

POLITICAL CAFE

Thursday, **25 March** 2010

The Nutshuis

Riviermarkt 5, The Hague
from 18:00 to 20:00

THEME

Coal

In 2007, the Dutch government announced that five new coal plants could be built in the Netherlands. It is widely known that coal energy is bad for the environment, but what many people don't realise is that the coal used in coal fired power plants comes mainly from developing countries (such as South Africa, Colombia and Indonesia), where there are poor working conditions in mines and coal mining has negative effects on the local environment. Farmland is destroyed and ground- and drinking water contaminated with mining chemicals.

Both ENDS feels that the Dutch government and Dutch industry have to take such effects into account when making policies and investments concerning coal imports.

PANEL

- **Matthews Hlabane**, The Green Revolutionary Council, Witbank, South Africa
- **Marga Edens**, Manager Corporate Social Responsibility Essent, The Netherlands
- **Janine de Vries**, Cordaid-Publish What You Pay Coalition, Nederland
- **Roger Moody**, Minds and Communities, United Kingdom
- **Marco Witschge**, Chairman of the Working Party Energy Transition of D66, The Netherlands

Have a drink and discuss these issues at the informal Political Cafe drinks reception to be held after the debate.

For further information, see: www.bothends.org

For directions to the Nutshuis: www.nutshuis.nl

A Burning Issue: about Dutch energy and the effects of coal mining in developing countries

Most coal used in the Netherlands comes from South Africa, Colombia and Indonesia. Both ENDS, EMG, ILSA and JATAM recently investigated the effects of coal mining on the local population and the environment in these countries.

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COALS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

In 2009, EMG inspected the area surrounding the 'Transvaal and Delagoa Bay' mine in Witbank. The mine was closed and the area was left behind in devastation. Coal fires still burn in underground passages, releasing toxic fumes through holes in the ground. The people who live around the mine run serious health risks. Water flows with toxic heavy metals from the mine run into the 'Brugspruit' river, which has already caused the deaths of many fish and crocodiles in the nearby Loskop Dam Nature Reserve. Clearing up is expensive. The cost of the removal of poisons and the replanting of old mines in South Africa is estimated at 14 billion US dollars. But who will pay? Up to now, the cost of our coal has been paid for by the South African people.

THE REAL COST OF COAL

To calculate the actual cost of coal as a fuel, one has to consider the entire chain and not just the effects of combustion, such as CO₂ emissions. The whole process should be taken into the cost equation - from the extraction of coal to the transportation and incineration thereof.

Both ENDS believes that it should be mandatory for Dutch energy companies to report on the local impacts of coal mining. The entire production chain should be financially transparent.

The energy sector has launched initiatives to clean up the use of coal. But what about the problems in South Africa, Colombia and Indonesia? Don't coal customers have a responsibility for the negative effects caused by coal mining? What role can the Dutch government play?

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POLITICAL CAFES IN 2010

What can the Netherlands do about disappearing glaciers in the Andes? As a small country, how much help can we be to farmers in Africa who face desertification? Both ENDS thinks that we can do a lot. By organising political cafes, we stimulate the discussion about how the Netherlands can change its policies in order to contribute to global sustainability. Case studies by representatives from developing countries form the basis of the debate. We invite you to attend our cafes.

**Both ENDS**

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