



Coal is the biggest source of the world's electricity needs and is second to oil as a source of primary energy. In the last decade coal has been the fastest growing global energy source. Transnational corporations, international financial institutions, big energy investors, and many governments of both developed and developing countries have pushed greater coal usage. Their justification is that coal is cheap and therefore an important part of the supposed strategy for ensuring energy for all people. However, many local communities have been fighting coal projects for decades. They have felt the brunt of the harmful impacts and none of the promised benefits. In light of increasing awareness of and resistance to this dirty and harmful energy source, the industry created the myth of "Clean Coal. "

The truth is:

1. Coal is NOT cheap. It comes with a horrifyingly huge cost to people and the environment

By literally tearing up the earth, surface coal mining (strip mining, open pit and mountain top removal) causes widespread deforestation, dispossession of community lands, soil erosion and landslides, water shortages, pollution and other problems. Coal dust can cover entire communities and pollute water bodies and poison humans and aquatic life. People who inhale or come in to contact with dust, soot, chemicals and other pollutants from coal mining suffer allergies, asthma attacks, bronchitis and other respiratory illnesses. Toxins enter the water and air, creating acid rain and poisoning water sources.

Underground mining for deeper coal deposits is just as destructive. Waste tailings flow out of coal mines, especially abandoned facilities, and can leach into surrounding ground soil and water bodies. In addition to the carbon dioxide produced from the burning of coal, underground working and abandoned coal mines directly release methane (fugitive emissions) which, despite a shorter lifespan in the atmosphere, is a greenhouse gas 23 times more potent than carbon dioxide (CO₂).

The health impacts of coal mining and coal-fired power plants are severe. Studies show that exposure to coal-related pollution caused between 80,000 and 115,000 premature deaths and more than 20 million asthma attacks in 2011-12 in India alone.¹ A recent assessment of the health costs of coal in the United States points to estimates of almost \$200 billion a year.² Chinese and international experts found that coal use in northern China has reduced life expectancies by 5.5 years.³

Coal combustion spews out a toxic brew of large quantities of carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, mercury and other polluting matter. Below ground, in some abandoned mines, coal burns in the oxygen-filled seams giving off CO₂, methane, mercury and at least 40 toxic compounds that can escape through the soil and /or underground aquifers.

2. Coal is fuelling climate change, and exacerbating its impacts.

The industrial revolution ushered in an economic system that involves huge and rapidly expanding consumption of energy and the use of coal as a key source of that energy. Throughout the history of industrialisation the use of coal accounts for a large part of the massive increase and accumulation of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere driving dangerous climate change. The toxic effects of coal also severely diminish the resilience of affected communities and hamper their capacity to deal with the impacts of climate change.

¹ http://india.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/03/22/indias-coal-power-plants-kill-tens-of-thousands-every-year-study-says/?_r=0

² http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/02/17/coal-costs-us-study_n_824004.html

³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/08/china-environment-coal-idUSL6N0FE1W620130708>

The harmful effects of climate change from a 0.8 degree Celsius temperature rise since pre-industrialization are already being felt by hundreds of millions of people across the globe. The 5th Assessment Report released in September 2013 by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – the world’s climate scientists - warns that climate change impacts are happening at a faster rate than expected and to prevent catastrophic climate change will entail much more drastic and immediate GHG emissions cuts than projected earlier. In 2011, the International Energy Agency (IEA) concluded that we had five years left to implement urgent energy reforms after which we would no longer be able to avoid catastrophic climate change. With less than three years away from that point-of-no-return, the world needs to urgently end all use of fossil fuels and shift as quickly as possible to clean and sustainable forms of renewable energy.

Coal is the most abundant fossil fuel day (compared to oil and gas) and is used widely. Emissions from coal are now the single biggest human contributor to current global greenhouse gas emissions. With its current low financial cost, coal continues to be preferred by big business, who justify their continued use and promotion of coal by arguing that unproven future technologies may possibly be able to capture its planet threatening pollutants.

We cannot confront the climate crisis without confronting our use of coal.

3. There is NO such thing as “Clean Coal.”

“Clean coal” ranks among the most desperate of myths spun by the coal industry in a frantic bid to survive.

One example of “clean coal” technology used in developing countries involves circulating fluidized bed combustion systems (CFBC), which produces four times more coal ash compared to pulverised coal plants. According to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the risk of getting cancer is 900 times higher from coal ash exposure compared to cigarette smoking. The more state of the art “clean coal” technology involves “ultrasupercritical” and the “advanced ultrasupercritical” boilers and turbines. Using steam at much higher temperatures and pressure levels, this technology increases efficiency levels by at most 7%, still resulting in massive CO₂ emissions. Less dirty is not clean.

Industry leaders are also talking about “cleaning” coal energy further through Carbon, Capture and Storage (CCS) technology - an expensive, energy-hungry process that also poses new risks from the huge amounts of carbon that would have to be sequestered under the ground. The vested interests who support coal also advocate for the dangerous option of ‘geo-engineering’ (or large scale intentional disruption of natural processes) so that they can keep profiting from coal, while wrecking further harm to natural systems.

“Clean coal solutions” are really just false solutions that will not avert the climate crisis and will only intensify the harm to local communities impacted by coal mining, transport and energy production.

4. Coal is NOT about energy for all.

The global consumption of energy is huge and rapidly rising and yet there are more than 1.3 billion people with no access to electricity, and many more with barely enough.

Where we have witnessed huge increases in coal energy generation and consumption, we have not seen this matched by an expansion of energy access among poor communities; nor the reduction of poverty and improvements in the quality of peoples’ lives. Instead, we see the perpetuation of the huge disparities in energy use between the wealth few and the majority of people and communities. And energy systems continue to power economies and “development” strategies that favor elites and corporations and fail to deliver universal access.

The strong push for Coal Energy continues.

There are 1200 coal fired power plants being planned in 59 countries around the world today. If all these projects go forward, the International Energy Agency estimates that this will push us towards 6 degrees centigrade of global warming, will horrible consequences for all life on earth.⁴

The vast majority of projects involve private financing through bonds, syndicated loans and other financial instruments from a wide variety of financial institutions and institutional investors including commercial banks such as JP Morgan Chase, Citi and the Royal Bank of Scotland. However, public financial institutions such as The World Bank (WB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Japan Bank for International Co-operation, German agency KfW, The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the Export-Import Bank of China continue to either directly or indirectly support coal. International financial institutions, export credit agencies, development finance institutions and bilateral aid agencies use public funds to subsidize private corporations and provide technical assistance and other types of support to the coal industry. While the WB and the ADB persist with green-wash rhetoric on global warming and the need for “greening” economies – they continue funding the dirtiest of fossil fuels.

As developed countries reduce their domestic consumption of coal, the industry looks for safe havens elsewhere. The US, for instance, reports declining energy-related CO₂ emissions in the last few years and yet its coal exports to Asia, South America and Europe rose from almost 60,000 short tons in 2007 to over 125,000 short tons as of end 2012 or an increase of more than 112%. Coal and all its dangers are being vigorously pushed in developing countries as cheap energy source by Transnational corporations, international financial institutions, big energy investors, and many governments of both developed and developing countries.

The push for Coal is a BETRAYAL of the commitment and obligation of governments under the United Nations to address climate change and shift to sustainable systems.

Our Demands

- 1. Ban all new coal projects.**
- 2. End investment incentives and public subsidies to producers that drive the expansion of coal mining and coal energy generation.**
- 3. A full stop to all public financing of coal projects, including from international financial institutions, export credit agencies, development finance institutions and bilateral aid agencies.**
- 4. Mobilize public finance to make a just transition to democratic, renewable and clean energy systems for people and communities as fast as possible.**
- 5. Stop excessive energy consumption by corporations and elites.**

⁴ International Energy Agency Medium Term Coal Market Report 2012, <http://www.iea.org/w/bookshop/add.aspx?id=436>

Signatories

International and Movements, Networks and Organizations

Jubilee South - Asia/Pacific Movement on Debt and Development (JSAPMDD)
Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA)
Friends of the Earth International
Food and Water Watch
350.org
Oxfam International
Oil Change International
Greenpeace
GAIA - Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives
LDC Watch * Carbon Market Watch
Waterkeepers Alliance
Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA)
World Wildlife Fund International
The Rules
Women's Earth and Climate Caucus
No REDD in Africa Network (NRAN)
African Biodiversity Network
South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE)
ARENA
Migrant Forum in Asia
Federation of Young European Greens
Push Europe
Food and Water Europe
Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe
CEE Bankwatch Network
Corporate Europe Observatory
Focus on the Global South
Young Friends of the Earth Europe
Global Ecovillage Network Africa (GEN Africa)
Global Ecovillage Network Europe (GEN Europe)
Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy
I AM One in a Billion Campaign for Climate Change
Climate Change Network Africa
Zero Carbon Africa
Health Care Without Harm Europe
Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF)

National Movements, Networks and Organizations

Afghanistan

Sanayee Development Organization (SDO)

Australia

Jubilee Australia
Lighter Footprints – Climate Action Group

Austria

GLOBAL2000 – Friends of the Earth Austria

Bangladesh

EquityBD

Bangladesh Krishok Federation

Nabodhara

Resource Integration Centre

Bangladesh Jatiyo SromikJote (BJSJ)

Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication

Online Knowledge Society

VOICE

Belgium

The Flemish Coalition of the North-South Movement, I.I.I.I.I

Friends of the Earth Flanders and Brussels

Canada

Climate Action Network Canada - Réseau action climat Canada

Denmark

NOAH Friends of the Earth Denmark

Djibouti

Organisation de bienfaisanceet de dévelloppement

El Salvador

Friends of the Earth El Salvador

Finland

Friends of the Earth Finland

France

Friends of the Earth France

Germany

BUND e.V. Friends of the Earth Germany

Ghana

Foundation for Grassroots Initiatives in Africa (GrassRootsAfrica)

Ireland

Friends of the Earth Ireland

Iceland

Iceland Nature Conservation Association

India

Bharat Jan VigyanJatha (India People's Science Campaign)

Beyond Copenhagen Collective – India

Indian Social Action Forum

minesmineralsPeople

Nadi Ghati Morcha

Himalaya Niti Abhiyan

National Coastal Women's Movement

National Hawkers' Federation

Indonesia

debtWATCH Indonesia

KRuHA-Indonesia

JATAM (Mining Advocacy Network)

Indonesia Civil Society Forum for Climate Justice (CSF-CJI)

Solidaritas Perempuan

Aksi! For gender, social and ecological justice Indonesia

Mozambique

Justiça Ambiental (Friends of the Earth Mozambique)

Nepal

Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)

Campaign for Climate Justice Nepal (CCJN)

Jagaran Nepal

Netherlands

Concerned Citizens Against Climate Change Netherlands

Jongeren Milieu Actief Netherlands

New Zealand

350 Aotearoa, New Zealand

Niger

Association Nigérienne des Scouts de l'Environnement (ANSEN)

NGO JeunesVolontaires pour l'Environnement du Niger

Nigeria

Centre for 21st Century Issues

Climate and Sustainable Development Network (CSDEVNET)

Project IGALA

Journalists for Climate Change (JCC)

Ruth KasuwaOpaluwah Foundation (RUKOF)

Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF)

Labour, Health and Human Rights Development Centre Nigeria

Youth Vision Alliance Network Nigeria

Norway

Friends of the Earth Norway

Pakistan

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum

Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee

Philippines

AlyansaTigil Mina (ATM)

Aksyon Klima Pilipinas

Ateneo School of Government

Philippine Movement for Climate Justice

Philippine Movement for Climate Justice Cebu (PMCJ-Cebu)

Freedom From Debt Coalition

Freedom from Debt Coalition-Cebu (FDC-Cebu)

Cebu Alliance for Safe and Sustainable Environment (CASE)

Cordillera Peoples Alliance

Campaign for a Life of Dignity for All (KAMP)

Ecowaste Coalition

Ecological Society of the Philippines

Gitib, Inc – Mindanao

Green Convergence for Safe Food, Healthy Environment and Sustainable Economy

Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC)

Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self Determination and Liberation

LILAK (Purple Action for Indigenous Women's Rights)

Our Rivers Our Life - Philippines

MAKABAYAN Pilipinas

MAKABAYAN Pilipinas - MINDANAO

SANLAKAS (Philippines)

Partido Lakas ng Masa – Mindanao
Pagkakakisang ManggagawasaTransportasyon (PMT)
Partidong Manggagawa
Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement
PKKK (Pambansang Koalisyonng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan)
WomanHealth Philippines
Responsible Ilongos for Sustainable Energy (RISE)
Partnership for Clean Air
SuporTadoKaNamin Movement
Stop Coal, Caraga Region Philippines

Poland

Society for the Earth (Towarzystwo na rzecz Ziemi)
Polish Climate Coalition

Somalia

Somali Organisation for Community Development Activities (SOCDA) in Mogadishu, Somalia

South Africa

Economic Justice Network of FOCCISA
Centre for Civil Society
Earthlife Africa
Institute for Zero Waste in Africa
groundwork - Friends of the Earth South Africa

South Sudan

Community Empowerment for Progress Organization-CEPO

Spain

Asociación Biodiversa
Amigos de la Tierra (Friends of the Earth Spain)

Sri Lanka

National Fisheries Solidarity Movement
Centre for Environmental Justice, Sri Lanka

Sudan

National Civic Forum

Sweden

PUSH Sverige

Taiwan

Taiwan Youth Climate Coalition

Togo

Federation des ONG au Togo (FONGTO)
JeunesVolontaires pour l'Environnement
Sena ALOUKA, Togo

Uganda

SEATINI

Uganda Environmental Education Foundation(UEEF)

Ukraine

National Ecological Center of Ukraine

United Kingdom

UKYCC (UK Youth Climate Coalition)

The World Development Movement

Healthy Planet UK

The Corner House, UK

Friends of the Earth Scotland

Young Friends of the Earth EWNI

Friends of the Earth England, Wales and North of Ireland (FOE EWNI)

USA

Institute for Policy Studies - Climate Policy Program

Friends of the Earth USA

California Student Sustainability Coalition

Labor Network for Sustainability

Center for International Environmental Law

ActionAid USA

Sierra Club

Yemen

Human Rights Information and Training Center HRITC