

Submission on the COP30 Presidency Roadmap for Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in a Just, Orderly and Equitable Manner

Resource Justice Network (RJN) is the world's largest civil society network advocating for just and equitable governance of natural resources, led primarily by members in Global South countries where extractive and energy industries operate. We welcome the COP30 Presidency's initiative to develop a roadmap operationalising the COP28 commitment to transition away from fossil fuels in a just, orderly and equitable manner, and we submit the following inputs in a spirit of constructive engagement.

The transition away from fossil fuels has entered a decisive implementation phase. The central challenge is no longer only whether the need for transition is recognised, but whether countries and communities have the practical power to carry it out: to reduce fossil dependence without fiscal collapse, build rights-based community-led clean energy systems and green industrial capacity, protect local and Indigenous community rights and territories from intensified extractivism tied to the material dimensions of scaling up green technology, and access finance and technology without deepening dependency or eroding policy space. Many of the most important barriers are global and structural in origin, even when they appear locally as high borrowing costs, weak industrial outcomes, technological lock-in, or constrained policy choices. Equally, many of the most effective solutions must be negotiated and delivered through national and regional entry points. This submission responds to the four questions posed in the Presidency's call for contributions.

(a) What are the most critical barriers – whether physical, economic, financial, institutional, technological or social – preventing a transition away from fossil fuels?

Continued expansion and weak supply-side discipline. The COP28 commitment will be undermined if countries continue to expand fossil fuel production, licensing and associated infrastructure without credible plans for managed decline. There is no room for new oil and gas fields or coal mines, and continued upstream expansion by major producers deepens lock-in, prolongs dependence and raises the eventual costs of adjustment. **Without stronger discipline on expansion, countries are being asked to prepare for transition while the conditions that make transition harder are still being reproduced.**

Structural economic and fiscal dependence. In many producer countries, fossil fuels remain structurally embedded in public finances, employment systems and national

development strategies. As demand changes, both price and volume effects can reduce public revenues, deepen stranded-asset risks and create pressure on wages, public services, energy sovereignty and security, and fiscal stability. The US-Israel war on Iran has also shown how quickly fossil-fuel dependence can translate into global geopolitical and macroeconomic instability and crisis through price spikes, supply shocks and increasing scarcity and national austerity measures, reinforcing the risks of remaining tied to volatile hydrocarbon systems and impacting the most vulnerable populations with associated rising food and electricity costs. National Oil Companies (NOCs), state guarantees, pre-financing arrangements and backloaded contracts can worsen public exposure. The crisis in the Strait of Hormuz is exposing the vulnerability of global energy sovereignty tied to fossil fuel dependency and in parallel intensifying the energy trilemma, with frontline climate vulnerable nations facing skyrocketing energy insecurity, unaffordability and lack of sustainability. **This makes transition not only an energy challenge, but also a macro-fiscal and development challenge.**

Cost of capital and constrained fiscal space. The absence of fully financed, country-owned just transition plans leaves many fossil-fuel-dependent economies with no credible alternative to continued extraction. Sovereign debt burdens, high risk premia, punitive credit-rating methodologies, IMF-style conditionalities, and volatile capital markets make clean energy systems, industrial upgrading and diversification far more expensive than they should be. In practice, developing countries often face borrowing costs that make transition pathways less bankable than continued extraction. This turns the cost of capital into a core barrier to implementation. **Lower-income countries do not enjoy the full cost advantage of renewables because capital costs remain too high, meaning that equal-speed transitions across countries would be less just and less orderly for the most dependent economies.**

Trade, investment and policy-space barriers. Restrictive trade and investment rules can deter countries from using the policy tools needed to build alternatives. This includes public procurement, local value-addition measures, supplier upgrading, performance requirements, export management, public-risk sharing and broader green industrial strategies. Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) is especially problematic because it can create regulatory chill and raise the perceived risk premium on transition policies. WTO disciplines also continue to constrain technology transfer, local industrial development and policy autonomy, especially in geopolitically weaker countries. **These are structural barriers that cannot be resolved through domestic policy alone.**

Concentrated control over TAFF-critical technology and value chains. The issue is not only whether countries can import equipment. Many remain excluded from the higher-value segments of transition value chains, including manufacturing, engineering, supplier ecosystems, standards, repair, software and industrial services. This means they can deploy imported technologies without capturing the learning, jobs and domestic capability needed for structural transformation. **The transition then risks reproducing extractive or assembly-only roles, while value, know-how and market power remain concentrated elsewhere.**

Governance fragmentation, weak implementation coordination. Decisions across trade, investment, and energy remain siloed, while international cooperation is dispersed and fragmented. Low and middle income country coordination remains constrained by entrenched power asymmetries, weakening collective bargaining power and limiting their ability to shape fair, equitable, and implementation-oriented transition pathways. **Without a representative and delivery-oriented architecture, countries continue to face the same barriers one by one rather than through coordinated support and reform pathways.**

Social legitimacy, rights deficits and corruption. Transition measures that are poorly governed have led to severe social and economic costs being borne onto frontline Indigenous and low-income households, workers, women and other marginalised groups, while leaving communities with continuous violations of their rights, loss of livelihoods, and little decision-making power. At the same time, weak transparency and accountability systems in both fossil and transition sectors also create risks of elite capture, corruption and misuse of public transition finance. **To avoid reproducing extractive, colonial and patriarchal dynamics, we need meaningful and inclusive participation; FPIC for Indigenous communities and affected peoples; labour safeguards; grievance and remedy; transparency, and anti-corruption measures, as well as accountability mechanisms and citizen and community oversight.** This is what makes transitions more durable, legitimate and capable of delivering real outcomes on the ground.

(b) What potential levers, whether economic, financial, institutional, social or technological, exist for accelerating implementation of the transitioning away commitment?

On the supply side: Governments should end new fossil fuel expansion and establish national phase-down roadmaps that reflect 1.5°C, equity and different levels of fossil dependence. These roadmaps should include explicit transition plans for NOCs, including revisions to business plans, incentive structures and mandates that currently reward continued extraction. They should also include responsible-exit measures: clear rules on decommissioning, remediation, liability assignment and asset transfers so that public authorities and communities do not inherit orphan liabilities. Countries need structured pathways to assess oil and gas dependence, reduce fiscal exposure, and sequence decline in ways consistent with national just transition priorities. **To be genuinely just, these pathways should also protect public services and livelihoods, and be shaped through social dialogue and meaningful participation by workers, affected communities and Indigenous Peoples where applicable.**

On economic diversification and green industrialisation: A core lever is to link fossil transition to democratic green industrial policy. Fiscal stress tests, contract and revenue reform, and subsidy reform are necessary, but they are not sufficient on their own. Countries also need public strategies to invest in clean energy systems, enabling

infrastructure, local manufacturing, supplier upgrading, maintenance, repair and recycling ecosystems, and broader domestic capabilities. These strategies are more durable when shaped through public debate, social dialogue, and meaningful participation by workers, communities and citizens in energy and diversification choices, rather than treated only as externally designed macro-adjustment exercises. Weak participation and exclusion from decision-making can fuel social conflict, undermine legitimacy and ultimately weaken implementation. **The issue is not to reject technical planning, but to root it in domestic ownership and social legitimacy so that economic diversification becomes a durable political project rather than a short-lived technocratic plan.**

On international governance and institutional frameworks: Autonomous, government-led coordination bodies (such as national commissions, just transition authorities, or cross-ministerial task forces) can help align energy, industrial, labour, fiscal and territorial policy around coherent transition pathways. But national coordination is not enough. There is also a need for representative international delivery structures able to route barriers to the institutions best placed to address them. **Operationalising the Just Transition Mechanism is therefore a fundamental lever for establishing an enabling environment for transformation within national and international level FFPO.** A delivery-oriented mechanism under the UNFCCC could help turn country-owned plans into support packages, connect climate goals with finance and industrial policy, and move beyond fragmented dialogue. Complementary high-ambition cooperation frameworks, including where willing states choose to pursue new legal instruments, can also help close gaps that consensus processes alone have struggled to resolve.

On fossil fuel subsidy reform, demand transformation, and the international economic architecture: Subsidy reform is a particularly high-leverage entry point, but only if it is governed as part of a broader just-transition strategy. It should not be reduced to a narrow macro-fiscal, trade-discipline or market-correction exercise detached from equity, development and just-transition priorities. Public procurement, sectoral plans, efficiency measures and electrification policies can then help redirect demand toward cleaner systems and socially useful alternatives. Harmful subsidies should be addressed in ways that tackle upstream expansion and emissions-intensive support while protecting affordability, energy access and social protection. **Reform should be sequenced through transparent, country-owned plans and linked to diversification, clean alternatives and implementation capacity.**

Reforming the international financial and investment architecture is essential because the current one still makes managed fossil decline harder than continued extraction. Debt burdens, high capital costs, volatile currencies, punitive credit-rating methodologies, and investor protections continue to lock many countries into fossil dependence by making diversification and clean investment more expensive and politically riskier than they should be. A just transition therefore requires more than additional funding: it requires debt alleviation for the most climate-vulnerable and

fiscally constrained countries, in line with CBDR-RC; concessional and non-debt-inducing finance; lower capital costs; stronger policy-space protections; coordinated pathways to move away from ISDS exposure; and wider reforms to investment governance. **Public finance should not merely underwrite projects, but actively change the terms of transition by supporting diversification, technology access, industrial upgrading, labour safeguards, community protection, and forms of derisking that reduce underlying instability instead of shifting risk onto communities and the environment.**

This also requires stronger safeguards across the green transition supply chain. Binding approaches to rights-based mineral governance, together with traceability and transparency across green technology and renewable-energy supply chains, are needed to ensure that the rising demand for transition minerals does not reproduce opaque extraction, violence, militarisation, or severe social harm. This should include stronger disclosure on extraction conditions and emissions, and should build on the principles advanced by the UN Secretary-General's Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals. **In other words, accelerating the transition is not only about moving capital faster, but about ensuring that the rules governing finance, extraction, and clean industrial expansion support just and equitable outcomes.**

On technology access and industrial entry points: International cooperation on transition mineral supply chains, technology access, standards, supplier integration and local manufacturing capacity is essential if the transition is not to reproduce enclave models. One practical set of entry points lies in national and regional industrial platforms (including SEZs, public procurement, infrastructure and offtake negotiations, and regional industrial corridors) through which transition-mineral-rich countries can negotiate supplier upgrading and climate-critical technology access in concrete terms. Properly designed, these platforms can tie public finance, licensing, joint ventures, secondments, supplier milestones, labour safeguards and FPIC where applicable into binding deal architecture. **This is particularly relevant for transition-mineral-producing countries, where decisions taken today about licensing, processing capacity, supplier ecosystems and infrastructure will determine whether the energy transition generates domestic industrial transformation or simply reproduces historical extractive patterns.**

On knowledge and accountability: Common monitoring, reporting and verification frameworks are needed to track progress not only on emissions, but also on production trajectories, diversification, supplier upgrading, technology access, affordability and rights protections. Peer learning on subsidy reform, decommissioning, industrial policy, SEZ negotiation, and NOC transition planning can accelerate implementation where institutional capacity is limited. **The Roadmap should support implementation-oriented knowledge exchange.**

(c) What country, regional or sector roadmap experiences, best practices, and lessons learned can be shared?

There is a rich and growing body of national and sectoral transition experience, but several broader lessons stand out.

First, there is no single pathway. Countries with high fiscal and/or economic dependence on fossil fuel revenues face different constraints from more diversified economies or fossil fuel importers. **Transition pathways are more credible when they are differentiated and anchored in the realities of producer and consumer countries and communities, actual dependence, fiscal exposure, productive structure and institutional capacity.**

Second, diversification is strongest when it is not treated as a purely technocratic exercise in macroeconomic adjustment. Experience shows that top-down diversification plans often fail when they are socially distant and disconnected from the priorities and impacts on workers, communities and citizens. **It is more likely to succeed when linked to rights-based public planning, industrial strategy, clean energy systems, transition mineral governance, transition mineral and green technology traceability and transparency mechanisms, enabling infrastructure, supplier development and regional integration, and when shaped through civic participation and social and community dialogue.**

Third, cost of capital is political, not merely technical. Countries do not face high capital costs only because of project-level issues, but because of the wider rulebook: debt burdens, investment governance, litigation risk, and trade constraints. **This means implementation requires political reforms on top of technical solutions.**

Fourth, regional integration matters. Regional value chains, cumulation, shared standards, pooled procurement, and cross-border supplier networks can make transition pathways more viable than fragmented national or bilateral approaches. **They matter not only for producer countries seeking to move up the chain together, but also for expanding affordable energy access:** where domestic industry is weak, regional suppliers can lower costs and reduce dependence on a few extra-regional firms; over time, the same regional architecture can support local manufacturing, repair, maintenance, and broader industrial capability. **This is why coordinated industrial planning, regional infrastructure and logistics, and shared technology pathways are often more effective than one-off imports or isolated national strategies.**

Fifth, governance quality shapes delivery quality. Rights-based participation, FPIC for local and affected communities, labour safeguards, grievance and remedy, and transparent oversight are not optional extras. They reduce conflict, improve legitimacy and make implementation more durable. **Transitions are also more effective when governance formats are genuinely representative and linked to concrete coordination and delivery functions, rather than relying on technocratic or socially distant processes.**

Sixth, local industrial and energy negotiations can become global transition lessons. PPAs, SEZs and other industrial and infrastructure negotiation vehicles show that national

entry points can be used to bargain for supplier upgrading, open interfaces, embedded learning and local capability; **but only when public authorities and financiers set enforceable conditions and use public money as leverage for real upgrading rather than enclave growth.**

(d) How can a just, orderly and equitable transition best reflect the diverse realities of countries at different stages of development and with different degrees of dependence on fossil fuels?

The Roadmap should be anchored in common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC), but applied in a way that reflects how fossil fuels play different roles in different countries. The challenge is not the same everywhere: some countries mainly face an energy transition away from fossil fuels in power and end uses; others face increasing IPLC rights-violations and land-grabbing for the implementation large-scale RE infrastructure; others face a broader transition away from fossil-dependent industry and employment structures; and others, especially oil and gas exporters, face a macro-fiscal, economic diversification and development transition away from dependence on fossil revenues and exports. A just approach therefore cannot rely on one uniform pathway or timetable.

A just and orderly transition does not mean every country moves at the same speed. Countries with strong renewable advantages, high fossil import burdens, or severe air-pollution costs may be able to move faster in parts of the energy transition and secure earlier gains in affordability, energy security and public health. Countries with younger fossil assets, weaker grids, higher capital costs, or deeper fiscal and industrial dependence will need more time and greater support to move at a meaningful pace. **What matters is that every country moves as fast as it can without making the transition more disorderly, more regressive, or more politically fragile and guaranteeing human and community rights and environment protection .** Avoiding new fossil lock-in is therefore essential everywhere.

For many fossil-fuel-dependent developing countries, the transition is not simply about changing the energy mix. It is also about reducing macro-fiscal vulnerability, replacing public revenues, reforming contracts and NOC strategies, and building more resilient economic foundations. Support must therefore extend beyond energy switching to economic diversification, alternative fiscal revenue, green industrial policy, and broader structural transformation. And this diversification is more likely to endure when it is country-owned, builds domestic technical capacity, and is shaped through public debate, social dialogue and meaningful participation, rather than treated only as a high-level technocratic exercise designed from outside.

A just and equitable transition must also address the structural barriers that shape what countries can actually build and sustain. This requires international support that lowers the cost of capital, expands fiscal space without worsening debt dependence,

protects policy space for public procurement, local value addition, supplier upgrading and industrial strategy, and supports usable technology access, skills and domestic capability-building. **It also requires a clearer distinction between real derisking and simple risk-sharing:** transition finance should not only make projects bankable, but reduce the deeper drivers of instability rather than externalising risk onto communities, workers and the environment. **This means conditioning support on credible participation, grievance and remedy, strong social and environmental safeguards, and value chains that generate visible domestic benefits, stronger local economic linkages, and longer-term political durability.**

Finally, a just transition must be representative. Indigenous Peoples, affected communities, workers, women and other marginalised groups should not be treated as peripheral stakeholders or passive consultees, but as rights-holders with structured and inclusive roles in decision-making, implementation and accountability. **Participation is not an add-on to justice; it is part of what makes transitions more durable, more legitimate, and more capable of delivering real outcomes on the ground.**

Possible Ways Forward

The COP30 Presidency's roadmap initiative has generated important political momentum. The challenge now is to ensure that this momentum is translated into implementation pathways that can survive beyond a single Presidency cycle.

First, the coalition of the willing now emerging around this agenda should use the Roadmap strategically across multiple processes, not treat it as a standalone exercise. Under the UNFCCC, this means using the Roadmap to shape the operationalisation of the JTM/BAM, feed into future COP decisions, and strengthen the evidence base for the second Global Stocktake and related transparency processes. **The Roadmap should become an input into delivery, not remain a parallel political document.**

Second, the coalition should engage trade, investment and technology governance more directly. Across the WTO, WIPO/TRIPS processes, plurilateral and regional agreements, and investment-governance discussions, willing governments should coordinate common asks on policy space for green/public procurement, supplier upgrading, local value-addition, climate-related exceptions, rules of origin and cumulation, and off-ramps from ISDS exposure.

Third, the coalition should address ISDS exposure directly as a core implementation barrier. ISDS is not a marginal legal issue: it raises the fiscal cost of transition, empowers investor challenges to public-interest regulation, and creates a chilling effect on necessary action to phase out fossil fuels and govern extractive sectors fairly. Governments should therefore begin building a coalition committed to freeing themselves from ISDS, including by committing not to sign new agreements containing ISDS, coordinating treaty termination or renegotiation to remove ISDS provisions, and

addressing sunset clauses collectively. **At the same time, this agenda should be connected to the UNFCCC's delivery architecture.** As the Just Transition Mechanism is operationalised, it should be able to identify where ISDS is obstructing country-owned transition pathways and route those barriers, through structured cooperation with institutions such as UNCITRAL and UNCTAD, into practical off-ramp work that protects just-transition policy space ahead of COP31.

Fourth, the coalition should engage the World Bank Group, IMF and related finance architecture with a clear strategy. The WBG's growing "single-window" guarantee and risk-sharing architecture, together with G7-linked critical minerals initiatives, will shape how capital moves into transition mineral and clean manufacturing value chains. **The coalition should therefore push not only for more risk-sharing, but for real derisking:** lower cost of capital, credit-rating reform, fairer debt treatment, and finance packages that do not externalise risk onto communities, workers and the environment. Instead, **support should be conditioned on meaningful participation, grievance and remedy, strong safeguards, balanced value chains, supplier upgrading, skills and technology absorption.** Otherwise, public balance sheets may simply underwrite a new round of extraction and midstream concentration.

Conclusion

The COP30 Presidency's Roadmap process offers an important opportunity to move from general recognition of the need to transition away from fossil fuels toward a more practical implementation agenda. To be successful, it should remain anchored in 1.5°C, support an end to new fossil expansion, and identify the structural barriers that prevent countries and communities from acting.

A credible roadmap should therefore support not only phase-out-, but the conditions that make it possible: fiscal resilience, democratic diversification, green industrialisation, lower-cost finance, real technology access, rights-based safeguards, and stronger international cooperation. Many of the barriers are global; many of the solutions must be built through national and regional entry points. The Roadmap can be most useful if it helps connect the two.

That means moving beyond ambition language alone and toward a practical politics of implementation: The transition away from fossil fuels will not succeed through ambition statements alone. It will succeed only if countries have the fiscal space, technological access, industrial capacity and democratic legitimacy to implement it. The COP30 Roadmap can play a historic role if it helps transform political commitment into the practical conditions for delivery.