

ECO

END FOSSIL FUELS NOW

eco@climateactionnetwork.org • www.climateactionnetwork.org/eco-newsletter • June 7, 2023

ECO has been published by Non-Governmental Environmental Groups at most international conferences since the Stockholm Environment Conference in 1972. ECO is produced cooperatively by the Climate Action Network at the UNFCCC meetings in Bonn during the SB58 meetings.

Editorial: Andres Fuentes

Freeing the UNFCCC from the Grasp of Fossil Fuels

Just when all things Bonn might be starting to feel like a temporary “new norm” and we are getting elbow deep into the policy work— please remember that nothing about these climate talks is “normal”. They are being overseen and orchestrated by an executive of one of the world’s largest oil corporations at a time when we are about to breach the 1.5°C threshold, and when millions of people around the world are losing their lives or livelihoods as a result of a climate crisis fueled by, well, fossil fuels. Don’t be fooled— there’s nothing “normal” about this intersessional. It’s happening alongside one of the most brazen examples of polluters’ conflicts of interest in the history of the UNFCCC. And this must not become the new norm.

For the UNFCCC to deliver the climate action the world so desperately needs, all COP presidencies must be fossil fuel free—yesterday, today, tomorrow, forevermore. But ending the fossil fuel stranglehold over climate action cannot stop there. This process needs to be accountable. That means:

1. We need to know who’s involved in shaping the global response to climate change. This is why all participants in UNFCCC activities should be required to publicly disclose their ties before participating, and these disclosures should be monitored and evaluated for potential conflicts of interest that would delegitimize the hard and essential work happening here.
2. We need to end corporate sponsorships of COPs and UNFCCC processes. Big Polluters (both the fossil fuel industry and other emissions-intensive industries) shouldn’t be able to literally bankroll these climate talks. Money talks, so if Big Polluters are writing the checks, we know who is also pulling the puppet strings.
3. We need a conflict of interest policy which is part of a broader Accountability Framework that protects climate policymaking and prevents entities with private, polluting interests from unduly influencing or undermining

UNFCCC activities and processes.

More broadly, we need a reset of the system, so that it delivers the action needed for people and the planet, and centers those who are most directly impacted by the climate crisis. Instead of a system that is bought by, obstructed by, and ultimately serves a fossil fueled agenda riddled with false solutions and dangerous distractions. The clock has run out on business-as-usual. And the time of the fossil fuels is up.

These are the demands CAN will be delivering alongside other constituencies when observers meet with the Executive Secretary tomorrow for an open dialogue on conflicts of interest. And these are the demands we won’t stop shouting, until they are heard and acted on. COP28 needs to be the COP when, 28 years too late, we Kick Big Polluters Out.

Only an accountable, legitimate process can deliver the fast, fair, and funded phase out of fossil fuels we so desperately need. Bonn must advance progress to free itself from the grasp of Big Polluters.

Let's Not be Caught NAPping!

ECO is pleased that developing countries are calling for National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) as an agenda item in Bonn. While the SB agenda hasn't been adopted yet, it will surely be a missed opportunity for substantial and strategic discussions – without the distraction of COP – and build to concrete outcomes at COP28. ECO heard the calls from many developing countries for greater support for NAPs.

More than 3 billion people are already at climate risk and critical ecosystems will be lost forever without immediate action. To date, only 45 developing countries have submitted their NAPs to the

UNFCCC. Let ECO remind the Parties that NAPs are a tool for identifying countries' medium and long-term adaptation needs. It's been more than a decade since NAPs were introduced through the Cancun Adaptation Framework. ECO feels that NAPs have been forgotten!

Countries' ability to develop and implement their NAPs is more urgent than ever. ECO wants to highlight the lack of available funding and barriers to access for developing NAPs, let alone implementing them. It is high time this issue was raised under the UNFCCC, and for this we need a dedicated space for discussion at SB58.

Santiago Network: the Next Episode?

As with all TV addicts, there is always high expectations for the next episode of our favourite series. For followers of Loss and Damage, maybe expectations were too high that at SB58 we would agree on a clear roadmap to establish the Santiago Network at COP28. Sadly, based on presentations from prospective hosts of the network made yesterday, it looks like this process may drag on.

On Monday, the Warsaw International Mechanism side event recognising ten years of the WIM ExCom made it clear that progress has been excruciatingly slow: too slow for many of the communities devastated by the catalogue of climate emergencies since Typhoon Haiyan struck during COP19 in 2013. The WIM ExCom established a policy arm in 2014, but we are still waiting on the operational arm (a.k.a) the Santiago Network agreed to at COP25. And as for finance, the Loss and Damage fund is still being discussed under the work of the Transitional Committee.

Hopes were high that here in Bonn, we could make progress on the operational arm, including deciding on a hosting agency and clarifying the secretariat structure for the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage. Two proposals have been presented, one by the Caribbean Development Bank and the second a joint proposal by the UNOPS and UNDRR. Neither proposal responds to the terms of reference and a number of questions remain. Critical among these are

the funding of the network. Both organizations are talking about lean structures focused on delivery, but neither were able to answer questions on what their administrative costs would entail. Another challenge is how to ensure that the network remains accessible and provides direct access to local organizations and communities while being agile enough to coordinate with and build the capacity of national agencies. There are also concerns about additional structures being proposed including a trust fund and a technical support unit.

Neither proposal meets ECO's expectations. Both have good points, but what is missing is a clear proposal of how they will work with impacted communities and facilitate access to the network for local organizations. Both have dangerous baggage that they bring to the equation. For example, the CDB proposal is founded on existing multilateral bank processes which are notorious for ignoring local voices and local needs.

For UNOPS and UNDRR the challenge is how to get out of the disaster risk bubble, how to embrace the broad spectrum of action and support needed to address loss and damage, the need to move away from early warning systems and anticipatory action. But the biggest challenge is how we proceed. Will the SB's end with an agreement on a host? We may find out later today in the next episode of the Santiago Network saga!

When Phasing Out isn't Phasing Out

Here in the UNFCCC, many processes are going on all at the same time. No one can keep track of everything. So ECO wonders if people were really listening to what certain Parties said on just energy transition. Did they really say to phase out fossil fuel emissions, not fossil fuels? That doesn't make sense! What could they mean?

Maybe they meant that carbon capture and storage (CCS) will phase out emissions somehow? But the reality is, CCS is a dangerous distraction that harms people, prolongs reliance on fossil fuels, and doesn't deliver on its promises. Even if CCS capacity triples this decade – an implausible rate of growth – the IEA's NZE scenario still finds no room for new oil, gas and coal fields. So this can't be what Parties have in mind.

ECO wonders if they meant burning wood biomass, mixing in some kind of hydrogen, relying on 'natural climate solutions', or just ... buying

offsets from someone else and escaping their own responsibilities? We all know that running away from our own responsibilities is an all too familiar way to tackle our problems. But the fact is, none of the above can magically erase fossil carbon emissions.

So, if none of these things will let us phase out emissions without phasing out fossil fuels, what could these Parties be thinking about? Well, ECO has heard some Parties suggesting a bold new answer – we'll phase out fossil fuel emissions with technologies that ... haven't ... been ... invented ... yet.

But since people and communities are suffering climate impacts that exist now, and renewable energy technologies to end fossil fuels exist now, ECO suggests it might be a good idea to rely on solutions that exist now, instead of gambling on things that might never exist. We need solutions now, not in science fiction.

Welcome Back, Brazil! But...

Hello, Brazil, long time no see! ECO is thrilled to be able to finally pay you some compliments after (justly) bashing you for four long and destructive years.

On Monday evening, while most delegates had already left the conference venue for a pint of Kölsch or an early night, President Lula made true on his promise to lead by example. Brazil finally promised to correct its shameful NDC, eliminating the previous president's (we won't say his name) carbon trickery.

For those who may have already forgotten, in 2020, Brazil changed its baseline year for emissions without adjusting the percentage of reductions in its NDC. This dodgy magic would allow it to spew out up to 400 MILLION tons of greenhouse gas more than in the original pledge by 2030. Now, ECO knows Brazil is not a big fan of corresponding adjustments but that went too far, eh? Fortunately President Lula acknowledged the misstep and seized on World Environment Day to announce Brazil will update the pledge. But that wasn't all! Lula also delivered a brand-new plan to fight deforestation in the Amazon rainforest. We didn't expect anything less from the future host of COP30.

Parabéns, Brazil! But before you grab your caipirinhas, let us warn you about a couple of things

that could undermine these encouraging signs of leadership and jeopardize the Brazilian COP.

First of all, there is Congress. While Lula is trying to regain trust from the world and rebuild Brazil's environmental agenda, lawmakers are advancing legislation that could hamstring the Environment Ministry and end Indigenous land demarcation.

And just yesterday, before we could even read all the pro-climate executive acts signed on Monday, eight state governors from Amazonia released a letter backing up a preposterous project to drill for oil close to the mouth of the Amazon river. One of them is none other than Helder Barbalho, governor of the state of Pará, and wannabe COP30 host. Mr. Barbalho has repeatedly stated that the energy transition is something we should start to debate "in 50 years".

Dear Brazil: do we really need to remind you that there is no room for more fossil fuels in a 1.5°C world? Which part of "fast, fair and full energy transition" don't you understand? Please don't let shortsightedness, greed and parochial political interests get in your way, Brazil. More than most countries, you have a lot to gain from a climate-friendly economy. Oil stains are notoriously difficult to remove, and a COP charged with implementing Paris simply can't afford to have any.

Wanted: Real Solutions; Dangerous Distractions Not Accepted

ECO has come to Bonn having seen the IPCC report and knowing the urgency of rapid, equitable climate action.... and so it is confusing to hear Parties talking about dangerous distractions like generating offsets. Even more confusing is talk of doing so from removal technologies - and even using emissions avoidance as a potential activity to generate carbon credits (though we were pleased to hear all but one Party avoid the avoidance trap and call to exclude avoidance from the 6.4 mechanism.) ECO will be watching to make sure this doesn't change and avoidance is out once and for all.

All of these discussions are dangerous distractions from what we know needs to happen: a full, fast, fair, and funded fossil fuel phase out (funded by climate finance, not carbon offsets). Figuring out how to produce offsets from more activities is not the answer. Especially when those removal activities have violated land rights, human rights, the rights of Indigenous

Peoples, and the rights of local communities. Did we mention that some of the technologies being floated about are unproven at scale and threaten to allow business as usual rather than enabling the action needed?

And in many instances, offsets have not done what they've claimed to do. Because if you rely on a credit generated from an activity that hasn't actually reduced emissions to offset business as usual emissions, then total emissions aren't going down - they're going up. No matter what kind of accounting magic is used to try to disguise the truth, the reality is clear.

You can't fool us! ECO wants to echo the calls across constituencies yesterday demanding real solutions and rejecting these dangerous distractions. Offsets are a Dangerous Distraction! There is no room for offsets in a below 1.5C world. The world is out of time for accounting tricks wearing offsetting costumes. Now is the time for real action.

Hey Chat CAN Ag, What's with this New Joint Work on Agriculture and Food Security?

CAN's Agriculture working group has created a brand new AI, one that is informed by the views of small-scale food producers, the rights of peoples, climate science, and is gender equitable. We asked it a few questions on the UNFCCC's new joint work on agriculture and food security!

Hey Chat CAN Ag, what is the deal with agriculture this week?

At COP27 a decision was adopted and parties agreed to launch a new "Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security". I would have used an acronym if I could, but there is no available consensus yet (and you might fear I was malfunctioning if I were to refer to the SSJWICAAFS.) I hope they don't use one of the three planned workshops to agree on that. If you ask me (well you have), they might as well have put agroecology in there! What a shame, 10 words in a title and none of them contains the actual solution for food systems transformation.

Why are the negotiations on agriculture taking so much time?

Well, this negotiation track has a history of going back and forth, sometimes behind closed doors. Discussions could take two days to decide on starting to vaguely evoke ideas about a roadmap. It is worth noting that agriculture spends most of the discussion time

with parties saying how important it is, but decisions are rare and political attention is severely lacking here. This is particularly worrying given the urgency of the situation, with 828 million people suffering from hunger, one in four people on the planet drawing their livelihoods mostly from agriculture, and small-scale food producers facing increasing threats from climate impacts. And the hard truth is that without dealing with emissions from food systems, the Paris Agreement target of limiting global warming to 1.5°C will simply be out of reach.

What are the "sustainable approaches" to agriculture they are fighting about?

Actually, they are better known as "AGROECOLOGY" - or the application of ecological principles to agricultural systems and practices. The benefits of agroecology, notably under harsh climate conditions, are indisputable, and yet these approaches receive only a tiny fraction of available finance. Any Party that would like to be on the right side of history should definitely support it. Agroecology also reflects the best available science and is tremendously innovative. Chat CAN Ag happens to know that many developed countries love innovative approaches based on Traditional and local knowledge, so they must love agroecology and not undermine it in this space going forward!