



Amnesty International members only  
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# EMERGENCY GLOBAL ASSEMBLY MEETING MAY 2019: DIVESTMENT FROM FOSSIL FUEL COMPANIES GLOBAL ASSEMBLY DECISION

**AI Index:** ORG 50/0348/2019

**From:** Ann Burroughs, Global Assembly and Preparatory Committee Chair

## **Summary:**

On Saturday 11 May, the Global Assembly held an emergency virtual meeting to vote on a motion from the International Board on divestment from fossil fuel companies. Please see the paper ORG 50/0219/2019: Emergency Global Assembly Meeting: Divestment from fossil fuel companies revised motion.

The EGA Meeting was quorate, with 52 standing representatives (or their proxies) participating (or attempting to participate) in the virtual meeting.

The Global Assembly voted by a majority in favour of this motion. Attached you will find the final decision text of Global Assembly Decision 2019/01: Divestment from fossil fuel companies.

Please click [here](#) for a recording of the virtual EGA Meeting.<sup>1</sup> The meeting report and results of the meeting evaluation will be shared shortly.

## **How to use this paper:**

Standing representatives are requested to share this paper with their national board, members and policy advisors.

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<sup>1</sup> The recordings are available in English, French and Spanish. To change the language, go to the bottom of the screen, click on "language" and select your preferred audio language.

Please note that the video recording may require some time to buffer and/or download due to file size or your internet connection.

**EMERGENCY GLOBAL ASSEMBLY MEETING  
MAY 2019  
GLOBAL ASSEMBLY DECISION**

This is the decision of the Global Assembly resulting from the Emergency Global Assembly Meeting May 2019. As mandated by the Global Governance Regulations:

- All parts of the movement are required to implement Global Assembly decisions (Regulation 6.2.3).
- At the next Global Assembly Regular Meeting, there will be a presentation in plenary for approval of a report on the implementation of the Global Assembly decisions (Regulation 10.1.2 (f)).

### **DECISION 2019/01. Divestment from fossil fuel companies**

The Global Assembly

Notes the existential link between climate change and human rights, in particular the ongoing and likely increasingly devastating impacts of climatic change on communities whose human rights and livelihoods are already under attack;

Notes that the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has stated, in October 2018, that humanity has a 144-month window to halve greenhouse gas emissions or risk catastrophic levels of climate change that would, among other things, deepen poverty, reduce access to clean water, and increase harm from flooding and heatwaves, and cause unprecedented levels of displacement;

Expresses its deep concern that global economic and political leaders have abdicated their responsibilities to humanity by failing to take the steps needed to prevent dangerous levels of climate change and thereby failed to act consistently with their human rights obligations and responsibilities;

Affirms that Amnesty International must challenge fossil fuel companies that refuse to rapidly transition towards providing human rights-consistent clean energy and thereby minimize greenhouse gas emissions from their products and activities (pending further clarification through the process set out in this motion, Amnesty International understands “fossil fuel companies” to be those companies directly undertaking coal, oil, or natural gas exploration or extraction activities, power generation from coal, oil, or natural gas, or distribution and retail of coal, oil, or natural gas to the end user);

Notes that Amnesty’s failure to divest from fossil fuel companies would not only contribute to climate catastrophe but also put the organization at odds with its own human rights mission and its developing advocacy and campaigning work on climate change and human rights;

Commits the Amnesty International movement to ensuring that all assets under the sole and direct control of Amnesty International entities including, where applicable, reserves, pensions, equities, investment funds and instruments, or other assets, are not invested in fossil fuel companies, as well as to divesting any existing assets from fossil fuel companies.

Decides additionally that where Amnesty entities invest in or contribute to funds not under their sole or direct control, including, where applicable, employee pension funds, the entities concerned will

engage with other stakeholders in order to encourage and facilitate divestment from fossil fuel companies.

Invites Amnesty entities, where to do so would be consistent with their investment strategies and individual circumstances, to consider investing in human rights-consistent renewable energy technologies and generation, and human rights-consistent technologies and services relating to energy storage, energy efficiency, and energy saving.

Reaffirms that in directing, controlling, or seeking to influence the direction and control of investments and the disposal of assets, Amnesty International entities will at all times act in a manner consistent with their legal and fiduciary duties, and in pursuit of the principle that the Amnesty movement's funds should not contribute to human rights harms.

Instructs the International Board to establish a Modalities Working Group, including representatives of national Amnesty membership entities, to propose options for and to make recommendations on the modalities for divestment from fossil fuel companies, including issues relating to:

1. Further developing, as necessary, the definition of what constitutes a fossil fuel company for the purposes of Amnesty's divestment;
2. Legal and practical barriers to partial or full divestment;
3. The time-frame for divestment;
4. How this effort, taken together with the impact of the divestment movement, should prevent any unintended negative impacts on disadvantaged groups, including through exceptions to divestment to avoid such negative impacts;
5. Exceptions to permit ownership of a strictly limited number of shares to allow Amnesty to obtain information and hold companies to account at shareholder meetings, and
6. The communications plan around the decision.

The Modalities Working Group should present its work and recommendations to the International Board by the end of 2019.

Instructs the International Board to adopt a decision as soon as reasonably possible, building upon the work of the Modalities Working Group, which would set out the criteria on divestment from fossil fuel companies and provide guidance on the application of Core Standard 21 in the context of fossil fuels.

Calls upon Amnesty entities to support the work of the Modalities Working Group by identifying if any of their assets are invested in fossil fuel companies and indicating the possible consequences of divesting these assets from fossil fuel companies, if applicable.

Instructs the International Board to consult with national Amnesty membership entities on the proposed decision prior to its adoption.

Welcomes the adoption of the strategy to effectively safeguard human rights in the face of climate change and other environmental degradation requested by the 2017 International Council meeting and commits to its implementation.

Further commits the Amnesty International movement to considering other ways that we can amend our policies and practices in order to significantly reduce the negative environmental impact and carbon footprint of the movement's activities. / Ends