



CLIMATE JUSTICE IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

URGENCY, TRANSFORMATION AND ACTION NOW

KEY MESSAGES AND POLICY DEMANDS FOR COP26

1. A just recovery and systems change post-COVID-19
2. Raising ambition and emergency within the Nationally-Determined Contributions and beyond
3. Loss & Damage
4. Just energy transition
5. Climate finance
6. Carbon markets
7. Climate and Agriculture
8. Geo-engineering and Nature-based Solutions
9. The Paris Rulebook

From 31 October to 12 November 2021, the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will be held in Glasgow. World leaders including national governments, businesses and limited civil society will meet to advance global efforts to prevent dangerous climate change. Given that developing countries are the most

affected by climate change, it is critical that all relevant countries and stakeholders are present at the table to ensure that these talks and the subsequently agreed measures are driven by equity and the needs of those most affected.

This document presents a brief synthesis of CIDSE's main messages and orientation on climate justice in the context of the COVID-19 era and beyond. It is based on the latest climate science and Catholic Social Teaching (e.g., the Encyclical letters, *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home and *Fratelli Tutti* On fraternity and social friendship), and CIDSE's [previous analysis on achieving 1.5°C¹](#) and transitioning to [agroecology²](#) and renewable energy systems.

Therefore, inspired by Pope Francis' call to listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, we urge all governments, businesses, and citizens to act in global solidarity as one human family, radically shifting from business-as-usual in the next decade to a way of life that benefits the common good, saves all lives and protects our planet for present and future generations.

¹ CIDSE (2018). 'The Climate Urgency: Setting Sail for a New Paradigm'. <https://www.cidse.org/2018/09/19/the-climate-urgency-setting-sail-for-a-new-paradigm/>.

² CIDSE (2018). 'Principles of Agroecology'. <https://www.cidse.org/2018/04/03/the-principles-of-agroecology/>.



1. A JUST RECOVERY AND SYSTEMS CHANGE POST-COVID-19

The current health crisis should not be used as an excuse to continue allowing any fossil fuel subsidies, unsustainable large-scale production and consumption of goods and services and debt increases. Responding to the climate and health crises requires a climate resilient response and recovery. We believe that massively investing in a just transition to clean and renewable energy sources is crucial to achieving a just recovery. Our survival depends on an inclusive economy that actively promotes healthy and thriving ecosystems and protects human rights as well as the dignity of all people.

» SPECIFIC CALLS TO ALL GOVERNMENTS

- Put people and the planet first by committing to achieving a just and sustainable recovery to rebuild societies and economies in the long term, rather than only delivering temporary relief and recovery.
- Ensure that the recovery and responses respect fundamental human rights, including public involvement, and Indigenous community buy-in through policies such as the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Convention 169 on Free, Prior, and Informed Consent.
- Governments must not finance any fossil fuel projects but should instead invest in renewable energy solutions that build climate resilience, generate sustainable jobs, promote human health, healthy ecosystems, and the overall health of our Common Home.

» SPECIFIC CALLS TO GLOBAL NORTH GOVERNMENTS

- Provide fair and equitable access to debt-free medical supplies to poor and vulnerable communities; the post-COVID-19 recovery aid from multilateral institutions (e.g., IMF and World Bank) must continue without interest fees.
- Scale up support for developing countries to shift to renewable energy systems that will increase electricity access to impoverished communities, improve community resilience and the provision of health services.

2. RAISING AMBITION AND EMERGENCY WITHIN THE NATIONALLY-DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS AND BEYOND

The latest [Emissions Gap Report](#) warns that the current Paris Agreement (PA) commitments will reduce global temperature rise to 3.2°C by the end of the century. On the other hand, the latest science³ confirms that without immediate, consistent, and massive reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, the Paris Agreement's objective of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels will be impossible to reach. Urgent and ambitious climate action is no longer a choice. The richest 1% of the world's population accounted for double the share of the total emissions of the lowest 50% during the 1990–2015 period.⁴ As the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere continues to rise, historical polluters (i.e., industrialised countries) bear the greatest responsibility and have the greatest means to rapidly reduce emissions. Industrialised nations have a moral and legal responsibility (under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement) to go beyond global average efforts in reducing their emissions in light of their historical responsibility, and a duty to support developing nations to implement their own Nationally-Determined Contributions (NDCs). Nationally-Determined Contributions are commitments and efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change to keep the global average temperature rise to 1.5°C. These NDCs should include commitments to implement the whole of the Paris Agreement and rich countries must stop seeing these as mitigation measures only. Rich countries' contribution also requires details of domestic adaptation and support to developing countries in implementing their mitigation and adaptation measures outlined in their NDCs.

» SPECIFIC CALLS TO ALL GOVERNMENTS

- Countries must communicate new and updated NDCs as soon as possible before COP26.
- Every new NDC has to be based on the best available science and a proper national consultation process including civil society organisations.
- To keep global temperatures below 1.5°C, every country should ramp up its current national plans and actions to significantly reduce its emissions by 2030 guided by science and the principle of equity.
- Governments should also clearly indicate their long-term plans and strategies to achieve rapid emissions reduction and achieve zero emissions before 2040.

³ IPCC (2021). Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Cambridge University Press, <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/>.

⁴ OXFAM (2020). Confronting Carbon Inequality, <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/confronting-carbon-inequality-putting-climate-justice-at-the-heart-of-the-covid-621052/>.

3. LOSS & DAMAGE

The latest science⁵ indicates that the extreme weather events that we are now seeing are now irreversible. We have entered the Loss & Damage (L&D) era. Climate losses and damages are climate change impacts that have not been avoided by reducing our emissions or adapting to global temperature increases. L&D is a highly contested topic because it reflects the harsh realities of failed mitigation and adaptation action. The poorest countries, least responsible for this crisis, are already paying the price to help communities recover from climate impacts. The scale of these losses is huge and growing.⁶ We must also consider the irrevocable tragic loss of culture, habits and human life – which we cannot put a figure on, and should strengthen our resolve to act. Dealing with Loss & Damage effectively and ethically is about addressing these irreversible and inadaptable climate impacts right now, and it must be a third central response to climate change after mitigation and adaptation.

» SPECIFIC CALLS TO ALL GOVERNMENTS

Loss & Damage as an indicator of progress on delivering the Paris Agreement

- We need an outcome indicator to report on progress to deliver the Paris Agreement. At the moment, the only accepted indicator is reduction on greenhouse gas emissions. But with new evidence now available, we should measure success or failure based on human impacts.
- Having Loss & Damage as an indicator of progress on delivering the Paris Agreement would increase focus, attention and thus ambition on actions to not only accelerate adaptation but more importantly address Loss & Damage.
- Through this indicator, ensure that Loss & Damage data is included in countries national communications (such as in the Nationally-Determined Contributions (NDCs) and in submissions to the Global Stocktake).

Finance for Loss & Damage

- The Warsaw International Mechanism (or the WIM) for Loss & Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts should establish a new dedicated climate finance mechanism that is capable of mobilising at least US\$75Bn per year for Loss & Damage by 2023. This finance facility should be financed by using the Polluter Pays Principle and should be started by taxing the profits of fossil fuel companies and reversing perverse incentives in the form of fossil fuel subsidies.

Make Loss & Damage a standing item on the COP agenda

- Loss & Damage as an equal standing item on the COP agenda would allow L&D to be discussed on a par, alongside Mitigation and Adaptation. This would give real meaning to discussion of the topic at annual meetings of the COP, help recalibrate attention, and mobilise real action.
- This would also reinforce the need for Loss & Damage agreed to be developed as an indicator of progress on delivering the Paris Agreement.

4. JUST ENERGY TRANSITION

To achieve the 1.5°C goal by 2030, all fossil fuels use and subsidies must end immediately to allow a rapid and just transition to 100% renewable energy sources. Simultaneously, scaling up support for developing countries to transition or leapfrog to renewable and efficient energy systems and deliver universal access to energy will bring about transformative change. A comprehensive approach that is context-specific and initiates both economic and societal transformation processes involving multiple stakeholders will help us achieve a just and sustainable transition. Within this, a more socially inclusive, transparent, decentralised, participatory community-owned energy systems' approach that ensures universal access, ends energy poverty and social inequality in modern society, thereby, leaving no one behind, especially, for the poor and vulnerable communities is crucial.

» SPECIFIC CALLS TO ALL GOVERNMENTS

- To meet the 1.5°C goal by 2030, immediately end all new support for fossil fuels domestically including coal, oil, and gas and channel increased finance to towards 100% production and consumption of renewable energy.
- End all new public support for fossil fuels overseas; review and phase out all existing support for fossil fuel investments by the end of 2021. This must include investments in fossil fuels via financial intermediaries.
- Develop an independent and more meaningful metrics for assessing and reporting the energy access and poverty-reducing impacts of investments, including considering transition pathways to cooking with clean electricity and renewables.

⁵ IPCC (2021). Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Cambridge University Press, <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/>.

⁶ Climate and weather-related disasters surge five-fold over 50 years, but early warnings save lives. WMO report 2021, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/09/1098662>.

5. CLIMATE FINANCE

The next COP26 and the negotiation sessions leading towards it will have to deal with several long-term decisions regarding international climate finance – the financial support provided by wealthy nations to developing nations to support their respective climate actions. Not only will rich countries need to show how they will close the gap to the US\$ 100 billion goal, but they will also need to lay out their further commitment for the phase from 2021 to 2025 and start the process towards a new long-term financial support goal after 2025. Intensified by the urgently needed COVID-19 response plans, parties will need to enhance their work on the alignment of all financial flows towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development (Paris Agreement Art 2.1c) and at the same time react to the threat of a massive debt crisis. Finally, yet importantly there is still a need to address the financial support for Loss & Damage and balance Mitigation and Adaptation support.

» SPECIFIC CALLS TO ALL GOVERNMENTS

- Developed countries must demonstrate their progress in bridging the remaining finance gap as quickly as feasible to enhance their contribution above the US\$ 100 billion level until 2025, specifically achieving at least 50% of financial flows for adaptation and raising the share for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
- To enhance the transparency of climate finance flows, developed countries should use the Common Tabular Format provisions to include grant-equivalent reporting, reporting of mobilised climate finance at activity level while excluding non-concessional instruments, and supporting efforts to report on support provided, support received as well as support needed by developing countries.
- Align all financial flows with climate targets. Strong progress must be demonstrated to align overall financial flows with Paris Agreement Objective (2.1c), including pathways to stop finance for fossil fuels and related activities and implementation of fiscal policies to speed up just transition plans.
- Defining the post-2025 finance target must be based on existing global assessments of financial needs for climate action and inviting parties and observers to make submissions on the scope and format of the long-term finance goal, like quantitative sub-goals for adaptation, loss and damage finance, grants-based finance.
- The Green Climate fund (GCF) should provide direct climate finance access to small-scale climate adaptation and mitigation projects for communities on the ground where it is needed the most⁷.

6. CARBON MARKETS

The global degree of ambition of mitigation targets is currently very low; if the topic on carbon markets in Article 6 is left inadequately defined, agreeing on such market-based mechanisms may render progress on the Paris Agreement as a whole meaningless. It allows governments to purchase, sell, and transfer emissions to and from other countries while indirectly meeting their long-term emissions reduction targets without any trading limitation. Allowing this means that the burden to adapt to the dangerous climate impacts especially for many developing countries would increase, which could lead to further losses and damages.

» SPECIFIC CALLS TO ALL GOVERNMENTS

- Exclude land from Article 6. It is critical that the land sector be excluded from market mechanisms (Articles 6.2, 6.4) under the Paris Agreement because its integration threatens both the achievement of climate goals and the respect of human rights.
- Establish strong safeguards to ensure respect of human rights. Article 6 activities must respect, promote and consider human rights and not repeat past mistakes (Articles 6.2, 6.4, 6.8). Thus, adopt robust rights-based social and environmental safeguards to ensure that not only projects do not harm people and the environment but also ensure human dignity for all.
- Strong safeguards must be achieved by integrating the participation of civil society, local communities, and indigenous peoples (IPs), particularly women at the core of the mitigation projects' design and implementation by also observing the Indigenous Peoples' right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC).
- Establish a grievance mechanism governed by an independent body to contribute to the respect of local communities' and indigenous peoples' rights so that people impacted by Article 6 activities have an official mechanism to raise their concerns and for the harms suffered to be remedied.
- Establish the Article 6 supervisory body or bodies on strict governance principles, including transparency and accountability. Its members must be free from conflict of interests and must involve local communities, IPs, women and civil society groups.
- Establish a robust and transparent accounting and reporting system that will ensure the accuracy of national greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions accounting and prevent all types of double counting in order to ensure ambitious emission reductions and the Paris Agreement's environmental integrity.

⁷ See more details in CIDSE (2021) 'Improving civil society's limited access to the Green Climate Fund', <https://www.cidse.org/2021/04/28/improving-civil-societys-limited-access-to-the-green-climate-fund>.

7. CLIMATE AND AGRICULTURE

A deep transformation of agriculture and food systems is required to meet the long-term goal of 1.5°C and contribute to the full realisation of the right to food. With the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA) coming to an end, a COP decision is expected during COP26. At CIDSE, we strongly believe that agroecology and its principles – when firmly rooted in food sovereignty and climate justice – are the way to move away from a model that threatens present and future agricultural production and food security (biodiversity losses, soil degradation, and soil erosion). Together with Climate Action Network (CAN) Agriculture, we are hoping for a COP26 decision which would:

» SPECIFIC CALLS TO ALL GOVERNMENTS

- Include meaningful guidelines to inform climate action in agriculture, based on the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Climate Change and Land (IPCC SRCCL) and which could provide guidance to NDCs and climate finance.
- Identify a future topic for discussion from among those such as agroecology and gender (for instance, outcomes would then be translated into additional recommendations for future workshops).

8. GEO-ENGINEERING AND NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS (NBS)

The use of NbS (Nature-based Solutions) in global climate policy is gaining popularity because of the rising pressure to close the emissions gap arising from prolonged climate inaction. These solutions are commonly viewed as ways of using or working with nature to address climate mitigation, adaptation and sustainable development issues. Although NbS show promising theoretical potential towards achieving the 1.5°C goal, its definitional ambiguity may cause confusion, open the door to hijacking, and abuse by vested interest, which may render policy efforts ineffective⁸. Hidden behind this precarious confusion is a growing push to invest substantially in Negative Emissions Technologies (NETs) based on false growth assumptions, and the illusion that there is still a greater budget that allows the transfer of necessary action to the future, which is neither realistic nor desirable⁹. It also represents a good example of the means through which modern, and precariously structured economic systems are set to achieve financial returns.

We maintain that urgent transitions in our food and energy systems, supported by deep lifestyle and system changes, would significantly contribute to keeping warming below a 1.5°C increase above pre-industrial average global temperatures, without relying on risky and unproven Negative Emissions Technologies or geoengineering/BECCS.

» SPECIFIC CALLS TO ALL GOVERNMENTS

- Enhance emissions reduction targets and actions in line with the 2030 ambition target and reach zero emissions by 2040.
- Immediately end all fossil fuel use and new investments to ensure a shift to 100% renewable energy sources in order to meet the 1.5°C goal by 2030, without geo-engineered solutions such as bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS).
- Invest heavily in finance that promotes decentralised, affordable, and equitable solutions such as agroecology.
- Rapidly restore ecosystems and put in place stricter policies and measures to prevent deforestation and degradation, land clearance, and peatland draining while prioritising people and not markets by full engagement and consent of indigenous peoples and local communities and a gender responsible approach following the Gender Action Plan.

9. THE PARIS RULEBOOK

Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when acting to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality empowerment of women and intergenerational equity. Human rights violation happens as finance institutions and companies that implement the projects place profit over rights and community consent because of inadequate policies, or failure to implement the correct policies. Therefore, a rulebook without the consideration of human rights cannot provide guidelines for ensuring that the Paris framework is implemented fairly and effectively using robust monitoring and accounting processes. All mitigation, adaptation and Loss & Damage projects must respect human rights, ecosystems, and sacred sites.

⁸ See CLARA responds to 'net zero', <https://www.clara.earth/netzero>.

⁹ See more details in CIDSE. (2018). The Climate Urgency: Setting Sail For A New Paradigm, <https://www.cidse.org/2018/09/19/the-climate-urgency-setting-sail-for-a-new-paradigm/> and CLARA (2018) Missing Pathways To 1.5°C, <https://www.cidse.org/2018/10/15/report-missing-pathways-to-1-5-c-2/>.

» SPECIFIC CALLS TO ALL GOVERNMENTS

- Include human rights language and the right to Free Prior and Informed Consent (ILO 169) into the Paris Rulebook as well as into other related UN processes such as the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss & Damage.
- Ensure that there is a robust grievance mechanism in place for communities to access when rights violations occur. This mechanism should provide genuine remedy and justice for affected communities.
- The scope of the NDCs must reflect the holistic nature of the Paris Agreement and include information related not only to the scale of actions but also to how governments will guarantee that their actions will promote and respect human rights.
- Building on synergies with existing reporting obligations, the transparency framework should ensure that governments provide information on how their climate policies contribute to the promotion of both human rights and sustainable development in advance. In addition, information on the progress in implementation of the national policies linked to the NDCs as well as evaluation on the effects/impacts of the same should be included in order to allow a consistent tracking of the implementation of NDCs.
- The periodic assessment of collective ambition in the Global Stocktake (GST) should review the level of climate action and support through the lens of human rights obligations. It should also assess how climate responses have contributed to policy coherence and to the promotion of the rights and principles reaffirmed in the Paris Agreement.



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This policy briefing is available in English, French and Spanish at www.cidse.org

CIDSE is an international family of Catholic social justice organisations, working together to promote justice, harness the power of global solidarity and create transformational change to end poverty and inequalities. We do this by challenging systemic injustice and inequity as well as destruction of nature. We believe in a world where every human being has the right to live in dignity.

CONTACT:

Lydia Machaka, Climate Justice & Energy Officer – [machaka\(at\)cidse.org](mailto:machaka(at)cidse.org)
 CIDSE - Rue Stévin 16, B-1000 Brussels – T: +32 2 230 77 22 – www.cidse.org