



There has been voicenote circulating on *Whatsapp* this month about the proposed coal fired power plant in Jamaica. We have received several calls and messages about

it from our members, who are confused by some of the things which it says.

While we appreciate the passion and support expressed by the speaker in the voicenote for the #saynotocoalJA campaign, and we are happy that it has generated renewed interest in the issue, JET would like to clarify some of the statements made. The more the public is informed on the proposition of a coal fired power plant in Jamaica, the more we all understand the issues. The statements made in the voicenote are in black text and JET's response is in *green text*.

1. China is in geological ruin

JET's response: China's environment (air and water quality, landscape, etc.) is heavily degraded. Here's a recent article from the Guardian about China's air pollution problems:

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/sep/27/more-than-million-died-due-air-pollution-china-one-year>

2. China is resurfacing a deal that was initiated years ago

JET's response: At a press conference on 28 July 2016, the Jamaican Government announced the sale of the old Alpart *bauxite* plant at Nain in St. Elizabeth to the Chinese company Jiuquan Iron & Steel (Group) Company Limited (JISCO)

3. China wants to convert Alpart into a coal fire plant

JET's response: A US\$2 billion investment in an industrial zone, powered by a 1000MW coal-fired plant was also announced on July 28. The plant would primarily be used to power the Alpart bauxite/alumina plant. The project is also proposed to include the construction of an aluminium refinery (aka smelter) and rolling wire mills. In other words, Jamaica would go from mining bauxite for the production and export of alumina only, to the production of aluminium and associated products (aluminium is made from alumina). Overall, the entire process of transforming raw bauxite into aluminium is incredibly energy intensive, requiring copious amounts of electricity,

water and resources to produce it. That is the main reason why power plants, such as the one being proposed, are built solely to support the aluminium industry.

4. Jamaica does not have combustible components (in the way of trees) to feed the plant "they will not be cutting down our trees because we will not have enough trees"

JET's response: Coal is a fossil fuel that is formed under the earth's surface due to the prolonged decay of plant and animal matter due to the heat and pressure. It is a black *mineral* found below the ground and is mined out just like any other rock or mineral. It is used for burning to supply heat and to make coal gas and coal tar. Charcoal on the other hand is produced by slow heating of wood or other combustible substances in the absence of oxygen. It is also a black substance made by burning wood slowly in an oven with a little air. Although both coal and charcoal are energy sources, *the proposed power plant is a COAL plant, not a charcoal plant;* therefore the plant will not be fuelled by trees.

5. China is the second largest producer of coal next to Australia

JET's response: China has by far been the biggest coal producing country over the last three decades. The country produced about 3.6 billion tonnes of coal in 2012 accounting for over 47% of the world's total coal output. USA is the second largest producer, and India is the third.

6. The logistics hub is for ships to deliver coal

JET's response: The logistics hub refers to several development projects aimed at improving Jamaica's global position as a centre for activities related to transportation, organisation, separation, coordination and distribution of goods for national and international transit. This includes but is not limited to a huge transshipment port which was originally proposed for Goat Islands. The transshipment port is not the only element of the logistics hub.

7. Some confusion between soil type and geology

JET's response: This links to the confusion between coal and charcoal. Coal comes from the ground (from rocks

in specific geological formations), charcoal comes from trees and vegetation (which grow in soil).

8. China's geology facilitates production of coal in large quantities

JET's response: China sits on huge coal reserves which are mined and used to produce electricity or in the production of steel

9. China's coal is more toxic than other coal (25%-50% above internationally accepted standard)

JET's response: We can find no reference for this claim

10. 750,000 ppl per year die from pulmonary disease

JET's Response: We are not sure where the speaker is referring to; however researchers from Berkeley Earth, a California-based climate research organization, calculated that about 1.6 million people in China die every year from health issues caused by the country's notoriously polluted air. According to their 2015 study, more than one-third of the Chinese population regularly breathe air that would be considered "unhealthy" by US standards.

11. Coal produces 3 particulates (NOx, SOx and mercury)

JET's response: the main impacts of a coal fired power plant on public health and the environment can be found in our fact sheet on the issue here: <http://www.jamentrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Fact-Sheet-on-Coal-2016.pdf>

12. Coal when burnt produces waste ash (likened to ash at the bottom of the pot) and fly ash (likened to the ash in the smoke)

JET's response: more on the types of ash produced by coal (not charcoal) can be found here: <https://www.epa.gov/coalash/coal-ash-basics>

13. Impacts of coal are not immediate, in 5 years we will be like China

JET's Response: Here's an article from Greenpeace which outlines the acute (short-term) effects and chronic (long-term) effects of coal on public health: <http://www.greenpeace.org/new-zealand/Global/new-zealand/report/2007/1/enviro-impacts-of-coal.pdf>

14. Air quality impacts likened to the Riverton fire of 2015 – implying that the plant will pump smoke

JET's Response: It is not yet certain what type of coal fired power plant will be built and what technology will be used to mitigate the negative impacts. The GOJ has suggested the plant would be a state of the art "clean coal" plant, but these types of plants are very costly and it is unlikely that the developers will want to pursue this option. Clean coal is never cheap coal. Mitigation measures can be put in place to limit particulate

emissions reducing impacts to public health, but there is no way to completely eliminate the production of greenhouse gases. It is highly likely that constructing this plant will breach Jamaica's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) under the Paris Agreement on climate change. Assuming continuous operation, a modern coal-fired plant emits 762 kilograms of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per megawatt-hour of electricity generated, if there is no CO₂ capture.

15. The speaker refers to a "No coal factory campaign"

JET's Response: The proposed plant is not a coal factory, it is a coal fired power plant.

#SayNOtoCoalJ A

For more information contact



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