

MOTION 1:

Africa will regret its reliance on China

China is now the African continent's largest trading partner, accounting for \$282bn in commerce in 2022. It is also the main country of origin for African manufacturing imports, providing 16% of Africa's total in 2018.

More than 10,000 Chinese companies are operating throughout the African continent and, since 2005, the value of Chinese business there has amounted to more than \$2trn, with \$300bn in current investments. Africa has also passed Asia as the largest market for China's overseas construction projects.

Chinese companies operate across many sectors of the African economy. Almost one-third are involved in manufacturing, one-quarter in services, and about one-fifth each in trade and construction/real estate. In infrastructure, Chinese companies' dominance is even more pronounced and they claim nearly 50% of Africa's internationally contracted construction market.

China argues that it is putting real money into real economies, developing real and much needed infrastructure, affecting the lives of real people. This is a fresh approach towards African development. In the process, China is winning the hearts and minds of the people of Africa.

Can that be a bad thing?

Bodies like Labour Unions, civil society groups, and human rights organisations will argue that yes it is, because, China's biggest interest in Africa is in her natural resources and not in her people. Oil from Sudan, Nigeria, Angola and Gabon and minerals from South Africa and Zimbabwe, timber and agriculture products from everywhere, to name but a few. They further criticise Chinese enterprises for poor labour conditions, unsustainable environmental practices, human rights abuses and job displacement.

Good-governance watchdogs warn that China negotiates unfair deals that take advantage of African governments' relative weaknesses and that foster corruption and wasteful decision making. In their view, China perpetuates a neo-colonial relationship in which Africa exports raw materials to China in exchange for manufactured goods. In some countries, resentment at Chinese business practices has led to popular protests and violence against Chinese businessmen and migrants.

So is Africa's reliance on China something African's will regret?

Debate it!



RESEARCH LINK

Find more information:

<https://trello.com/b/R0OVemw4/concern-debates>



MOTION 2:

African nations must be allowed to develop fossil fuel resources to help lift their people out of poverty

The continent of Africa has huge reserves of fossil fuels of all kinds: oil, coal and natural gas, which provide great opportunities to improve energy access, accelerate economic growth and reduce poverty.

Despite their reserves, the continent faces enormous energy challenges. According to the World Bank just 30.4% of the continents people have access to electricity.

Many African leaders argue that their countries need to exploit their reserves to help generate electricity and make it available to millions of their people who lack access to the grid. They also want to increase exports to Europe, where many countries are looking for an alternative to Russian gas.

They argue that Western countries benefitted from dirtier fossil fuels so Africa should not be prevented from exploiting its cleaner natural gas in order to raise living standards on the continent.

But climate campaigners and leaders from low-lying islands have said this will lock Africa into using fossil fuels for many years and make the crucial goal of slowing the global temperature rise more difficult.

Greenpeace Africa says that the continent should embrace renewable energy instead, pointing out that Africa has 60% of the world's solar power potential but only 1% of global installed solar capacity is on the continent. "Fossil fuels must be phased out; they must be kept in the ground. Africa's backyard will not become Europe's forecourt"

While Mary Robinson the former President of Ireland, Climate Activist and Chair of the UN Elders group argues that Africa's energy poverty is so great that Africa should be allowed exploit its natural gas resources.

So...should African countries be allowed to develop their fossil fuel resources?

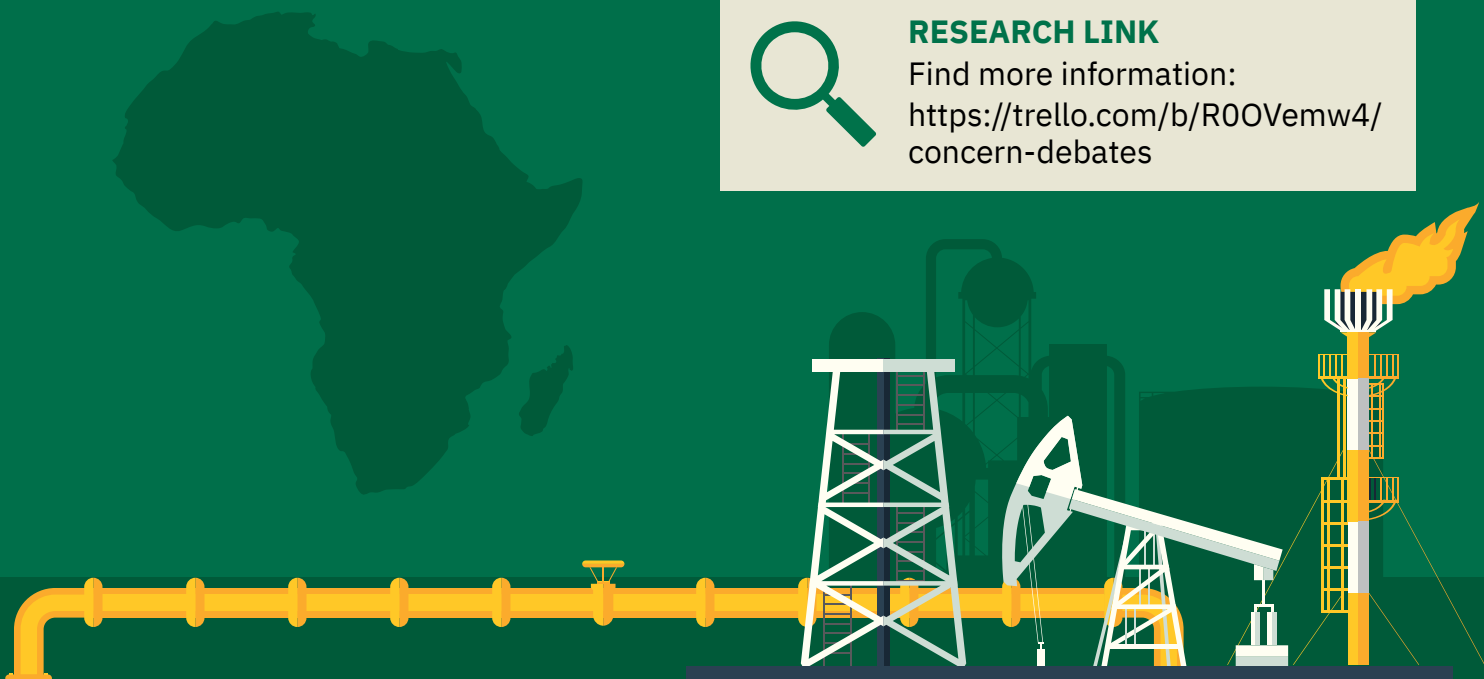
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MOTION 3:

Big business is indifferent to the Sustainable Development Goals

The year 2030 looms large. It is the year when each of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are due to be achieved and it is just seven years away!

As we know the SDGs are, in their most radical form, a call for system change at every level. They encompass almost every aspect of human and planetary wellbeing and, if met by their target date in 2030, they will provide a stable and prosperous life for all people everywhere and will ensure the health of the planet for generations to come.

Shortly after launching the Goals back in 2015 the then UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, said “Our planet and its people are suffering too much. This year has to be the moment for turning global promises into reality. Governments must take the lead with decisive steps. At the same time, businesses can provide essential solutions and resources that put our world on a more sustainable path,”

The sunny optimism that greeted the SDGs in 2015 is gone. Back then, many corporations quickly demonstrated support for the agenda as crucial partners in achieving the world’s vision of sustainable development on a global scale. Companies swiftly adopted the goals and incorporated them into their communications and sustainability reports.

But companies have largely fallen short of taking any new concrete actions to achieve the SDG goals. Their underwhelming engagement looks more like SDG washing, akin to the greenwashing companies commit when they market as “green” products that are only marginally more environmentally friendly than their counterparts. Companies that SDG-wash claim to contribute to societal-level sustainability goals but lack proper evidence and actions to support the claim.

However, a quick Google search of ‘the SDGs and Business’ returns thousands of examples of Big Companies taking the SDGs seriously through investments, strategies and concrete actions (like creating Sustainability Departments).

So, is it correct to say that *Big Business is indifferent to the Sustainable Development Goals?*

Debate it!



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