

ECO

TURN YOUR WORDS INTO ACTION

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Ocean Action is Climate Action

The ocean is the greatest unsung climate hero - it is the largest ecosystem on the planet and the most important carbon sink.

But ocean health is in jeopardy if we continue to misuse its carbon sink capacity as a buffer to atmospheric changes. The ocean has absorbed over 90% of the excess heat generated by humans since the industrial revolution, without which, it is estimated the Earth would be 35 degrees hotter. But these climate services are not merely chemical and physical reactions - they rely on a functioning ocean-carbon pump, which relies on an ocean full of marine life, fish and healthy habitats.

Coastal and marine blue carbon ecosystems not only provide climate mitigation benefits, but are key to adaptation by acting as buffers against the impacts of extreme weather events and sea level rise. Similarly, managing healthy populations of fish and more complete marine food webs not only increases the ocean's resilience in the face of climate change, it also reduces the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere by increasing sequestration and reducing emissions from the fishing fleet.

Keeping the ocean's ecosystems functions intact to maintain its power to mitigate and adapt to climate change protects the livelihoods of millions of people around the globe living in coastal communities, especially those in coastal LDCs and SIDS.

Ocean extraction is clipping the wings of our climate hero with industrial and illegal fishing and mining, while overuse and development is degrading the strength of ocean life with noise, offshore development, pollution and shipstrikes. These issues are exacerbated by the provision of subsidies which perpetuate destructive fishing practices and promote fossil fuel burning.

Climate change acts as a threat multiplier to the oceans - it not only creates new problems in the ocean such as acidification, but it undermines the ocean's capacity to deal with other impacts such as overfishing or pollution while also reducing the ocean's capacity to mitigate and adapt to climate change, thereby creating a dangerous feedback loop and downward spiral.

We therefore cannot talk about climate action without ocean action that also must include biodiversity protection and restoration. So ECO strongly and urgently welcomes the UNFCCC's decision to hold an annual ocean and climate dialogue. But it's a long walk to freedom - from simply acknowledging the ocean's role in climate action, to prioritising and accelerating ocean climate action.

ECO knows we need to leverage the power of the ocean in the fight against climate change. To do this, we need to rapidly address the knowledge and process gaps such as carbon accounting methodologies for other marine ecosystems such as kelp forests, and protecting and managing key species such as whales and fish; we need to integrate and strengthen ocean-based action in existing agenda items and request the relevant Constituted Bodies of the UNFCCC to incorporate and act on ocean-related issues under their respective mandates. This includes encouraging nations to include ocean actions in their NDCs, NAPs and in the Global Stocktake. We need to increase investment into marine nature-based solutions through enhanced synergies on financing between the ocean and the climate agenda.

The Ocean & Climate Dialogue at SB56 on 15th June presents a critical opportunity to accelerate ocean climate action by agreeing the goal and setting a clear path - let's not waste time.

No more blah blah blah, Loss and Damage finance NOW!

On their way to Chamber Hall which yesterday hosted the 1st session of the Glasgow Dialogue, Parties were greeted by a very special welcome committee organized by various civil society groups.

ECO was delighted that this message quickly found an echo in the room. AOSIS reminded the hall that the Glasgow Dialogue was not their first choice and the only reason they agreed to it at COP26, was under the condition that the Dialogue would lead to the creation of a Loss & Damage facility at COP27.

Having raised the need to address loss and damage since the creation of the UNFCCC almost 30 years ago, vulnerable countries, understandably, won't back down. Delaying a decision by another 3 years, while climate impacts only worsen, is simply not acceptable. And let's face it, the current financial architecture does not provide an adequate response to all existing loss and damage needs, let alone future needs.

For instance, there is no or very limited available finance to support island communities who face the consequences of slow-onset processes like sea-level rise; populations who lose their farmlands, are forcibly displaced, and witness the disappearance of their traditional cultures. ECO found the presentations of efforts supported by the World Bank, the GCF and the CREWS initiative quite interesting, but they primarily focus on minimizing loss and damage and leave aside the bulk of losses and damages which deeply infringe human rights. In addition, ECO understands donors count this towards their adaptation finance.

ECO demands that this dialogue must not repeat what had happened in the past dialogues but instead paves the constructive next steps to new and additional loss and damage finance, and how a loss and damage finance facility could channel a significant chunk of that to address affected communities and people's needs - going beyond the humanitarian system and insurance schemes.

Can Parties Afford to Ignore Agroecology?

As delegates gather once again for negotiations under the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture, the current conflict in Ukraine is triggering alarming global price rises for food, fuel and fertilisers.

This global crisis comes at a tragic time for communities on the front lines of the climate crisis. Currently 20 million people are facing famine in the Horn of Africa due to the drought affecting Ethiopia, Kenya and Somaliland. They and millions of others are not only losing their livelihoods to climate change, but are also seeing the price of food escalating beyond their reach - with tragic consequences.

Meanwhile, farmers around the world are also being hammered by the rising price of synthetic nitrogen fertilisers, triggered by the increasing cost of fossil fuels. But on farms where fertilisers have been applied for many years, soils have sadly lost the biota that provide natural soil fertility. Cropping systems have become dependent on agrochemicals delivering nutrients to grow crops, creating a vicious circle of dependency that needs to stop.

Alternative strategies to provide natural soil fertility are urgently needed to avoid significant crop yield reductions. If multiple agricultural nations simultaneously experience reduced crop yield, this will further worsen the crisis in global food prices and availability.

But what can we do about this? For many years, CAN has been pointing to the answers. Governments urgently need to plan for alternatives to improve soil fertility and protect yields, without

depending on fossil-fuelled fertilisers. They need to look at the entire food system from farm to fork. This can neatly be delivered through scaling up agroecology with training, support and gender-transformative extension services. By using natural and locally available materials such as compost and manure, farmers can improve soil fertility and crop yields - while also providing the climate benefits such as strengthening resilience and reducing emissions, in addition to multiple health, socioeconomic and biodiversity benefits.

Agroecology is now well-defined and easy to understand. Now more than ever it's time for Parties to endorse the language of agroecology in the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture, so that climate solutions and climate finance can be channeled to strengthen countries' long term resilience to both economic and climate crises. Agriculture negotiations must not ignore this global food crisis, nor the voices of those calling out for agroecology outside of the UNFCCC's doors. The IPCC and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) have both called for a shift towards agroecological approaches while UNEP points out that 87% of agricultural subsidies are harmful and could be far better used - for example to train and support smallholder farmers to adopt climate solutions such as agroecology.

This week in Bonn, Parties have the opportunity to shape change that will put food systems on track to weather the multiple storms ahead.

Putting Words Into Action (Plan)

Action for Climate Empowerment is the workstream related to public participation, access to information, education, training, awareness raising and international cooperation. ECO never tires of reminding you that three of these six elements - the right to access to information, the right to participation and the right to environmental education - are internationally recognized human rights. While less "sparkly" than topics like Loss and Damage or Article 6, ACE has the potential to break down the silos across different workstreams, acting as a catalyst for increased climate ambition and a people-centered implementation of the Paris Agreement.

At COP26, ECO was extremely disappointed when Parties swiftly moved to adopt the new Glasgow work programme on Action for Climate Empowerment without any reference to a "human rights-based approach". Though initially included as one of the guiding principles for the new Work Programme, it was removed during the very last hours of negotiations. Leaving the mandate for a new Action Plan to guide the implementation of ACE as one of the few highlights.

As ECO never loses hope, we have arrived in Bonn with renewed optimism that Parties will use the negotiation of a new ACE Action Plan at SB56, to be adopted at COP27, to make sure that it actually enhances effective, rights-based implementation of the Paris Agreement.

How you may ask? ECO is here to help. The new ACE Action Plan should include a set of activities in line with relevant processes within and outside the Convention and the Paris Agreement that can support

Parties in better understanding what it means to integrate the right to participation and access to information (among other rights) when putting in place climate policies. There is a wealth of expertise within and outside the UNFCCC among Parties and non-Party stakeholders who can inform each other's work and ensure that procedural rights are taken into consideration across all relevant workstreams.

ACE simply cannot overlook that worldwide there are still many restrictions for people to exercise these rights. Especially for those on the frontlines of the climate crisis. Environmental human rights defenders working for climate justice are increasingly targeted with violence, harassment, and criminalization. The operationalization of the linkage between ACE and human rights requires the ACE Action Plan to address the situation of those working to demand climate action by exercising their rights of access to information and participation.

The ACE Action Plan should recognize the need to effectively protect environmental human rights defenders and include activities that support Parties' efforts to guarantee an enabling environment for those on the front lines.

At COP26, fourteen Parties took the floor during the SBI plenary to apologize for the failure to include human rights in the new Glasgow Work Programme. Now it is the time to show real commitment and match words with action. ECO will be following the ACE in-session technical workshop and will report back on (hopefully!) progress towards an Action Plan that is meaningful and centered on human rights.

Seeing Through the GlaSS

The first workshop of the Glasgow - Sharm el-Sheikh (GlaSS) work programme on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) opens today. And it's about time too.

It's been seven long years since the GGA formed part of the Paris Agreement. Yet only now are we discussing the means to realise its aims.

But better late than never. If, that is, the urgency is recognised. If it's a learning process rather than a negotiation in obscure language. And if it's inclusive and transparent.

First and foremost, ECO insists that people must be at the centre of the Global Goal. After all, what we are working towards is reducing their vulnerability and increasing their resilience and capacity.

We will be looking around the workshop today to see if there is a diversity of people represented—youth, women, disabled, poor, Indigenous Peoples and the marginalised impacted by the climate disasters—reflecting the diversity of vulnerabilities and the many and various routes to resilience.