

**Keynote Address to MSGBC 2023**  
**Nouakchott, Mauritania, 21-22 November, 2023**  
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1. I should like to thank the host country for the 2023 edition of the MSGBC Conference, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the other member countries of the MSGBC and Energy, Capital and Power, the organizers for the invitation to deliver this Keynote address.
2. I should also like to commend the foresight of the leaders of the MSGC countries for coming together to pursue in a collective manner what is in the best interest of their countries and peoples.
3. In APPO, we believe that cooperation and collaboration are key to ending Africa's general underdevelopment and more specifically creating a future for Africa's oil and gas industry in an increasingly challenging global energy environment.
4. We also believe that the salvation of Africa lies in the hands of Africans, not some foreign countries and people. Furthermore, we believe that for too long Africa has blamed others for its underdevelopment when the root cause is inside Africa itself. We do not contest the structural harm that colonialism inflicted on our continent and its people. But we believe that we have been responsible for the perpetuation of some of these injustices.
5. Your Excellency, let me relate what I have just said to what is happening on the global energy scene where the whole world – the rich and the poor alike – have been herded into accepting energy transition in the name of protecting the planet and by extension, protecting all living beings, humans, animals and plants.
6. The world has been made to believe that the planet is on the verge of a catastrophe due to the burning of enormous fossil fuels which release carbon dioxide, GHG into the atmosphere.
7. We are all therefore asked to commit to finding a solution to this existential challenge for mankind.
8. In the quest for this commitment, no country - developed or underdeveloped, rich or poor, those who created the mess as well as the bystanders, like the countries of Africa -, is exempted. The task of finding solutions to the climate challenge is posed as a global challenge, a challenge for humanity.
9. Sadly for Africa, the science of climate change, or the researches whose findings are used to prove the existence of climate change, was developed and promoted by the

industrialized and developed countries of the world. So are the proposed solutions to the dangers of climate change.

10. Africa played little or no role in formulating the solutions to climate change. These solutions were developed and are being propagated by the very societies that caused the mess called climate change.
11. What is the solution: We are told the solution is net-zero. Net zero essentially means a state in which human caused emissions are balanced by human-caused carbon dioxide removals. In other words, don't add more emissions to what already exists. If you do there will be a climate catastrophe and we will all perish.
12. The implication of accepting this as the only solution to the climate challenge is that the world has to end or limit fossil fuel use. In other words, underdeveloped countries in Africa that need affordable and reliable energy to industrialize their economies and lift their people from poverty cannot use the same energy that the industrialized and developed countries of the world used to get to where they are today. This is even as Africa is hugely endowed with these energy resources, like Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau and all the countries of the MSGBC basin.
13. The question Africans should be asking at the various COPs is: Is net-zero the only solution to the climate challenge? To answer that question, one needs to understand that today's climate challenge is more the result of legacy emissions than contemporary or future emissions. In a period of 150 years, between 1870 and 2020 today's champions of climate change have used fossil fuels to industrialize their economies and societies. They have made the living conditions of their people better. In doing so, they emitted an estimated 2,500 gigatons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Interestingly, these countries were aware of the dangers of burning fossil fuels as far back as 1859 and 1896 when their own climate scientist published studies linking the burning of fossil fuels to carbon emissions and GHG. But they went on burning it anyway because their goal was to industrialize their economies, and there was not and still there isn't any better form of energy for industrialization than oil and gas.
14. Excellency ladies and gentlemen, if the problem is the existing emissions in the atmosphere, we agree that net-zero is a good strategy to addressing the challenge. But a better strategy is to work on removing legacy emissions. If the developed countries who are today championing a quick energy transition are to focus on further developing and massively deploying Carbon Dioxide Removal Technologies to remove even 500 gigatons of the 2,500 gigatons of emissions that they released into the atmosphere, the fear of an imminent climate catastrophe shall be allayed.
15. But more importantly for Africa it will provide us the opportunity to also use the same fossil fuels used by today's industrialized countries to get industrialized and developed.

16. And globally, it will bring greater peace and harmony among nations of the world as the wide gap between the poor and the rich shall be narrowed because each nation shall be able to meet the basics of life for its people.
17. As Africa prepares to go to COP28, our appeal is that our parties should not go begging for a pie of the illusory climate fund. Climate Fund, which is externally sourced, cannot solve Africa's problems. Let them use those funds to further develop CDR technologies, which exists already but is not being further developed for political and strategic reasons, deploy them to clean the mess they created.
18. I thank you for your kind attention.