

To:

President of the Italian Republic, Sergio Mattarella; President of the Council of Ministers, Giorgia Meloni; Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Antonio Tajani

We are writing with concern about the proposed “Mattei Plan” that was announced in October 2022 with a mandate for Italy to foster energy cooperation with Africa while addressing the root causes of migration flows, including the ongoing climate emergency.

According to several declarations made by government representatives throughout the past year, this goal will be translated into a “non-predatory, non-paternalistic strategy” aimed at the long-term, sustainable development of African countries. We understand the plan will, among other things, seek to:

- establish Italy as a major energy hub distributing fossil gas extracted from Africa and the Mediterranean to the rest of Europe
- address what the Italian government considers “illegal migration” from Africa to Italy
- increase cooperation on other development-related issues including infrastructure, health, education, and exports
- strengthen the role of Italian corporations in the exploitation of Africa’s natural and human resources

The naming of the plan after Enrico Mattei, the founder of Italian state-controlled oil and gas major Eni, makes clear that the overarching goal is expanding Italy’s access to fossil gas from Africa to Europe.

In this framework, as Italian Prime Minister Meloni announced during her visit to [Mozambique](#) and the [Republic of Congo](#) in October 2023, the Mattei Plan would be co-written with African partners – yet to this point, there is still no clarity about how this will happen. A major concern is also that the involvement of African partners could be limited to African elites and corporations, thus bypassing the voice of the African civil society.

The Italy-Africa Summit presents an unparalleled opportunity to redefine the role that European countries take to their partnership with Africa, steering it towards an approach that is more consultative, collaborative, and development-oriented. One that places the voice and leadership of Africa at the center, and that responds to Africa’s genuine development needs to build a future that is not only prosperous but also sustainable and equitable.

Our vision for this future is one where our people, our rich biodiversity, and our vital natural resources such as food systems and water are protected. It is a vision that demands a leadership approach, one that is bold, innovative, and inclusive.

However, the current iteration of the “Mattei Plan”, as developed by the Italian government for Africa, fails to adopt this consultative approach and falls short in recognizing and incorporating these African-centric goals.

The exclusion of African perspectives and needs in the development of the “Mattei Plan” by the Italian government is an oversight that not only undermines the spirit of mutual respect and collaboration but also perpetuates a cycle of inequality that hinders the progress of our continent.

This exclusion of African voices in its initiation and formulation not only reflects a missed opportunity but also a continuation of historical patterns where decisions impacting Africa are made without Africa. This is not just an oversight; it is a reinforcement of inequality that we collectively have the power – and responsibility – to rectify.

Furthermore, a new law on the Mattei Plan adopted by the Italian Parliament on 10 January 2024 undermines the urgent call to address the climate crisis by spurring more investments and financial flows into new fossil oil & gas projects, undermining the well-being of Africans harmed by fossil fuels, and distracting resources from other sectors – such as the expansion of renewable energies or adaptation projects – that could be more relevant.

The energy crisis that currently prevails in Europe must not be treated as a gateway to promoting new oil and gas extraction and export infrastructure. This “dash for gas” in Africa is dangerous and short-sighted. It is a disaster for our climate, undermining existing commitments to keep temperatures to 1.5°C.

It also risks contradicting Italy’s legal obligations to phase out international finance for oil and gas as promised in Glasgow at COP26. Italy - which shared the presidency of COP26 with the United Kingdom - joined the COP26 Glasgow initiative committing to end new direct public support for the international fossil fuel energy sector by the end of 2022.

However, through the operations of *SACE*, an Italian export credit agency - Italy has since become the leading public financier of fossil fuels in Europe and the sixth globally. Moreover, since the Paris Agreement came into force, almost half the amount of guarantees issued by SACE concern fossil fuel projects in Africa. The “Mattei Plan” risks exacerbating this. The proliferation of fossil oil & gas projects is an obstacle in the way of a just energy transition on the African continent, as denounced by African civil society who met in September in Nairobi, Kenya, for the Africa Climate Summit.

To create a meaningful dialogue ahead and during the Italy-Africa Summit to advance an agenda of, by and for Africans, we call on you to:

- 1. End neo-colonial approaches by European countries:** We welcome international cooperation, but it must be based on African-led, developed and owned approaches that address our fundamental development needs. Plans initiated by European countries, named after European oil-executives, do not seem to align well with this approach. We call for a reset of European-African relations and an end to all actions by European and other global North countries that presume to establish plans for Africa.
- 2. Transparency, participation and inclusion of African civil society:** The involvement of African partners should be as inclusive and transparent as possible. In a manner that promotes equality and meaningful dialogue where engaging with African Civil Society ensures the genuine needs and interests of Africans are reflected in any cooperative outcomes.
- 3. Access to energy and energy transition:** In line with COP28's final declaration, any plan for Italian-African cooperation should take into consideration what it means for Africa and Europe to both “transition away from fossil fuels”, thus we call on an immediate stop to any deals to expand gas production and infrastructure in Africa. We call for cooperation to scale up people-centered renewable energy to meet the needs of 600 million Africans that are without modern energy access and have been failed by the fossil fuel industry, and by previous engagement by European partners in Africa.
- 4. Adopt an integrated approach** to Africa’s climate, energy, and development issues – one that increases, rather than reduces, Africa’s food and energy sovereignty and directly benefits people and communities, not merely African elites. Without such an integrated African-led approach, concepts like “green growth” will simply further “neo-colonialism”.
- 5. Adaptation:** The summit must tackle global and African adaptation finance gaps, delivering on commitments to double adaptation funding, setting new targets to address the existing gap, reforming the financial system, and prioritizing quality, and accessible finance. Additionally, it should discuss how to position an adaptation framework that would incentivise financing options favorable to Africa like debt relief, tax waivers, and grants to bridge the climate finance gap effectively.
- 6. Agroecology and Food Sovereignty:** Africa needs to regain self-sufficiency in food production through agroecology and food systems that ensure food sovereignty and farmers' rights. The industrialized food systems, including its backing by commercial and multilateral banks, must be effectively countered, with appropriate public support for peasant agriculture and local food production.
- 7. Acknowledge** the huge role the climate crisis plays in migration, and why the continued ‘dash for gas’ in Africa by Italy and other European nations is perpetuating the climate

emergency as well as the security and food crisis which in turn forces African people to dangerously migrate to Europe.

Signed by the following African Organizations:

- Don't Gas Africa
- Voice of the Vulnerable - Nigeria
- Africa Movements of Movements Building Space.
- Northwestern youth lead-Zambia .
- Les Amis de la Terre-Togo
- GreenPeace Africa
- Entrepreneurship Initiative for African Youth (EIFAY Africa) - Nigeria
- Sir J interbiz venture -Nigeria.
- The Zoba Advisory- Nigeria
- Natural Eco Capital - Nigeria.
- GIFSEP-Nigeria
- Union Pour le Développement et la Coopération
- YoungAfricans for Development Foundation - DRC
- Denis Hurley Peace Institute - South Africa
- Climate Clock DRC- DRC
- Care For Environment (Cameroon)
- Génération pour l'environnement et la culture (GCEC-Cameroun)
- Relief international Africa - Nigeria
- Gender initiative for environmental risk and food security - Nigeria
- Action Solidaire International (Sénégal)
- Strategic Youth Network for Development (SYND)
- Power Shift Africa
- AbibiNsroma Foundation
- Mena Fem Movement for Economic, Development and Ecological Justice.
- Odeibea Foundation
- 350 Ghana
- The Green Connection - South Africa
- Connected Advocacy - Nigeria
- Africa Coal Network
- GREEN LEAF ADVOCACY AND EMPOWERMENT CENTER
- Global Sustainable Future Networks- Kenya
- Centre for Citizens Conserving Environment & Mgt (CECIC)
- Peace Point Development Foundation-PDF, Nigeria
- Community Development Advocacy Foundation (CODAF)
- Haki Nawiri Afrika
- Peace Point Development Foundation - Nigeria

- Quest For Growth and Development Foundation (Nigeria)
- HEDA Resource Centre
- Appui aux Initiatives Communautaires de Conservation de l'environnement et de Développement Durable,(AICED) , RD Congo
- Laudato Si' Movement Africa
- GreenPeace MENA
- Center for Alternative Development - Zimbabwe
- Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation Franciscans Africa
- Climate YES - Kenya
- Kikandwa Environmental Association - Uganda
- Climate Justice Coalition - South Africa
- Christian Aid - Kenya
- Environment is Life (ENLIFE) - Tanzania
- Sisters of the Little Company of Mary - Zambia
- Nairobi Recyclers - Kenya
- The Catholic University of Eastern Africa - Kenya
- Mouvement international des Intellectuels catholiques - Burundi
- Sisters of St.Charles Borromeo - Tanzania
- Generation Nouvelle GEN3 Juniors l'unité - Burundi
- Agir Pour l'Environnement - Central African Republic
- Conseil pour la Terre des Ancêtres République Démocratique du Congo
- Laudato Si Movement - Nigeria
- GDMR
- Support Humanity Cameroon - Cameroon
- Tard For Climate Uganda
- Riseup Movement Africa
- Youth For Ecocide law Africa
- Ecotaka Solutions Africa,
- Laudato Si Movement - Kenyan Chapter,
- Catholic Justice and Peace Department -St Monica Kitengela Kenya
- Jesuit Ecology Network Africa
- Centre Arrupe Madagascar
- Neighbourhood Environment Watch Foundation - Nigeria
- 350Africa.org
- Centre for Social Change, Johannesburg
- Magis Zimbabwe
- World Climate Change Adaptation Programme
- Tanzania Alliance for Climate and Sustainable Society (TACSS)
- Strong Roots Congo
- International Association Of World Peace Advocates - Nigeria
- Harmony Institute - Kenya
- Kikandwa Environmental Association (KEA) - Uganda

- YVE Gambia