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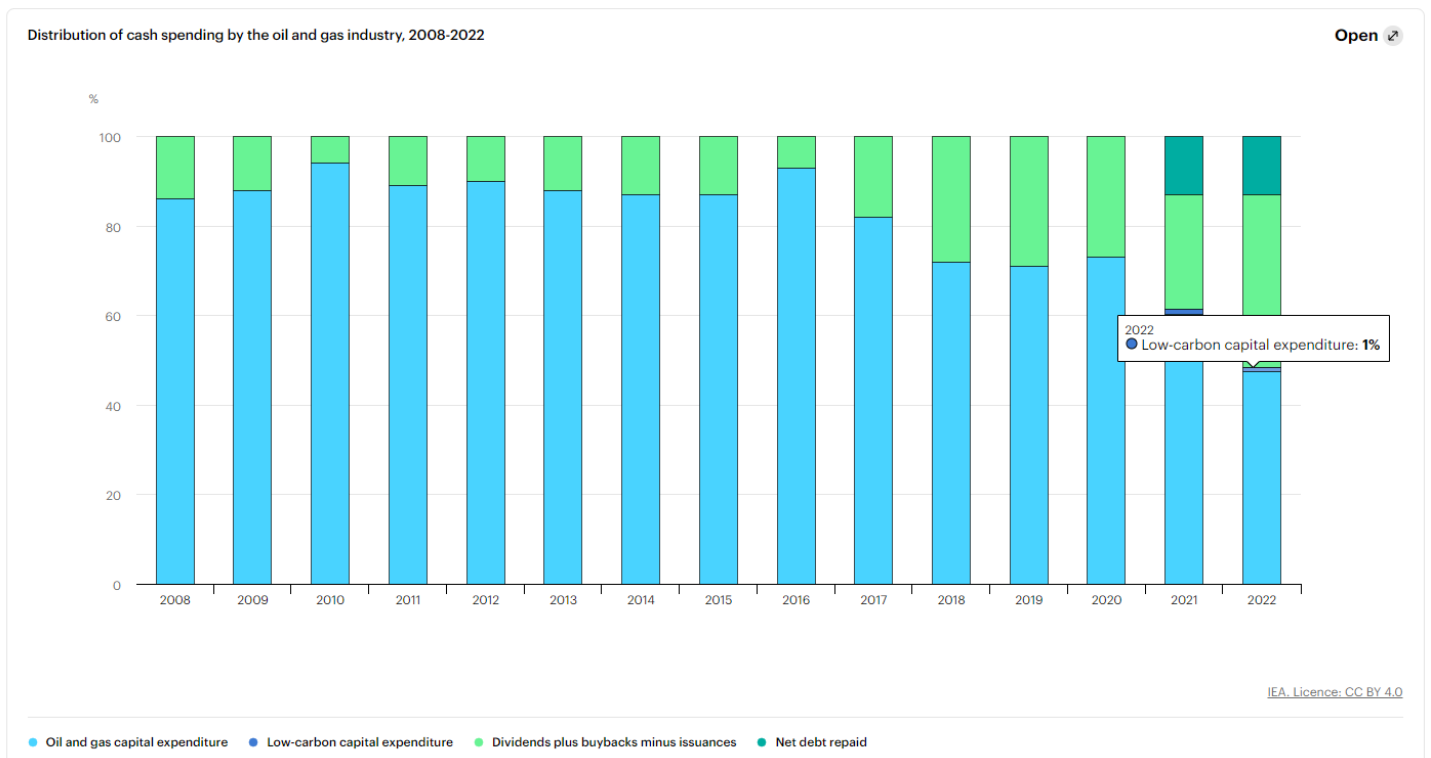
## PRESS RELEASE: Fossil fuel advertising ban campaign launched in Cape Town

On Wednesday 28 June 2023, Fossil Free South Africa, the SA campaign for fossil fuel divestment and sustainable reinvestment, launched a new campaign urging the City of Cape Town to implement a comprehensive ban on fossil fuel advertising, branding and sponsorship in the city.

The campaign launched via a webinar hosted by fossil ad ban campaigner, Dean Bhebhe, with contributions from climate activists across Africa and international ad ban campaigners.

The rapidly worsening climate crisis – primarily driven by use of fossil fuels – makes it vital to stop fossil fuel companies greenwashing themselves into continued public acceptance through cynical spending on CSR, advertising and sponsorships.

Society still depends on fossil fuels in many instances, but there's no need to actively promote their use or allow fossil fuel companies free reign for their greenwashing efforts. Despite their claims to support climate action, in 2021, for example, [Shell spent only 1.5% of capex on true renewables](#).



*In 2022, the oil and gas industry spent just 1% of capital expenditure on low-carbon technologies (IEA).\**

## **First African ad ban campaign**

The Cape Town launch marked the first city on the African continent to join a growing number globally where active campaigns are underway to ban fossil fuel advertising. Some cities, such as Stockholm and Amsterdam, have already adopted measures to implement local bans, [while France has adopted a nationwide ban](#).

The City of Cape Town, as a member of C40 Cities, a global network of mayors taking urgent action to confront the climate crisis, already possesses a well-developed climate policy framework that makes a fossil fuel advertising ban a logical next step.

Climate activist Lorraine Chiponda opened the webinar by painting a picture of the “dash for gas” by fossil fuel companies and developed nations currently underway across the African continent. Methane gas contributes to about 80 times more global warming than carbon dioxide over 20 years, illustrating that energy majors are not aligned to international standards for climate action, such as the Paris Agreement.

The uptick in fossil gas extraction, mostly destined for export to Europe in light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, would result in displaced communities, polluted ecosystems and worsening climate change impacts. Historical experience of oil extraction in the Niger delta and other places has shown local communities benefit little from job creation or energy access, instead suffering from dire environmental consequences.

Fossil fuel use is now a guaranteed inequality multiplier, enriching elites who seek cover under claims of economic development and purported concern for jobs and the poor.

Clean Creatives South Africa’s Stephen Horn illustrated how fossil fuel advertising slows down climate action through the use of deceptive greenwashing, and showed many local examples. Clean Creatives is a global movement asking advertising and PR agencies to decline future work with fossil fuels, with over 600 agencies on board so far.

## **International precedents**

International fossil ad ban campaigners shared their experiences in mounting local campaigns, including Rosanne Rootert from Reclame Fossilvrij (Netherlands), and Belinda Noble of Comms Declare (Australia).

Rootert showed how a fossil ad ban is a climate action social tipping point intervention, saying: “Once you have measures such as [a fossil ad ban] it makes other measures that have to be taken easier.”

Noble explained how using a health focused approach to the campaign in Sydney won public support. The Comms Declare campaign made use of doctors to make the link between fossil fuel use and air pollution. A Harvard study found that fossil fuel pollution causes about 1 in 5 premature deaths globally.

Cape Town fossil fuel advertising ban campaigner Dean Bhebhe said: "It's time to ban fossil fuel advertising and sponsorship. The false solutions presented by fossil fuel advertisements is a dangerous and short sighted ambition that will undermine the continent's development and growth. The Just Transition to renewable energy has never been more crucial, as the climate crisis and its impacts threaten the African continent and its people."

Fossil Free SA's lead coordinator, David Le Page, said: "Most people still don't realise that we are in a war with the fossil fuel industry for our futures – they're destroying our world and our health – and it's past time to put a comprehensive stop to their propaganda."

Brandon Abdinor, Acting Head: Pollution and Climate Change Programme, Centre for Environmental Rights, who attended the launch webinar, said: "This is an important and timely initiative that will highlight the urgency of the climate crisis and the links it has with the ongoing combustion of fossil fuels. It is high time that the social licence enjoyed by fossil fuel companies is challenged in every way possible."

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\*Full attribution for IEA graphic:

*IEA, Distribution of cash spending by the oil and gas industry, 2008-2022, IEA, Paris*  
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