



Submission

Of the official children and youth constituency of the UNFCCC ("YOUNGO") for the COP30 Presidency Roadmap for Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in a Just, Orderly and Equitable Manner

The COP 28 outcome called on Parties to contribute, in a nationally determined manner, taking into account the Paris Agreement and their different national circumstances, pathways and approaches, to the global effort to transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner (paragraph 28.d/GST1). The COP 30 Presidency Roadmap aims to translate that global consensus into implementation, building on the debates initiated in Belém and recognizing initiatives and solutions being accelerated through the Action Agenda. It will map critical barriers and enabling factors, while recognizing that no single transition pathway applies to all countries and regions. The Roadmap will offer differentiated options that countries, subnational entities, and economic sectors can adapt according to their circumstances, serving as both a reference document and a catalyst for advancing this agenda.

Contributors may consider submitting concise inputs on one or more of the following questions:

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

Social:

To identify the most critical social barriers we adopted a granular approach, looking at every part of the society and the relative barriers they are facing .

The rise of right wing authoritarianism is perpetuating **misinformation** on the harms of fossil fuels. Misinformation campaigns discredit proven solutions, omit accurate climate data, and deny the need for international cooperation for the purpose of managing the impacts of anthropogenic climate change. Such narratives often target economic vulnerabilities, such as the cost-of-living or the housing crisis and thereby polarize public opinion on climate action and cooperation.

Policy consistency and **transparent communication** are required as abrupt regulatory shifts or poorly explained measures risk alienating the communities they are designed to protect. The Yellow Vest movement in France stands as a cautionary example: a carbon tax perceived as regressive, introduced without redistributive mechanisms or compensatory support for disproportionately affected groups, triggered social unrest and stalled climate action. To ensure communities understand and are able to engage in climate policy and legal frameworks, plain language should be used, and reasonable accommodations should be provided for persons with disabilities.

Indigenous peoples are often marginalized in green transition processes. Claims of economic or green development have been used to justify the appropriation of Indigenous territories without meaningful consent raising doubts as to the legitimacy of so-called green initiatives. These risk reproducing the extractive externalities fossil-fuels caused, termed by critics as "**green colonialism**". This exclusion of Indigenous peoples in these processes has generated significant resistance from Indigenous communities to green transition policies and initiatives.

Renewable energy development, if poorly governed across the supply chain, may result in the same societal harms that fossil fuel extraction caused. Indigenous must be granted genuine agency and in this respect, **Free, Prior and Informed Consent** mechanisms can serve as a space for collaboration, co-producing solutions and safeguards that center affected communities in shaping the transition.

Consumerism is preventing countries and people from reducing their harmful environmental and economic impacts. Proactive efforts to address this shortfall should be embraced to allow for fair and circular economies that enable prosperous and sustainable environmental development.

Economic and financial barriers:

Subsidies for fossil fuels are a critical obstacle to a transition away from fossil fuels. Implicit fossil fuel subsidies reached a peak at \$1.5 trillion in 2022 (Our World in Data, 2025). These subsidies create price incentives towards fossil fuels and away from renewable energies and thereby entrench fossil fuel infrastructure. Such subsidies should be redirected towards renewable energy solutions to overcome their deployment costs.

A significant just transition **finance gap** persists, particularly in developing countries, whereby the cost of transforming energy systems and supporting affected workers and communities exceeds available international public finance, reinforcing continued dependence on fossil fuel revenues.

Elevated **costs of capital** in developing countries makes renewables unaffordable, offsetting potential price gains of investing in them. By way of example, the same solar infrastructure that costs X per MWh in Germany can cost 2–3 X in Kenya due to the financing risk inflating the total cost of energy delivered¹. This shortfall could be transformed into a development opportunity as 600 million Africans lack access to electricity. Unlocking affordable renewable energy could simultaneously address energy poverty and advance the Paris Agreement's goal of tripling global renewable energy capacity.

Scaling renewable energy at the pace required remains constrained by insufficient grid infrastructure, storage capacity, and system flexibility in many regions, limiting the ability of clean energy to fully displace fossil fuel generation despite rapidly declining costs.

Political:

Short election cycles are a critical intergenerational justice concern since they encourage policymakers to postpone the transition away from fossil fuels and thereby impose burdens upon future generations.

The fossil fuel industry has entrenched **lobbying networks**, present at all political levels enabling it to influence energy policies. Given such political entrenchment, the strategic engagement of fossil fuel leaders could present an opportunity to achieve a transition to green energies.

Demands against 'developed countries' to 'pay up' for historical polluting must be balanced against increasing **right wing** populist backlash against international, including climate, policy emerging across many developed countries. Furthermore, making demands for payment from them may, in certain political contexts, further alienate key constituencies and lead them to vote in governments that would undo progress in terms of international cooperation in tackling climate change. In such contexts, **instead of demanding payment solely from**

¹ IEA (2025): "How a high cost of capital is holding back energy development in Kenya and Senegal" — [iea.org](https://www.iea.org)

governments, a call for philanthropic and private funding could also be emphasized as a complementary approach, to avoid a zero-sum mindset between the demographics of developed countries and developing countries, **while maintaining long-term commitments to public climate finance and historical responsibilities.**

The narrative of developed vs. developing country positions is breaking. It is replaced by a divide between fossil fuel-producing nations protecting their economic interests and vulnerable countries facing catastrophic climate threats, regardless of their development status.

Institutional:

Dependency on Fossil Fuel fiscal revenues:

Fossil fuel dependence is not necessarily a chosen development path, but the result of residual colonial structures. This structural dependence is reinforced by a global governance gap: governments' planned fossil fuel production remains misaligned with climate targets. The Production Gap Report finds that governments collectively plan to produce more than double the amount of fossil fuels in 2030 than would be consistent with limiting warming to 1.5° C, highlighting a systemic disconnect between climate commitments and fossil fuel supply policies (UNEP et al., 2023)

Corruption and Quality of Institutions:

The difficulty of coordinating a transition away from fossil fuels is prevalent in developing countries. As policies are integrated and coordinated among stakeholders, high levels of bureaucracy that facilitate pathways for corruption and nepotism in licensing and investment can emerge. This reduces the chances of implementing renewable energy investment as it fuels public mistrust. Consequently, it is not necessarily a lack of expertise that hinders transitioning away from fossil fuels. Instead, it is a system based on political interest that hinders experts in the field from participating in decision-making on an impartial basis.

Investment Treaties and ISDS:

An institutional barrier to phasing out fossil fuels is the architecture of investor-state treaties and the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism. With approximately 2,600 bilateral investment treaties in force – conceived with no regard to the climate crisis – states are often left having to choose between honouring legal obligations in favour of fossil fuel investors *or* fulfilling their Paris Agreement commitments. Over 300 ISDS claims worth \$80 billion have been launched by fossil fuel companies for climate-related phase-out policies. Beyond direct financial liability, this system disincentivises states, particularly developing nations, from implementing ambitious climate regulation for fear of large arbitral awards against their public budgets, generating what we call **Regulatory Chill**. Reform of the international investment law regime to allow for fossil fuel carve-outs and the removal of ISDS from climate-sensitive sectors must be implemented transparently and with regard for legal certainty to avoid investment treaties functioning as a legal lock-in mechanism for continued

fossil fuel production to prevent them from undermining the global transition and states' ability to honor their nationally determined contributions.

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

Economic:

The **redirection of fossil fuel subsidies** towards renewable energy deployment and redistribution funds, such as ring fencing fossil fuel expenditure savings to subsidise investments in renewables is of great impact.

At the international level, scaling up grants and facilitating access to funding would accelerate implementation by making renewable energies more affordable and attractive relative to fossil fuels. This could be achieved by levying a **global wealth tax**² that could create leveraged distributive financing towards transitioning away from fossil fuels whilst supporting sustained economic development. A means of identifying past polluters that have profited off exploiting the planet should be devised to inform how and against whom Carbon taxes are levied.

Trade agreements can be leveraged to incentivise the transition by including provisions that lower tariffs on green technologies, so as to foster renewable energy investment, and stipulate adherence to Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. This would ensure climate innovation serves all by addressing critical **gaps in the WTO intellectual property** framework regarding climate technologies.

Renewable energy sources, such as **geothermal technologies**, that provide firm, continuous power around the clock should be developed to complement other renewable energy sources such as wind and solar to ensure stakeholders dependent on a continuous energy supply are aligned and in support of a just transition away from fossil fuels.

Political:

Countries should implement just transition plans with time-bound and measurable milestones in their **NDCs**.

Policies that support children and youth-led enterprises and community energy projects should be developed to leverage national and international resources to provide incentives and promote sustainable development. Establishing **pilot funding windows** within the Green Climate Fund and New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance is an option.

² [According to UNICEF Climate Breakthrough Report \(May 2025\)](#), young people support the idea of a "global wealth tax" which "could raise billions by levying progressive rates based on individuals' or corporations' total wealth above a certain threshold. A UN report estimated that [taxing 1.5% of wealth](#) over \$100 million could raise nearly \$300 billion, an amount close to the adaptation financing gap".

Social:

The challenge of fostering support of **workers** of fossil fuel-dependent industries can be approached by engaging trade unions of fossil fuel-intensive industries to develop and implement **retraining and reskilling programs** that correct skills mismatches that result from a transition to a green economy. This would provide purpose and job security for workers of fossil-fuel intensive sectors in a green economy.

Knowledge systems should be analyzed and redesigned so as to align and reconnect modern societies with nature. This may be achieved by partnering with Indigenous leaders and drawing on **Indigenous wisdom**, ecological literacy to effect a cultural shift away from the extractive mindset that has defined industrial progress.

The transition away from fossil fuels extends to **sectors down the supply chain** including plastics, fashion, transportation, and fertilizers. Low hanging fruit for accelerating the transition include phasing out plastics, unlocking electrified infrastructure systems, and strengthening environmental and health & safety standards to reduce fossil fuels in everyday products that are essential for getting more people on board with the transition.

Social awareness through amplifying collective actions and communication is crucial to tackling skepticism around climate change within communities. Policies that ground people in their heritage and collective shared knowledge should be encouraged to nurture the sense of the community.

Institutional:

The growing movement of **Alliances**, such as the Fossil Fuel Treaty, the Coalition on Phasing Out Fossil Fuel Incentives Including Subsidies, and the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance networks have the potential to scale just transitions. Parties should be encouraged to join and formalize regional networks that help achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and the transition away from fossil fuels.

To avoid green colonialism, the TAFF Roadmap should draw upon the findings of the UN Secretary-General's Panel on **Critical Energy Transition Minerals**.

Governments of countries dependent upon fiscal revenues from fossil fuel are, on the face of it, incentivised to delay the transition away from fossil fuels. To the contrary, the risk of **stranded assets** grows the longer countries delay and deny the transition. This risk should be brought to the attention of such governments so they can understand that it is in their countries' best interest to transition away from fossil fuels in spite of fiscal revenue benefits.

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

The development of country-specific approaches to energy transitions could create the leverage and promote awareness needed for larger transition projects. UNICEF's Climate Breakthroughs Report³, offers multiple examples for the transition away from fossil fuels, including:

Certain countries are drafting National Energy Transition Frameworks tailored to their circumstances, like Ghana, factoring domestic realities and international relationships into their NDCs. Another example is Bangladesh's successful scale-up of solar home systems for 20 million people. Canada is creating opportunities for co-ownership of microgrids with Indigenous communities. Many countries are following the path of Costa Rica by transitioning their energy systems to run nearly entirely on renewable energy. Even cities are coming forward with specific climate action plans to align with the Paris agreement.

YOUNGO as the official Children and Youth constituency to the UNFCCC highly applaud the decision of Colombia to exit the state-investor dispute settlement (ISDS), joining Brazil, South Africa, India, Indonesia, Ecuador, Bolivia, and several European countries that have recently moved away from ISDS in trade and investment agreements. As ISDS has a track record of heavily favoring multinational corporations at the expense of governments and local communities, we extend the invitation to other parties, especially developing countries to follow this best practice and exit ISDS.

(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?

A just, orderly and equitable transition must recognize that countries face different realities, capacities, and levels of dependence on fossil fuels. However, these differences should not be used to justify the continued framing of fossil fuels as a pathway to development. Upholding the Paris Agreement requires transition pathways that are equitable, context-specific, and centered on long-term resilience rather than fossil fuel dependency.

A just transition energy pathway requires climate finance assistance from developed countries to developing countries.

The latest World Meteorological Organization “State of the Global Climate 2025” report states that the past three years, referring to 2023, 2024, and 2025, are the three warmest years in the 176-year record. This is a warning to the entire world and a clear call to parties to implement their commitments.

Parties with experience in transition to a green economy should provide capacity building skills development in renewable energy, clean cooking, and providing energy education to support the transition of parties with less experience; creating a “help desk” like what we called for in the Belem Antalya Mechanism.

Monitoring and reporting, at local and regional levels for the purpose of ensuring human rights are not violated in the green energy transition should take place. Human rights monitoring organizations, having expertise in this field, should be engaged for the purpose. Ensuring participation of directly impacted communities in decision making processes. The extraction and recycling of materials should meet corporate, social, and global responsibility standards.