



The Climate Urgency
Setting Sail for a New
Paradigm

The Climate Urgency:

SETTING SAIL FOR A NEW PARADIGM

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Executive Summary

This report aims to explore how a paradigm shift in our food and energy systems – supported by structural lifestyle and societal changes – could greatly contribute to limit rise in average global temperature to 1.5°C without relying on risky and unproven Negative Emissions Technologies (NETs) or geoengineering.

The UNFCCC Talanoa Dialogue is built on three fundamental questions: where are we, where do we want to go, and how do we get there? Despite efforts to promote viable solutions, biodiversity loss, environmental impacts, and Green House Gas (GHG) emissions continue to worsen in the midst of multiple crises that are rooted at the core of our current social, economic, and political system. Climate science is clear: there are just a few years left with current carbon budget reserves to stay within the 1.5°C limit. Hence, achieving the long-term goal of the Paris Agreement is of utmost importance and it requires countries to increase their ambition promptly.

Nevertheless, not all solutions promoted are putting people and planet at the centre but rather harmful and deeply controversial technologies are gaining traction as an effective way to achieve the 1.5°C threshold. The consequences of deploying such techno-fix solutions could be irreversible and would continue to hit the poorest and vulnerable communities the hardest. Instead, the energy and agriculture sectors need a fundamental transformation to reach the long-term goal.

On the one hand, the energy sector, representing two-thirds of total GHG emissions and 80% of CO₂, must phase-out its dependence on fossil fuels and switch towards renewable energy systems. Such a transition must be just, inclusive, and transparent, and must not replicate the corporate structures that are currently governing the energy sector. Decentralisation, diversification, human rights, and gender equality have to be considered when developing such renewable energy systems, with finance flows shifting towards such viable alternatives. Meanwhile current levels of energy consumption must also be reconsidered to respect planetary boundaries and the understanding that we are living on a finite planet.

On the other hand, a transition towards agroecology would turn agriculture and the food system from problem to solution. The transition framework which comprises five different levels of actions helps clarify the integral nature of the changes required while highlighting their mitigation potential and multiple co-benefits they would bring. Such transition goes through shifting to organic agriculture as a first level, ramping up to the next one by redesigning agroecosystems to diversify and integrate them, to changing diets, reducing meat and dairy production and consumption by 50%, relocalising food systems to reduce food loss and waste and build food sovereignty.

CIDSE affirms that this transformation can only be achieved through a paradigm shift. We need a different system as a whole. This requires new narratives, a different cultural approach – putting sufficiency at its heart – and of course, transforming our political and economic systems – away from the destructive growth imperative that lies at the heart of the current system. CIDSE's arguments and vision for a new paradigm are based on values such as integral ecology, justice, and good governance, as also defined by Catholic Social Teaching and in the Papal Encyclical *Laudato SI'*. Equity, Common But Differentiated Responsibilities, as well as communities' involvement and participation in decision-making processes are some of the principles that must lie at the heart of the change needed.

Climate change is the tip of the iceberg of a failing system and solving it in conjunction with other crises requires political courage and efforts that can no longer wait.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBDR-RC:	Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities
CFS:	Committee on World Food Security (UN)
CH ₄ :	Methane
CO ₂ :	Carbon Dioxide
COP:	Conference of the Parties
CSO:	Civil Society Organisation
EU:	European Union
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organisation (UN)
FLW:	Food Loss and Waste
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
GHG:	Greenhouse Gas
Gt:	Gigatonne
GW:	Gigawatt
IEA:	International Energy Agency
IPCC:	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LS:	<i>Laudato Si'</i>
MW:	Megawatts
N ₂ O:	Nitrous Oxide
NDC:	Nationally Determined Contributions
NETs:	Negative Emission Technologies
PVs:	Photovoltaic System
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
UN:	United Nations
UNEP:	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC:	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WHO:	World Health Organisation (UN)

Introduction

*It's 3.23 in the morning
and I'm awake
because my dreams
won't let me sleep
my great-great-grandchildren
ask me in dreams
what did you do while the planet was plundered?
what did you do when the earth was unraveling?
surely you did something
when the seasons started failing?
as the mammals, reptiles, birds were all dying?
did you fill the streets with protest
when democracy was stolen?
what did you do
once
you
knew?*

Drew Dellinger¹

