

# FAIR SHARES – LESSONS FROM PRACTICE, THOUGHTS ON STRATEGY

## An Equity and Fair Shares Discussion Paper for Climate Action Network International

By: Tom Athanasiou, Christian Holz, Sivan Kartha | Climate Equity Reference Project

### Executive Summary

**“There is no easy way, but there’s a way.”**

**– Willie Nelson**

### Discussion Paper Briefing Note

The fair shares idea is no longer novel. But as the crisis deepens, its profile is changing. Humanity is facing a civilizational emergency – a “polycrisis” with both climate and injustice at its core – and we need big ideas that can help guide us out of it.

This briefing is focused on one such idea: fair shares. Its purpose is to contribute to CAN discussion and strategizing, with the immediate goal of supporting analysis of and campaigns for equitable national mitigation contributions, including – very explicitly – greatly increased international mitigation finance. To this end, as one concrete manifestation of the fair shares idea, we also briefly discuss the ethical principles that underlie the Climate Equity Reference Framework, and its nuts and bolts, and how CAN member groups and nodes around the world have applied it in their work.

The fair shares idea, of course, has implications beyond mitigation, and in this report, we do discuss other climate equity challenges. But, importantly, these other challenges – which include adaptation and loss & damage – resist the kind of straightforward quantitative analysis appropriate to mitigation, for they involve even more complex and sprawling national and international efforts.

At any rate, the equity challenge has great relevance in virtually all dimensions of our global climate response, which also means that it cannot be set aside while we concentrate on “implementation.” This is the case for the simple reason that – despite all the benefits and promises of the climate transition – any adequately rapid global decarbonization process, if not carefully managed, could be extremely disruptive and in many cases painful.

A rapid global climate transition can, in principle, be achieved – we have (all) the money and (most of) the technology we need – but it's hard to see how this will be possible if it is not done fairly. In other words, if we intend to succeed, then not only benefits and promises but also unavoidable pain and disruption must be shared amongst the people of this world in a way that is widely accepted as being fair enough. We can not follow, yet again, the all too often repeated pattern in which most of the benefits are captured by those who are already wealthy and powerful, while most of the pain and suffering is born by those already marginalized and oppressed.

This report is a bit long. It has to be, because while the fair shares idea is familiar in a vague way, crucial aspects of the global climate justice challenge are often misunderstood. Thus, this summary will begin by spotlighting a few of the key arguments this report will develop, before going on to very briefly summarize its chapters and lay out a few key recommendations.

Here, briefly, are those key arguments:

- 1. There is a global climate crisis and there is a global inequality crisis, and they are very closely intertwined. Inequality both contributes to the climate crisis and makes responding to it more challenging.**

Extreme inequality is linked to our climate predicament in many ways, the most direct being the linkage between extreme *income* inequality and the *emissions* inequality now apparent between and within countries. More fundamentally, extreme inequality, and extreme injustice in general, profoundly shapes our planetary civilization, which is divided between “developed” and “developing” countries, all of which are themselves stratified between rich and poor peoples and communities. The twice-divided structure of this world constantly and *systemically undermines climate action*, for at least three interrelated reasons.<sup>1</sup>

First, there is a radical disconnect between those most responsible for the climate crisis and those most vulnerable to its consequences, many of whom depend directly on nature for their livelihoods, have no spare capacity to protect themselves from worsening climate shocks, and lack any real recourse to public support when disaster strikes. The wealthy and powerful, on the other hand – those who make the decisions, control the public narrative, and command the resources necessary to act effectively and at scale – are generally buffered from devastating climate impacts. All this critically undermines the perceived need for global action, and the impetus for political institutions at all levels to mobilize on the necessary scale.

Next, and at an even more fundamental level, extreme inequality poisons society itself, undermining the solidarity and social trust that binds us together. This, as it turns out, can be catastrophic, because trust is essential to cooperative action, which is in turn essential to ambitious, urgent climate mobilization.

Finally, yet obviously, we are living in a world system that is structured by fossil energy and by our dependence on fossil energy. In such a system, powerful and wealthy actors who profit from this dependence – whether in the rich world or the developing one – have tremendous stakes in maintaining the status quo, and they have labored mightily to obstruct meaningful climate action.

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<sup>1</sup> For a much more extensive discussion of these dynamics, see Stoddard et al. (2021).

These three dynamics interact with and strengthen each other, and raise issues that sprawl far beyond the ambit of climate politics as it has generally been understood. Nonetheless, this report, like others now being published within the climate movement, emphasizes these dynamics precisely because they critically affect our ability to effectively manage our climate crisis.

## 2. **A global climate response must be accepted as sufficiently fair if it is to be effective.**

Given the pace and scale of the climate response that is now required, this response has the potential to be extremely disruptive, particularly in poorer countries and communities that are already struggling to achieve development in an increasingly hostile climate. This is true even though globally we have (all of) the money and (much of) the technology needed to navigate a rapid climate transition, and even though such a transition could ultimately be immensely beneficial to people all over the world. To enable this transition while managing this potential disruption effectively, there must be an overall context in which both effort and benefits are shared in a reasonably fair way, and keeps open paths to dignified futures for all.

The key premise here – one at the core of the fair share approach – is that the planetary mobilization now required cannot be successfully mounted, or sustained, unless it is very broadly accepted as fair both between and within countries. This is because a true 1.5°C-scale mobilization, or anything like it, will (as the IPCC has repeatedly stressed) require extremely challenging infrastructural and social transformations, and this is true despite the fact that, for example, the levelized cost of renewable electricity is now cheaper than fossil electricity in many contexts.

This is not to argue, as the fossil companies routinely do, that a rapid transition away from fossil energy would *inevitably* hurt the poor and the vulnerable, for a future based on sustainable energy that is fairly provided to all would clearly be a massive improvement – for people and for planet – over our current fossil fuel-driven pathway. But it *could* hurt the poor and vulnerable, and absent real efforts to the contrary, it *will*.

To be blunt, an honest 1.5°C future will require such rapid and sweeping change that transitional impacts and costs would be distributed unjustly *unless this injustice is explicitly prevented*. This is because, in our sharply unequal world, the very intensity of the necessary transition will create endless opportunities for the wealthy and the powerful to consolidate even more wealth and power, even while energy and material poverty becomes more firmly entrenched, livelihoods disappear with no support or transitional assistance, and responsibility for stranded assets is dumped onto the public sector.

Further, no individual, nor any single country, can meet the climate crisis on its own. If there is widespread free-riding among key players, especially wealthy players that live lavishly while they free-ride, this will rapidly erode the resolve of others to continue contributing to the shared global effort. Moreover, this will be true even for those who are deeply anxious about the impending climate impacts, because in the presence of rampant free riding, as impacts deepen and adaptation costs mount, they will be increasingly reluctant to sustain an apparently failing international effort. Instead, they will be inclined to pull back from the far-reaching and transformative action that would be needed to achieve any ambitious temperature target, and moved, perhaps reluctantly, to redirect their resources toward bracing against those apparently inescapable impacts. This is precisely because they see humanity

tipping from a possible future of cooperation and mutual commitment, and toward a future that is defined by selfish and brutal survival strategies.

Fair effort sharing is thus not optional. It doesn't have to be perfect, but there is no adequately ambitious path forward – especially one that is seen as being difficult and disruptive – unless all actors can see the others contributing at a scale they can accept as being at least broadly fair.

- 3. Countries have shown themselves to be unwilling or unable to substantively deal with equity and fairness within the UNFCCC, and thus it is critical that civil society prioritize it. Many civil society and climate movement groups are already doing this, and integrating it with their campaign demands.**

As one example of this unwillingness within the UNFCCC negotiations, the terms of reference of the Global Stocktake call for assessments of mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation to be performed “in the light of equity.” However, they nonetheless restrict these assessments to the collective level, thus leaving no room for assessments of individual national pledges or actions. So, not only does the Paris Agreement, with its “self-differentiated” and “nationally determined” pledges, leave Parties free of obligations that are explicitly scaled based on principles of equity, but even the Paris ambition ratchet – which includes the pledges, the transparency mechanisms by which their details can be known, and the five-year cycle within which they are supposed to be strengthened – has no mechanism for assessing or even discussing the fairness, unfairness, or sufficiency of individual pledges. Furthermore, only so much can be said within the UNFCCC context about inequality within countries, which is unfortunate, because it is hard to talk honestly about international injustice without talking about inequality within countries.

If anything along these lines is to be possible, it will for now have to be based on the work of independent actors. Over the last several years, CAN nodes and other collaboratives of climate movement organizations have carried out specific projects and campaigns that are specifically based on analyses consistent with equity principles and fair shares. Despite differing equity perspectives and the various ways that groups have chosen to define fair shares, and despite the quite substantial differences between their specific views (which are discussed in detail in chapter 5), their results nonetheless tend to be consistent with each other, and add up to a very useful source of guidance for setting demands.

- 4. The fair shares approach that undergirds those climate movement efforts is based on the fundamental UNFCCC principles. It implements a dynamic version of the keystone notion of “common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities” (CBDR+RC) that explicitly acknowledges the inequality with nations.**

**More particularly, this fair shares approach:**

- a. Recognizes that defining fair shares entails normative decisions, and it can be applied in a manner that is flexible to a wide range of perspectives;**

While the fair share approach that underlies this report is based on the fundamental UNFCCC principles, it also recognizes that fair share assessments are inherently and unavoidably normative, and that there are differing perspectives on questions of fairness and fair effort-sharing, and indeed different interpretations of the principles of the UNFCCC. All of which is to say that fair share assessments cannot be reduced to purely

academic or analytical exercises. Rather, equity assessments can and should be conducted in a transparent manner that allows for an explicit expression of value-based ethical assumptions. Any claims that a climate pledge is or is not “fair” should be underpinned by clear statements regarding the equity principles it is invoking, as well as the justification for their selection, the indicators by which it represents those principles, and the use to which it puts those indicators. Such “normative clarity” is essential, and though it does not settle the debate about what fairness is, it does allow us to coherently debate that question, to tell each other, and ourselves, where we actually stand, and to discover common ground and shared values.

- b. **It recognizes the inequality within nations in its definition of responsibility and capacity, while recognizing that how issues of inequality within nations are addressed is not generally considered within the purview of the UNFCCC;**

Any arguably fair approach must recognize the extreme inequality raised at the outset, and how it defines the magnitude of a country or community’s struggle to achieve sustainable development while undertaking climate action. Those that are relatively wealthy and secure, and can in principle direct much more attention and resources to shifting toward social and infrastructural transformation than those struggling to meet basic needs, those who suffer widespread energy poverty, those whose lack of security renders them exceedingly vulnerable to disruptions and disasters.

The fact that some people are rich and some are poor thus must inform our understanding of a country’s fair share. A poor person’s dollar is not the same as a rich person’s dollar, nor are their emissions. A dollar spent on obtaining staple foods and securing shelter is very different than a dollar spent on, say, space tourism. Or even terrestrial tourism, for that matter. Similarly, a ton of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted from the burning of a kerosene lamp to light a small home is not the same as a ton emitted from, say, a private spacecraft. Or from long-distance holiday travel. Survival emissions are, morally speaking, as distinct from luxury emissions as incomes required to meet basic needs are distinct from incomes utilized to fulfill discretionary desires. They have different moral valences and should not be treated the same when reckoning a country’s responsibility for causing climate change, nor its financial capacity to contribute to global climate action.

Importantly, these admonitions apply to both developed and developing countries, for there are very poor people living within very rich countries, and any just transition worthy of that name must protect them as well as the poor people who live within developing countries. Successfully mobilizing support for ambitious national climate action will thus demand that income and wealth stratification within countries be spotlighted.

- c. **It defines a national fair share as a share of a common global effort, rather than relative to purely domestic metrics; and**

This is a key point. The equity framework supporting this report, in contrast to most effort sharing frameworks, references fair shares against the common goal of protecting our single global climate, and gauges them against the scale of that overall challenge. This approach differs markedly from how people usually think about shared effort. Typically, people think about a country’s share in comparison to some other arbitrary scale – such as its own emissions in some particular year, or its own mitigation potential, or the effort

necessary for it to reduce its own emissions to “net zero,”(perhaps with a bit of extra time or international assistance to help it along) this automatically introduces a major bias in favor of countries with a disproportionately high fraction of historical responsibility and capacity.

This is not to say that there are not important nationally specific conditions to account for in assessing the scale of the challenge, or widely varying domestic predicaments, but only that these realities must be accounted for in our reckoning of the shared global challenge, domestic efforts, and international support.

**d. It is dynamic, and responsive to the shifting conditions of nations over time.**

Any defensible assessment of fair shares should be clear and concrete enough that its definition of basic equity principles – such as capacity and historic responsibility – can be referenced to real, empirical data and usefully expressed as quantitative indicators. These indicators will naturally evolve dynamically over time, reflecting the relative shifts among countries as their economies evolve, populations grow, and technologies change. Though they may be categorized in static annexes or various other caucuses and groupings within the UNFCCC process, for a science- and principle-based fair share assessment, the data must determine the results.

- 5. Any sufficiently ambitious climate regime will require significant amounts of international support, both public and private. If we are to achieve the Paris targets, this support will have to be available in amounts that far exceed those normally debated within the UNFCCC. Other more appropriate points of comparison are given in chapter 6. Such support is not “offsetting.”**

Despite starting from meaningfully different ethical perspectives and normative decisions, groups undertaking fair share assessments have come to importantly similar outcomes. Specifically, wealthier countries have mitigation fair shares that are in excess, and often far in excess, of their total emissions or any plausible amount of mitigation that could be done within their borders. In less wealthy countries the opposite is the case – their fair shares are smaller, often much smaller, than the amount of mitigation that arguably could and should be undertaken within their borders. This is the case even though all countries must soon approach zero emissions. The natural implication of this is that international cooperation is critical to fair sharing of the effort, whereby wealthier countries provide the financial and technological resources by which less wealthy countries can exert efforts beyond their fair shares. That is the only way to square equity and ambition.

This all implies that *international cooperation and finance are not secondary issues* – wealthier nations such as the US, Europe, Canada, the UK, or, indeed, Singapore and South Korea can only fully deliver their fair share of the global effort by supporting a substantial amount of climate action in poorer countries. The fair share approach taken here defines a total fair share for such countries, which in practice would be undertaken in part as a domestic and in part as an international effort. Determining the best way to allocate this fair share into domestic and international components is no trivial matter, and involves techno-economic factors (such as the relative cost of abatement opportunities domestically and internationally), as well as political and ethical judgments such as what type of lifestyle change might be needed, and of whom?

Regardless of where exactly the line between domestic and international effort is drawn, national climate campaigns must come to stress international cooperation and climate finance as much as domestic mitigation. This implies a perspective that is starkly different from the current one, where the thought of developed countries searching for mitigation activities in developing ones invokes the image of wealthy countries with weak NDCs off-shoring much of their already inadequate effort through loophole-ridden carbon markets and offset schemes. But if high ambition pathways are to be taken seriously, then developing countries will also need to shift rapidly to these pathways, and they will absolutely need financial and technology transfers to do so. At the same time, the logic of high ambition pathways also means that the cooperation on and provision of this finance and technology by wealthier countries will have to be in *addition to* very ambitious domestic pathways and not *instead of* them, as would be the case if this were done through some offsetting scheme. Creating sound mechanisms and institutions that can effectively and fairly mediate this cooperation is an absolutely crucial development that civil society organizations must prioritize.

- 6. The challenges here are great. Nevertheless, we have both the money and the technology to achieve the necessary transition, though major finance and support breakthroughs will be necessary to deploy them at the necessary speed and scale. To that end, we argue that a new kind of realism, a “climate realism,” is now needed.**

It is imperative to reject the false choice posed by what we call “conventional realism,” which sees an almost immutable divide between, on the one hand, the incremental steps that are judged to be possible within the current political reality and, on the other, more strenuous demands that are summarily dismissed by that same realist judgement

In fact, the path ahead must be one of political transformation, within which the bold action necessary to stabilize the climate system can *actually become politically realistic*. “Climate realism,” in contrast to conventional realism, embraces the central importance of equity, including the fair share perspective and the enormous demands it implies. In so doing, it does not simply ignore the constraints of political reality and idealistically assert that, because we *should* act ethically, we *must* act ethically. The point is rather to spotlight the grand compromises that are necessary to solve the climate problem, to stress the fact that *if* we act ethically, we can in fact solve it. In this sense, fair shares is anything but “idealistic,” a word that, in the conventional realist lexicon, usually means “naïve.” Rather, it is a hard-nosed realism indeed that can acknowledge that a fair approach, despite its daunting demands, is actually *in our own self-interest*, a self-interest that – in this case at least – we share with strangers beyond our national borders, who happen to share our same, single, imperiled climate system.

The conventional realist will hold that nothing like fair shares is in the cards, that the weight of history is simply too great, and that the politics of the day will simply not support it. But while this may at the moment seem to be the case, tomorrow’s realism will assuredly be different from yesterday’s. This is because of the rising impacts, and the increasingly visible and well-known existential dangers they portend. And this is because of the technoeconomic revolution in renewables, which has already reset expectations about the politically realistic pace and cost of decarbonization, and which is poised now to drive that point resoundingly home. And this is because of the evolving climate movement, which has already largely

become a climate *justice* movement and is well on the way towards becoming a *global* climate justice movement.

Realist skepticism is especially provoked by calls for a “transformational finance breakthrough” that must inevitably be denominated in trillions rather than billions of dollars in new and redirected finance, both public and private, along with the new institutions of international cooperation that will be needed to effectively deploy it. But then again, the prospect that governments would quickly disburse multiple trillions of dollars for a smorgasbord of welfare relief and macroeconomic support would surely have provoked a similar skepticism... at least until COVID-19 hit.

One final point. What we’ve called climate realism goes far beyond fair shares. But the fair shares approach is surely a path towards climate realism, and not only because it insists on the primacy of international cooperation and solidarity. It also forces us to think about them in very concrete and very specific ways, which is exactly what we are going to have to do if we actually intend to launch a climate transformation of the necessary speed and scale.

## Chapter Summary

This briefing is divided into the following chapters.

### 1) Introduction

The world is in a systemic crisis, with climate and inequality crises at its core. In this context, we need to move forward as best we can, but we also need strategic ideas that open doors to the bold action necessary to stabilize the climate system. Such ideas are necessarily rooted in a commitment to fairness, and fair shares is clearly one of them.

This report situates the fair shares approach with respect to the great problem of extreme inequality, summarizes CAN’s history with it, and develops it further. The basis of this analysis, the Climate Equity Reference Framework, (“the CERP framework”), has been co-evolving with CAN’s equity politics for over a decade, and it has informed the equity work of a wide spectrum of civil society organizations.

There is of course more to the global climate equity challenge than mitigation fair shares, but such fair shares have a key role to play, particularly now, as we begin to face the real demands of the Paris temperature targets, and struggle to ratchet up the Paris pledges, not least the finance contributions. Further, the ideas at the core of the fair shares analysis can provide useful starting points when considering the equally difficult challenges posed by adaptation, loss & damage, and the overarching global just transition challenge.

### 2) Context setting: Climate Action in a Radically Unequal World

The climate crisis is unfolding in a world simultaneously suffering an inequality crisis. This latter crisis is two-fold in nature, for it manifests both *between* countries and *within* countries, whether they be “developed” or “developing.” The resulting picture is complex, and it is instructive to consider it against an analysis that steps back to see planetary inequality as a whole; it is particularly instructive to view inequality within individual countries in this larger global context.



We stress this point because *extreme* inequality has become a pervasive social poison, which undermines solidarity and cooperation both within countries and globally. The underlying issue here is that solidarity and cooperation are essential if we're to achieve first the short-term pledges and then the long-term targets upon which our common future depends.

Despite the myriad ways in which a rapid climate transition will ultimately improve the lives of people around the world, actually achieving this transition is going to be very hard. The power of the fossil energy cartel is, of course, one of the major problems here because it compounds the sheer size of the necessary effort (e.g. tens of thousands of power plants around the world), and the structural lock-ins and dependencies which challenge us on every front. Witness the depth of Europe's dependence on Russian fossil energy, which it took a brutal war to bring to the world's reluctant attention.

The point is not that a climate transition should be fair, but rather that it demands an immense and sustained effort, and unless this effort is widely seen as fair, it is very unlikely to happen in time. The issues here sprawl far beyond the ambit of climate politics as usual, but so do the demands of an adequately rapid and transformational climate transition,

### **3) CAN International's history with, and near consensus on, the Fair Shares idea**

CAN has long struggled with the significance and implications of the equity idea, which is of course highly contested. This is no surprise, given the state of the negotiations, and of the world system that underlies them. But despite the obvious challenges, many actors within CAN circles have long believed that the promise of equity – to become a “pathway to ambition” – cannot be abandoned, and in this context CAN has been engaged with the equity challenge – and in particular the fair shares idea – for some time. The story here began in earnest with the “Bali Equity Summit” in 2002 and extends through the Copenhagen and Paris equity debates and to the present moment.

These developments crystallized with the analysis produced by CAN's post-Copenhagen Equity Working Group, which co-evolved with and is closely related to the Climate Equity Reference Framework, which is at the foundation of the work summarised in this report, and is the basis of the climate equity work of a broad spectrum of civil society organizations.

This chapter presents some key lessons. For example, it argues that, in all matters related to equity and its uses, “normative clarity” is extremely important. To be useful, claims about climate equity must be very clearly and transparently laid out, so that different actors in different nations can judge them, understand them, and use them in ways consistent with their own ethical perspectives. And CAN itself is now in a position to have a substantive and productive internal equity debate.

### **4) The CERP framework in light of the CAN-I equity position**

Insofar as CAN has a position on global climate equity, it is rooted in the Framework Convention and its equity principles. These principles can be justly summarized as:

- A precautionary approach to adequacy
- Common but differentiated responsibility and respective capability (CBDR+RC)
- The right to sustainable development.

CAN generally understands these principles not in abstract and legalistic terms, but as ethical imperatives that can and should be applied to the real world of complex, dynamically evolving nations, rather than to static lists of “developed” and “developing” countries.

While this report is not a primer on fair shares, it does explain the ethical premises that underlie the framework and how they are implemented, and in particular the user choices – “Equity Settings” – that allow it to represent different ethical perspectives.

Importantly, this chapter includes an appendix (“box”) called *Fair Shares Assessment – Why this framework and not others?* In it, several alternative approaches to fair shares assessment are discussed, in light of CAN’s position on equity. These alternatives are the Climate Action Tracker (more precisely CAT’s new hybrid ambition benchmarking approach), the “grandfathering” approach, equality-based approaches like Contraction and Convergence and equal per-capita benchmarks, and the cumulative per-capita approach.

## **5) CERP applications around the world and how they are usefully different**

Over the last several years, a number of climate movement collaboratives, including many CAN members and nodes, have conducted projects and campaigns based on the fair shares approach presented here. One of these, the ongoing Civil Society Equity Review, is global in scope and is historically targeted toward international events and audiences surrounding the climate negotiations. The others – this chapter will review efforts in Norway, the United Kingdom, Quebec, New Zealand, South Africa, and France – are national in scope, and targeted at national audiences. The bulk of these (the exceptions are the Civil Society Equity Review and the South Africa report) are focused on countries in the Global North.

This is a long chapter, and it may be tempting to skim it. This is even justified if you are primarily interested in the “big” political questions, which we turn to in chapter 6. But do understand that this chapter reflects the *practices* of fair shares effort to this point, practices that have varied from country to country as various collaborations have taken different approaches to defining and quantifying national fair shares. It also presents the high-level results of these efforts, and discusses how groups have leveraged these results to inform their campaigns.

Both the commonalities and the differences between national efforts are interesting, and taken together they are quite suggestive when it comes to strategizing forward. For example, the USCAN fair shares collaborative focused on “high progressivity” equity settings, which spotlights the disproportionate wealth and income of the rich relative to the middle-income and poor when calculating national capacity, while the South African report shows that ideas really do matter, and can have real policy impact, particularly when combined with a determination, on the ground, to prioritize equity.

## **6) Applying Fair Shares to global and national advocacy**

Here the central political question takes the stage – what does the fair shares idea bring to the table, from the point of view of global and national advocacy? To queue up this question, two foundational issues are discussed in detail.

- How can calculations based on fair shares, which often demand national efforts that far exceed the bounds of conventional realism, nonetheless be helpful? In other words, what would a strategy based on “climate realism” consist of?
- How should a national fair share defined in terms of both domestic and international action best be framed, so as to most usefully contribute to efforts relevant to policy and campaigning?

The context here, stated simply, is that we will not achieve even the weak (“well below” 2°C) edge of the Paris temperature goal without meaningful breakthroughs on both domestic reductions and international support and cooperation, which itself implies a breakthrough on international climate finance, public as well as private.

To that end, we discuss the great challenge posed by the *sheer scale* of the necessary climate transformation, which is revealed especially clearly whenever attempts are made to estimate its size in monetary terms. As it turns out, expenditures on the necessary scale are almost routine, and not just in the military section. A number of examples are given.

It’s important, here, to note that the need for “transformational levels” of international public climate finance is now widely recognized. This decisive shift, which was exemplified by Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley’s speech to the COP26 opening plenary, is extremely important, and the overarching political challenge is to deliver on its promise. To that end, understanding the concrete implications of international support on the scale suggested by the fair shares analysis has become a top priority. This challenge, which is beyond the capacity of the formal negotiations, falls now to civil society.

## **7) Equity & Fair Shares – Strategic challenges and invitations to reflection**

The goal of this chapter is to canvas the larger strategic landscape defined by the global climate equity challenge. It does not argue that the fair shares approach is relevant to all the key problems found on that landscape – though in some cases it is – but rather seeks to identify those key problems, and to briefly spotlight their structure, which often implies a need for approaches that, like fair shares, strain against the limits of conventional realism.

The discussion here sketches out some of the challenges implied by the outcomes of CAN’s 2020 Arusha strategy conversations:

- Centering people and climate impacts
- Ending Fossil Fuels
- Transformative national climate action in a global context
- Multilateral action and advocacy

These challenges extend far beyond mitigation, and very far beyond fair shares. We recognize the deep complexity of all of these challenges, but we want to offer a set of key questions that, if properly explored, might help to illuminate some of the equity challenges central to the human prospect. In any case, all of these questions are in the air, and considering them as a set does, we think, sketch out a map of the larger equity problem space.

## Recommendations

- 1) CAN members and nodes should convene national and regional fair shares exercises and pledge assessments, in broad collaboration with allied organizations, social movements, and front-line communities. These collaborations should be explicitly deliberative, aiming to build the basis for active and invested advocacy and campaigning.
  - a. The Global Stocktake, as per the Paris Agreement's Article 14, is to be conducted "in the light of equity." Unfortunately, it is also generally understood to be restricted to assessments at the collective level. Given that the equity assessments of individual national NDCs is an essential part of any well-functioning "ambition ratchet," the need here is both obvious and critical – civil society organizations must pioneer ways forward by developing useful and illuminating ways of conducting such assessments.
  - b. The negotiations around the New Collective Quantitative Goal (NCQG) are just as critical and perhaps more contentious than arrangements relating to the GST. With the negotiations still plagued by the arbitrary and grossly inadequate USD \$100 billion/year finance number, NCQG discussions will provide an extremely important opportunity to reset expectations. CAN-I can seize this opportunity to highlight the crucial importance of a needs-based goal that takes both science and justice into meaningful account. No less important are the issues relating to the institutions and mechanisms through which finance is to be delivered, again to ensure just outcomes. As the NCQG is to be a *collective* goal, there will be little space within the formal deliberations to highlight national fair shares of finance, but this only means that the domestic work of CAN-I members must be all the more explicit and forceful about its implications for their national campaigns.
- 2) CAN members and nodes should explicitly face, and debate, the gap between the actions implied by their fair shares assessments and the limited actions that currently seem politically realistic in their countries and regions and examine what would constitute climate realism in their national political contexts.
- 3) Opening the conversation beyond the limits of conventional realism is an urgent priority, but the best paths towards that goal will inevitably vary from place to place. What would constitute climate realism within national political contexts that can manage the defining realities:
  - a. In developed countries, fair share efforts consistent with a 1.5°C global pathway invariably include extremely ambitious domestic mitigation efforts *as well as* cooperative multilateral efforts to provide the international finance and technology needed to achieve the remainder of the national fair share.
  - b. In developing countries, fair share efforts must include both ambitious domestic mitigation efforts and a readiness to conditionally embrace even more ambitious efforts – if adequate provisions of climate finance, technology transfer and capacity building are made.

- 4) CAN members and nodes should chart out equitable transformation pathways of the necessary scale, as implied by their national fair shares, and then advocate for them in close collaboration with social movements and front-line communities within their countries and regions. These collaborations must, for both ethical and political reasons, explicitly and genuinely support broad social justice goals as an integral part of transformative climate action.
- 5) CAN members and nodes should help define and promote equitable international cooperation.
  - a. Wealthier countries should identify sources of revenue that can appropriately be drawn upon to provide international climate finance, insisting that these must be tapped in progressive ways that do not unfairly burden the poor.
  - b. All countries should work to understand how global cooperation and implementation could rapidly occur, and demonstrate the feasibility of cooperation at the necessary scale, while prioritizing the needs and priorities of local communities.
- 6) CAN members and nodes should work to shift power and reduce inequality, so as to make effective consensus on a climate transformation feasible.

The details will vary from time to time and place to place, but the overarching goal should be reversing the extreme inequality that makes the emergence of a culture of solidarity, including international solidarity, all but impossible. There is no end to the possibilities here, from electoral reform and financial sector regulation to tax and immigration justice to reversing austerity measures and imagining a “global green new deal.” The list goes on. The point is that somehow, together, we must make solidarity possible.

## Introduction

The fair shares idea is no longer novel. But as the crisis deepens, its profile is changing. Humanity is facing a civilizational emergency with both climate and injustice at its core, and neither can be treated in isolation from the other. The fair share approach, by recognizing the linkages here, seeks to intervene in the climate crisis as we actually find it, which can be separated from the inequality crisis, but only in limited ways.

Climate-linked injustices extend far beyond mitigation, and this report discusses other equity challenges as well as mitigation proper. These involve an enormous set of profound justice related issues including adaptation, loss and damage, the challenge of a just global transition away from fossil fuel extraction and dependence, and of course the overarching challenge of just and sustainable development in a climate constrained world. We raise some of these issues, but the core of this report centers on fair shares of mitigation, and the point we wish to stress here is that, despite their importance, many of the other issues here resist the kind of straightforward quantitative analysis applicable to mitigation, for they involve even more complex and sprawling national and international efforts. Thus, the focus of this report remains mitigation, and this despite the fact that, at the end of the day, the climate equity agenda is impossible to narrowly circumscribe, not least because it inevitably implicates the global inequality crisis, which can no longer be set aside.

At any rate, the equity challenge has great relevance in virtually all dimensions of our global climate response, which also means that it cannot be set aside while we concentrate on “implementation.” This is the case for the simple reason that – despite all the benefits and promises of the climate transition – any adequately rapid global decarbonization process, if not carefully managed, could be extremely disruptive and in many cases painful. And while a rapid global climate transition can, in principle, be achieved – we have both the money and the technology – it’s hard to see how this will be possible if it is not done fairly. In other words, not only benefits and promises but also any unavoidable pain and disruption must be shared amongst the people of this world in a way that is widely accepted as being fair enough. It is not acceptable to follow the common pattern in which most of the benefits are captured by those who are already wealthy and powerful, while most of the pain and suffering is born by those already marginalized and oppressed.

This report is not intended as a primer. While it provides a general overview of the Climate Equity Reference Framework (“the CERF framework”) and the UNFCCC equity principles it is based upon, it shifts relatively quickly to a discussion of the concrete decisions and choices involved in applying this framework in particular political contexts. By so doing, it seeks to illuminate political challenges that arise when approaching the critical task of assessing and then ratcheting up current mitigation NDCs “in the light of equity,” and the equally pressing challenges of effectively delivering the necessary levels of international transition support. To that end, this report draws heavily on the work of the various civil society collaboratives that have applied the fair shares framework in their work. The lessons learned from these initiatives are quite instructive.

As the world enters the third year of a pandemic that has exposed the short-sighted venality with which the elites can ignore the needs of the poor, it is altogether obvious that the old politics will not suffice. And, of course, the Russian war in Ukraine has underscored the need to strengthen today’s inadequate institutions of global governance. But while, within the climate movement, a

new politics is being created, this is not the direction of the official climate “process.” Rather, the high politics of climate suffers a constant grinding pressure to replace the anchoring principles of the Rio climate regime – “common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities” – with ad hoc and undifferentiated “shared responsibilities” approaches in which the challenges of international cooperation and finance are, it seems, never to be met. This pressure, importantly, is explained by those sympathetic to it (many of whom fully understand the depth of the climate crisis) as a realist imperative, but this only emphasizes the degree to which realism itself is now a contested notion.

There will be more to say in the years ahead. For the moment, in this report, our aim is to contribute to the deepening of CAN’s equity discussions, a deepening that is necessary if CAN, a leading international civil society network, is to play a helpful part in the reckonings ahead. Here, we focus on fair shares for, inevitably, the challenge of international fair effort sharing must be faced in a manner relevant to the world as it actually is, a world as brutally divided by class as it is by nation.