg: PCC. <https://pcccommissionflo.imgix.net/uploads/documents/A-Just-Transition-Framework-for-SouthAfrica-wi-th-dedication-FSP-002.pdf> To

issue of **justice, ethics, and faithfulness**, not simply agricultural productivity.

- Agroecology will ensure that crops grown are the most suitable for the environment and also ensure that nutritional needs are well taken care of. The land will be preserved for future generations.
- Noting that one of the key crises of our age is the climate change crisis, agroecology helps communities to adapt and mitigate the impacts.
- Policies that support agroecology need to be enacted, and also policies that discriminate against it need to be removed. The gap in legislation has hindered the government's support, hence it's important for legislation that supports agroecology to be enacted to support, especially smallholder farmers in rural areas.
- **We call for the enactment of stringent legislation and the strict implementation of the laws to keep banned chemicals away from our food and our environment.**

3.4. Factory farming

- We advocate for the elimination of factory farming because it inflicts suffering on billions of sentient animals such as chickens, pigs, cattle, and others that are confined in conditions that deny them the Five Freedoms: freedom from hunger and thirst, discomfort, pain and disease, fear and distress, and the freedom to express natural behaviours. Ending factory farming means respecting the dignity of all farmed animals and recognising their right to lives free from suffering. We call on major retailers to use their immense procurement power to shift the sector toward humane production, because corporate decisions shape the entire food system.
- Factory farming prioritises agribusiness profit over animal welfare, environmental sustainability, and food security, creating market concentration that leaves communities vulnerable and farmers powerless. This is why SAFCEI challenges false solutions that anchor corporate control while demanding strong regulatory action: redirect subsidies from industrial giants to smallholder farmers, prosecute corporate collusion in the farm animal sector, and break up oligopolies that concentrate power in the hands of a few corporations. The government and South African Poultry Association (SAPA) have a responsibility to lead the transition away from factory farming, supporting cage-free and humane practices that centre on animal dignity, farmer livelihoods, and community wellbeing.

3.5. Strengthening climate governance, accountability, and transparency

- We advocate for strengthened climate governance grounded in human rights, climate justice, accountability, transparency, and the binding legal obligations set by the South African statement. Parliament has a constitutional and statutory responsibility to ensure that climate-related decision-making processes are democratic, participatory, transparent, and responsive to existing societal power relations, particularly those that marginalise low-income and climate- vulnerable communities.
- Effective governance is not a procedural formality. It is a prerequisite for the realisation of constitutional rights, including the right to a healthy environment, access to information, just administrative action, and socio-economic rights, which are directly threatened by climate change. Participation and transparency must therefore be meaningful and outcome-oriented, not reduced to compliance or “tick-box” exercises.
- South Africa’s Nationally Determined Contributions and the Climate Change Act 22 of 2024 institutionalise the country’s response to climate change in accordance with the Paris Agreement. These instruments impose enforceable duties on the state to implement climate action that is equitable, accountable, and capable of delivering measurable mitigation and adaptation outcomes. Parliamentary oversight is essential to ensure that these obligations are fulfilled in practice, not merely in articulated plans.
- In line with South Africa’s international obligations, including those clarified through the [Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice](#)⁶, confirming states’ duties under customary international law. Parliament must hold government officials accountable for delivering on their climate commitments, transparently disclosing all climate-related spending, and ensuring that public resources are used to protect present and future generations from foreseeable climate harm. Strengthened governance must ultimately translate into concrete improvements in people’s lives, particularly for those least responsible for the climate crisis, most exposed to its impacts.

⁶ International Court of Justice (2025). Advisory Opinion: Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change. Accessed 18 April 2026.

4. Conclusion

Honourable Members, the decisions that we make determine our shared future. We come together as civil society, requesting an opportunity to convene and engage on pressing issues and the lived experiences of communities. We call upon the South African parliament to oppose and reject all false solutions to the climate crisis, which, as evidence shows, will worsen all our existing challenges, including poverty and inequality.

We urge you instead to advocate for, legislate, and fund a truly just, equitable, accessible, affordable, and sustainable Energy and Agricultural Transition away from fossil fuels - one that centres human rights, promotes energy justice, is based on evidence-based climate science which promotes decentralised, diversely owned energy systems - including by communities - as is outlined in the 2022 Just Transition Framework.

South Africa can avoid a fossil-fuel-based development pathway by meeting increasing demand using renewable energy solutions. As civil society, we are committed to supporting our country's commitment to achieve sustainable development and prosperity aligned with our Nationally Determined Contributions.

We request Parliament for an opportunity to present and engage on the substance of this Memorandum to the relevant Parliamentary Portfolio Committees and urge your urgent response and action.

Submitted by:

(Space for logos/names of signatory organisations and communities)



South Durban
Community
Environmental
Alliance

