

COP28's energy transition package must kickstart the phase out of all fossil fuels

His Excellency Dr Sultan Al Jaber
President-designate of COP28

November 13, 2023

Dear COP28 President-designate,

We, over 100 civil society organizations write to you two weeks before COP28 deeply concerned by your letters to Parties dated November 8 and October 17 to call on you to facilitate an agreement on an ambitious, science-aligned negotiated energy package at COP28 that enshrines an agreement to phase out all fossil fuels.

We acknowledge the monumental task that lies ahead and the immense responsibility resting on your shoulders as the President of this critical conference. Fossil-fueled climate catastrophes have become too numerous to count, impacting the lives of millions around the world and 2023 will be the hottest year on record. As your letter to Parties dated October 17th rightly points out, the world is “way off track from pathways consistent with keeping 1.5°C and the Paris Goals within reach”. In this context, **failure by COP28 to secure an agreement on urgent action in the energy sector in line with a 43% equitable reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 through an agreement to phase out of fossil fuels would have a major impact both on the world's most vulnerable populations and ecosystems and on the credibility of this process.** We would like to express our unwavering commitment to fight for COP28 to deliver a credible, science-based and equitable response to the climate crisis.

Three quarters of global emissions are caused by fossil fuels and their production and use must start falling immediately in line with the 1.5°C limit. The success of COP28 will therefore be judged by whether it secures an agreement on a comprehensive energy package that includes:

- The just and equitable 1.5°C-aligned phase-out of all fossil fuels (coal, oil, and gas) across all sectors, which includes an immediate end to fossil fuel expansion and an urgent decline in fossil fuel production and use this decade.
- The tripling of fair, safe, and human rights compliant clean renewable energy, primarily wind and solar, capacity to 11,000 gigawatts by 2030 (2022 baseline), leading to the annual deployment of 1.5 terawatts of renewable energy from 2030 onwards.
- A doubling of yearly energy efficiency gains with a 2022 baseline.
- A monumental scaling up of grant and concessional finance from richer developed countries for renewable, efficient and just energy transition in developing countries.

If this is the COP to “correct course” and “keep 1.5°C alive” as you have declared is your priority, all of these elements will need to be part of its formal decision and be accompanied by

significantly scaled up and improved funding from rich countries for the just energy transition in the Global South. The phase out of fossil fuels will not happen at the speed and scale needed to limit warming to 1.5°C unless all actors take action to actively plan and implement it. **We, the signatories of this letter, will see any outcome that enshrines the need to scale up renewable energy and energy efficiency, but that is silent on the urgent need to phase out fossil fuels, as inadequate and not aligned with science.**

In this context, we are gravely concerned that your second letter to Parties signals a shift in tone and a noticeable lowering of ambition on the energy package.

First, we strongly believe that the energy package outcome must be a formal part of the COP28 decision text and not relegated to mere “pledges” as stated in your letter. **The COP Presidency should strive to achieve formal negotiated outcomes with the legal status of a COP decision and not rely on voluntary pledges and initiatives that fall outside of the purview of UNFCCC negotiations and can have a poor implementation record.** Presenting the energy outcome as pledges undermines the prospects for a meaningful outcome even before the conference has started and mobilizes scarce diplomatic resources in support of voluntary commitments that should instead be directed toward developing an integral part of the formal COP28 decision.

Additionally, while it is essential that the oil and gas industry commits to and urgently implements reductions in its methane emissions and flaring, this must happen in the context of a clear and formal decision on ending the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure and a phase out of all fossil fuel production and use, and agreement by Parties to develop the policies required to regulate methane emissions reductions from industry. To pursue methane emissions reduction without fossil fuel phase-out and clear targets for scope 3 emissions reduction, in the form of only voluntary pledges from the sector, will be seen as starkly insufficient and tantamount to greenwashing. We need to go well beyond addressing all of the oil and gas industry’s Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions, which would only be tinkering at the margins, given that this generally amounts to around 10-20% of oil or gas producing companies’ total emissions.

Secondly, **we would like to express utmost concern about your letter’s repeated emphasis on so-called decarbonization “solutions and technologies”.** We are aware that this is coded language for the use of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) and other “abatement” technologies, carbon removal activities or offsets, whose primary function is to distract from and delay the need to phase-out fossil fuels. CCS has been described by the IPCC as the highest cost, least potential mitigation option in the near term, which negates its relevance as a driver of the urgent and large-scale mitigation that is needed this decade. It has a decades-long history of overpromising and under-delivering and comes with a huge energy penalty. Despite having been around for half a century, CCS facilities currently capture less than 0.1% of global CO₂ emissions and serious doubts exist about the permanence of storage. Additionally, if CCS were to be used to store emissions, it would leave the local and regional health and pollution costs of fossil fuel extraction and use unresolved. Science is clear that renewables, especially solar and wind, are by far the cheapest options with the highest mitigation potential. The need for a just transition away from fossil fuels is paramount, and we must not be misled by purported alternatives that do not address the root causes of the climate crisis. **Promoting technologies, such as CCS, that will not deliver any meaningful**

contribution to reducing emissions in the next decade is a dangerous distraction that we will oppose.

Dear COP28 President-designate, you have rightly stated that the phase out of fossil fuels is “inevitable”. Yet, so far we are deeply concerned this remains an empty statement. The fossil fuel phase out is also urgent and will not happen at the speed and scale that is necessary to limit warming to 1.5°C unless governments jointly agree to and implement a managed phase out of fossil fuel production and use. You have both a unique power and the responsibility to conduct negotiations in an impartial manner to achieve that outcome, centering the needs of people around the world and not the oil and gas industry's bottom line. We urge you to champion our shared goal of an ambitious and transformative energy package as part of the *formal* outcome at COP28, reflecting the principles of justice, equity, and urgency. We are committed to making COP28 a success, and urge you to use your position and power to achieve a strong outcome for people and the planet.

Thank you for your attention, we look forward to your response,

Sincerely,

350.org

AbibiNsroma Foundation

African Coalition on Green Growth

AGIR POUR LA SÉCURITÉ ET LA SOUVERAINETÉ ALIMENTAIRE ASSA

AidWatch Canada

Asociación Generaciones de Paz (ASDEPAZ)

Association Nigérienne des Scouts de l'Environnement ANSEN

BIOCARBON

CAN Africa

CAN Canada

CAN International

CAN Latin America (CANLA)

CAN SOUTH ASIA

CAN Arab World

Carmelite NGO

Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

Centre for Climatology and Applied Research

CENTRE FOR CLIMATOLOGY AND APPLIED RESEARCH

Centre for Environment, Human Rights & Development Forum - CEHRDF

Centro de Atención a la Mujer Trabajadora de Chihuahua A. C.

Centro de Desarrollo Humano. CDH

CENTROAMERICA SIGLO XXI

Christian Aid

Citizens' Climate Lobby Colombia

Climate Action for Lifelong Learners (CALL)

Climate Action Network Australia

Climate Action Network Southeast Asia

Climate Action Network Zimbabwe (CAN ZIMBABWE)

Climate Generation
Climate Justice Programme
Climate Justice Saskatoon
Climate Nexus
Climate Reality Canada
CliMates Austria
CNCD-11.11.11
College of the Atlantic
Consejera nacional de juventudes
Corporación Sihya
Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO)
CVX Perú.Comunidades de Vida Cristiana
Debt For Climate
EcoEquity
Ecological Society of the Philippines
EKOenergy ecolabel
Emmaus International
Environmental Defence Canada
Environmental Investigation Agency
Équiterre
Fastenaktion
FOCSIV Italian Federation Christian NGOs
Foro Cambio Climatico y Justicia Socioambiental-FMCJS
Fridays For Future India
Fridays for future Sierra Leone
Friends of the Earth Norway (Naturvernforbundet)
Friends of the Earth US
General Federation of Workers' Unions in Iraq
Global Institute for Sustainable Prosperity
Grandmothers Advocacy Network
Greenpeace International
Heñói
Iceland Nature Conservation Association
Indian National Trade Union Congress-INTUC
Innovation pour le Développement et la Protection de l'environnement
Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement
Klimadelegation e.V.
Laudato Si Movement
MARBE SA
Misereor - Catholic Bishop's Organisation for Development Cooperation
Mom Loves Taiwan Association
Natural Justice
Nepal Development Initiative
Observatório do Clima
Oil Change International
Our Kids' Climate
Oyu Tolgoi Watch
Pakistan fisherfolk Forum
Palmares Laboratório - Açã

Paz y Esperanza
Power Shift Africa
Razom We Stand
Re_Generation
Reaccion Climatica
Recourse
Réseau Action Climat France
RIPESS LAC
Rivers without Boundaries Coalition
SAFIRE
Salam for Democracy and Human Rights
SCIAF
Sierra Leone School Green Club (SLSGC)
SOBREVIVENCIA, Amigos de la Tierra Paraguay
Southern Africa Climate Change Coalition
SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK(SARCAN)
Stamp Out Poverty
SWORD
TEAL Climate
The Climate Center
The Development Fund of Norway
The Movements Trust
Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development
Union of Concerned Scientists
Uplift
UUSC
WWF France
WWF International
Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines
Zimbabwe Climate Change Coalition