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October 21, 2022

Mr. Lagi Toribau  
Executive Director  
Greenpeace Africa  
293 Kent Ave, Ferndale,  
Randburg, 2194, South Africa

Dear Mr. Toribau,

**Response to Greenpeace Africa's press release of 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022.**

Symbion Power is an independent power producer with extensive experience developing, building, and operating generation, transmission, and distribution projects in emerging markets.

Earlier this year, the Ministry of Hydrocarbons of the Democratic Republic of the Congo extended an invitation to Symbion to submit a proposal regarding the extraction of the biogas that exists in Lake Kivu. Symbion submitted its proposal together with details of our qualifications. Other companies did the same and there were around 200 people in the room including government officials and the media at the public opening of submissions on 13th October.

Following that event, Greenpeace publicly stated: *"Nine companies are bidding for exploration rights to fossil gas in Lake Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) including US-based Symbion Power, a firm which appears to have no experience in gas exploration."*

Firstly, Symbion Power is not a company that explores for 'fossil gas' and should therefore not be compared with major oil or gas producers whose remit is to undertake gas exploration.

Secondly, there are no bids for 'exploration rights to fossil gases' in Lake Kivu. There is no gas exploration. Biogas is naturally prevalent throughout Lake Kivu and no drilling required to extract it.

Rather, Lake Kivu's gas is a mix of carbon dioxide and methane that is saturated in the lake's water. Because of its high concentration of gases, the water in Lake Kivu does not support typical levels of the freshwater life that might otherwise be expected in a lake that is 480 metres deep.

Thirdly, Symbion Power's know-how in the extraction of biogas from Lake Kivu is unquestionable. This is because Symbion is one of only three companies that have been involved with implementing projects of this nature on Lake Kivu itself.



Symbion is in fact the former owner of the very first biogas extraction and power plant built on Lake Kivu, known as KP1, which is located in Rwanda, the country that shares the lake with the DRC. Symbion is also the original developer of a second biogas extraction and power project of 56MW on Lake Kivu, also on the Rwandan side of the lake and the only other plant on Lake Kivu is a 26MW plant that was built and is successfully operated by a company called Kivuwatt. Although Symbion Power sold its interests in these two Rwandan projects to its partners in 2019, the construction of the latter 56MW plant is now almost complete.

The other two companies have not participated in the DRC-side bidding process of the Ministry of Hydrocarbons. This means that new entrants to this sector who are bidding, will have considerable work to do considering that it is specialized technology that they must develop from scratch, and incur millions of dollars of the up-front engineering expenditure that will be required to ensure the delivery of a safe, working project.

Despite full details of Symbion's previous experience on Lake Kivu being available on our website and freely available in the public domain, Greenpeace's statement clearly misrepresents the facts regarding our relevant experience. Greenpeace made no attempt to contact us and, had they reached out, we could have explained all this and thereby avoided the damage that it has created.

It is surprising that Greenpeace has chosen to misinterpret an initiative that can transform lives through increased access to cleaner, cheaper, and more environmentally friendly energy resources than exist there today. It is also disappointing that Greenpeace did not make any attempt to understand the difference between the 'gas exploration' that is undertaken by oil and gas companies and the very different requirement for gas separation at Lake Kivu, before choosing to publish false and damaging statements regarding our experience.

In recent years Symbion Power has in fact restructured its entire business from being a company that previously operated natural gas and heavy fuel oil power plants, pivoting into an organization which now works exclusively with new renewable energy resources, including geothermal, mini-hydropower and biogas. We share many of Greenpeace's environmental concerns and are usually supporters of their initiatives and we wish them well. But facts and accuracy are important, and we hope Greenpeace has the courtesy to contact us before commenting on our activities in the future. We will gladly engage with you to help you better understand the peculiarities of the Lake Kivu gases.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Hinks  
Founder and CEO  
Symbion Power LLC

Cc:  
Pat Venditti, Executive Director Greenpeace UK  
Norma Torres, Executive Director, Greenpeace International  
Annie Leonard, Co-Executive Director, Greenpeace US

