



Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of Norway and  
Mr. Ola Borten Moe, Minister of Petroleum and Energy  
P.B 8001 Dep  
0030 OSLO NORWAY

### **Norway must leave their oil under the ground!**

We, the General Assembly of the Oilwatch Africa network express our concerns about the pressure to open up the vulnerable areas of Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja for oil and gas activity. Having become one of the richest countries in the world from destructive petroleum activity, we are now calling for your solidarity. In the name of climate justice, we are strongly advising the Prime Minister and the Minister of Petroleum and Energy to protect the areas outside of Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja from the petroleum industry and to leave the oil underground.

Norway is seen by many to be a leader among industrialized nations in the process towards a just and effective international climate change agreement. However, if emissions continue to grow from Norwegian oil and gas production, already the main contributor to the country's relatively high per capita emissions, Norway's commitment to combating climate change will be in doubt.

If the world is to be effective in preventing dangerous climate change, a large portion of the available fossil fuels will have to be left in the ground. Even if the dirtiest fuels such as coal and unconventional oil are left untapped, the world's proven and recoverable oil and gas reserves are still large enough to pose a significant risk for global temperature rise of more than 2°C. To avoid this risk, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA), not less than five sixths of the available fossil fuels must be left underground. Opening new areas to oil and gas activity will thus bring the world further away from the goal of limiting global temperature rise to 2°C or lower levels.

In this situation, avoiding oil and gas activity in some of the worlds most sensitive and biodiversity rich ecosystems should be an easy choice. The pristine areas offshore of the Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja archipelagos in the North of Norway, are among these valuable ecosystems. The area holds unique cold-water reefs, pods of sperm whales and killer whales, some of the largest seabird colonies in Europe as well as being the spawning grounds of the largest remaining cod stock in the world. We support the call of local fisheries organizations and environmental groups for these areas to be protected from the risks and emissions associated with oil and gas activity.

We, the undersigned organizations, represent a broad range of environmental organizations, social movements and other civil society organizations in Africa. We are all involved in our own struggles to keep dirty fossil fuels under the ground. If Norway,

as one of the richest countries in the world, were to show that even the valuable and unique areas of Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja are “off limits” for the oil and gas industry, it would set a disappointing precedent internationally, and make it harder for us to argue for stronger restrictions on oil and gas activity from our governments.

The Prime Minister have personally pointed out that reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation is among the fastest ways of reducing global emissions, because keeping the forest standing requires no technology. We would like to remind you that keeping undiscovered oil and gas in the ground similarly requires no costly or technologically advanced measures. In the case of Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja it would also yield many of the same co-benefits for biodiversity and local communities as will reducing emissions from deforestation.

We demand you to live up to Norway's reputation as a leader in environmental issues and a strong supporter of keeping global temperature rise below 2 °C. We ask that your government protect the areas of Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja against oil and gas activity.

With best regards,

**Oilwatch Africa;**

Environmental Rights Action (ERA), Oilwatch Nigeria

Oilwatch Ghana

Oilwatch Mozambique

Friends of the Earth Togo/ Oilwatch Togo

Oilwatch Mauritius

Oilwatch Sudan

National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE)/Oilwatch Uganda

groundWork, Oilwatch South Africa

Jeune Volontaires pour l'Environnement (JVE)/ Oilwatch Ivory Coast

Center for the Environment and Development/ Oilwatch Cameroun

Oilwatch Mali

Oilwatch Chad

Friends of the Earth Tanzania/Oilwatch Tanzania

For more information contact:

Kentebe Ebiaridor  
Coordinator,  
Oilwatch Africa,  
+2348037917731,  
[www.oilwatchafrica.org](http://www.oilwatchafrica.org)