

THE GREEN CONNECTION

NEWSLETTER



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Foreword



Liz McDaid The Green Connection Strategic Lead

The Green Connection Welcomes You!

The Green Connection welcomes you to another year full of eco-justice struggles. We continue to pride ourselves on ensuring the environment is protected and the country is gearing towards sustainable development, especially in the face of intensifying climate change.

This edition is jam-packed, with highlights of the Who Stole Our Oceans campaign which focuses on protecting oceans from offshore oil and gas drilling and encourages sustainable development. The sad part is, the bulk of our work has been focused on pursuing legal challenges against the government due to its failure to put section 6 of the National Energy Act (which covers the Integrated Energy Plan) into effect while fighting

for the safety security of the environment and coastal community livelihoods against offshore oil and gas projects.

The lack of meaningful public participation and attempts to exclude those who will be affected by offshore oil and gas projects is a recurring theme in this country. That is why The Green Connection is on a mission to empower South Africans, especially our small-scale fishing communities who call our coastline home to participate in decision-making on proposed projects that affect them.

This is the only way that social and environmental justice will be achieved. Through community outreach and advocacy work.

Let's continue to empower the youth and work towards protecting our environment and those that defend it, remembering to restore the ecosystem as people's livelihoods depend on it. Let us push for climate justice, while raising the voices of fishers, to ensure good governance. The time has come to phase out oil and gas.

For more information, kindly visit our website at www.thegreenconnection.org.za

Thank You,
The Green Connection



GREEN CONNECTION WITH BLOOM GO HEAD ON TO OBJECT TOTAL'S OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION PROJECTS IN SOUTH AFRICA



Image: Activists with small-scale fishers in Saldanha Bay



Image Left: Ntsindiso Nongcavu Small-scale fisher, middle Liz McDaid, Right Neville Van Rooy

Following several outcries by civil society about negative impacts that oil and gas poses to the environment and coastal livelihoods. On 17 October 2022, Bloom and the Green Connection launched OurTotalDestruction campaign against TotalEnergies after the French company applied for a production license to explore oil and gas in the South Coast of South Africa. The press conference organized by Bloom in collaboration with Green Connection was held in Paris to reach out to the French president to call out Total the French company to leave South African waters and shift to renewable energy.

2022 LEGACY ACTIVISTS MAKE IT TO THE FINAL ROUND OF THE LEGACY PROGRAMME



Image: 2022 Legacy Activists

After successfully equipping the first batch of Legacy activists in 2021 who turned out to be good environmental defenders and applicants of the Shell court case where the company's exploration right was set aside in Gqeberha High court. Late October 2022, Green Connection celebrated yet another graduation of environmental activists in Gqeberha, Eastern Cape. The dedicated eco-justice activists left the programme with more knowledge of how they can fight and voice out their own opinions when there has been poor public consultation process in their respective communities about oil and gas developments that could affect their livelihoods.

SOUTH AFRICAN FAITH COMMUNITIES ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE IN COLLABORATION WITH THE GREEN CONNECTION HELD ITS 3RD LEGACY WORKSHOP WITH FAITH LEADERS



Image: 2022 SAFCEI Legacy Activists

On 2 November 2022, Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI) Legacy activists attended their 3rd workshop in Schoenstatt, Cape Town with the aim of gaining advocacy skills. The faith based activists work towards inspiring change in their communities and encouraging people to voice out their worries about being locked in fossil fuels and the government not implementing sustainable energy sources. With the current climate and energy crisis, faith leaders continue to advocate for clean energy and sustainable development.

SMALL-SCALE FISHERS CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE AGAINST OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION. WHICH COULD POTENTIALLY AFFECT THEIR LIVELIHOODS SHOULD THERE BE OIL SPILLS



Image: Small-scale fishers picketing against proposed oil and gas projects

Following nationwide pickets against Shell & Searcher seismic surveys on South African waters in 2021 leading to 2022, civil society finds itself having yet to defend the West Coast against blasting of the ocean floor. On 25 November 2022, just after COP27 in EGYPT, Green Connection submitted its comments on the Basic Assessment Report for TGS Geophysical company based in UK to undertake 3D seismic surveys over multiple petroleum license blocks in the West Coast of South Africa. The environmental organisation raised key issues about surveys that marine lives would be affected and there may be behavioral changes to some fish species – While there's also more to worry about because exploring for oil and gas means the country is not abiding by the climate zero agreements, as it continues being locked in fossil fuels.

CLIMATE ACTIVISTS HOLD NATIONWIDE PICKETS AGAINST TOTAL'S OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN WATERS



Image: Activists marching to Total's Head Offices in Johannesburg

On 7 December 2022, The Green Connection with civil society marched to Total Head offices in Johannesburg to hand over the memorandum with their list of demands. One of the demands was for Total to stop offshore oil and gas exploration in South Africa and transition to renewable sources of energy. Climate Activists from the West Coast, Eastern Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal supported the action and held pickets to raise key issues about oil and gas companies extracting fossil fuels in South African waters which poses risk to coastal communities who depend on fishing for their livelihoods, while oil and gas companies reap benefits at the cost of people's livelihoods. Research has proven that drilling will contribute to climate change and coastal communities will bear the brunt.

IN THE MIDST OF SOUTH AFRICA'S ENERGY CRISIS, COASTAL COMMUNITIES CONTINUE TO RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT KARPOWERSHIPS



Image: Small-scale fishers picketing against proposed oil and gas projects

Fishers find themselves having to constantly address Karpowerships issue after a flawed EIA process where the noise impacts were not properly studied on how they would affect marine life. On 14 December 2022, small-scale fishers held a protest in the West Coast of South Africa demanding the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy to look into other sustainable energy alternatives. Concerned citizens raised key issues that Karpowerships would pose to the environment as extreme noise levels would affect marine species and their breeding zones. Coastal communities continue to fight against floating power plants.

THE GREEN CONNECTION WITH SOUTHERN AFRICAN FAITH COMMUNITIES ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE LAUNCHED A COURT CASE AGAINST SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO FORCE TO BRING SECTION 6 OF THE NATIONAL ENERGY ACT INTO OPERATION



Image: Left to right Neville Van Rooy, Francesca De Gasparis, Kholwani Simelane & Wayne Du Plessis



Image: Left Chennells Albertyn, middle Kholwani Simelane, right Francesca De Gasparis

The Green Connection and Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI) took government to court in the midst of an energy crisis and called for an Integrated Energy Plan to be put into effect. A plan that will guide the energy investment of the country. The launched legal action against Cyril Ramaphosa is to enable section 6 of the National Energy Act (NEA) under which the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) will develop the IEP. Court papers were issued at Cape Town High court and were served to the President and the Minister of DMRE on the 16th of January 2023.

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS AGAINST TOTALENERGIES OIL AND GAS PROJECTS



Image: Picket In Port Nolloth



Image: Picket In Gqeberha



Image: Picket In Knysna



Image: Picket In Cape Town



Image: Picket In Hout Bay



Image: Picket In Richards Bay



Image: Picket In Port St Johns



Image: Picket In Durban



Image: Graaff-Reinet



Image: March in Johannesburg



Image: Picket In Saldanha

THE NEED FOR AN INCLUSIVE ENERGY PLAN AND MEANINGFUL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS IN COMMUNITIES



On 25 January 2023, The Green Connection participated in a workshop that was hosted by EarthLife in Johannesburg and presented the Integrated Energy Plan, which is a plan that guides the energy infrastructure of the country. The key highlights were the importance of the plan being implemented and the citizens of South Africa being properly consulted about it before it is put into action.

CIVIL SOCIETY REMAINS OPPOSED TO TOTAL’S OIL AND GAS EXPANSION PLANS



Image Left: Kholwani Simelani Handover of the memorandum at TotalEnergies Headquarters



Image Right: March To TotalEnergies' Headquarters

The Green Connection and Natural Justice (3 February) made its submission on the scoping process of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for the proposed offshore Block 11B/12B production right and environmental authorisation project for TotalEnergies EP South Africa (TEEPSA), as part of the public participation process. The organisations say the assessment has several shortcomings, which will affect the interests of the local and indigenous peoples and communities.

FIVE GOLDMAN ENVIRONMENTAL PRIZE WINNERS URGE FINANCIAL PLAYERS TO STOP SUPPORTING TOTALENERGIES' CLIMATE-WRECKING STRATEGY



From left to right – Claire Nouvian, Heffa Schücking, Lucie Pinson, Liziwe McDaid

Brussels / Paris / Berlin / South Africa, 7 February 2023 – On the eve of the announcement of TotalEnergies’ annual results, five winners of the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize called on financial institutions to stop supporting the French major’s oil and gas expansion in Africa which tramples on climate, biodiversity and human rights. This week they presented their call in the European Parliament. The Goldman Prize winners have written to 78 banks, investors and insurers to demand they commit to stop supporting, either directly or indirectly, TotalEnergies’ expansion strategy in Africa, where the French company is developing a number of projects, including the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) in Uganda and Tanzania and the planned exploitation of Luiperd and Brulppada, two major offshore gas fields in South Africa.



Organisations signing court papers. (left) Chennells Albertyn. The Attorneys of record (left), Kholwani Simelane (middle) Francesca De Gasparis (right).

Section 6 of the Act requires the Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy to develop and publish the Integrated Energy plan (IEP), and review it on an annual basis. According to both eco-justice organisations, it is this lack of proper, updated energy planning that lies at the root of the country’s current energy problems.

FROM WESTERN CAPE AND NELSON MANDELA BAY TO PARIS AND BRUSSELS, SOUTH AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY IS INCREASING THE PRESSURE AGAINST TOTAL’S DESTRUCTION OF OUR OCEANS



Image above: Goldman Prize Winners & a small-scale fisher at EU parliament

The Green Connection, small-scale fishers and activists went to France in a joint bid with Bloom for the #OceanTotalDestruction campaign, to stop TotalEnergies’ oil and gas expansion in South Africa. They engaged with European Parliament (Brussels) with Goldman Prize Winners and Members of the National Assembly (Paris), environmental and civil society organizations and French Ministries to provide awareness about the campaign and request help to stop the French company TotalEnergies from exploring offshore oil and gas in South African waters.

PRESIDENT AND MINISTER OF ENERGY OPPOSE LEGALLY BINDING ENERGY PLANNING FOR SOUTH AFRICA (IN RESPONSE TO THE GREEN CONNECTION AND SAFCEI’S COURT CHALLENGE)

Following a recent court application (brought in January 2023 ahead of the President’s SONA speech) by The Green Connection and the Southern African Faith Communities’ Environment Institute (SAFCEI) – to review the President’s failure or refusal to bring Section 6 of National Energy Act, 2008 (NEA) into operation - both President Cyril Ramaphosa and Minister Gwede Mantashe have confirmed that they will oppose the legal challenge.

To sign the petition against offshore oil and gas exploration, visit our website and add your signature.

The Green Connection Board Members

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