



## **Reimagine Industries Through the Lens of Sustainable Markets**

### ***Put the people and planet at the heart of global value creation***

Nairobi, 24 January, 2019 – Kenyans and particularly communities from Lamu and Kitui where the government of Kenya is backing plans by investors to develop a coal industry have received with gladness the speech Prince Charles of Wales – United Kingdom’s heir apparent as he addressed world leaders at the ongoing World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland.

Prince Charles told world leaders that it was pointless to accumulate wealth in a world that was facing an unprecedented global warming.

“Just think for a moment, what good is all the extra wealth in the world gained from business as usual if you can do nothing with it except watch it burn in catastrophic conditions,” he asked the world leaders.

The speech by Prince Charles couldn’t have been more timely and relevant for Kenyans who are witnessing prolonged droughts and floods – all caused by climate change while the Kenyan government is backing an ambitious controversial coal power plant in Lamu that doesn’t make any economic sense.

The [speech](#) by Prince Charles comes shortly after the UK – Africa summit where the Prime Minister of Britain, Boris Johnson delivered another powerful speech to the African Heads of States where he promised that UK taxpayers’ money will not be used on coal projects.

"To put it simply, not another penny of UK taxpayers’ money will be directly invested in digging up coal or burning it for electricity. Instead, we’re going to focus on supporting the transition to lower- and zero-carbon alternatives," said the UK Prime Minister.

The residents of Lamu and Kitui have been asking the government to consider investing in renewable energy and put off the plans to engage in coal mining in Kitui or put up a coal power plant in Lamu that will undermine their right to a clean and healthy environment as stipulated in Article 42 of the Kenya Constitution.

“As we start the 2020s decade, climate change must become an important topic not just for activists but for governments too. I am happy that the Prince not only recognized that climate change was the biggest threat of our time but also called on world leaders to start focusing on sustainable alternatives now,” said Omar Elmawi, deCOALonize Campaign Coordinator who also comes from Lamu.

### **Choosing Coal is Choosing Development is a Myth**

The UK Prime Minister also told the first ever gathering of African Heads of States in London, that the thinking by pro-coal businessmen that opting out of coal meant opting out of development was but a myth.

“There’s a huge myth about this, people say that you have to choose between reducing emissions and raising economic growth. Look at what happened here in the UK. Actually we have cut CO2 by 42 per cent since 1990 and yet GDP has gone up 67 per cent. And we stand ready to help you do the same.”, he said.

In his [speech](#), the Prime Minister further told the African leaders that the UK is ready to work together with them to tackle the causes of climate change, while also delivering the power needed to unlock the potential of all our people. And subtly called out the hypocrisy shown by other developed countries that were shutting down coal projects in their countries but investing in the same in Africa.

Reacting to the Davos speech and the UK – Africa summit, deCOALonize board member and Greenpeace Africa’s Senior Political Advisor, Frederick Njehu said this was timely as the 2020s decade must be devoted to solving the climate crisis.

“As deCOALonize campaign we indeed recognize that we need development. Lamu and Kitui in particular badly need infrastructural development. What we are saying is the communities want sustainable development. Not development that comes at the expense of their environment, health, livelihood or heritage. So we are truly happy to see Prince Charles and the UK Prime Minister speaking strongly about sustainable development to world leaders.” he said.

In June 2019 the National Environment Tribunal canceled the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) license issued to Amu Power after residents of Lamu successfully petitioned the court. The tribunal gave lack of adequate public participation among other reasons. Amu Power has since appealed, but the community remains firm that they want sustainable solutions to their challenges.

In November last year, the African Development Bank (AfDB) [pulled out](#) of funding any coal power plants including the Lamu coal plant. AfDB had been considering a partial risk guarantee for Lamu coal plant. This decision suggests that banks are realizing their role in fighting climate change and that it can’t be business as usual.

As deCOALonize campaign we have also questioned the economic sense of this project; especially after the [report](#) by the Institute of Energy and Economic Affairs (IEEFA) that showed that the country did not need a coal plant. We therefore ask the government and investors keen on the energy sector to do right by Kenyans and invest in renewable energy.

“As a country we must refuse strongly the idea that some people in government and unscrupulous businessmen can sit down somewhere and decide to make money in the name of development and at the expense of people’s health,” said Omar Elmawi arguing that the proposed coal plant was not economically viable.

It is our sincere hope that China as a keen investor in the energy sector in Kenya will walk the talk and like the United Kingdom move away from funding coal projects in Africa and particularly Kenya.

The World Economic Forum in Davos is ending today Friday 24th January.

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