

# ECO

## THE FOSSIL OF THE DAY IS BACK ISSUE

eco@climateactionnetwork.org • www.climatenetwork.org/eco-newsletter • November 2, 2021

ECO has been published by Non-Governmental Environmental Groups at most international conferences since the Stockholm Environment Conference in 1972. ECO is produced cooperatively by the Climate Action Network at the UNFCCC meetings in Glasgow, Scotland during the November COP 26 meetings.

*Editorial/Production: Andrés Fuentes*

## The Good, the Bad & the Ugly: Climate In the G20 Leaders' Communiqué

The G20 Leaders' summit in Rome over the weekend may well have been mistaken for the set of a well-known spaghetti western with their climate rendition of the good, the bad and the ugly.

### **The Good**

If the recovery from COVID-19 has taught us one thing, it's that existential threats have no quick fix. So too is the case with climate change, which is why it was good to see in paragraph [24] of the communiqué a commitment to allocate "an ambitious share of the financial resources to mitigating and adapting to climate change and avoid harm to the climate and environment". Reference was also made to the International Energy Agency's Sustainable Recovery Tracker. Assessments like this contextualise the unique opportunities and challenges inherent in a given country's transition to net-zero. In doing so they highlight the dividends investing in clean energy pays, as well as shine a light on the often dim picture of states still recalcitrant to take meaningful change. Recognition of the long-term climate impact of decisions made today was a demonstration of 'good' by the G20 Leaders.

### **The Bad**

If we have learnt anything over the past century and a half of fossil fuel exploration, development and consumption - it's that humankind would have been far better to have left them in the ground. Coal is a particularly good example of why - it has high greenhouse gas emissions and an equally high cost to the health of humans that are subject to its particulates. For this reason, it was disappointing to see in paragraph [28] that G20 States could still not agree unanimously on the importance of "phasing out new unabated coal power generation" domestically. There is an overwhelming need for the G20 to take domestic leadership in phasing out private as well as public investment in new coal builds, with the former representing a much higher percentage of financing for new coal builds in both the G20 and beyond. Let's make no mistake - both need to be stopped immediately. The fact that G20 Leaders can't recognise fossil fuels for what they are, a relic of the past, is their demonstration of 'bad'.

### **The Ugly**

There was also a strange twist in paragraph [23] where after recognising

the importance of the IPCC's assessments, G20 Leaders' committed to reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions or carbon neutrality "by or around mid-century". Anyone that has relied on a friend that has advised they will be somewhere 'around' a certain time knows one thing - that same friend will undoubtedly be late. This could be up to 20 years too late as we saw with India's most recent announcement. However, the consequences for the G20 being 'late' in reaching net-zero are far more dire than being late to a friendly rendezvous. Indeed it would result in ugliness in two respects - an untidy legal and economic framework for the net-zero transition, and the loss of life and livelihoods associated with having no prospect of keeping 1.5°C alive.

So what does this mean for COP26? Just like a spaghetti western, negotiators only have one shot to get it right. This means building the framework for longstanding economy-wide decarbonisation, acknowledging the end of the fossil fuel power generation and ensuring that constructive ambiguity is not used to mask a failure in both diplomacy and leadership amongst the self-described global economic steering committee.

# Hey Guilbeault! It's Your Old Friend, ECO

Hey Steven, what's up? Do you remember the long nights? The wordplay? ECO remembers you - drafting articles to fill our pages, calling out climate inaction, doing what you knew best: speaking truth to power. Oh man, we had fun!

ECO is excited to see our old friend Steven Guilbeault is the newly appointed Environment and Climate Change Minister of so-called Canada. He is no stranger to the admittedly cold, austere, grey halls of COP. ECO's friend and a founder of Climate Action Network, chair of the board, and former editor of this very newsletter, for over 25 years Steven was collaborating in meeting rooms, demonstrating in action zones, and speaking up in interventions alongside other civil society comrades. This year, with the return of COP comes the return of a veteran of these negotiations - this time, in a different position of power - one which brings with it many privileges, and many responsibilities.

Steven will no doubt recognize COP, but will COP and ECO recognise Steven? Will Guilbeault continue to be the champion of climate action and of civil society that ECO has known for so long? Will the man who once awarded Canada Fossil of the Day (more than once!) and published an ECO that referred to the nation as the "bad kid at the back of the class" and "the land of fossils" truly hold himself and his newfound colleagues in government to the standard of the systemic, terrific change that he spelled out back in 2012 when that ECO newsletter was published at COP18 in Doha?

Now Steven, with your change of status, ECO is hopeful that the climate hero we know is the climate hero we'll see in the Cairn Gorm Plenary. I'll remind you of what ECO cares about most: ambition, justice, reconciliation, equity, people, and planet. I know you know - we wrote these words together so many times, over and over again. Steven, tell me something, Has the time arrived for a new era of Canadian federal action on climate? Oh man, that would be fun!

You should know Steven, that some of us here on the ground still have some questions; after all, we're talking to a key representative of a major petro-economy! So ECO has to wonder, how will the Minister responsible for getting a country to zero emissions before mid-century show that he takes seriously his role in protecting people from powerful fossil fuel interests? At COP26, ECO will be watching to see if you can help Canada re-chart the journey of an administration shackled to increased funding of fossil fuel subsidies and a vintage pipeline purchase. We hope to see you instead take Canada by the hand and lead the nation down a more responsible path towards the managed decline of the fossil fuel industry.

Steven, you are the brilliant mind once responsible for editing me. I hope you read and understand how happy ECO is to see you back. ECO trusts that you will put people and the planet front and centre.

We're counting on you not to break our hearts.

---

## Brazil's NDC Magic: How To Increase Ambition Without Decreasing Emissions

ECO followed with mathematical curiosity Brazil's announcement of its new NDC target yesterday. There we found a stunning exercise of number-crunching that might earn the Brazilian environment minister a Fields Medal, a Nobel Prize - or, more likely, a Fossil of the Day. The Brazilian government, lo and behold, has discovered a way to increase ambition without cutting a single gram of carbon dioxide.

The recipe to such an arithmetical tour de force involves, first of all, updating the first NDC in 2020 with a deliberate increase of 700 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> to emissions in the baseline year of 2005. Then, keeping the same percentage cut already applied as an indicative target back in 2015 - 43% by 2030. This will grant an extra 400 megatonnes to freely dump in the atmosphere while somehow still claiming to meet the target, and rendering the NDC a total fudge. That will result in getting sued for violating the Paris Agreement (this pesky piece of paper that says NDCs can only move in one direction, upwards) and being singled out by UNEP as

the only G20 country to actually decrease ambition in its NDC update.

But worry not! Here comes the neat part: in Glasgow, before the eyes of the world, the baseline year emissions will be updated again, so in 2005 that remains a still lofty 400 million tonnes higher than the original NDC projection, and the percentage cut will be ratcheted up even further to 50% (who doesn't love round numbers?). That ends up with the exact same amount of emissions in 2030 as in the 2015 pledge, and yet John Kerry and Alok Sharma, who will tout this greenwashing as a "significant GHG reduction", will slap Brazil on the back.

Maybe inspired by the air of the British Isles, Brazil seems to have followed the advice of Lewis Carroll's Red Queen: "It takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place." ECO urges other countries, for the sake of our planet, not to emulate the Latin American giant - and never, ever, use the maths of the Brazilians to update your own NDCs.

# Will COP26 Decisions Recognise Nature's Essential Role In Achieving 1.5 And a Resilient Future For All?

Six years after the Paris Agreement, Parties at COP26 must urgently agree on how to close the current mitigation gap to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C. To keep the 1.5°C goal in reach we need urgent, ambitious action **BOTH** to phase out fossil fuels as soon as possible **AND** to preserve and restore natural ecosystems which are a major carbon sink. Crucially, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) are the custodians of much of the world's precious biodiversity and, in the efforts to pursue 1.5°C, their rights must be protected and their voices heard and centred.

The IPCC AR6 report clearly highlights that land and ocean sinks have absorbed over half of our carbon emissions over the last decade, and warns that the climate crisis threatens the ability of ecosystems to act as carbon sinks and risks turning them into sources of emissions. Even if we immediately eliminated fossil fuels, the emissions from agriculture, increased deforestation, forest and land degradation, and other land use changes would severely hamper our chances of staying below 1.5°C.

Nature is not a new topic for Parties. In Madrid they underlined "the essential contribution of nature to addressing climate change and its impacts and the need to address climate change in an integrated manner" (1/CP.25, paragraph 15). The Convention and the Paris Agreement also contain major provisions related to nature, including Article 4 paragraph 1(d) of the Convention and Article 5.1 of the Paris Agreement: now is the time for Parties to operationalise these.

At this COP, the UK Presidency has made nature one of its 5

"campaigns". On day 2 of the World Leaders Summit, the high-level Forests and Land Use event will include the launch of the "Glasgow Leaders Declaration on Forests and Land Use". ECO welcomes the commitment to reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030. But political declarations are only helpful if they go beyond promises. Successful nature outcomes at COP26 will also depend on the inclusion of nature in the formal negotiations, with the adoption of decisions that drive political ambition and tangible action, and ensure we keep the possibility of keeping below the 1.5°C limit.

Protecting and restoring natural ecosystems are essential components of ambitious climate action for both mitigation and adaptation, which must be recognised in the COP26 decision text. Not only will taking care of our precious ecosystems help us achieve our climate goals but it will also build the resilience of communities to the worsening effects of climate change. Widespread loss and damage is already occurring, and the needs of vulnerable communities, including safeguarding the land, freshwater and seas on which they live and depend, must be made central to decision making.

Crucially, any role for nature must reflect the following important principles: ambition to protect and restore nature must be alongside, not instead of, eliminating fossil fuels; the rights of IPLCs must be upheld and their role recognised, including through increased funding for IPLC land tenure and forest management; all ecosystems must play a role; and investment must be made in biodiverse and carbon rich ecosystems, not monoculture tree plantations.

## It Always Seems Impossible Until It's Done

Yesterday, Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon must have had Nelson Mandela's words on her mind when she announced her country's pledge to provide £1 million to respond to loss and damage. The money will come from the Scottish Government's soon-to-be £6 million-a-year Climate Justice Fund, which to date has been focused on adaptation, and is to be used to help communities recover from and build resilience against climate-related events. This is the first developed country - ever - to make an explicit commitment to loss and damage finance.

Of course, this is nowhere near sufficient to respond to the scale of loss and damage needs, which could range between US\$290 billion and \$580 billion annually by 2030, only for developing countries. Yet this small but strong political stance that Scotland, as a sub-state actor, is taking towards countries and people on the frontline of climate impacts, is a way of saying: we heard you, we bear a responsibility in this and we will not let you down. And it is also a message for other Western governments with much larger resources than Scotland: if small nations can do it, you can and **MUST** do it too.

Despite being anchored in the Paris agreement as the third

pillar of climate action, loss and damage remains the "unwanted child" in the climate talks, as the AOSIS Chair bluntly but rightly said on Sunday. Developed countries do not want to face their responsibilities and pay to repair the devastating impacts of flood, hurricanes, sea-level rise, glacial melt, and increasing pace of desertification, triggered by their historical emissions but which primarily affect the poorest countries, communities and ecosystems. Rich countries are not exempt from loss and damage as the terrible flash floods in Europe over the summer sadly demonstrated. But not every country can immediately allocate €30 billion to rebuild the country, like Germany was able to.

The decisions from COP26 but also speeches from world leaders must reflect this urgency and provide solutions that address the scale of the needs in developing countries and the vulnerable communities therein. Its decisions need to contribute to ensuring that adequate and needs-based support is available and is accessible to the most vulnerable people for upscaling adaptation and responding to loss and damage. This is not a matter of charity but of climate justice!

# It's Not Just Bolivia Who Wants Non-Market Approaches. ECO Does Too!

Negotiators here in Glasgow, and in Madrid, and in Katowice, and in Bonn, and in Marrakech have become obsessed with carbon markets. We get it. We know how attractive it is to pay others to do the work while someone else covers the costs. But in these dire circumstances, we need to sit down and talk about other ways to enhance ambition, and fast. Like, right here in Glasgow!

When it comes to talking about Article 6 and international cooperation, it's always mitigation, mitigation, mitigation, and, markets, markets, markets. But what about those non-market approaches that are also included in Article 6? Yes, the stuff at the end of Article 6 that no one seems to see or want to talk about, but which could raise hundreds of billions of dollars - including for ecosystem conservation - through innovative approaches to finance including financial transaction taxes, taxes on the super rich, and levies on fossil fuel production and aviation.

Let's take a step back and take a quick gander at the Paris Agreement. Article 6 is about voluntary cooperation in the implementation of NDCs, to allow for higher ambition in mitigation and adaptation actions, and to promote sustainable development and environmental integrity. So basically, it's about international cooperation that supports mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology transfer, knowledge sharing and capacity building.

Unfortunately, though, non-market approaches have been left behind in the negotiations, given less time and less emphasis. All this time we could've been unleashing a powerful system to raise ambition and finance through a range of measures for enhanced international cooperation on climate change. Instead, negotiators have tied themselves up in knots, year-after-year around all the complexities related to carbon markets.

This whole time we could've been telling the kids about how countries are enhancing cooperation and entering bilateral, regional, or international climate agreements to raise hundreds of billions of dollars per year to enhance mitigation and adaptation ambition, doing things like protecting natural ecosystems and supporting adaptation and a just transition. Imagine that! The thousands of students that have taken to the streets for more action and all the activists at ECO would surely approve. Non-market approaches have huge potential. Allow us to quickly tell you why before you jump into the next round of negotiations.

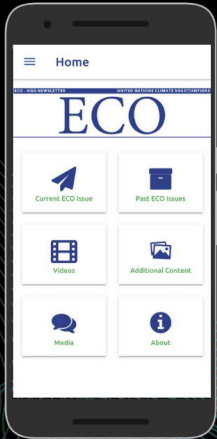
Non-market approaches can be implemented quickly, and being fast is a good thing in a crisis. Negotiations concerning markets have taken what feels like forever. We have watched our negotiator friends working tirelessly on Article 6 for almost 7 years with no outcome. We feel for you and would love to help you find a way out. Even assuming there is a market outcome in Glasgow, there's still a lot of work to be done over the coming years. We could be launching non-market approaches and opening the way for all sorts of international cooperation under Article 6 right now and see activities and results within 1 or 2 years, or even months. Just look how quickly the Green Climate Fund set up its non-market results-based payments system for REDD+.



Non-market approaches have the potential to be more equitable and beneficial to more countries, especially LDCs and SIDS. Many countries won't be able to participate in markets due to capacity constraints and not being able to create carbon credits. Non-market-based approaches to international cooperation can support adaptation and NDC implementation for all countries and even support the implementation of conditional NDCs. LDCs and SIDS are calling for a share of proceeds from transactions to go towards adaptation that will diminish over time as emissions are reduced. Non-market approaches can ensure ongoing support for adaptation and even for loss and damage going well into the future.

Non-market approaches can also support resilience and recovery. How badly is this needed? More than ever after that pandemic, right? The pandemic has increased the vulnerability of those already most vulnerable to climate change. Enhanced international cooperation through an equitable non-market-based approach opens the door to support for more countries and can support projects that will help boost the much-needed resilience and recovery.


And last but not least, non-market approaches have huge untapped potential to support significant real and permanent emissions reductions, and we all know how much we need that if we're going to keep 1.5 alive. Non-market approaches include North-South and South-South transfer of technologies, policies and regulations, and knowledge to mitigate climate change, as well as international cooperation to raise finance through innovative financial mechanisms to support mitigation activities. Offsetting doesn't reduce emissions, it merely shifts emissions obligations around, but through non-market approaches, mitigation activities across all sectors can be supported to deliver real and permanent emissions reductions in multiple countries, as well as boost adaptation co-benefits.

## DOWNLOAD THE ECO APP



 Google Playstore  
 Apple App Store

**OR THROUGH THE CAN WEBSITE**  
[climatenetwork.org/COP26](http://climatenetwork.org/COP26)



## Fossil of the Day

Well, here we are again. In for yet another roller coaster ride through the climate negotiations that are COP26. This time, direct from sunny Glasgow, with its stunning Victorian architecture, lively spirit and basically its own language and sense of humour. And so to business and back by popular demand, the first of our 'Fossil of the Day' Awards.

**The First Fossil of the Day Award goes to the UK Presidency, in partnership with the UNFCCC secretariat, for their exceptional organisation.**

CAN asked for a COP postponement, as we feared people from the developing world wouldn't be able to come and advocate for climate justice in the face of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

But the UK presidency insisted that COP26 was going ahead and was prepared to welcome the global community to 'the most inclusive COP ever'...

This spirit of inclusivity has showcased what the Brits do best - the art of queuing for hours in some cases. People who've invested time and resources to travel to Glasgow have waited patiently only to find there is "no room at the inn" for civil society and told to 'join events online' - to then find they were offline... We might as well have stayed at home, though we would have missed the weather...

We hope this inaugural COP26 Fossil of the Day serves as



a wake up call. Civil society must be treated as an equal partner with equal access - we all have the same aim to avert climate breakdown. You have two weeks to shepherd a successful negotiation process and to cultivate a productive negotiating environment at a critically important time. You've been warned - we're watching and we aren't queuing!

**The Second Fossil of the Day Award goes to Australia for aiming very low.**

The Aussies are already excelling in heading for rock bottom this COP. They've not only spectacularly failed to deliver ambitious contributions (NDC) but have also approved three new coal projects in the last months.

They brought no new 2030 target, no new policies to reduce emissions or phase out fossil fuels and ruled out signing the Global Methane Pledge.

Australia, we've come to expect some unconscionable behaviour from you on climate change but this time you've truly outdone yourself. How low can you go and will New Zealand be following you?

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said that New Zealand's updated climate plans are perfectly aligned with the 1.5C target yet Energy Minister Megan Woods refused to commit to phase out of new and expanded coal mines. You can't go for coal and rely on overseas credits to meet your targets.

## Nothing About Us Without Us: Indigenous Peoples With Disability Must Be Centred In Emerging Disability Constituency

Indigenous Peoples with Disability are affected first and worst by climate change - from floods, fires, and climate disasters that claim our lands and our lives, to eco-ableist climate action that advocates for a future where our communities are erased.

The SustainedAbility Disability & Climate Network have been working for the establishment of a Disability Constituency for many years now, and the support of allies across civil society has been instrumental in finally getting this Constituency on the agenda. We thank you for your support and solidarity.

The deep allyship demonstrated by the Indigenous Peoples Constituency in this fight for our recognition and space within the UNFCCC is particularly noteworthy and appreciated. Any emerging Disability Constituency must centre Indigenous Peoples with Disability and prioritise marginalised people with Disability.

It is therefore fitting that the flagship event for the Disability Caucus centres on this important intersection, sharing the experiences of Indigenous Peoples with Disabilities in the face of climate change, as well as sharing how this knowledge and these rights movements can be a source of strength in advancing real solutions to climate change.

The event, **Stories and Solutions: Indigenous People with Disabilities Share our Stories for Climate Impact** takes place today from 10am - 11:30am in the Indigenous Peoples' Pavilion.

You will be able to hear from Indigenous Peoples with Disability from around the world, with an opening address from the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy on Disability and Accessibility, Professor María Soledad Cisternas Reyes.

Nothing About Us Without Us!