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Which Future Will You Fund?

For decades ECO has watched in dismay as world governments came to COP after COP promising more climate action, only to go home and continue producing and burning more coal, oil and gas.

The world has known for over a century that the combustion of these fossil fuels causes climate change. Yet try as you might to find a mention of the need to phase-out the use and production of fossil fuels in the Framework Convention on Climate Change - or even in the Paris Agreement itself - you'll come up empty-handed. So far, ECO's beloved COP process

has had everything to say about the need to reduce emissions, and almost nothing to say about the need to reduce our reliance on the dominant source of those emissions: fossil fuels.

ECO thinks COP26 has the chance to change this.

We have come to a breaking point in the implementation of the Paris Agreement where it is no longer possible for countries to ignore the necessary escalation of the energy transition and the need to phase-out fossil fuels. This has driven the series of major announcements

last week focused on curbing the production and financing of fossil fuels. In Glasgow, Parties are finally saying the F-words.

ECO is here to give the delegates of COP26 a vision of the work that lies ahead now that we're ready to have a serious conversation about energy.

A major test of credibility for COP26 will be its ability to break from the decades-long tradition of COP decision texts being conspicuously silent on the cause of climate change: production and combustion of coal, oil and gas.

You Can't Offset Your Way to 1.5°C

You may have heard of a recent greenwashing trend whereby fossil fuel majors are marketing their polluting products as "carbon neutral". In 2021 alone, companies have claimed 19 massive fossil fuel cargoes to be "carbon neutral" on the basis that the associated oil and gas companies have retired carbon credits to compensate for fossil emissions. What's more, oil and gas companies are pushing the myth that carbon capture and storage can make fossil fuels "carbon-free".

There are SO many problems with such claims that ECO does not even know where to begin but suffice it to say that, no matter how much fossil fuel companies and countries try, they cannot offset their way to 1.5°C. That's why, despite the number of net zero emissions pledges trumpeted at COP26 and repeated promises that Article 6 is going to deliver on ambition, ECO remains dubious.

Let's be clear: the surest way to avoid

truly catastrophic levels of warming is to cut emissions at the source, in line with science and equity, by immediately halting expansion of oil, gas, and coal, phasing out their production and consumption, reducing agricultural emissions and ending deforestation. Staying below 1.5°C requires bringing fossil fuel emissions and deforestation down to zero – *real zero* – not "balancing" them out with carbon credits or illusory technologies in the pursuit of a theoretical "net" zero.

Countries in the Global North need to move first and fastest to slash their emissions domestically, *without* reliance on offsets or carbon markets riddled with loopholes.

If Article 6 allows countries to meet their mitigation obligations and commitments not by primarily exhausting all available measures to cut emissions domestically, but through the purchase of

climate measures elsewhere, ambition will remain a pipe dream.

The UK Presidency says this COP is about getting on the path to 1.5°C (and the world is nowhere near on track), and is pressuring countries to conclude negotiations on Article 6. Requirements: Absolutely NO double counting of credits whether inside or outside an NDC (this includes having measures in place so that corresponding adjustments can be applied for CORSIA and the voluntary carbon market); NO carry-over of credits from the CDM whatsoever; robust baselines set below business as usual; and high "overall mitigation in global emissions" (OMGE) through automatic partial cancellation of credits. Without those elements, Article 6 will blow a hole in the Paris Agreement too big for a net to cover it.

"Netting" out fossil fuels doesn't keep us to 1.5°C, reductions do.

Do Judge a COP by its Cover Decision

ECO has been following discussions on the “cover decision” and has heard that some Parties do not acknowledge the importance of such a piece. So, we thought it was a good idea to remind negotiators and especially Ministers that this is the decision that sets the political tone of how the world is responding to the climate crisis. This is your best chance to respond to the demands, not only from the record number of people marching on the streets on Saturday, but from people all over the world: civil society, youth, women, Indigenous Peoples, children, workers.

We are now in the second week and a bit tired of so many queues and meetings and we imagine that negotiators must also be exhausted. But since this is one of the most important outcomes of this COP, we wanted to highlight the key points we think should be in there (you're welcome, and we trust you will pick this up!!!). So here it goes:

1. **Loss and Damage Finance:** Our number one request is for you to establish a new stream to provide sufficient and needs-based Loss and Damage finance, in addition to the US\$100 billion per year committed for mitigation and adaptation. The most vulnerable need that urgently. And please, include loss and damage in the terms of reference for the post-2025 finance negotiations on the same level as mitigation and adaptation. We also want you to request that the Secretariat prepare a synthesis report on the Loss and Damage finance gap.
2. **Rights and inclusion:** The decision must recognize the linkages between climate action and the fulfilment of human rights obligations and, clearly. Simply recalling Paris Agreement language would not do the trick. So we suggest that you welcome the recognition of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and the establishment of a Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change by the UN Human Rights Council at its 48th session. After all, this is work from your own peers and benefited from considerable support across all regions!
3. **Fossil Fuels:** We need you to commit to halt fossil fuel subsidies as soon as possible, including via multilateral and regional

financing institutions, and to direct financing institutions and the private sector to provide adequate financing for renewables. Please also stop licensing or permitting new fossil fuel projects of any kind for production from 2021 onwards, and phase-out fossil fuel combustion.

4. **New 2030 Ambition:** ECO would be pleased with a call for all countries to revise their 2030 targets no later than 2022. Then the UK will be able to say 1.5 is ‘staying alive’ (...staying alive, ah-ah-ah-ah-, staying aliiiiiiiiive). Parties should be urged to complement existing NDCs with transparent additional climate policies, plans, action and accelerated implementation, as well as additional financial and technical support annually. In this context, we like the idea put forward by the CVF to establish an Annual Ambition Platform where Parties can share and report on these additional commitments.
5. **Role of Nature in Keeping 1.5°C Alive:** In the last cover decision waaaaay back in 2019 (it seems so long ago, before COVID) you reaffirmed the need to address biodiversity loss and climate change in an integrated manner. Now you need to go further and recognise the urgency of halting and reversing biodiversity loss - along with tackling fossil fuels - in order to limit the increase in the global average temperature to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Building on that, countries should commit to conduct rapid greenhouse gas emissions reductions alongside ambitious conservation and restoration of natural land, water and marine ecosystems in a manner that complies with human rights and the rights of Indigenous Peoples. This should also be included by parties in their NDCs, NAPs and LT-LEDs. The continuation of the dialogue on oceans (that was also on the last cover decision) is also key.

And then, if you tackle all those things + rulebook, we will be able to say we started to respond to the demands of the people. Yes, “started”, as ambition is not the only game in town. We need to start working hard on implementation as well if we want a future no warmer than 1.5°C for our children and their children and the children of their children.

Japan's Commitment To “Keep Coal Alive”

While we have seen some encouraging progress here at COP26 on phasing out coal, one country you won't see in that list is Japan, one of the world's largest greenhouse gases emitters – and with over 20% of its emissions coming from burning coal. ECO recognizes that OECD countries must exit coal by 2030 in line with the science-based 1.5°C pathway, but it seems Japan is not aware of that, even in the second week of COP26. Despite a recent 2050 net-zero emissions declaration and updated 2030 reduction targets, Japan currently has no concrete plan to phase out its 160+ operating coal units, and is still intending on having nearly a fifth of its power coming from coal in 2030.

Even worse, Japan has a number of *new* coal-fired power plants under construction, along with plans to keep its oldest coal plants alive by bolting on ammonia and hydrogen technology that would only marginally reduce emissions. And this dedication to coal power is not limited to domestic projects – the government

continues to support coal abroad, funding major “unabated” coal power projects Indramayu in Indonesia and Matarbari in Bangladesh.

At a time when Japan is required to do its fair share to meet the Paris goals as a major emitter and developed country, PM Kishida is instead doubling-down on Japan's commitment to keep coal alive, restating at COP26 that Japan's energy strategy relies on using hydrogen and ammonia produced from fossil fuels as so-called “zero-emission thermal power.” This strategy simply creates an illusion of emission reductions, as it will only shift the emissions to the countries where the fossil-based ammonia and hydrogen is produced, all while prolonging the life of coal in Japan through co-firing.

It's about time that Japan gets serious about its energy strategy and sets a concrete roadmap to transition from fossil fuels to renewables in line with the Paris Agreement.

We Can't Burn Our Way Out Of The Climate Crisis

ECO believes it's obvious that we can't burn our way out of the climate crisis. Avoiding the worst impacts of the climate crisis and keeping 1.5°C within reach requires a rapid phase-out of fossil fuels and other carbon-rich fuels, and the parallel protection and restoration of ecosystems—not more extraction.

Burning trees for energy emits carbon instantaneously. In fact, burning forest biomass emits as much – or more – CO₂ than fossil fuels at the smokestack and per unit of energy produced (as well as a slew of other pollutants including soot, perpetuating harms in communities near these plants). Co-firing of coal and biomass for energy can also prolong the lives of coal plants.

Proponents love to argue that as long as it's "sustainable," forestry can deliver carbon-neutral energy. Biomass feedstock can range from sawdust to agricultural residues or even mature, whole trees that wouldn't sell for timber. And when trees are harvested, they take a long time to regrow—longer than Paris Agreement's time frames for emissions reductions.

Like taking out a loan at a bank, this creates a "carbon debt" until all of the ecosystem carbon released during harvest and combustion is recaptured by plant growth. Scientists note that the period of time for regrowth to "payback" the carbon debt often spans decades to centuries. But we can't wait for emissions reductions to occur decades in the future—our collective mandate is to curb emissions now. What about when disasters or development prevent forests from ever re-growing? And by the way, *weren't we already counting on those very same forests to soak up the lingering fossil fuel emissions from other sectors of our economies?* We definitely can't ask them to do two things at once.

More broadly, land-based energy feedstock and negative-emissions technologies can have even larger carbon impacts: for example, when they lead to indirect changes in land use. Increasing

demand for bioenergy could drive conversion of natural forests and other ecosystems to plantations. In the global South, tree plantation expansion is frequently linked to land- and water- grabbing at the expense of local communities, including Indigenous Peoples. There is already huge pressure on a finite amount of land for food, water, biodiversity and other life-supporting ecosystem services.

Making things even worse, under current UNFCCC carbon accounting rules, Parties do not account for smokestack emissions from burning biomass for energy in the same way that they account for those from fossil fuels. In theory, biomass emissions should appear in the land use sector—including emissions coming from countries other than the one claiming to reduce its emissions, when biomass is traded internationally. In practice, notoriously deficient land sector accounting frequently obscures or fails to account for carbon loss from forest harvesting. Don't get us started on the fact that Parties can include harvesting emissions in their accounting baselines! Countries can claim a win on fossil fuel reductions, without any guarantee of reductions for the atmosphere.

Yet even with benefits so uncertain, many countries are charging ahead on bioenergy build-outs. A massive ramp-up of burning forest wood for "renewable energy" in the EU and UK is driving forest carbon loss and reducing the forest carbon sink. Those policies are now being replicated elsewhere, including in Japan and South Korea.

It's just so simple: to *decarbonize*, we need to go beyond burning and transition away from *carbon-based fuels*. The UNFCCC must make the risks and impacts of bioenergy far more transparent, overhaul contradictory policies that undermine environmental integrity and allow emissions to go unaccounted for, and get real about restoring and protecting nature. A just and nature-sensitive energy transition will result in real emissions reductions and cleaner, safer energy sources that are better for nature and people.

For A Fossil Fuel Free Future

Today, more than 150 nationally-elected legislators from 30 countries around the world are urging their colleagues to join their call for a Fossil Fuel Free Future.

The call was initiated by over a dozen parliamentarians in the Global South covering Bangladesh, Colombia, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Kiribati, Palau, Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa and Timor Leste. Their collective demands have now grown to include voices from every single major continent.

ECO welcomes the call. Governments must get together and agree to the principle of no new production and set that as a global norm, and then begin the work of negotiating the drawing down of production over time, in line with what's required by science.

This will only be possible when the governments who have gotten wealthy from mining like the US, Norway, Canada, the UK, and Australia are prepared to support countries to diversify their economies with the resources, access to technology and supportive international rules that give them the space to make and commit to these policies.

Together, these parliamentarians are demanding that world leaders embrace the spirit of international cooperation "given the huge historical contribution of fossil fuels to causing climate change, the industry's continuing expansion plans, and demands on the public purse".

Their demands are five-fold:

1. **End new expansion of oil, gas and coal production** in line with the best available science as outlined by the IPCC and UNEP;

2. **Phase out existing oil, gas and coal in a manner that is fair and equitable**, taking into account the responsibilities of countries for climate change and their respective capacity to transition;
3. **Commit to and pursue transformational policies and plan to ensure 100% access to renewable energy globally**, support economies to diversify away from fossil fuels, and enable peoples and communities across the globe to flourish through a just global transition;
4. **Enact national budgets and fiscal policies that will support this swift and just transition nationally and globally**; Ensure the timely and adequate delivery of public, additional and non-debt creating climate finance as part of the obligations of rich, industrialized countries to address climate change.
5. **Forge new international commitments and treaties complementing the Paris Agreement to address the urgency of a swift and just transition** away from fossil fuel energy and build democratic, renewable, safe energy systems for all peoples and communities in line with the goal of keeping global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius and preventing climate catastrophe.

So what does ECO see as next steps? As governments discuss long-term goals and pathways in Glasgow they should create an agenda item or process to focus specifically on the issues these colleagues from across the world are raising: How will we stop expanding the fossil fuel industry? How will we plan for its phase out? And how will we resource the transition away from these polluting fuels?

Redefining Our Standards and Narratives on Climate Finance: The Perspective of Indigenous Peoples

ECO is happy to share this part of our publication with the Indigenous Peoples Caucus (IPO) to help amplify their voice. This article reflects the views of the IPO.

Countries from around the world have committed to climate finance to support climate action but, what does that really mean? While a growing number of state and non-state actors heeded to a call for an increased climate finance, the structure continues to fall short of effectively addressing the needs of Indigenous Peoples. This has amounted to small, short-term, project based funding that is not scalable and completely narrow in scope and reach.

Over US\$19.2 billion from combined public and private funds has been pledged at COP26 to end deforestation by 2030 and another \$ 1.7 billion in support of Indigenous Peoples' land and forest tenure. But this commitment remains hollow until there is a mechanism that ensures resources actually reach Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples are demanding an inclusive, just and equitable climate financing channeled *directly* to Indigenous communities **both in developed and developing countries**.

Why the need for a dedicated climate financing mechanism for Indigenous Peoples?

It has become clear that Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately impacted by climate change, yet there remains an unequal access and benefits to climate financing under existing arrangements, for example, through the Green Climate Fund, which to date, has not accredited a single Indigenous organization, owing to the governance structure that makes it difficult or impossible for Indigenous Peoples to comply with.

It is essential that Indigenous Peoples have direct access to finance, rather than systems that route funding through *intermediary*

organizations that are completely inaccessible and unreliable. Dedicated climate financing for Indigenous Peoples could provide support for us to maintain, restore and enhance our knowledge and practices that care for the Earth, to promote Indigenous food sovereignty, to create an appropriate structure for loss and damage to compensate Indigenous Peoples, and to advance the rights of Indigenous women and persons with disabilities within the climate agenda.

Climate financing could also enhance in-country capacities of Indigenous Peoples to bring in their priorities to national country programming or an integrated and holistic adaptation and mitigation planning. This could advance Indigenous self-determination by investing in our collective capacity to administer and manage climate finance based on our priorities, systems of governance, and our knowledge systems.

At COP26, we must change the narrative that perpetuates an understanding of climate finance focused solely on numbers, whether the number of beneficiaries or tonnes of carbon equivalents. Instead, climate finance must respect, protect and uphold Indigenous Peoples' rights and self-determination, building our collective capacity to manage our own priorities and support our ability to adapt and strengthen our resilience.

Equally important is the need for a political change to see how climate finance is correcting the climate injustice that Indigenous Peoples have and continue to experience. Because for as long as we continue business as usual, as long as profit-seeking actors continue to control climate funds without Indigenous Peoples leadership and free, prior and informed consent, the \$19.2 billion pledge or any other climate finance for that matter, will remain a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Have You Ever Played Just Transition Bingo?

You'd have been winning points galore in recent days. We've seen a raft of announcements in support of a socially fair move towards climate neutrality - a 'just transition' - at COP26.

ECO likes it best when words are matched by actions. Luckily, that also seems to be the case. Two years after the launch of the Katowice Declaration in 2019, countries are finally committing to support each other financially to drive just transitions.

However all too often, when ECO looks closely, the details are missing. And we all know that's where the devil is.

Take the new 'Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet' (GEAPP) led by the Rockefeller Foundation. This acknowledges the need to provide technical assistance, regulatory reform support and work with transformative country partnerships, but we need to know how this will work.

And the partnership of the EU, US, Germany, France and UK to help South Africa get out of coal has focused on the money (US\$8.5 billion over 3-5 years). We need to know more about the 'investment framework' and the conditions for financing.

ECO is adamant that we can't have a happy and healthy society if our environment is hurting. We need to work on both together.

For that, we need international solidarity, cooperation and finance. We need to make sure the right projects are financed - in a transparent and fair way. We also need just transition projects and initiatives to ensure transitions are aligned with 1.5°C and that they protect nature.

So, for now, ECO applauds the financial commitments and the effort made to start putting words into practice. But the just transition bingo will only become a real win for nature and for people if the details are right and help usher in just energy transformation globally.

A just transition for Latin America

Decarbonization. The star tool with which the global south countries propose to achieve a green energy matrix, reduce emissions, and reach net zero.

In Latin America, decarbonization is urgent. The problem of energy generation from fossil fuels has long since moved away from being treated as a technical challenge and into the space of climate justice. The demand is no longer to change the technology to a cleaner one but to repair the social, environmental, and human damage caused. When you live in an area with decades of environmental degradation, government neglect, and imposed extractivist vocation, the spectre of general blackouts no longer scares you.

However, every crisis is an opportunity. That is how the large power generation companies that dominate the Latin American electricity market see it. Decarbonization will happen anyway, as world markets increasingly punish coal and favor renewable energies. The question is how it will happen and who will decide it.

Will we continue with large power plants and extractivism but now "green"? The green hydrogen and lithium for the energy transition of the global north leaves Latin America in the same place it has always been: where everything is extracted, and nothing is gained.

In a continent increasingly threatened by the effects of climate change, a socially and environmentally just energy transition is needed, with markets different from what we already know. That has led us to the crisis we are in now.

Climate justice must be the pillar for democratic, decentralized, and equitable energy systems, with broad access and diverse forms of financing. This transition implies a paradigm shift and not a dream of green capitalism that we will regret in a few years.

UK Governments Pushing Fossil Fuel Projects

Like a bad magician, the UK government desperately wants people to look the other way as it tries to pull off a clumsy trick with one hand while doing something completely different with the other. Everybody can see the sleight of hand for what it is: blatant hypocrisy, "a do-as we say, not as we do, and please look over there".

Despite being hosts of this COP their desperate push for fossil fuel projects continues. Projects are proposed that don't have a future and damage the planet when nobody can argue with the clear, science-based need to reduce emissions. Yes, we need to keep 1.5°C alive but how can we pursue that critical path when our words and actions are so lacking in alignment?

Friends of the Earth put out a report a few days before COP showing how the UK government is still addicted to fossil fuels here and elsewhere in the world with 40 new oil, gas, and coal projects in the pipeline before 2025. And these projects are just the tip of the iceberg. Beneath them lie more prospective oil, gas and coal developments that will completely scupper the UK's climate efforts unless the government rapidly changes direction.

There should be no need for argument on this anymore, yet the government crashes on with bizarre support for planet-wrecking fossil fuel projects. Nobody can ignore the difference between the UK Prime Minister's brash and glossy words, and what his government still does. Each day that the Cambo oil field

isn't cancelled, that the plug isn't pulled on the new coal mine in Cumbria, that support is not withdrawn for oil development in Surrey, and investment in a gas mega-project in Mozambique isn't stopped, is another day where their hypocrisy clear for all to see.

We can't be dangerously distracted by false solutions at COP. Instead, we must use these remaining hours and days to advocate for people who have done the least to cause the climate crisis, and who suffer the worst from it.

We can keep rightful pressure on a government who say they realise the scale of the problem, but are still in dangerous thrall to the very industry and practices at the centre of this environmental mess. We cannot sanction fossil fuel projects, here or anywhere else. We are wasting time, livelihoods and lives while this deceit goes on.

It's such a waste of money and energy. There is so much that needs to be done. From funding the move to better jobs, an overdue action steeped in historic responsibility, to mitigating the loss and damage being suffered now... The fact that the UK government persists with these projects means they lack credibility, and doubly so given that they are hosting this COP.

And obviously there is also the issue of cutting emissions, and to that end we could do so much by just saying no to fossil fuels, their funders and the industry behind it.

29 Countries And Institutions To Shift Public Finance From Fossil Fuels

29 countries and institutions, including the United States, Canada, Mali and Costa Rica, have joined a United Kingdom-led commitment to end direct international public finance for unabated coal, oil and gas by the end of 2022 and instead prioritize a clean energy transition. After a wave of commitments to end international coal finance, this is the first international political commitment that also addresses public finance for oil and gas.

Since the initial announcement on November 4th, the initiative has snowballed, with the Netherlands, El Salvador and Germany signing on this week. Together the signatories represent at least US\$21.7 billion a year in influential and often preferential public finance for fossil fuels for 2018-2020. This is a massive portion of the \$63b a year in known G20 and Multilateral Development Bank (MDB) finance for fossil fuels.

Shifting public finance for energy out of all fossil fuels and into clean energy is an urgent task. The International Energy Agency (IEA) says that to limit global warming to 1.5°C, this year needs to mark the end of new investments in not just coal, but also new oil and gas supply. Yet, G20 and MDB public finance for fossil fuels is currently 2.5 times their support for renewable energy, which averages \$26b per year. Public finance for clean energy has stagnated, despite the need for it to grow exponentially to meet climate goals and ensure universal access to clean energy.

The joint statement, which was welcomed by CSOs, unites

some of the largest historic providers of public finance for fossil fuels. However, other large financiers have yet to join. Laggards include Japan (\$0.9b/yr), Korea (\$10.6b/yr), and China (\$7.6b/yr), which are the largest providers of international public fossil fuel finance in the G20 and together account for 46% of G20 and MDB finance for fossil fuels. France, Spain, and major MDBs like the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) are also missing.

The combination of big polluters and low-income countries signing the statement challenges the assumption that developing country signatories want or need investments in fossil fuels to achieve their development objectives. Alongside fulfilling their stated goal of "*prioriti[zing] support fully towards the clean energy transition*", campaigners remind signatories that the ability of this initiative to support a just and 1.5°C-aligned global energy transition will also hinge on avoiding loopholes allowing for a dash for gas, acting on debt relief, increasing grant-based climate finance, and securing a growing number of signatories to the statement. This welcome and nearly-unprecedented international action on oil and gas must now be combined with big polluters cleaning up their acts at home too. Carbon doesn't care about borders, so this means signatories like the US, Canada, UK, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and Italy must take the obvious next steps: end domestic subsidies for fossil fuels and sign up to join the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance to pursue a managed and just transition away from production.

Redefining Our Standards and Narratives on Climate Finance

From 9 options down to 2 on common time frames for NDCs! It seems the Switzerland/Rwanda ministerial pair was able to cut through the noise and get right to the heart of the matter—some countries want a common time frame that aligns with the five-year cycles of the Paris Agreement while others are happy with the status quo.

ECO will be brief. We have long supported the common-

sense five-year time frame. And most Parties do, too. ECO will not waste your time with a repetition of our arguments and wonders whether you used your time constructively during the consultation yesterday. The response to the final question before you now is pretty straightforward: you must choose five years and a 2035 time frame for the next NDCs.

What About Public Transport And Cycling?

It seems that COP26 Transport Day, is set to focus mainly on electric vehicles. Of course, a consensus on the pace of transition to zero emission vehicles is needed to meet climate targets. It is also clear that there is a need for a commitment to ensure all new car sales are restricted to zero emission vehicles. Or that countries should put in place policies to ensure that fleet-owning businesses commit to achieving fully zero emission fleets. Those needs are all depicted in the official description of the COP26 Transport Day and, despite being undeniably necessary measures, what is missing is the encouragement for truly green transportation. It seems that alternative means of transport, such as electric trains and active mobility modes, were left out of the agenda when in truth they represent the only sustainable option.

Don't get us wrong: we undoubtedly want the electric transition in mobility, but it will take too long. On the contrary, walking, trains, bicycles, and other similar means are the only ones that can sharply reduce emissions by 2030. Transport represents around 25% of total greenhouse gas emissions, and, moreover, is the main cause of mortality in cities. Air pollution, closely linked to transport, causes annually millions of premature deaths and diseases, such as coronary or respiratory diseases, and is the most important environmental risk factor for human health. This represents a heavy bill on individual health and on public health systems of billions of dollars per year. Unfortunately, 'air pollution' or 'climate change' are never the culprits on death certificates, being that both are still dismissed as possible causes of death and their effect relegated to oblivion.

The so-called green technology is seen by many as a panacea to the climate crisis – including, apparently, the UK Presidency in the case of transports – and the focus of many current public policies. In the case of road passenger transport, which in many countries is mostly done by car, the big bet is on electric cars, in principle much cleaner than conventional ones. But is the electric car really the desired climate remedy?

The truth is that it will take too long for these cars to start having an appreciable positive climate impact. And even when electric cars penetrate heavily into fleets, transport emissions will not decline fast enough. In addition, the number of electric cars that need to be made available is so high – ponder that there are more than one billion conventional cars in the world! – that it will pose many difficulties in supplying them and an unsustainable pressure on the natural resources needed for their production, such as lithium, cobalt and manganese.

Therefore, in order to comply with climate goals, it is essential to curb cars on the road, not only replace them with electric equivalents. Instead, what is needed is to promote public transport, shared mobility, bicycles and the good old walking. Electric cars are not enough to solve the climate problem in transport. Rather, they are just a piece of a big puzzle, which should include a comprehensive range of public policies that significantly reduce the use of the private car. In this sense, ECO would much prefer a bicycle exhibition at the COP 26 venue to an electric car one!

Fossil of the Day

US ranks first in the Fossil of the Day Award for failing to take basic steps to halt fossil fuel production

Only last week in Glasgow, President Biden was talking sprints, marathons and finishing lines in the race to net zero. Seems like he's had enough of those sporting analogies and is back to speaking the language of black gold and carbon as the U.S. is set to announce a new oil and gas drilling program off the Gulf Coast.

As fossil fuel enabler-in-chief his administration has even outdone Trump by approving over 3,000 new drilling permits on public lands. Joe has refused to stop the Line 3 pipeline, expected to transport 760,000 barrels per day, and is keeping the fossil fuel lobby happy with sweet whispers of carbon capture storage and hydrogen. And the cherry on this carbon cake - the US shunned a global pact to commit to a coal end date.

Now we know he's 'talked the talk' about stopping deforestation, taken the methane pledge, agreed to boost climate finance and outlined a clean energy investment plan but until this hot air is converted into action we're not convinced.

We may have more faith if he used his presidential powers to declare a climate emergency, stop Line 3 and, while he's at it, end all new federal fossil fuel project permits and end oil exports. As the largest historical carbon emitter Joe owes it to us all to pay that climate debt and then some.

Australia comes in second place for a diabolic strategy ahead of Transport Day

Day two of week two wouldn't be complete without an appearance by Australia. This time, on top of their complete lack of progress on a worthwhile NDC 2030 update, or any remote plans to end

fossil fuels, on the eve of 'Transport Day' at COP26, good old PM Scott Morrison has outdone himself again with an 'inaction plan' for EVs – in celebration of his love of gas guzzlers.

The #ScottyFromMarketing plan includes no new tax breaks, sales targets, subsidies, incentives to increase consumer EV choice and, to cap it all, zero improvements to air pollution or fuel quality standards. It looks like we'll be hearing from those V8s for a good while longer. Our bet is that transport is going to speed past electricity as the land down under's biggest source of emissions in the not too distant future.

Serbia comes in third place for giving grace to big polluters

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic came over all Shakespeare (or so he thought) during his COP26 speech, saying : *"The Earth has music for those who listen"*. Now our resident fact checkers are pretty sure this isn't one from the Bard of Avon. But what they are certain of is that: *"Serbia hath laws for those that doth pollute"*.

The Serbian Government has adopted amendments to the law on Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control, in favour of large scale polluters. The National Assembly Committee for Environment rubber stamped these amendments giving coal fired power stations free reign to continue business as usual without the necessary environmental permits for three more years with support from Members of the Serbian National Assembly.

It seems fitting that we end today's fossil with a quote from Shakespeare about something that is as relevant today as it was then: *"Let the clean air blow the cobwebs from your body. Air is medicine. ... I know that our bodies were made to thrive only in pure air, and the scenes in which pure air is found"* - Troilus and Cressida