

November 18, 2019

Fatih Birol  
Executive Director  
International Energy Agency  
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Dear Fatih,

So much has happened since we wrote to you earlier this year, asking the IEA to prioritize a 1.5°C pathway in this year's World Energy Outlook (WEO). We have just witnessed 11,000 scientists declare that we are now in an emergency state with climate change. The unprecedented public protests we see on our streets has made clear that people will no longer tolerate inaction or delay from businesses and governments when it comes to the climate crisis.

We welcome the improvements the IEA has made to the latest WEO, including renaming the New Policies Scenario to the more accurately entitled 'Stated Policies Scenario', extending the Sustainable Development Scenario to 2050, and reintroducing some discussion of the critical 1.5°C warming limit. Such minor improvements are very welcome, but should not be mistaken for delivering upon urgently needed substantial changes.

We urge you to do better. We fully understand that the IEA does not intend to define policy or investment decisions, but the fact is that the WEO is the globally authoritative publication on energy and energy infrastructure and it is used to inform significant investment and political decisions worldwide. As the WEO can become a self fulfilling prophecy, it carries a major responsibility that goes way beyond that of other publications that are merely descriptive. The IEA cannot be derelict of this responsibility.

The mainstream scenario in this year's WEO leads to at least 2.7°C of warming. The Sustainable Development Scenario could limit warming 1.8°C of warming by reaching net-zero emissions by 2070. That's two decades too late.

The science tells us that our best chance of avoiding unprecedented human catastrophes is to limit warming to 1.5°C by halving global emissions between 2020 and 2030, and again by 2040, so we can safely reach net-zero emissions by 2050. Any temperature rise beyond 1.5°C will exacerbate the devastation and injustice that is already too much to bear.

The WEO must provide governments, investors and companies with a scenario that describes what they would need to do to align their policies, investments and business strategies with the Paris Agreement's long-term goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C. Measures would include exponential broad-spectrum renewable energy deployment, improved energy efficiency, electrification of cars, heating and heavy industry, an end to polluting combustion engines, and an end to the expansion of oil, gas and coal production, accompanied by a just transition and radical regeneration of nature.

We have seen how the IEA can shine attention on transformational solutions. Its recent outlook report on offshore wind rightly acknowledged the game-changing power of this technology, and charted a course for other industries, including oil and gas, to seize the business opportunities it presents.

We therefore renew our call on the IEA to make a fully transparent Sustainable Development Scenario the central reference in the 2020 WEO. The ambition of the SDS must be increased to present a reasonable probability of reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 (not 2070) and limiting warming to 1.5°C (not 1.8°C). It should include a precautionary approach to negative emissions technologies, and the steps needed to follow that pathway.

The year 2020 marks a turning point for the world — the year when we either grasp the challenges and opportunities before us, or continue delaying and obstructing the low-carbon transformation. This is an opportunity for the IEA to step out in front and show the world what is necessary for us to deliver a 1.5°C future.

Yours sincerely,

- Aron Cramer, Chief Executive Officer, BSR
- Betsy Taylor, President, Breakthrough Strategies & Solutions, LLC
- Bill Hare, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Climate Analytics
- Catherine Howarth, Chief Executive Officer, ShareAction
- Christiana Figueres, Convenor, Mission 2020
- Eduardo Paes, Former Mayor of Rio and former Chair of C40
- Emma Herd, Chief Executive Officer, Investor Group on Climate Change (Aus & NZ)
- Faustine Delasalle, Director, Energy Transitions Commission
- Fiona Reynolds, Chief Executive Officer, Principles for Responsible Investing (PRI)
- Fletcher Harper, Director, GreenFaith
- Frances Eaton, Chief Legal and Compliance Officer, Nysnø
- Gail Whiteman, Director, Pentland Centre for Sustainability in Business, Lancaster University
- Gebru Jember Endalew, Former Chair, Least Developed Countries Group, UNFCCC
- Gilbert Ghostine, Chief Executive Officer, Firmenich
- Harry Verhaar, Head of Global Public & Government Affairs, Signify
- Helen Clarkson, Chief Executive Officer, The Climate Group
- Henrik Poulsen, Chief Executive Officer, Ørsted
- Jennifer Morgan, Executive Director, Greenpeace
- Joanna Haigh, Co-Director, Grantham Research Institute for Climate Change & Environment
- Joeri Rogelj, Lecturer in Climate Change and the Environment, Grantham Institute for Climate Change and the Environment, Imperial College London
- Johan Rockström, Professor & Director, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK)

- Johan Sidenmark, Chief Executive Officer, AMF, Founding Member of the UN-convened Asset Owner Alliance
- John Schellnhuber, Director, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact
- Julian Sainsbury, Trustee, JJ Charitable Trust
- Katja Bergqvist, Chief Executive Officer, Nordea Life & Pension, Founding Member of the UN-convened Asset Owner Alliance
- Kelly Clark, Director, Finance Dialogue
- Kelly Rigg, Director, Varda Group
- Leena Srivastava, Vice Chancellor, TERI School of Advanced Studies
- Lord Adair Turner, Chair, Energy Transitions Commission
- Lucy Guard, Trustee, JJ Charitable Trust
- Magnus Billing, Chief Executive Officer, Alecta, Founding Member of the UN-convened Asset Owner Alliance
- Malte Meinshausen, Director, Climate & Energy College, University of Melbourne
- Marc Andrus, Bishop, Grace Cathedral, San Francisco
- Marc Engel, Chief Supply Chain Officer, Unilever
- Marjan Minnesma, Director and Founder, Urgenda Foundation
- Mark Campanale, Founder & Executive Director, Carbon Tracker
- Mark Watts, Director, C40
- Mary Robinson, Former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson Foundation
- Michael Mann, Distinguished Professor of Atmospheric Science and Director of the Earth System Science Center at Penn State University
- Michael Oppenheimer, Albert G. Milbank Professor of Geosciences and International Affairs, Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University
- Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Michiel Schaeffer, Director and Senior Scientist, Climate Analytics
- Monica Araya, Founder and Director, Costa Rica Limpia
- Nicky Bull, Chair, Operation Noah
- Nigel Topping, Chief Executive Officer, We Mean Business
- Odd Arild Grefstad, Chief Executive Officer, Storebrand, Founding Member of the UN-convened Asset Owner Alliance
- Oliver Bäte, Chairman of the Board of Management of Allianz SE, Founding Member of the UN-convened Asset Owner Alliance
- Patrick Verhelst, Chief Marketing Officer, Elopak
- Paul Simpson, Chief Executive Officer, CDP
- Pavel Kabat, First Chief Scientist and Research Director, World Meteorological Organization
- Peter Bakker, President and Chief Executive Officer, World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)
- Peter Blom, Chief Executive Officer, Triodos Bank
- Pushker A. Kharecha, Deputy Director, Earth Institute, Columbia University
- Qiankun Wang, Research Analyst, GEIDCO
- Rachel Kyte, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University
- Sandrine Dixson-Declève, Ambassador for Europe, Energy Transition Commission
- Sarah Butler-Sloss, Chair, Ashden Trust

- Seb Beloe, Partner and Head of Research, WHEB Asset Management
- Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation
- Tim Smit, Co-Founder and Executive Chairman, Eden Project
- Tomás Insua, Executive Director, Global Climate Catholic Movement
- Torben Möger Pedersen, Chief Executive Officer, PensionDanmark, Founding Member of the UN-convened Asset Owner Alliance
- Torbjörn Letter, Chief Executive Officer, IKEA of Sweden AB
- Urban Angehrn, Chief Investment Officer, Zurich Insurance Group, Founding Member of the UN-convened Asset Owner Alliance
- Ylva Wessén, Acting President and Chief Executive Officer, Folksam Group, Founding Member of the UN-convened Asset Owner Alliance