A Global Registry of Fossil Fuels is Needed to Hold Governments and Corporations Accountable for Emissions from Current and Planned Production

September 10, 2020 - Today, the international coalition behind the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative released a Global Registry of Fossil Fuels White Paper making the case for a source of publicly accessible, systematically reported and comparable data on fossil fuel production, reserves and resources to hold governments and industry accountable for greenhouse gas emissions from the supply of fossil fuels. The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative is also announcing a Request for Proposals from interested parties to develop a prototype of the Global Registry of Fossil Fuels.

The Global Registry of Fossil Fuels is needed to provide the missing baseline of fossil fuels that are known, estimated and planned for extraction, to be able to assess the emissions these projects lock-in against the trajectory of climate ambition needed to stay within the safe temperature goal of 1.5 degrees Celsius. It can be used by government, investor, insurance, academic and civil society leaders to determine the role countries and fossil fuel companies are playing in exceeding warming beyond the 1.5 degrees Celsius limit, in order to plan for a global, equitable transition to clean, low carbon energy.

In 2018, the IPCC presented the world with a stark warning - cut greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030 to avoid catastrophic climate disruption. Fossil fuels account for more than 75 percent of global emissions causing the climate emergency. Yet oil, gas and coal are not mentioned once in the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework on Climate Change Convention has no mechanism for tracking and reducing emissions from the supply of fossil fuels. With no oversight in place, as the UNEP-led Production Gap Report published in December 2019 demonstrated, governments around the world plan to produce 120 percent more oil, gas and coal than what is consistent with limiting warming to the IPCC’s recommended 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming.

With COVID–19, the fossil fuel sector’s underlying financial volatility and risk is on display. The UN Development Programme head Achim Steiner and Fatih Birol, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency are among a growing number of leaders highlighting the irrationality of ongoing dependence on fossil fuels and the need to transition to clean energy sources as part of economic recovery efforts. Despite this, among G20 countries, more stimulus funds are being invested in fossil fuels than clean energy.

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Lessons learned from international and domestic policy efforts to tackle global threats including the proliferation of nuclear weapons, highlight the importance of government transparency and accountability for public safety and well-being. At this critical juncture of major global change and uncertainty, it is vital for governments and the fossil fuel industry to provide clarity on plans for fossil fuel extraction and develop national strategies to avoid expansion beyond what can be safely extracted under the Paris Agreement.

A Global Registry of Fossil Fuels will offer standardized, comprehensive, government-vetted, publicly available data on fossil fuels. This will include reporting on:

1) Fossil fuel reserves - fossil fuel deposits in production or planned for future production that are deemed commercially viable to extract;
2) Licensed resources - fossil fuel deposits for which licenses have been granted and may be developed in the future; and
3) Historical and projected future production - the combination of what countries have and plan to produce and how this aligns with the Paris Agreement temperature goals.

The prototype of the Global Registry of Fossil Fuels will be developed as a precursor to and independent of a formal country-driven global registry of fossil fuels. At the same time, it will provide a model to inform country deliberations around the design of a multilateral registry negotiated by countries and formally hosted within the UN process, ideally by a UN body or by a newly established Secretariat. The establishment of a prototype registry will be timely in the immediate run-up to the landmark COP26, taking place in Glasgow 2021.

“Transparency about our climate action will be essential for measuring progress towards the Paris Agreement goals. In no area is this more important than the managed phase-down of fossil fuels. The Global Registry of Fossil Fuels is a necessary tool for tracking supply of the world’s largest source of greenhouse gas emissions and can help ensure that global cooperation towards a just energy transition is data-informed and equitable for all nations.” - Ambassador Moses, Permanent Representative of Nauru to the United Nations

“No one is adding up all existing and planned fossil fuel production. This leaves governments, investors and the public in the dark when it comes to climate risks. The Global Registry of Fossil Fuels will address this gap, providing a tool that will make it possible to hold the fossil fuel industry accountable for current and planned production and ensure public health and safety can be protected from the threat of oil, gas and coal.” - Mohamed Adow, Founder, Power Shift Africa and International Steering Committee Member of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty

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- **Tzeporah Berman**, Chair, Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and International Campaign Director, Stand.Earth

- **Mohamed Adow**, Founder, Power Shift Africa and International Steering Committee Member of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty