

ECO

End the Genocide. End the illegal wars.

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Climate talks must not become a closed conversation

Something troubling is happening at the UN climate talks. The spaces through which civil society reaches the public, and throws light on what is happening are quietly being reduced.

For decades, civil society press conferences have helped journalists, observers and the wider public make sense of these highly technical talks. Livestreamed around the world, they are among the few places where developments are unpacked as they happen and governments can be questioned in public.

The UN climate process was built on the understanding that tackling climate change requires participation beyond governments. Civil society organisations, Indigenous Peoples, women, youth, trade unions and frontline communities have long been part of the process because climate

decisions go far beyond those sitting around the negotiating table.

These press conferences are not a favour granted by the Secretariat. They are instrumental in keeping the climate process visible, transparent and accountable.

Yet that space is shrinking.

Both here, at Bonn, and at COP30, CAN and other constituencies have seen long-standing access to daily press conferences reduced. - This is part of a broader trend that makes it harder for independent civil society networks, representing thousands of organisations and communities around the world, to communicate with journalists and the wider public.

Climate change is one of the world's most urgent challenges. The decisions made through this process shape energy systems, jobs, food security and the ability of

communities to cope with ever-worsening impacts of the climate crises.

Crucial discussions are taking place in Bonn right now on adaptation, climate finance, just transition and the transition away from fossil fuels. These decisions will influence whether communities can prepare for climate impacts, whether workers are supported as we transition, and whether countries receive the finance they have been promised. People have a right to know what is being decided in their name.

Public trust in governments and institutions is already under strain. The answer should be more transparency, more scrutiny and more public participation - not fewer opportunities for independent voices. The UNFCCC can fix this and reinstate these daily press conferences, starting at COP31.

COP30 President - We're blushing. Keep Going

Dear COP30 President,

ECO's little heart is beating with joy to hear that you not only read our letter but that it stayed on your mind. Our heart skipped a beat every time you and your team mentioned our demands in the to-do list we shared with you: socioeconomic development, energy access, equity, capacity to transition, addressing structural imbalances in the global financial architecture, outdated trade frameworks, recognition of diverse national circumstances, embedded in Just Transition principles, CBDR-RC, inclusivity....!

You really have been listening

to us Mr. President! Mostly. Please reconsider your support for unsavory things like carbon pricing, global carbon markets and de-risking mechanisms. It could ruin the friendship and the planet.

By the way, we now understand first hand why COP Presidencies love writing letters to us. ECO is enjoying this so much that we plan to write letters to the incoming COP31 Presidencies too. We want to remind them that Electrification is an important and indivisible pillar of TAFF, so they must wind up their own fossil fuel production too. Don't worry, we'll still write to you. We just feel that we also need to expand our relationship and start

providing to-do lists to them too.

And while we are at it, ECO will also write to the Parties. We don't want them thinking that we have forgotten them. We also have very clear to-do lists for them. Our long list should arrive in their mailboxes very soon, once you have completed the Global Framework for TAFF and that will form the basis for developing their Just and Equitable National Roadmaps. That is where the real work will need to be done and ECO is geared up for this. We know that there might be some not-so-polite letters to write. Your slightly demanding friend,
ECO

Sharm El-Sheikh it up for agriculture

Come on Parties, aren't you sick of the same tired dance? The Sharm El-Sheikh agriculture negotiations have been discussing the workshop on "systemic and holistic approaches to implementing climate action on agriculture, food systems and food security" from SB62 already and we're seeing the same sad moves from Parties. We know, we know - it's the end of week one, energy is flagging, our shoes are wet, but let's not let the party end on a bad song. Sheikh it up!

To start with, we've got artificial intelligence in agriculture. Really? The Robot? Come on, that's a clunky move. Replacing farmers with drones, data, remote-controlled tractors and AI systems which heat the planet while guzzling energy and precious water supplies will only deepen inequality, and it will not deliver climate action. ECO reminds Parties that a quarter of the world's population depends on agriculture. A better move would be to champion the approach which centres the experience of small-scale food producers, and Indigenous

Peoples: agroecology. It's an oldie, but a goodie.

Next, moonwalk 'climate-smart agriculture' right out of the text. It's not clearly defined, consolidates corporate agribusiness control on food systems and in the livestock sector, and disadvantages smallholder and pastoralist farmers. Unlike agroecology which is the most effective means of adaptation to climate change.

Relying on carbon markets and private finance is like doing The Worm to get out of financial responsibilities, and it's not a cool move. Throw in some new moves – end harmful subsidies, tax the profits of fossil fuel companies and lift the debt burden. Invest in agroecological approaches with grant based, public finance and direct access for smallholders farmers.

Maybe we've just got the weekend on our mind, but as we end week one, ECO urges Parties to Sheikh things up! Nobody puts agroecology in the corner.

Sustainable Forest Management? More like Sustainable Forest Myth

After much suspense, the COP30 Presidency presented an overview of its plans for halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030 under the Forest Roadmap this week.

ECO felt a few pangs of optimism when we saw some progressive steps to better understand and measure deforestation and forest degradation. So imagine our nervousness when Parties proposed "Sustainable Forest Management" and large-scale forest monocultures as solutions to forest loss and degradation.

Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) has no credibility.. If it is used as a benchmark for the supposed stewardship of natural forests, it will mask their destruction. So what's our problem with SFM? Sounds pretty sustainable, right? Well, the term "sustainable" here doesn't actually mean *ecologically* sustainable. Instead, it's referring to an industry-crafted focus on sustainable supply of wood.

SFM was deliberately designed by the forest industry, and adopted by

governments, to hide damage to forests. In reality, some of the worst damage to forests is done in the name of SFM. From the legal destruction of old growth boreal forests in Canada and the Earth's most carbon dense forests in Australia, to granting Big Bioenergy billions of dollars in low-carbon subsidies for its use of "sustainable" wood as fuel. Fittingly, SFM stands on a foundation of carbon neutrality and biodiversity benefit myths. In fact, logging under SFM halves average carbon stocks, removes habitat for wildlife and places forest ecosystems at risk.

When it comes to halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation, the genuine sustainable management is responsive to whether a forest is natural or a monoculture plantation. The challenge in natural forests is to retain their high ecological integrity, such as in primary & old growth forests, and recover ecological integrity in forests damaged by industrial logging practices. In planted forests, we need good management, including through reduced reliance on

pesticides and fertilisers, the protection and recovery of natural vegetation along streams, and connectivity for wildlife. SFM does not do any of this, and definitely does not halt forest degradation.

This isn't just an ecological problem - it's a problem of equity. SFM has become a catch-all term for logging practices in the Global North. If SFM occurs in a wealthy country, it is assumed to be sustainable and celebrated, but this leads to an unjust focus on deforestation in the Global South, and does nothing to secure the rights of Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent, and local communities.

SFM is a Trojan Horse for ecologically unsustainable logging and inequitable practices and ECO suggests it must be kept far far away from any 'Forest Roadmap'. Only when we can accurately define forest degradation, can we ensure that forest management is measured in a way that protects biodiversity, ensures high levels of ecosystem integrity, and builds resilience.

Green Precarity: Why is Article 6 Failing Workers?

As the Article 6.2 Ambition Dialogue convenes, we need to confront a critical governance failure: labor and workers are structurally omitted from the operational framework.

Carbon markets affect a range of human rights, including those of Indigenous Peoples, people of African Descent, and local and land-dependent communities. These markets are also production systems built on the backs of real people, with massive consequences for labor rights.

Carbon markets cannot exist without the workers who sustain them. Who are the workers, you ask? They are the forest rangers, smallholder farmers, waste workers, and renewable energy technicians...

From project development and land clearing, to technical operations and community monitoring, workers underpin every phase of carbon market activities. Yet, they remain invisible and are often locked out of decision-making, including on Article 6. Research shows that carbon market systems overlap with informal sectors and foster precarious subcontracting, wage suppression, and worker misclassification that bypasses full labor protections.

The current market model reduces workers to low-cost inputs within global value chains, rather than recognizing them as vital stakeholders and rightsholders. Carbon markets must be bound by enforceable obligations to uphold international labor standards

and human rights. Without establishing clear standards and decent work, social dialogue with workers and their representative organizations, and enforceable access to remedy, carbon markets will institutionalize a model of "green precarity" by extracting global carbon assets through the systemic exploitation of an unprotected workforce.

As Parties consider cooperative approaches under Article 6.2, we have to ask: *how much longer can we pretend a transition is "just" while treating the people who are building it as disposable?* A truly just transition ensures that the people building the economy are legally protected, equitably compensated, and valued more than the capital that finances it.