

# ECO

## NO CLIMATE JUSTICE WITHOUT HUMAN RIGHTS

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*Editorial: Andres Fuentes*

### On the F Word

COPs are meant to be a dedicated space to confront the escalating climate chaos and move all countries forward together on finding and investing in solutions. Yet elements of this year's meeting seem to be designed to turn COP27 into a promotional convention for fossil gas at the exact moment in which the crisis of the fossil fuel system is being exposed as a cause and accelerant of the many crises the world is facing - from conflict to inflation to high commodity prices to, of course, the climate crisis.

ECO has been listening with mounting concern in recent months as Ministers from our host country have been using multilateral meetings to push the outdated myth that fossil gas should act as a "bridge" fuel. Now, science and the International Energy Agency (IEA) are crystal clear: gas is a bridge to nowhere. Burning just the oil and gas in fields that are already open now would take us beyond 1.5°C. Expanding fossil fuels of any kind is senseless. The IEA says that demand is peaking, even within business-as-usual scenarios; further investments in oil and gas will lead to worse energy access and security, whereas countries that have more renewable energy generation have been spared the worst of the energy crisis.

ECO's concern turned to alarm when we learned Hill+Knowlton had been hired to help run communications for COP27. You may recognize their name as the PR firm that pioneered Big Tobacco's disinformation campaigns, and now works with Big Oil and Gas. Speaking of Big Oil and Gas: they had a bigger delegation than any country at last year's COP in Glasgow, and their representatives are set to have an even bigger presence at COP27. We can see their fingerprints in the negotiations already – see our note on 6.4 and the technofixes showing up there.

Don't get us wrong: COP should be talking about fossil fuels. The reality is, defossilization is the only road to decarbonisation. ECO hopes to hear talk about how to phase oil, gas, and coal out in a just and equitable manner while dramatically scaling up energy efficiency and renewable energy. It took over 30 years for COP to finally say the F words in last year's cover text, and we need to build on that this year. Here's ECO's take on the work leaders should be doing on fossil fuels:

- World leaders must pick a side and end the expansion of

coal, oil and gas in keeping with science.

- Recognise the need to end oil and gas including via decision text calling for phase down (and ultimately phase out) of all fossil fuels, not just unabated coal. The Mitigation Work Program and Global Stocktake should include clear priorities to accelerate just energy transitions away from fossil fuel dependence.
- Global north countries must support those in the global south to develop industries and economies that enable them to move rapidly and equitably beyond coal, oil and gas.
- Finance institutions should follow the lead of groups like Banque Postale and end finance for oil and gas. Institutions that have joined the "Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero" should additionally announce that they will phase out support for oil and gas production as part of their commitment to Net Zero.
- Multilateral cooperation is essential to getting this right: governments should join and strengthen the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance (BOGA) and urge the development of a Global Just Transition fund to support countries working to achieve economic development and energy access goals without deepening dependence on fossil fuels. Governments should also join Vanuatu in developing a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty to manage a global fair energy transition.
- Existing BOGA members, like California and Quebec, should be the first to call out the insanity of turning COP27 into an all-you-can-eat fossil gas buffet.
- As the cost of living crisis bites for people around the world, there is a clear source of revenue for loss and damage funds: the grotesque profits of oil and gas companies. Negotiators in Sharm el Sheikh must agree to a global charge on publicly listed oil and gas companies. This follows calls by the UN Secretary General, the preceding COP President, and AOSIS countries.
- Any side deals agreed - such as the Just Energy Transition Partnerships, which Germany, Senegal and Egypt among others are discussing - should be absolutely clear that they will not support any gas. After all, with renewables now the cheapest form of energy globally, there can be no role for fossil gas in a just energy transition.

# Will You End Energy Poverty?

As the 'African COP' progresses in Egypt, and the world counts on its leaders to make crucial climate commitments, ECO wants to know: are you ready to commit to end energy poverty through clean and affordable energy sources and achieve the SDG7 goal of universal energy access?

The reality is stark: 760 million people still lack access to electricity, 2.6 billion lack access to clean cooking fuels, and 1.1 billion lack access to cooling which can help prevent large-scale food wastages. But access to reliable, clean, and affordable energy can help assuage the polycrisis of inflation, food shortages, and rising energy costs currently gripping the world. Reliable energy access can also catalyze development across different areas such as education, health, reducing hunger, improving productivity, and so on which leads to the achievement of many other SDGs. However, the progress so far has not been encouraging!

Between 2019 and 2021, the number of people without access to electricity has not decreased significantly, compared to the 9% average annual decrease seen between 2015 and 2019. In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of people without access increased in 2020 for the first time since 2013. In addition, the challenges imposed by COVID-19 increased the number of people without access to clean cooking fuels by 1%, putting countries

further away from the goal of universal access to clean cooking. An estimated 660 million people will still lack access to electricity, and the world will fall short of its clean cooking target by 30% in 2030. Most of this energy poverty will be concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa.

Meeting the 2030 SDG7 targets calls for investments of approximately US\$60 billion each year for the next 8 years. And this is only a small fraction of the multi-trillion dollar global energy investment needed, and one that would bring huge social benefits. Centralized fossil fuel infrastructure is expensive, fuels the climate emergency, and is not resilient to climate disasters, and ECO calls out the myths that are being propagated that building new fossil fuel infrastructure will enhance energy access. Renewable energy, especially decentralized renewables, will play the central role in achieving the SDG7 goal.

ECO is asking the world leaders at Sharm El Sheikh: Are you ready to go beyond rhetoric and take a stand that energy access is a basic human right? Will you commit to deliver on the investment required to eradicate energy poverty by 2030? If yes, then posterity will remember COP27 in Egypt as an "in Africa, for Africa COP" that truly made a difference in the lives of the poor and underserved.

## Removals Need More Supervision

On the eve of COP27 opening, while many were fast asleep, the Article 6.4 Supervisory Body adopted dodgy recommendations on guidance for activities related to removals. Just a reminder: Adopting a rushed decision in the middle of the night is decidedly not a good practice and unsurprisingly has led to a bad outcome. Throughout the meeting, observers were relegated to a separate room and the intended interaction didn't happen due to "insufficient time."

ECO is worried about some elements of the text, and thinks that these should be removed before they sink ambition.

First, the proposed definition of removals is not appropriate. No credits should be issued to "processes to remove GHGs". The credits should only go to outcomes, because these credits represent "mitigation outcomes", not "some process that might deliver mitigation outcomes if things go well". And keep in mind that removals are not reductions.

Second, the list of possible sinks

to store the removed GHGs is too wide. Including "oceans" as a possible sink with no further limitations opens the door to dangerous and far-reaching options such as ocean fertilization. While some niche practices that restore damaged ocean ecosystems (seagrass, salt marshes, mangroves) could play a useful role in removing GHGs through anthropogenic actions, the proposed language is too broad and goes much beyond those activities. Oceans are the largest natural sink on the books, but due to rising temperatures and the resulting human-induced changes in ocean chemistry, the ability of oceans to absorb CO2 is rapidly reduced. We don't need any more large-scale experiments,

In addition, the suggestion that "products" could be considered durable sinks is not credible. Just ask IKEA, which incidentally plans to count carbon stored in its short-lived furniture as a durable removal!

Finally, activities should minimize risk of loss by ensuring ecosystem integrity

and supporting human rights. Negative social and environmental impacts must be prevented. Human rights including the rights of Indigenous Peoples have long been undermined by carbon market activities. You'll recall that at COP 26, the Supervisory Body was mandated to establish requirements and processes related to respecting, promoting and considering their respective obligations on human rights including the rights on Indigenous Peoples and robust social and environmental safeguards, and ensuring they don't repeat mistakes of the past. But rather than building on those positive outcomes, the Supervisory Body is taking a huge leap backwards. The current caveat that places the enforcement of this under the "free-for-all" provision of "national prerogative" is not acceptable.

Yes, we are in a climate emergency and ECO knows we need to get things done. But adopting recommendations for the sake of "getting the work done" isn't the right way. Once again, having no rules is better than adopting bad rules.

# Time to Rouse the GST

We all know Egyptians love football. They are proud of their national team. And their country's star player? Why of course it's the team captain - Mohamed Salah, goal scoring phenomenon and international superstar.

Why are we talking about football, you ask? Well, as the saying goes, football is a game of two halves. And so is the Global Stocktake. The first half is the technical dialogue, which informs the second half: the political discussion. COP27 sits between these two halves. It's the halftime break of the GST, exactly halfway between when it began back at COP26 in Glasgow twelve months ago and when it will end next year in Dubai at COP28.

A halftime break in football is a key turning point in the match. It's when the captain can rouse their team to fight harder and to score more goals. For the GST, the goals aren't balls at the back of the net. The goals are won if we can shift the UNFCCC into 'crisis implementation' mode and away from a business-as-usual forum that is stuck in divisive politics and negotiations. The goals are if the GST can commit all Parties to further action, including: enhanced and rights-based NDCs, phase out of all fossil fuels by 2050, accelerate concrete action to protect and restore ecosystems, and concretely step up finance, including for adaptation and loss and damage at the scale needed.

The first half of the GST has seen good technical dialogues

that are critical for understanding the failures of meeting the Paris Agreement and what we can do about it. But right now, the GST is losing the match. We're not scoring goals. So, we need COP27 to give the GST an inspiring half-time pep talk.

If the GST is going to rise to the challenge of the second half - building political momentum for transformational outcomes to accelerate action to meet the Paris Agreement - we're going to need COP27 to:

- Use the Joint Contact Group to have a strong decision text by COP27 with political support and a common vision for the GST outcome between Parties.
- Develop a GST work plan for the 2023 year, that could be under the lead of Egypt and the UAE, and set the calendar and activities to get an ambitious and efficient GST at COP28.
- Allow an inclusive, discussion-oriented and equitable technical dialogue in collaboration with the co-facilitators, Parties and non-parties participants.

Political leadership is key for the success of the GST. This is the challenge at COP27. We might not have Mo Salah in Sharm El Sheikh to help us along the way, but we do have all of you hard working negotiators - and us, the strong voice of global civil society. Together we can turn the GST around, and take it to the victory we need for the planet.

## Loss & Damage Finance: No Time to Sit Back and Relax!

Welcome to Sharm el Sheikh, World Leaders!

You probably land in Egypt with a very clear idea of what is at stake for this 27th edition. And here is a crucial point: If not, don't worry ECO has got your back : a strong and fair decision on Loss & Damage finance is nothing less than a litmus test for international climate negotiations.

You'd probably answer that "the question is now formally on the agenda". You'd probably add "it has never been the case before". It is indeed unprecedented. This would never have been possible without all the tremendous work in elevating demands that civil society and developing countries delegations have pushed for decades, asking for fair assistance for climate victims.

Now let's talk about that agenda item. Developed countries: everyone saw your old tactics in the meeting rooms in the final 36 hours before the beginning of COP27, trying to weaken the final decision and delay (again) action on providing meaningful loss and damage finance. ECO also took note of your relentless efforts to exclude liability and compensation from the agenda item. That too is quite familiar.

So yes, funding arrangements for Loss and Damage are now on the agenda, but the risk is real that we end up with an empty shell once again. The parameters adopted yesterday do not meet the demands of developing countries or the needs of

the most vulnerable.

And while the agenda calls for a decision no later than 2024, that doesn't mean you can relax and sit back. It is absolutely crucial to get a decision by the end of this COP on the establishment of a financial mechanism for loss and damage already laying out core framing parameters for such a new facility. The relevant functions, governance, and modalities for disbursing such finance can be fine-tuned, no later than and ideally well before the end of 2024, so that the facility starts delivering shortly thereafter. There are many options for additional finance, starting with looking at the worst polluters via a climate damages tax or a windfall tax on the outrageous profits that fossil fuel companies are hauling in this year.

As a reminder: ECO will not be celebrating an agenda item, as it represents only an incremental step in the right direction. We are still demanding a truly ambitious decision for frontline communities that meets the requirements of climate justice and equity. Postponing such a decision once again would be an insult to the people and communities who are already suffering the worst climate impacts, even though they are not responsible for them. So, in case it wasn't clear, Parties, get your work done over the next two weeks here in Sharm el-Sheikh. The entire world – and ECO – will be watching you.

# No Climate Justice Without Liberty

Climate justice requires a vibrant civil society and respect for civil rights and political freedoms — a principle that is explicitly reaffirmed in the Paris Agreement. There can be no sustainable development without the ability for individuals and organizations to speak up and exercise their right to freedom of expression, protest, and association.

While we may be spending the next two weeks in Sharm El-Sheik, a resort town designed for entertainment, we are not oblivious to the repression and threats that our brothers and sisters face every day in Egypt and around the world. Climate action requires that we call on world leaders to take measures to ensure our right to clean air, food, health, a healthy environment, and to life. We recognize that it is our responsibility to speak up and relay the political demands of those who could not be here. And, to demand

freedom for all those behind bars for their political opinions. As one of our brothers currently in detention wrote: “unlike me, you have not yet been defeated.” We will not censor ourselves in exchange for the privilege to be here. We stand in solidarity with those deprived of liberty.

For the credibility of this process, it is imperative that heads of States and governments participating in the COP also speak up on these issues and formally recognize the close inherent relationship between human rights and climate justice.

The credibility of the conference and its participants require that delegates do not censor themselves for the sake of textual progress in COP outcomes. When life hangs by a thread, silence is no longer an option.

No one is free until everyone is free. #FreeAlaa #FreeThemAll

## Don't Let Adaptation Fall Off the Cliff

Dear Leaders, have you forgotten where COP27 is happening? Let ECO remind you that this is an African COP. Africa is experiencing the dangerous impacts of climate change which disproportionately affect the world's poorest and most vulnerable communities. And this will not be slowing down in the near future.

Heads of state coming to Sharm El-Sheikh must reaffirm, build on and deliver with urgency their commitments and promises. ECO reminds governments to be united in preventing the devastating climate crisis from spiraling out of control. Governments must respond to the adaptation needs of communities and ecosystems currently bearing the brunt of the climate breakdown.

Adaptation is the key to survive and thrive. The adaptation gap report's title says it all - too little, too slow. So, we must align our adaptation actions with science now. At COP27, we want Parties to:

- Commit to ensure at least a 50% share of pre-2025 finance for adaptation and agree on a roadmap for at least doubling

adaptation finance. This must be majority grants with the remainder highly concessional.

- Define key elements and framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation, including a political announcement on the means of implementation for adaptation.
- Ensure that the Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh (GlaSS) work programme is closely linked to other crucial policy processes, such as the Global Stocktake and the New Collective Quantified Goal.
- Recognise, adopt and promote the Principles for Locally-Led Adaptation which can realize the enormous potential and creativity of communities for transformation change.

ECO wants to remind the leaders about their responsibility to protect nature and respect communities, human rights and the rights of Indigenous peoples. ECO is watching to see if you will finally step up your game, and make this COP an adaptation and climate justice COP!

## We Need the Mitigation Work Program

ECO was pleased that today negotiators got together to discuss the Mitigation Work Programme, a key outcome needed from this COP. We thought the air conditioning plus plane noise issues would be an extra incentive for them to get to a consensus on this desperately needed Work Programme, but it seems that was not quite what happened. So let's remember why we need a Work Programme that's more than a talk shop: **we are not on track.**

The UNFCCC Synthesis Report of 2022, launched last week, couldn't be clearer: while science states we need a global reduction of 43% of emissions from

2019 levels by 2030 to keep 1.5° C within reach, the current NDCs submitted, if fully implemented including conditional targets, will amount to a reduction of 3.6% of emissions from 2019 levels. The UNEP Gap report, also launched just before COP, confirmed the same. **We are woefully far from where we need to be.**

There are a few parties saying that this essential Work Programme should only last for one year. And yet after 30 years of the Convention, it would be quite clear that we are running out of time to close the emissions gap and achieve the Paris temperature goal. Is one year going to put

in place all we need: political will, resources, technical support, capacity strengthening to enable countries to advance on ambition and implementation and change the stark picture painted by science for 2030? ECO doesn't think so.

And some parties keep questioning why this Work Programme is needed and if it isn't a duplication of what is in the Paris Agreement. Indeed, friends, we would not need such a Programme if the ambition cycle was working as it was supposed to be. We are wildly off course and need all the help we can get to keep 1.5° C alive and maintain the spirit of Paris.