





In the Niger Delta, where oil spills have poisoned lands and waters, two out of every three women live with the devastating impacts of pollution, while more than 80 million Nigerians still lack access to reliable energy.

This paradox, energy poverty amid oil wealth, demands urgent and inclusive solutions.

Against this backdrop, GreenFaith Nigeria launched the Africa Women of Faith in Energy (AWFE) Project in Rivers State, signaling a historic moment for women-led climate and energy advocacy.

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The initiative seeks to amplify women's voices, equip faith-led women with tools to advocate for gender-balanced policies, and accelerate a just transition away from fossil fuels toward locally-owned, affordable, and clean renewable energy solutions.

## A Spiritual Beginning, A Bold Vision

The launch was opened with prayers from Rev. Sister Lilian Chibiko, grounding the initiative in faith and solidarity. Women leaders from three Niger Delta communities, Bodo, Bomu, and K-Dere, gathered for a training workshop following a courtesy visit to the Paramount Ruler of Bodo.

Meryne Warah, GreenFaith's Global Program Director and Director of GreenFaith Africa, introduced the vision of AWFE, emphasizing women's pivotal role in resisting fossil fuel expansion and leading Nigeria's just energy transition. "Development must serve people, not profits," she urged, reminding participants that energy justice is both a moral and human rights imperative.

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The regional project lead **Lynn Modester**, joining from Kenya, sparked conversations by asking women what “energy” means to them. From firewood to kerosene to electricity, participants reflected on daily struggles: the smoke that harms their eyes and lungs, the high cost of cooking gas, the destruction of mangroves, and failed harvests from oil-polluted soils.

Their testimonies painted a raw picture of resilience amid hardship.

## A Spiritual Beginning, A Bold Vision



Breakout groups generated powerful community-driven recommendations:

**Bodo women** highlighted their reliance on firewood and kerosene, calling for energy-saving stoves and solar-enabled cooking solutions.

**Bomu women**, grappling with the devastation of a recent oil spill that wiped out cassava, yam, and maize harvests, demanded healthy soils and clean energy alternatives.

**K-Dere women**, who use solar streetlights alongside firewood and kerosene, stressed the unaffordability of gas and the health hazards of smoke.

Together, the communities recommended:

- Provision of solar panels to power households.
  - Affordable solar cooking stoves and energy-saving cookers.
  - Access to refrigeration for food preservation.
- Investment in women-led renewable energy enterprises.

These grassroots priorities embody a clear demand: renewable energy must not remain a distant promise but become a lived reality in the Niger Delta.

## Early Achievements

The inception workshop trained **35 grassroots women** on climate literacy, fossil fuel impacts, and advocacy for just energy policies. A key milestone was the formation of a multi-faith, women-led circle for renewable energy in Rivers State, tasked with driving local advocacy and monitoring government commitments. Significantly, the launch coincided with the Nigerian government’s approval of a **₦10 billion solar energy project**, a development that women leaders now seek to influence, ensuring grassroots communities, not only urban elites, benefit from clean energy investments.



## Lessons and Challenges

The launch revealed critical gaps:

- Limited climate literacy among grassroots women.
- Low awareness of renewable energy’s health and economic benefits.
- Livelihood losses from oil spills, constraining adoption of clean alternatives.

Weak access to political representatives for policy advocacy.

These challenges underscore the urgency of scaling capacity building, hybrid trainings, and structured advocacy engagements to ensure women’s voices reach state and federal policy tables.

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## The Road Ahead

The AWFE launch is more than an event—it is the beginning of a movement. For Nigeria, where billions are still spent on new oil projects like the Kolmani Integrated Development Project, women of faith are now stepping into the arena to demand a different path: one rooted in justice, sustainability, and dignity.

As GreenFaith Nigeria reaffirms, a just transition cannot exclude women. Their leadership, resilience, and lived experiences hold the key to breaking the cycle of fossil fuel dependency and building renewable futures that work for communities.

From prayers to policy, from the pulpit to the protest, Nigeria's women of faith are rising. Their message is clear: Stop fueling destruction. Start investing in women-led, community-powered renewable energy. For when women lead, justice follows.

## The Ghana Women of Faith in Energy Launch & Food Sovereignty March

In Ghana, the story of fossil fuel expansion is not just about energy, it is about people, land, livelihoods, and survival.

For years, the oil and gas projects in communities like Anokyi, Atuabo, and Ngalekyi have reshaped the lives of women, families, and entire villages. Land that once grew food is now fenced off for industrial projects. Air that once carried the smell of ripening crops is filled with smoke from flares. For women, who carry the dual responsibility of sustaining households and keeping communities intact, this reality has been especially heavy.



It was in this context that the Women of Faith in Energy initiative was launched in Ghana. This was not just another program, but a powerful movement designed to lift the voices of women who have borne the brunt of fossil fuel expansion. Women of faith, who are trusted as moral anchors in their communities, came together to be equipped with advocacy skills, energy literacy, and leadership tools to steer the call for a just energy transition. The launch was both a celebration of resilience and a bold declaration that women will no longer remain silent in the face of displacement, economic hardship, and ecological harm.

## Voices from the Community

At the heart of the launch were the community dialogues. These were not polished speeches from conference halls, but raw, heartfelt testimonies from women who know what it means to live with the consequences of an energy system built on exploitation.



Women spoke of long treks into shrinking forests to gather firewood, even as gas flares burned above their heads—a cruel irony that clean energy existed, but not for them. They spoke of smoke-filled kitchens where young children coughed as mothers tried to cook with wood or kerosene. They spoke of farms lost to oil exploration, forcing families into deeper poverty and breaking generational ties to the land.

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**“The oil takes our land, the gas pollutes our air, and the firewood depletes our forest. Where do we go? What do we eat? What do we leave for our daughters?”**

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One woman from Anokyi captured the mood when she said: “The oil takes our land, the gas pollutes our air, and the firewood depletes our forest. Where do we go? What do we eat? What do we leave for our daughters?”

These stories did not just evoke sympathy—they fueled determination. Out of their lived pain came clear demands: subsidized solar energy, affordable and fair gas pricing, and clean cookstoves that reduce health risks. Women insisted that a just transition is not a luxury but a matter of dignity, survival, and justice.

## Building a National Women's Network

A key outcome of the launch was the establishment of a national Women of Faith in Energy network. This network is more than a symbolic gathering—it is a concrete platform through which women can unite their voices and hold both government and corporations accountable.

Through this network, women leaders from villages, towns, and cities will now have a stronger collective presence to influence national policies, challenge unjust practices, and propose solutions that prioritize the most vulnerable. The network represents a shift from scattered, individual struggles to coordinated, national action.



The women are not only standing against harmful energy practices—they are also reimagining Ghana's energy future. They see a future where solar panels shine on rooftops in rural villages, where clean cookstoves save lives, where energy access no longer divides the rich and poor, and where the dignity of creation is restored.

## FROM ENERGY TO FOOD: THE FOOD SOVEREIGNTY MARCH

The momentum from the Women of Faith in Energy launch spilled over into another historic moment: Ghana's Food Sovereignty March. This march brought together farmers, women, youth, and faith leaders in a bold display of unity. With banners raised high and chants echoing through the streets, the march connected the dots between food, energy, and climate justice.

**The message was simple but profound:  
"Food Access = Energy Access = Life Access."**

Participants walked to remind the nation and the world that food sovereignty cannot be separated from energy justice. Farmers reminded us that without access to affordable, clean energy, storing crops, irrigating fields, and transporting produce becomes nearly impossible. Women reminded us that without clean cookstoves and accessible energy, preparing meals becomes a health hazard. Youth reminded us that their future depends on systems that nourish, not exploit, people and the planet.



The march was not just a protest—it was an expression of hope, creativity, and solidarity. Songs of faith blended with chants for justice. Colorful banners painted by schoolchildren fluttered in the wind. Farmers marched with baskets of produce on their heads, symbolizing both their resilience and their demand for justice.

## Faith at the Heart of Justice

What made both the launch and the march powerful was the way faith anchored every action. Women prayed before dialogues began. Scriptures were read as reminders of stewardship and care for creation. Songs of praise accompanied chants of justice, bridging the spiritual with the political.

For many women, faith is not just personal—it is a wellspring of courage and a shield against despair. By drawing from their faith, they stood with conviction, knowing their cause was not only about today's needs but also about the moral responsibility to protect future generations.



Every year on June 3rd, Uganda's Martyrs Day brings together one of the largest annual gatherings of Christians on the African continent. Tens of thousands of pilgrims—some traveling for days on foot—converge on Namugongo in Kampala to honor the memory of the 45 Christian converts who were executed in the late 19th century for their faith. The event is both a solemn commemoration and a vibrant expression of faith, unity, and hope.

In 2025, amid the hymns, prayers, and processions, a powerful new message rang out: the moral call for climate justice. For the first time in this sacred space, GreenFaith Africa leaders and partners took the pulpit to challenge faith communities and policymakers with a clear and urgent appeal:

**“Divest from fossil fuels, invest in renewable energy.”**

## A Sacred Platform for a Just Transition

For GreenFaith Africa, participating in Uganda Martyrs Day was not just symbolic—it was strategic. This was an opportunity to speak at a gathering that embodies sacrifice, courage, and unwavering faith. The martyrs gave their lives for truth, and in that same spirit, GreenFaith leaders called on today's faithful to take bold steps to protect creation and future generations. With pilgrims gathered under the hot Ugandan

## Looking Ahead

The Ghana Women of Faith in Energy launch and the Food Sovereignty March marked a turning point. They showed that women, when equipped and united, can transform grief into action and despair into hope. They showed that energy justice and food sovereignty are two sides of the same coin. They showed that faith, when combined with courage, can shake the foundations of unjust systems.

But this is just the beginning. The task ahead is immense: pushing for policy reforms, scaling up access to renewable energy, ensuring that fossil fuel companies are held accountable, and making sure that no community is left behind in Ghana's energy transition.

As one youth marcher said during the rally: “We are not just marching for ourselves. We are marching for the soil beneath our feet, for the air we breathe, and for the future we deserve.”

*From Anokyi to Accra, from Atuabo to Tamale, the cry has been raised: Food access. Energy access. Life access. Justice for all.*

## Uganda Martyrs Day Faith Leaders Speak Out

sun, the voices of GreenFaith representatives carried a message rooted deeply in both scripture and science. Faith leaders reminded the crowd that protecting the earth is not a peripheral issue—it is a sacred duty. The pulpit became a place not only of remembrance but of prophetic witness, linking the courage of the martyrs with the courage needed today to confront climate injustice

## GreenFaith Africa's Role and Representation

GreenFaith Africa's participation at Martyrs Day was both visible and influential. The delegation included:

### Regional Leaders

who spoke during interfaith services, weaving climate justice into prayers, homilies, and reflections.

### Local Partners and Clergy

who stood side by side with bishops, priests, and pastors, ensuring the call for renewable energy was embedded into the day's liturgies.

### Youth Representatives

who carried placards and distributed flyers with the theme "Faith for Climate Justice." Their chants and songs gave fresh energy to the traditional processions.

### Women of Faith

Leaders from Uganda's grassroots communities, who shared testimonies of how fossil fuel projects—like the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) are already harming families, land, and livelihoods.

This blend of voices reflected GreenFaith Africa's core belief: climate justice must be led by communities most affected, supported by religious authority, and amplified through global solidarity.

## The Call: Divest, Invest, Protect

The central message that rang out during the event was unambiguous. Fossil fuels, while often presented as the backbone of economic growth, are in reality fueling destruction—destroying ecosystems, displacing communities, and worsening the climate crisis.

Standing before the thousands gathered, **Rev. Grace Nanyonga**, a GreenFaith Uganda leader, declared: "The martyrs gave their lives for faith and justice. Today, we must give our voices for the earth. We cannot remain silent while our rivers are polluted, our forests destroyed, and our children left without hope."

**Imam Rashid Ssekandi**, representing Muslim faith leaders within GreenFaith Africa, followed with a resounding call:

"The Qur'an tells us that humankind is a steward of creation. Stewardship does not mean exploitation. It means care, it means balance, and it means justice. Fossil fuels have tipped the balance. It is time for us to invest in the sun, the wind, and the blessings that God has already provided." **Dr. Lydia Abbo**, speaking on behalf of the Women of Faith in Energy Network, added a deeply personal dimension: "We women are carrying the weight of this crisis. We are the ones who cook with firewood, who walk long distances for water, who see our farms fail. This is why we say clearly today: subsidize solar, bring clean energy to our homes, and give dignity back to our families."

## Pilgrims Respond

The impact was immediate. Many pilgrims—farmers, students, clergy, and lay people—approached GreenFaith representatives after the service to express solidarity and ask how they could be involved. For some, it was the first time they had connected their faith with climate issues. For others, it affirmed what they already felt in their hearts: that faith must speak boldly in times of crisis.

A young pilgrim named Daniel, carrying a wooden cross on his shoulder, said with conviction: *“When I heard the leaders speak, I realized that caring for creation is also a form of martyrdom. It is a sacrifice we must make, not just for ourselves but for those who will come after us.”*

Songs erupted during the procession, with pilgrims chanting refrains such as *“Creation is sacred, protect it!”* and *“Energy justice for all!”* Faith communities were visibly moved, and many leaders committed to bringing the message back to their congregations.

## Looking Ahead

Uganda Martyrs Day 2025 will be remembered not only for its spiritual significance but also for its prophetic climate witness. By raising their voices in this sacred space, GreenFaith Africa wove the struggle for climate justice into the moral and spiritual fabric of Uganda's faith communities.

This was not the end but a beginning. The seeds planted during Martyrs Day will continue

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## THE CLIMATE REALITY PROJECT

GreenFaith Africa was honored to partner with the Climate Reality Project for the inaugural Climate Reality Leadership Corps Training held in Nairobi a historic moment for the East African region.

This gathering marked the very first time the globally renowned Climate Reality initiative reached East Africa's heart, bringing together people of faith, grassroots leaders, youth, and climate advocates under one roof to amplify the urgency of climate justice.



The training was not just a conference; it was a movement in the making. Nairobi, a city that symbolizes both Africa's resilience and vulnerability in the face of the climate crisis, became the launchpad for a new generation of climate leaders. Day One of the Climate Reality Tour Training opened with an atmosphere thick with hope, solidarity, and determination. We were honored to hear from **Rev. Dennis**, a devoted priest and passionate climate advocate, who shared his powerful climate reality. As a man of faith who has traveled far and wide, Rev. Dennis spoke from the heart about witnessing the devastating impacts of climate change, not in theory, but in the lived struggles of vulnerable communities. From parched lands where children walk miles for a drop of water to villages swallowed by sudden floods, his stories carried the weight of truth and the urgency for change. Grassroots storytelling, he reminded us, paints the clearest picture of climate injustice, moving beyond graphs and statistics to reveal the human cost of inaction.



Amid this powerful exchange, we met @Ecosystem Pundit, known to many simply as Burhan—a passionate Muslim youth leader from our GreenFaith Youth Circle in Mandera County. For Burhan, climate change is not an abstract issue discussed in air-conditioned conference rooms; it is the harsh reality of daily life. In Mandera, prolonged droughts parch the soil, leaving families hungry and herders without livestock. When rain finally comes, it is often in the form of floods that destroy the little that people have managed to build. Erratic weather patterns disrupt farming seasons, forcing families into cycles of uncertainty and loss.

Burhan's voice is bold, unflinching, and rooted in the pain and resilience of his people. Through his testimony, he amplifies the stories of the most vulnerable, ensuring that the world cannot look away. He speaks of the real loss and damage communities endure: the drying up of wells, the collapse of traditional livelihoods, the disintegration of social safety nets, and the heartbreaking migration of families forced to abandon ancestral lands in search of survival.

What makes his story even more compelling is his unwavering commitment to faith-driven advocacy. Burhan reminds us that for communities like Mandera, the fight against climate change is not just about adaptation but about dignity, justice, and survival. His storytelling bridges faith and science, personal pain and global policy, local realities and international platforms.





