

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### ***Italy-Africa Summit: African Civil Society Calls For a Consultative Approach to Address Climate Crisis and Protect African People***

- Italy-African Summit set to take place Jan 28-29 in Rome
- Plan for cooperation excludes the voice of African people, says African Civil Society
- “The Mattei Plan” as currently formulated earmarks further exploitation of African resources for Euro energy needs
- Organisations lay out 7 demands for Afro-European partnership in a just energy transition

**January 26, 2024 (Nairobi, Kenya)** - Ahead of the Italy-Africa Summit to be held in Rome on January 28 and 29, African civil society organisations (CSOs) have laid out a series of demands to be brought before African and Italian leaders.

The CSOs demand the Summit chart a new course for Euro-Africa cooperation, protecting African people, ecosystems and the continent's biodiversity, while addressing the Climate Emergency.

Billed by the Italian government as a forum to discuss a new strategic investment plan "for the development of the African continent", the summit will bring together African leaders, international organisations and Italian institutions to discuss and adopt prime minister Giorgia Meloni's strategy for Africa, the “**Mattei Plan**”.

The plan has been described as a "non-predatory, non-paternalistic strategy".

The CSOs are, however, concerned the plan did not follow a consultative approach and falls short in recognizing and incorporating African-centred goals. Naming the plan after Enrico Mattei (the founder of the Italian state-controlled oil and gas major Eni), they warn, leaves no doubt its overarching goal is to expand Italy's access to fossil gas from Africa to Europe and strengthen the role of Italian corporations in the exploitation of Africa's natural and human resources.

The CSOs also question the opacity surrounding Italy's plan to address “**illegal migration**” from Africa to Italy and are calling on the Summit to:

1. **End neo-colonial approaches by European countries**, a reset of European-African relations and an end to actions by Global North countries that presume to establish plans for Africa;
2. **Transparency, participation and inclusion of African civil society to ensure** the genuine needs and interests of African people are reflected in any cooperative outcomes;
3. **Access to energy and energy transition:** Meaningful cooperation to transition away from fossil fuels, scaling up of renewable energy to meet the needs of 600 million Africans;
4. **Adopt an integrated approach** to Africa's climate, energy and development issues;
5. Tackle global and African **adaptation finance** gaps and deliver on commitments to double adaptation funding;

6. **Agroecology and Food Sovereignty;**
7. Acknowledge the huge role the **climate crisis plays in migration.**

Calling for the Summit to go beyond elite and corporate interests and spotlight the voices of the African people, **Dean Bhekumuzi Bhebhe, Campaigns Lead for Don't Gas Africa, said:** *“The “Mattei Plan” is a symbol of Italy's fossil fuel ambitions, a dangerous plan and short-sighted ambition that threatens to transform Africa into a mere energy conduit for Europe. This ambition neglects the urgent climate crisis and the voices of African civil society. The pathways pursued for African development must be sustainable and equitable. They must be driven primarily by the needs and voices of its people, not by external energy demands.”*

**Lorraine Chiponda, Coordinator for the African Movements of Movements Building Space, said,** *“That Africa is disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis is not in doubt. To deal with the crisis, the continent needs partnerships that support an equitable and just transition away from fossil fuels. This must be done in a way that facilitates clean energy access and ownership by Africans, builds resilient food systems and supports climate adaptation. The Mattei Plan falls short of all the necessary levers needed by Africa. But even most frightfully, any financing of fossil fuel development in Africa undermines the continent’s climate resilience and adaptation.”*

For the summit to be truly convened under the spirit of mutual respect, **Joab Okanda, Senior Climate Advisor for Christian Aid,** said it should be the moment that Italy and its state-backed fossil fuel companies finally woke up to the harm it is causing Africa and commit to investing in Africa’s abundant renewable energy, which holds the potential to create jobs for thousands who die while trying to reach Europe.

*“It's time Africa broke away from being part of strategic visions of Europe’s fossil fuel players disguised as Africa’s development blueprint and mobilised political commitment to a comprehensive strategy that seeks to reposition Africa in the global neo-colonial energy systems and put it on path to self-reliance and sustainable prosperity”.*

**Fadhel Kaboub, member of the Independent Expert Group on Just Transition and Development, added:** *“If the Italy-Africa Summit does not respect Africa's needs, then the "Mattei Plan" is nothing but a blatant colonial project that must be exposed and rejected rather than celebrated by African leaders. We cannot accept partnership offers that deepen Africa's structural problems. We want to build renewable energy infrastructure to serve the 600 million Africans who have no access to electricity rather than export it for Europe’s energy security. We want to invest in food sovereignty and agroecology, not cash crop exports to complement the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). We need to escape the bottom of the global value chain and invest in high value-added manufacturing”.*

For media enquiries, contact:

**Don't Gas Africa**

Email: dontgasafrika@gmail.com

