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Statement of Thompson Ayodele of the Initiative for Public Policy Analysis:

For the more than 140 million people of my native Nigeria, it is estimated that 42,000 megawatts of electricity must be generated daily. In reality, only a fraction of that is currently available.

Because we cannot meet these basic power needs, businesses are crippled and the Nigerian people are suffering. Michelin recently closed their production facilities in our country because it could not continue to make a profit under the existing energy crisis. Small businesses that provide employment for greater percentage of Nigerians can hardly break even considering the costs of fuelling power generators. This is causing our people even more suffering and perpetuating poverty.

President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua has considered citing Nigeria's energy crisis as grounds for declaring a national state of emergency. While this is a controversial notion to say the least, there is no denying the truth in what he said last June: "We must solve this problem because until we do that, we cannot address the fundamental problems of our economy like poverty and unemployment."

Nigeria is looking into alternative means of producing power such as solar, wind and hydroelectric, but that is not going to provide a short-term solution to Nigeria's energy crisis. We cannot take a long-term approach to something that needs to be solved yesterday. Lives are at stake.

This is exactly why we do not need the intervention of Al Gore and his elitist allies. The Nobel Peace Prize, Oscar and an Emmy Mr. Gore has been awarded for his environmental activism will only aid the people of Africa if he melts them down and donates the gold to a relief organization. For him and his colleagues to try to restrict people of the world from obtaining the energy they need in the means that are cost-effective and readily available for them to get it is not humanitarian in any sense of the word.

This further worsens the plight of the poor and adds insult to the injury when we see people like him living in luxury and gobbling power to fuel their large homes, expensive habit and private planes. Whenever they ventured into Africa they stay in five-star hotel,

far removed from the reality that millions of poor people face daily. It should deprive them of their ability to mouth their anti-development rhetoric, but there are too many in the media and popular culture that still lend their credence.

Saving the environment is an honorable pursuit, but it cannot come at the expense of human dignity and human life. All things must come in moderation, and Al Gore must act as the moderate and mainstream political entity that he claims to be.

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Statement of Alice Wanja Hinga, RN:

I am a nurse in Baltimore, but was born and raised in Nairobi, Kenya. I moved to the United States in 2001 to attend nursing school.

I did not grow up under colonial rule, but its legacy lingers in Kenya and throughout the whole of Africa. For every step forward that came with colonial rule, there were steps back to be considered. While we now rule ourselves, Africans often still find themselves at the mercy of overseas powers. Today, it is the Western elites who impose wrong-headed sensibilities upon my fellow Africans who are a problem.

It will never cease to amaze me at what a land plenty you have here in America. Things such as gas stoves and running water which most Americans take for granted are considered a luxury in many parts of Kenya where people burn trees to make coal to cook meals and haul water from great distances. While I take no umbrage with the majority of people I work with here on a daily basis, I do take exception to others who seem to have it all yet are willing to support policies that will leave by fellow Kenyans wanting. Why can my people not have everything that we have here?

In particular, the power systems in Kenya and other African countries are in dire need of improvement to meet the needs of the people. In some communities, power is not a given. With people such as Al Gore and Leonardo DiCaprio pushing policies to regulate new power-generating opportunities out of existence before they can even be created, there is no proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. Development will remain at a near-standstill while they return to their mansions in their private jets.

It's an issue of fairness. It's not fair that those with great wealth and celebrity can feel free to impose their ideologies and values upon those with virtually nothing by comparison to the West. It's a double-standard when these elites live the high-life here, but want Africans to continue to be deprived of some of life's basic necessities.

The people of Africa cannot afford to worry about their carbon footprint when they are focused on making sure they have enough to eat and can remain healthy. If people from outside Africa want to intervene, it should be to make access to things easier, not more difficult. My people ask for assistance, but the strings attached to certain aid are sometimes worse than not accepting anything in the first place.

People in Africa love America and the West. I ask that the West return this admiration in the spirit in which it is offered – acting as a brother and not as a parent.

Alice Wanja Hinga, RN, an associate of the Project 21 black leadership network, is on the health advisory board of the Alliance for Health Education and Development. She is also a member of the international affairs committee of the Diocese of the Chesapeake of the Episcopal Missionary Church.



**Statement by Project 21 member
Bishop Council Nedd II:**

During the Cold War, you would hear stories about people from the former Soviet bloc who would go into an American grocery store and burst into tears — emotionally overcome at the sight of aisles and aisles of food. What we took, and still do take, for granted was a luxury to these people. Since the fall of Soviet communism, this is no longer the case. There are still people, however, who marvel at what we take for granted.

The shame of the situation now is that we are effectively the aggressors as some in our society seek to deprive rather than give other the opportunity to rise to the same level.

Today, Africans are still lacking access to things such as power, running water and food and medicine. For instance, a disease such as malaria — which is virtually nonexistent here in America — is one of the biggest killers of children in Africa. Why? Malaria-spreading mosquitoes cannot be controlled. The pesticide DDT could work miracles in killing the mosquitoes that spread malaria throughout the population, but environmental activists and their celebrity supporters who still worship at the altar of Rachel Carson refuse to look at new scientific data and do a simple risk-benefit analysis that would show the positives far outweigh the negatives when it comes to using DDT in Africa.

It's similar with power. In the commercial debuted today by the Competitive Enterprise Institute, we see the joy and wonder among Haitians whose town is just now getting a street light — albeit just one. How often do we walk through our own homes, flipping on lights without a second thought? How many times have we been annoyed with ourselves because we left the front porch light on all night? And how about Al Gore, whose Tennessee mansion was found to use more than 20 times the amount of electricity as the average American household?

If it weren't so unsettling it would be funny that it is people such as Al Gore who are behind policies and pressure to restrict the development of pretty much every sort of successful method of energy production. This is inconvenient and costly to us here in the United States, but it can be a matter of life-and-death in a developing country.

Having been involved in non-governmental organizations at international conferences, I have experienced first-hand the condescending elitism on the part of Western activists toward the developing world. For those who already have security, comfort and plenty to actively seek to limit the access of others to the same is just plain wrong, and I thank all who are fighting for opportunity for others through this commercial and other activities.

Bishop Council Nedd II is a member of the national advisory council of the Project 21 black leadership network, a bishop in the Episcopal Missionary Church for the Diocese of the Chesapeake and the chairman of the AHEAD, Alliance for Health Education and Development.