

ENABLING A JUST TRANSITION AWAY FROM FOSSIL FUELS

The First Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in Santa Marta represents an historic opportunity to strengthen cooperation towards a fossil fuel free future

Governments from the European Union to Latin America and from Africa to the Pacific will be attending the First Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in Santa Marta, Colombia from April 24-29, 2026. The conference comes at a critical time as communities around the world grapple with the human and economic toll of an escalating global energy crisis sparked by the US-Israel war on Iran. In contrast, **the Santa Marta conference shows growing political momentum to phase-out fossil fuels and is a key turning point towards a clean energy future.**

Although governments committed to pursue efforts to limit global warming to 1.5°C in the Paris Agreement and to transition away from fossil fuels at the UNFCCC climate talks COP28 in Dubai¹, Governments, in aggregate, still plan to produce more than double the amount of fossil fuels in 2030 than would be consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C². This failure to curb the production, supply and use of fossil fuels - the main root cause of the climate crisis - strongly signals the need for a pro-active, managed phase out of coal, oil and gas.

Our climate is now more out of balance than at any time in history and **since the Paris Agreement was reached, the years 2015-2025 have been the hottest 11-years on record**³. The impacts of climate change are accelerating - from deadly heatwaves, catastrophic fires, extreme downpours to devastating hurricanes.

But fossil fuels do more than destabilise the climate; they drive widespread health, social and economic harms, while fuelling instability around the world. When conflict erupts in regions that are central to global trade and oil and gas production, energy and food prices soar, and people pay the price. **The current war induced energy crisis has again laid bare the inherent vulnerability of fossil fuel dependence.** What's clear is that transitioning away from fossil fuels is not merely a matter of climate policy: for all countries and communities, it is also a question of economic stability, human wellbeing and justice.

The Santa Marta conference is therefore not about who controls oil and gas reserves, but about who is ready to shape a different future. The Santa Marta coalition of committed states can seize this moment to accelerate the shift to renewable energy and build a more stable world.

¹ UNFCCC: [COP28 Global Stocktake](#)

² SEI, Climate Analytics & IISD (2025): [The Production Gap Report 2025](#)

³ World Meteorological Organization: [State of the Global Climate 2025](#)

But a just transition away from fossil fuels is about more than simply swapping coal, oil and gas for renewables. It is an opportunity to transform energy, transport, industrial and other systems so they are more secure and affordable, reduce inequality, protect ecosystems and shift power from elites and multi-billion-dollar corporations to people. To seize this opportunity, and not repeat the extractivism and colonialism of the fossil fuel era, the transition must go beyond a technocratic exercise. It must be a process of social transformation - one that places social justice, human rights, and people-centred decision making at its core.

Managing the global phase out of coal, oil and gas - in a way that no country and community are left at a disadvantage, and the benefits of the new, stronger energy system are reaped by all - will require international cooperation, accountability, and a shared vision. A just transition demands we ask: How fast must we phase out fossil fuels, and what's needed to limit warming to 1.5°C? How will fairness be ensured in the distribution of costs and benefits within and between countries? How will the transition be funded, and who pays? And critically, who shapes the decisions that guide the transition, and whose rights and voices need to be protected and heard?

To coincide with the Santa Marta conference, Greenpeace has produced a policy briefing outlining the core elements of a just transition away from fossil fuels, and the urgent, priority actions needed from national governments and through global co-operation to make it a reality. Justice is both the compass and destination - guiding the vision for the transition and the pathway to achieve it.

- [The Greenpeace International Just Transition Policy Briefing](#)

Accelerating the just transition: priority actions for 2026

2026 needs to be a turning point. National action and multilateral cooperation must align behind a just transition away from fossil fuels, accelerating action by 2030, by advancing the priority actions set out below.

NATIONAL ROADMAPS

- All governments should develop **national roadmaps for transitioning away from fossil fuels, as part of comprehensive just transition plans** aligned with each countries' fair share of the global action required to limit warming to 1.5°C. These roadmaps should be anchored in social justice and supported by international climate finance and other means of implementation where needed.
- Roadmaps should:
 - Include an immediate commitment to **no new fossil fuel expansion**; and **set timelines to phase out production and consumption**, with developed countries moving fastest (per timelines in the Just Transition policy brief);
 - Include **ambitious renewable energy targets**, to strengthen energy security and sovereignty, supported by fiscal and policy incentives that prioritise electrification, local benefits, decentralised solutions and community-led initiatives.

- **Exclude and phase out false solutions** and new forms of environmental harm, including biofuels that cause deforestation and forest degradation and fuel pesticide use, Carbon Capture and Storage, and nuclear which is inherently high cost and high risk.
- Take a **comprehensive approach to reducing fossil fuel demand across all sectors**, including energy, transportation, buildings, agriculture and petrochemicals - while improving efficiency in energy use.
- **Advance a just transition** by centering impacted communities, redistributing resources (including access to technologies), co-creating solutions and safeguarding the environment and human rights.

COP31 AND GLOBAL COLLABORATION

- COP31 must **operationalise and accelerate the commitment to transition away from fossil fuels** in a just, orderly and equitable way. Building on the momentum from COP30, the Santa Marta conference and the Brazil Presidency roadmap initiative.
- COP31 must turn the promise of a new **Just Transition Mechanism** into action by establishing the Belem-Antalya Mechanism (BAM) to coordinate fragmented global efforts and accelerate international finance and capacity support for just transition.
- Alongside and in support of the UNFCCC - the central multilateral climate forum where all countries can participate - **willing countries should cooperate to advance ambition** through initiatives such as the Fossil Fuel Treaty, the Santa Marta conference and its follow up, and bilateral and regional collaborations.

FINANCE & FISCAL REFORM

- To support developing countries in delivering a just transition, developed countries need to urgently **scale-up predictable, accessible and affordable climate finance** - especially grants and concessional finance - progressing towards the US\$300 billion goal, increasing it to reflect actual needs, and also scaling up towards US\$1.3 trillion investment goal.
- To increase public finance for the transition and incentivise fossil fuel phaseout, governments should implement **top-up taxes on fossil fuel profits and taxes high net worth individuals** at national level - to fund domestic action and international support, as appropriate. At the global level, a new top-up tax on the profits of international fossil fuel corporations under the UN Tax Convention. Tax rates must align with a just global fossil fuel phase-out, with developed countries moving fastest.
- The new **UN Tax Convention** should also ensure a fairer allocation of taxing rights, global coordination on transparency and accountability tools, and global minimum taxes on corporate profits and wealth, to reduce inequality within and between countries and enable all governments to increase investment in sustainable development.
- Progress on broader fiscal reform is also vital including **ending fossil fuel subsidies**, above all production subsidies, and replacing untargeted consumption subsidies with support for vulnerable households. Action to deliver **debt relief** in highly indebted developing countries to free up fiscal space for action on the transition is also essential.

PLASTICS

- **Agree a new Global Plastics Treaty** to regulate and reduce the production of plastics in a way that supports a just transition by ensuring the rights and voices of affected workers, communities and countries are safeguarded in the process. The Global Plastics Treaty represents a near-term, once-in-a-generation lever to manage the reduction of one of the most significant drivers of growth in consumption of oil, gas and coal.

“CRITICAL” MINERALS

- **Prioritise and govern mineral use to support a just transition.** Governments must ensure mineral use is prioritised for renewable energy and sustainable transport - particularly to expand energy access in underserved communities and regions - while also reducing demand through increasing public transport, battery innovation, circularity, and recycling; safeguards people and nature by protecting vital ecosystems and upholding the rights, voices and territories of Indigenous Peoples and local communities; and ensures that producing countries and communities are the primary beneficiaries.

Greenpeace delegation attending the Santa Marta conference

Greenpeace will have policy experts from Greenpeace International, Greenpeace Colombia (Andino), Greenpeace Australia Pacific and Greenpeace Brazil onsite at Santa Marta for interviews and updates:

- Laura Caicedo, Campaigns Coordinator, Greenpeace Colombia
- Shiva Gounden, Head of Pacific, Greenpeace Australia Pacific
- Anna Cárcamo, Climate Politics Specialist, Greenpeace Brazil
- Rodrigo Estrada, Senior Climate Advisor, Greenpeace International

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