

## **Chinese ambassador to Kenya Wu Peng invites deCOALonize members for a meeting tells them he personally doesn't support coal plants**

In an extra ordinary move, the Chinese ambassador to Kenya Wu Peng invited members of the deCOALonize campaign to discuss the controversial Lamu Coal Power plant just two days after a land mark ruling that put the controversial project to a stop.

The Ambassador assured the deCOALonize team that, "It has been and always will be the people of Kenya who can decide whether there would be a coal power plant or not.", explaining further that he was personally opposed to coal power plants.

Save Lamu has tried reaching the Chinese government through the Chinese embassy in Nairobi since 2016 in vain – forcing the campaign to target the Chinese embassy and the ministry of energy in their June 12<sup>th</sup> protest.

Indeed the Ambassador admitted he was aware of the protest and that he knew the protesters had been dispersed by the police before reaching the Chinese embassy – hence the decision to invite the members of the campaign for a meeting.

The meeting that happened on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June therefore offered the campaign a chance to ask why the government of China has been ignoring their letters written by Save Lamu, and particularly why China as a global leader on climate change issues including being the United Nation's co-chair of the Global Climate Change Action summit was treating the controversial project lightly. Other issues the campaign raised with the envoy include:

- That China is currently the largest solar investor in the world and also one of the biggest polluters globally
- That the coal plant is backed by ICBC (industrial and commercial bank of China) being the biggest investor
- That the project proponents have already had the ESIA license cancelled for not involving the Lamu and Kenyan people as well as not having provided enough information on issues like the location of the ash yard which was crucial in giving an ESIA license
- That Lamu is a UNESCO world heritage site and the World Heritage Committee has already issued a draft decision proposing Lamu be put on watchlist as the world heritage site is in danger because of the proposed coal plant (among other reasons)
- That our geothermal capacity is yet to be exhausted having barely utilized 10% of its availability
- That the deCOALonize campaign members are NOT against development but are pushing for development that is sustainable and doesn't harm the people of Lamu and Kenyans at large
- That we welcome them to invest in other renewable energy (RE) options like wind, solar, tidal and geothermal
- That our president has promised 100% RE sufficiency by 2020 and therefore having a coal plant will be in direct contradiction to that
- He was also invited to Lamu to see what they are planning to destroy

Having considered these issues, the Ambassador conceded that climate change is a pressing problem, that they have sacrificed the GDP in China for Climate change issues.

He also conceded that Lamu coal plant or any investment in Kenya by China will not take place without Kenyans involvement. Adding that the Chinese government is committed to invest in RE

giving examples of Olkaria geothermal and Garissa solar plant where they provided concessional loans for these RE projects.

The deCOALonize team thus thanked him for inviting them to this meeting and submitted the demands to him as cited below:

*Following the principle of intergenerational responsibility, we do not want any coal projects in Kenya*

*That the Chinese government should respect and uphold the Paris accord that both China and Kenya have committed to*

*That Kenyans are very resilient and we will never waver from our position of not having any coal plants or mines in Kenya and therefore they should invest their money in other projects*

*We would expect China to have acted before the 30 days of appeal to the NET decision have been exhausted*

The campaign was represented by a team of four, including the campaign Coordinator; Omar Elmawi, Greenpeace Africa – Kenya team – as the chair of the deCOALonize board and Raya Famau from Save Lamu.