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Editorial: Andres Fuentes

Requiem for the Just Transition Work Programme

Today ECO is not in the mood for jokes or puns. In yesterday's Contact Groups on the UAE Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP), it became clear that a handful of developed countries are trying to kill the potential of the JTWP to deliver justice for workers, for communities, for peoples and for countries that need support to accelerate their transformation.

As opposed to some delegates, ECO is not confused. ECO is angry. We were clearly getting somewhere after a constructive session on Monday night. And yet, instead of taking all that work and making genuine efforts to ensure the JTWP progresses towards concrete actions on just transition, countries might be leaving Bonn with little more than a procedural trick.

We will likely leave the SB60 with

no summary from the dialogue, no process to streamline the activities and to ensure that we have the discussions we need to scale and speed up just transition, and no commitment to actually deliver on anything of substance. The world needs justice and equity and what we get is an empty procedural conclusion.

ECO wants to be clear with you, dear Parties. If you answer yes to more than one of these questions, then you are part of the problem:

- Have you argued that clarifying the modalities of the UAE JTWP is a renegotiation of COP28 outcomes? (spoiler alert: it's not!)
- Have you rejected attempts to clarify the themes to be discussed in the future?
- Have you used budgetary concerns or

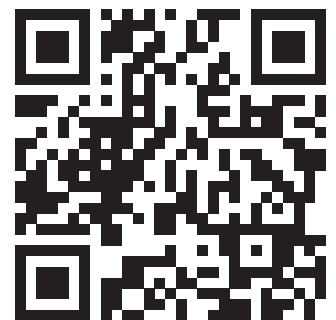
concerns for Non-Party Stakeholders' participation as a reason not to add more activities to the dialogues?

- Have you said more than once that you are confused without proposing a way forward that seems acceptable to all Parties?

What we see in the JTWP discussions is what we witness in the real world: the transition is under way but justice is nowhere to be seen.

ECO strongly supports all the activists and delegates that will be fighting between now and COP29 to redress this situation and make Baku the essential stepping stone to the historic Just Transition outcome everyone needs by COP30. You all have the strength, ideas, vision and collective power to make it happen!

DON'T MISS A SINGLE ECO AT SB60!



Don't Erase the Past

It has come to ECO's attention that some Parties think that a core principle of climate justice and international environmental law in general is merely an inconvenience that is no longer needed. Concretely, across multiple negotiating tracks, US negotiators have reportedly been striking any and all references to Common but Differentiated Responsibilities – and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC).

CBDR-RC is a bedrock principle of the Paris Agreement and has been a core part of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change for more than thirty years. At its most basic level, CBDR-RC reflects the reality that the wealthy developed countries (aka the global north) are largely responsible for the climate crisis due to their outsized historical emissions and therefore must lead in taking actions to reduce carbon emissions, as well as the obligation to provide climate finance to developing countries. Global north countries have built their wealth off their fossil fuel-based industrial development.

There can be no justice in any climate negotiation outcome if references to CBDR-RC – and equity in general – are struck out or opposed by parties to the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. Doing so sets a dangerous precedent that CBDR-RC is a thing of the past. When so many commitments and promises for climate justice have been broken, this is not only unjust - it is insulting.

As such, ECO finds it deeply troubling that the US seems to be taking every opportunity to erase CBDR-RC and equity. In an extremely Orwellian moment, we even heard of an instance where US negotiators refused to participate in a side event unless references to CBDR-RC and equity were cut from the event's description.

It is 2024, not 1984. ECO calls on the US to stop these underhanded negotiating tactics. We can certainly understand how – as the world's leading historical emitter – the US would not be a fan of historical responsibility and differentiated capacity. But the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement are the results of global

negotiations that nearly 200 countries – including the US - have signed. Perhaps the US's time and energy would be better used if it focused on being the climate leader it so often claims to be. The US should instead provide its fair share of support to the global south and demonstrate what equity should look like, particularly during discussions around the NCQG and the Global Goal on Adaptation. Acting in good faith is critical to building trust and catalysing ambition amongst parties.

Common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities are foundational, and will continue to be so, even as the world changes around us. Erasing references to them makes the outcomes of climate negotiations weaker, not stronger. All Parties, including the US, should embrace that, rather than attempting to scrub a well-established principle of the UNFCCC from negotiating texts. We urge all Parties to hold the line and keep CBDR-RC – and equity – in negotiating texts.

Where's your Bonnergy?

Energy is conspicuously low in Bonn. While ECO wonders if the dismal quality of the coffee is a factor, the true problem is deeper: the groundbreaking energy transition package that was agreed at COP28 seems to have gone missing just six months after Dubai.

As a result, the connection between the GST and the enhancement of NDCs has been lost in transit somewhere between Dubai and Bonn. But let ECO remind you that all those long, late nights last year had a purpose.

Here's the thing: Parties must respond to the COP28 Global Stocktake decision by stepping up their ambitions ahead of COP30. It's time to put your policies in line with your talking points. Parties made the decision at COP28 that to deliver on 1.5°C countries must accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels in a just and equitable manner, triple renewable energy capacity, and double energy efficiency improvements by 2030. Reflecting the principles of the Paris Agreement and the Convention, rich fossil fuel producers must act first and fastest – and crack open their wallets.

First, there can be no 1.5°C-aligned

NDC that does not reflect the need to transition away from all fossil fuels towards renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Second, a credible 1.5°C-aligned NDC is not merely words on paper, but actually reflects urgent national actions to implement this ambition. There is no place for new fossil fuel extraction for that sunset industry. As a recent IISD study showed, all demand for oil, gas, and coal within 1.5°C pathways can be met by existing sources. New extraction just risks more climate disaster and more stranded assets.

ECO has a direct challenge for the

Troika of COP Presidencies: Turn last year's groundbreaking energy package into action. The outgoing Presidency must play a role in making sure that their 'Consensus' – of which they are justly proud – doesn't fall into the Rhine and sink into oblivion, never to be seen in Baku or Belém.

And here's a good way to start. The Troika of Presidencies must play a leadership role by ensuring that their own NDCs are faithful to the GST outcome and aligned with 1.5°C. That means they must show how they will transition away from fossil fuels – and that begins with ending new production now.



The race for healthy, resilient, and equitable food systems is finally speeding up at the UNFCCC

ECO was amidst the cheerful crowd yesterday at what seemed to be the end of the "Sharmonivia" agriculture marathon. But if negotiators thought they have reached the finish line, ECO is here to remind them that the past ten days were just the warm-up.

During this warm-up in Bonn, there was finally an agreement for a roadmap to discuss - and hopefully deliver - much needed climate action for agriculture and food security. The cardio coaches (aka the co-facilitators) kept the athletes motivated by promising a refreshing snack at the finish line made up of low hanging fruit (and a few from the higher branches) referred to repeatedly over the course of the week.

The first miles of the main race will be covered in Baku where the online portal on agriculture and food security will be presented.

The second more difficult and promising part of the marathon will be the workshop on Systemic and Holistic

Approaches to Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture, Food Systems, and Food Security to be organized in June 2025.

Negotiators, you are in luck - ECO knows one systemic and holistic approach to deliver healthy, resilient and equitable food systems: agroecology. What will certainly not be sustainable to the pace of the runners in our race are approaches such as "climate-smart agriculture" or corporate-led techno-fixes. The 2025 workshop also provides the opportunity to go beyond agricultural production, and tackle the entire food system with a focus on interventions that secure - and do not threaten - agricultural livelihoods, and also address food loss and waste, food security, nutrition, and equitable approaches to diets.

Part three of the marathon will be focused on Means of Implementation for Climate Action in Agriculture and Food Security, featured in a workshop in June 2026. Once again, ECO has many concrete ideas on how delegates can ensure that

means of implementation, including finance, will be accessible and match the needs and priorities of small-scale food producers, with a special focus on youth, women, Indigenous Peoples, marginalized communities and their collectives. First, finance must be provided as grants and NOT loans. Then, we need to define and uphold safeguards so that finance flows never undermine human rights and the right to food, and respect locally-led adaptation principles. Finally, finance must enable the agroecological transformation of food systems, with farmers' livelihoods at its heart, and never encourage business-as-usual.

But be mindful: Running does not only happen in the UNFCCC stadium. Food systems transformation is a race that must start right now in your countries and with local agroecological producers at the forefront.

By the way, where will the fruit salad be served? Maybe this was circulated on a delegates-only email list, as ECO didn't get the memo.

Treasure found – but rights still missing

Remember that treasure hunt with ECO a couple of days ago? The saga continued and ECO finally found the treasure it was looking for: the shiny COP28 Host Country Agreement! And not a moment too soon, as the hunt for the COP29 agreement has already started. But the journey isn't complete as there is an important piece still missing.

Make no mistake - the mission is close to impossible with obstacles at every turn* for finding host country agreements, despite a commitment to make them publicly available.

The COP28 Host Country Agreement is bright and shiny, but human rights protection aren't among the sparkling pieces. In fact despite last year's hard-fought AIM conclusions, human rights are missing. There was no guarantee for COP28 participants that their human rights and fundamental freedoms

would be safeguarded and promoted, and that they would be effectively protected from harassment and intimidation during their stay in Dubai.

Now to the present moment. In line with the AIM conclusions, ECO calls on all Parties to urge the UNFCCC to make the journey more straightforward by immediately making the COP29 agreement publicly available and easily accessible.

We hope that when we find and open it, the human rights guarantees will shine through. But if that's not the case, Parties must request clarity from the Azerbaijani Presidency and the UNFCCC Secretariat on the steps they will take and the measures they will put in place to ensure the safety and security of all COP29 participants. We urge them to ensure open civic space and freedom of expression before, during and after the conference.

And one more thing, while we are digging up these agreements, the agreement between the German government and UNFCCC for their permanent headquarters should also be made public. After all our safety and security must be guaranteed here in Bonn as well.

After all, not all that glitters is gold.

**Steps to be taken: search the UNFCCC website, ask the UNFCCC, look on the UN Treaty website and don't find anything, go back to the UNFCCC, create an account on the UN Treaty website, put in a request, receive answer that it's not available, go back to the UNFCCC, try again, wait, go to Bonn and ask the UNFCCC again, wait for the UNFCCC to realize it is *really* not available, discuss, wait, check your spam, don't find it, wait, receive it right at the moment the negotiations on the topic are closing 10 months after you started looking for it.*

Rich countries, pay up! There's no shortage of public money for an equitable energy transition

Last week, the International Energy Agency (IEA) released the World Investment Outlook. ECO was not surprised to see that it shows rich countries are failing miserably at paying what they owe to support a just transition away from fossil fuels and toward 100% renewables globally. Meanwhile, filthy fossil fuels are still raking in over a trillion a year in cash from governments and banks alike.

That's why, as negotiations continue in Bonn to establish a New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG), we must secure trillions each year for mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage. Funding to address climate crisis impacts cannot be pitted against funding to stop climate crisis causes — there is enough to go around if we get the priorities right.

But in Bonn we see wealthy countries once again shirking their responsibilities, claiming there isn't enough money to cover the costs, and instead offering the equivalent of pocket change. These rich countries have some tried and failed magical thinking to dodge the bill: a "private sector first" or "derisking" approach that puts profit before people, drowns low-income countries even further in debt to address a crisis they had no hand in creating, and uses taxpayer money to subsidize private benefits.

This "private sector first" approach won't deliver any energy transition, let alone a just and equitable one. For this, we will need a fair mitigation subgoal that includes public finance for the energy transition that is mostly grant-based, with fair and favorable terms to pay for many of the most-needed projects like 100% renewable-ready grids, affordable universal energy access, public transit, and worker- and community-led planning and programs for a just transition. And yet so far no wealthy governments mention finance needs for a just transition as part of their NCQG submissions.

ECO knows that there is more than enough public money available, it is just poorly distributed: going to fossil fuels, war, and the super-rich instead of the solutions we need. As just one example, while wealthy Annex 1 countries pledged paltry sums towards the Loss and Damage Fund, they continue to provide billions to back climate-wrecking new fossil fuel projects that will only increase the need for, you guessed it, loss and damage finance.

As a start, governments must stop funding fossil fuels and make polluters pay. Year after year, wealthy governments provide hundreds of billions in subsidies to dirty fossil fuels, all while the oil and gas companies have

brought in record profits. Ending these fossil fuel handouts and taxing the excess profits of fossil fuel companies could together raise hundreds of billions in public funds.

There is already momentum to stop a particularly influential form of fossil fuel support: international public finance, which has remained skewed towards the fossils. Pledges as part of the Clean Energy Transition Partnership (CETP) are already ending billions a year in financial support that plays an outsized role in building out large fossil infrastructure. If key laggard countries including Japan, Italy, and the United States keep their overdue promises, this initiative can shift \$30.2 billion a year and go a long way to cementing fossil free public finance as a global norm.

The list goes on: taxing the rich is yet another tool wealthy governments have at their disposal to raise trillions in public funds. So would canceling unjust and illegitimate debts and rewriting unfair global tax, trade, and finance rules that penalize the Global South and just happen to mirror the colonial relations some leaders claim we have left behind.

The public money has always been there to pay for the solutions we need for a just and livable future. ECO calls for those most responsible for the climate crisis to be held to account and pay up.

