



DECOLONIZE — TO — DECARBONIZE

Our Call to Action
for Climate Justice
at COP28



What is the UNFCCC?

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is a global treaty signed by 166 nations at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and came into force in 1994. It has the overarching goal of preventing dangerous climate change in such a way as 'to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner'.

The UNFCCC does not have any specific national or international targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It does, however, contain key principles that establish a framework and a process for agreeing on specific actions.

The Convention established the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities" (CBDR-RC), which recognized that countries varied in their contributions to climate change as well as in their capacities to address its impacts and mitigate emissions. This made a distinction regarding countries' obligations under the Convention, with the Convention committing developed countries to assist developing countries' climate action.

What is COP?

Member States of the UNFCCC, or "Parties to the Convention", meet annually during the Conference of Parties (COP)—the supreme decision-making body of the Convention. The COP undertakes the process of reviewing the implementation of the Convention and taking decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention.

In addition to governments, COPs can be attended by representatives from UN agencies, civil society, academia, media, and the private sector. These groups are called "observers". Observers have no official role in negotiations but many seek to influence them - for better or worse. While the governmental negotiations take place, observers organise and attend events and other informal meetings.

While the COP is a key date in the political calendar, formal and informal discussions surrounding it kick off prior to the dates of the COP. The negotiations that form the basis of the decisions at the conference normally take place months ahead of

the annual meetings. Inter-session meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies (SBs) usually take place at the UNFCCC headquarters in Bonn, where many of the technical decisions are negotiated and prepared for adoption. The COP then provides the space to formalise the outcomes of these discussions.

What happened at previous climate talks? What is at stake at COP28?

Fossil Fuel Phaseout - The [COP27 agreement](#) covering fossil fuels did not deviate from what came out of COP26. Rather than being strengthened to phase out fossil fuels as some countries and civil society have pushed for, the COP27 text only echoed "efforts towards the phasedown of unabated coal power and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies". It also failed to encompass all types of fossil fuels including oil and gas and all types of fossil fuel subsidies despite proposals from developing country Parties.

Developed countries also proposed "special responsibilities" for "major emitters," such as India and China, to scale up their mitigation efforts at the Mitigation Work Programme (MWP) negotiations. This would dilute the principles of equity and CBDR-RC that obligate historic polluters like the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), and the European Union (EU) states to take the lead in reducing emissions. In the end, the MWP text followed the US' suggestion to not prescribe reduction targets, due to the "nationally determined" nature of countries' climate action.

Looking ahead to COP28, the European Union is expected to call for a phase-out of "unabated" fossil fuels at COP28. This would leave a window for countries to keep burning coal, gas and oil if they use technofixes to "abate" or capture the resulting emissions.

False/Market-Based Solutions - Rather than fulfil their obligations and cut down emissions, developed countries are shifting the burden of mitigating climate change to developing countries. At COP27, they aggressively pushed for false or market-based solutions. Talks were hounded with discussions on carbon markets, removals, geo-engineering, technofixes and nature-based 'solutions', among others. They are reputedly meant to address the crisis, but some say otherwise.

Apart from being unscientific or too resource-intensive to deploy at the scale and pace required, these 'solutions' are mere ploys to

continue burning fossil fuels and profit off of the climate crisis. Worse, these result in what some would refer to as “green grabbing” or “green colonialism” since they historically led to restrictions on people's access to rights, services, and natural resources, including labour rights, healthcare, education, and the Indigenous Peoples' rights to free, prior, and informed consent.

In particular, negotiations on the global carbon market rules under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement (PA) was a major sticking point at COP27. This involves cooperative approaches to cutting emissions, primarily via carbon trading—the practice of buying and selling the right to produce carbon emissions through a carbon market. This faced pushback from civil society groups, as the lack of safeguards and criteria to consider impacts, meant the market risked opening the door to corporate greenwashing. An Article 6 Rulebook is set to be tackled at COP28.

Just Transition - At COP27, Parties establish a just transition work programme (JTWP) on the pathways to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. Meanwhile, meetings at SB58 focused on matters that will kickstart the work programme, including its objectives, scope, and modalities, among others.

Developing countries assert that a just transition amounts to creating green jobs, providing social protection, and ensuring that developed countries lead the transition. On the other hand, developed countries pushed for a narrower definition of a “Just Transition,” rejecting notions that international cooperation needs to be part of the JTWP. In simpler terms, they are not willing to provide the necessary financial and technical support that developing countries need to implement their transition pathways.

In a dialogue with youth leaders, the COP28 President said he envisions the target for renewables to triple this year. However, some groups cautioned that this may go down the same path of colonial appropriation of developing countries' resources to feed into developed countries' energy transition needs.

Climate Finance - At COP27, the US and other developed countries were unwilling to commit to higher figures when it came to deliberating the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG), which will supersede the 100 billion USD target that was arbitrarily set in 2009. They argued for expanding the climate finance contributor base by including “high-income” countries. They also propose leveraging private finance through multilateral development banks. In simpler terms, they are not willing to provide their fair share of climate finance. Developing countries also caution that the majority of MDB climate finance is delivered as loans, which may put them at further risk. High-level technical dialogues on the NCQG will happen at COP28.

The other area of climate finance that requires close attention is the Global Goal on Adaptation. The Goal stems from the issue that the already scant funds primarily flowed towards mitigation measures, to the detriment of adaptation. A two-year work programme was established at COP26 to transform the Goal into tangible actions. It will be ratified at COP28 and will be key to reducing the vulnerability of developing countries to climate disasters.

Loss and Damage - At COP27, governments finally agreed to establish a specific fund for climate change-induced loss and damage, the Loss and Damage Fund (LDF). The decision is an important initial step in bringing justice to billions of people, particularly in the global South, who are enduring extreme droughts, tropical cyclones, floods, and sea level rise. A Transitional Committee (TC) was established and was tasked with drafting recommendations on the operationalisation of the new funding arrangements and LDF. In TC meetings, the United States has put forth a contentious proposal suggesting that the LDF be placed under the auspices of the World Bank. However, the Bank faces raps for delivering debt-creating instruments accompanied by policy prescriptions that perpetuate the economic subjugation of developing countries.

Meanwhile, at SB58, negotiations on the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage (SNLD), a body assigned to catalyse technical support for vulnerable countries facing loss and damage, revolved around what agency is best suited to host the network. Parties debated between two options: the Office for Project Services in the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR/UNOPS) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). In the end, Parties could not agree on a host for the network.

COP28 will be the final avenue for Parties to revisit and negotiate their positions on loss and damage and come to a conclusion.

Civic Spaces - COP27 had unique risk implications for civil society participation compared to previous COPs. Apart from pre-departure restrictions, Sharm el-Sheikh was heavily militarised. Actions of accredited civil society at COP27 were restricted to the blue and green zones within the official UN venue.

Meanwhile, corporate lobbyists freely roamed to derail meaningful climate action. COP27 was attended by more than 600 lobbyists from the oil and gas industries—more than any country delegation, with the exception of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

It is expected that COP28 will have the same conditions that undercut civil society participation in COP27. The UAE, the COP28 host, has restrictive laws against freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. It also has a dismal human rights record. Moreover, Sultan Al Jaber, a fossil fuel executive, will sit as COP28 President. His designation serves as a glaring reminder of how corporations continue to crowd out climate talk, to the detriment of meaningful dialogue with frontline communities and broader civil society.

What is 'Just Transition'?

The concept of 'Just Transition' emerged from the trade union movement. It refers to ensuring justice for workers displaced in the transition from fossil-fuel energy to renewable energy systems. This is cognizant of the fact that shifting away from industries and practices that harm the environment can have significant social and economic consequences, particularly for vulnerable communities and workers in those industries.

A 'Just Transition' makes certain that the burdens and benefits of the energy transition must be distributed fairly. Thus, it includes demands from workers to prevent job losses and economic dislocation through the guarantee of jobs in the renewable energy sector, social protection for affected communities, retraining, and social dialogue.

More recently, workers and civil society are demanding more transformative approaches to transitions, not just a mere shift to sectors premised on the same development model that global North

countries and foreign corporations are putting forward. This seeks to interrogate the connections between fossil fuels and the wider economy and address the asymmetric power relations within. This amounts to dismantling the corporate-driven and colonial framework of development that is based on unabated economic growth and technological hyperfixation. These demands look not just at the individual workers impacted but at ways to transition to a future that dignifies work and creates socialised energy, rooted in the equitable distribution of resources.

What is 'Decolonize to Decarbonize'?

'Decolonize to Decarbonize' or D2D is a campaign call that aims to bring to attention how imperialist countries in the global North and their corporations are using the climate crisis to co-opt peoples' demands to transition away from fossil fuels to further colonise global South frontiers for resource grabbing and exploitation.

Centred around the theme "Unchaining the Climate Agenda from Corporate Control", D2D is a reclaiming of the narrative on energy transition. It underscores grassroots resistance against fossil fuel companies, corporate-driven renewable energy projects, and their financial backers, while also addressing rights abuses against local communities and environmental defenders. D2D reflects the efforts of grassroots communities in developing initiatives and alternative strategies that prioritise their well-being and rights amidst the multifaceted impacts of the climate crisis.



What are our demands at COP28?

Phase out all forms of fossil fuels

At COP27, governments, businesses, and other stakeholders presented a gamut of pledges, including ones to reduce emissions, speed up the phase-out of coal, and stop international funding for fossil fuels, among others. But Parties at COP must do more to end their support for all forms of fossil fuels, not just coal.

Decarbonising economies entails the Parties committing to a global moratorium on new oil and gas projects and establishing a definite timeline to equitably phase out these industries. This includes

clamping down on subsidies, tax breaks, and financial incentives for the fossil fuel industry. Furthermore, divesting from fossil fuels must translate to ending the imposition of policy prescriptions that are hinged on market liberalisation, deregulation, and privatisation, which have disastrous impacts on communities and reinforce the power of global elites and corporations.

No to false 'solutions' to climate change

Market-based mechanisms cannot be presented as solutions to the climate crisis since markets in the current system are primarily driven by the private appropriation of profits and not the real needs of society or the planet. Anchored on continuous pollution, these technologies and mechanisms will inexorably lead to further resource depletion, ecological breakdown, social inequality and crisis. Instead, global North countries and corporations must fulfil their obligations by taking the lead in cutting their emissions at source.

Rights-based and community-initiated climate responses offer viable alternative solutions to the climate crisis. In contrast to the false and market-based 'solutions' peddled by corporations, grassroots initiatives take into account their communities' struggles, experiences, and indigenous knowledge. These solutions include the promotion of agroecological farming systems and food sovereignty, community conservation of biodiverse ecosystems, and securing land and tenure rights for Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Uphold a people-led energy transition

It is imperative to move away from the neocolonial and corporate approach to shifting to renewable energy, one that privileges profit accumulation over the welfare of the people. Disentangling from this model of energy transition is necessary if countries are to have a chance of transitioning to renewable energy in a just and equitable manner.

Recognising the pivotal role of the energy sector to development, it should be publicly-owned, wherein the people are allowed to exercise democratic control over the overhauling of existing energy systems based on their contexts, priorities, and development needs. By decentralising energy systems, countries and communities have more leverage to rationally manage energy production and distribution, giving thorough consideration to

the use and allocation of resources and overall environmental impact, with a view to ensure long-term economic sustainability.

Global North countries must fulfil their financial obligations

Countries with stronger economies, more fiscal space, and a greater historical responsibility for climate change must also take the lead in contributing a sizable portion of the necessary finance for developing countries' transition and development costs. Global North countries should go beyond their existing commitments and significantly increase their financial contributions that come with ambitious and concrete timelines of delivery, not repackage existing finance flows and aid.

Funding mechanisms and facilities must channel finance in the form of grants as compensatory funding and not as loans or for-profit investments that drive developing countries further into crisis. Thus, the LDF should be operationalised to channel funding efficiently and effectively, with a focus on direct support for vulnerable communities. The World Bank is not best suited to do this as it has a track record of funding dirty energy projects and perpetuating cycles of dependency and debt in the global South.

In tandem with financial contributions, the global North should also facilitate the transfer of technologies to developing countries. This transfer of knowledge and technology is essential for accelerating the transition to a low-carbon economy and ensuring that all countries can benefit from the advancements in renewable energy and sustainable practices.

Polluters out, People in

The dynamics within international climate policy spaces remain fundamentally colonial, where global North countries and corporations hold the majority of the influence, often dictating terms that align with their economic and political interests. This creates a cycle of disempowerment that hinders the meaningful participation of frontline communities in shaping climate policies that will primarily affect them.

Addressing these entails deconstructing the existing power structures that favour global North countries and corporations. In practical terms, this amounts to institutionalising measures that will withhold the ability of corporations to access and influence

climate policymaking and governance. More importantly, this means redefining decision-making processes to ensure that the voices of marginalised communities, particularly those in the global South, are not only heard but are central to shaping policies.

Why do we need to engage in climate negotiations?

There is a growing sense that global North countries are crowding out other voices to use the UNFCCC as their rubber stamp to orient policies towards redirecting the profit motive away from discredited polluting industries to false 'solutions' and more acceptable 'green' energy systems and technologies. This allows them to evade historical responsibility, while ensuring a steady flow of resources from global South neocolonies for their renewable energy corporations.

To this end, civil society organisations and activists must continue to assert their central role in shaping the energy transition agenda. While multilateral climate negotiations like the COP are not legally binding, they function as crucial political moments for communities to draw attention to the impacts of climate change and the colonial appropriation of the South's resources, and corporate control over technologies and knowledge. They provide a

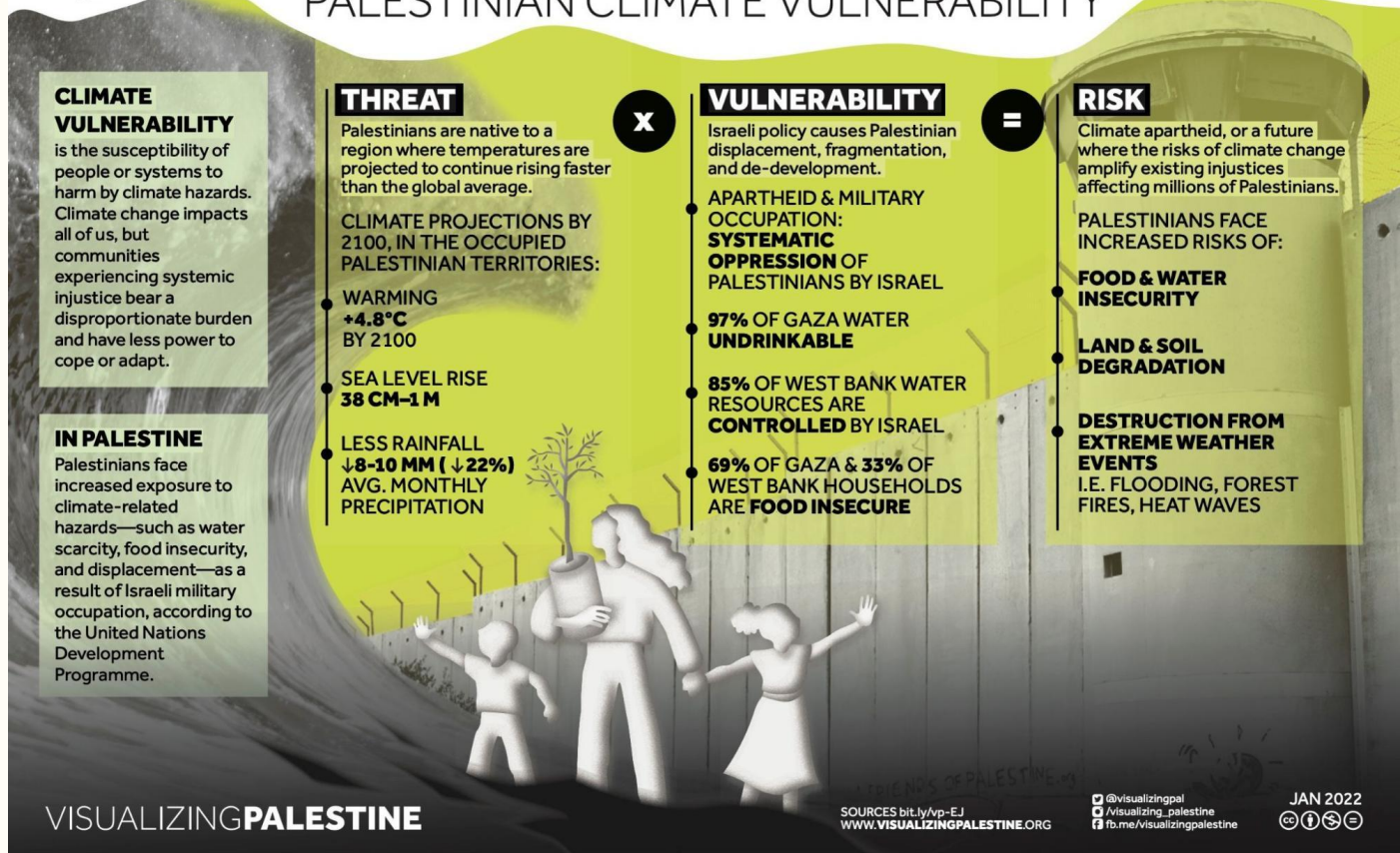
platform to hold countries and corporations in the global North accountable, to influence and drive global ambitions, and to demand reparations for the harms inflicted by historic and enduring forms of exploitation.

COP28 will be happening against the background of the bombardment and siege of the Gaza Strip by Israeli occupying forces. Since October 7, nearly 1.5 million people have been displaced across the Gaza Strip. More than ten thousand Palestinians, half of whom are children, have been killed by the indiscriminate bombing of civilian neighbourhoods, hospitals, schools, mosques, churches, and refugee camps in violation of International Humanitarian Law. Water, electricity, telecommunication and other critical facilities and infrastructure are being destroyed by Israeli bombs with the intention to collectively punish the Palestinians, and ethnically cleanse Gaza Strip.

The siege and apartheid imposed on Gaza and the West Bank only worsens and intensifies the climate crisis Palestinians endure, making them more vulnerable to climate change.

BETWEEN A RISING TIDE & APARTHEID

PALESTINIAN CLIMATE VULNERABILITY



Israel robs Palestinians the right to build climate resilience by appropriating Palestinian land, water, and other vital natural resources. To justify their violent colonialism, Israel employs greenwashing using environmental rhetoric. In January 2022, the state-supported Jewish National Fund (JNF) destroyed Palestinian Bedouin farmland and violently arrested Palestinian families and children, all for a “forestation” project aimed at removing the Indigenous Palestinian people.

The JNF relies on racist, colonial tropes of the Israeli state “making the desert bloom,” which has been one of the ways Israel has justified its colonialism and land theft.

As movements fighting for climate and social justice, we cannot afford to ignore the cry for freedom and justice of the Palestinians. The cruel 16-year Israeli blockade on the Gaza Strip has resulted in deteriorating living conditions for its 2.3 million population. Ninety-seven percent of Gaza's water is undrinkable and less than 16 percent of materials needed to develop sanitation infrastructure are allowed in. Gazans are on the frontlines of the climate crisis, as their condition is aggravated by loss of land due to rising sea levels and the saltwater contamination of their aquifer.

The continued support of the United States for Israel's settler-colonialism in Palestine reveals the US' preference to war and militarism over the protection of human life and climate. Despite being the largest historical emitter of greenhouse gases, the United States continues to allocate more and more funds to military expenditures, which adds to global emissions while taking away resources from climate solutions.

The climate crisis is the outcome of years of colonial occupation, imperialism, and apartheid: the same oppressive systems tying the Palestinians down. As social and climate justice movements, we know that sustainability and climate justice cannot be built on occupied land.

How can we engage and take action?

Here are some opportunities you can take:

Post a photo of your call!

Take a photo of yourself with a placard that best reflects your local context (🌟 you can be creative! 🤖). You may use this [template](#) to print out your calls.

You may also draw inspiration from the following suggested messages written on a [pre-made placard](#):

- End Fossil Fuels NOW!
- Unchain the energy transition from corporate control!
- Decolonize Energy Transition!
- Reclaim Transformation for the People!
- Fight Climate Imperialism!
- No to False ‘Solutions’!
- Peoples’ Power Not Corporate Power!
- Pay Up for Loss and Damage!
- World Bank Out of Loss and Damage Fund!
- US, Hands Off the Loss and Damage Fund!
- No Climate Justice on Occupied Land!
- Defend the Defenders! Activists not Terrorists!

Post your photo at your social media page during the Days of Action (November 23, 2023 and December 9, 2023) and tag IBON International Climate Justice Program!

Upload your pictures and videos to this [drive](#), so we can help amplify it.

Amplify your calls!

Algorithms don't love copy-and-paste captions or tweets these days, so feel free to draft a content that works best for you. You may draw inspiration from the following:

- 🌍 Break free from corporate shackles! Let's unchain the energy transition and put the power back where it belongs - in the hands of the people! #Decolonize2Decarbonize #ClimateJustice #COP28
- It's time to rewrite the narrative. 📜 A just transition to renewable energy systems means confronting neocolonialism, that has kept the global South dependent on fossil fuels. 🌍 #Decolonize2Decarbonize #ClimateJustice #COP28
- ⚡ We must fight for genuine climate action and resist false ‘solutions’ that keep the

fossil fuel business longer and appropriate the land, water, and resources of the global South. 🌍🗑️ #Decolonize2Decarbonize #ClimateJustice #COP28

- 🇺🇸 Northern countries are perverting the energy transition so they can continue to profit over the plunder of the global South's resources. 🌿 We demand a just and equitable energy transition! #Decolonize2Decarbonize #ClimateJustice #COP28
- 🌍💔 No to false climate 'solutions'! 🚫 We reject greenwashing and demand real solutions to the climate crisis. ✨ #Decolonize2Decarbonize #ClimateJustice #COP28

If you will use the sample posts, we recommend you paraphrase or customise them to fit your local context and reflect your calls, since an original formulation works better.

📹 Record a video!

There will be an **online speak-out on November 23** to draw attention to the impacts of corporate capture of energy transition in different communities. We encourage you to record a short video sharing your local campaigns guided by these questions:

- State your name and affiliation
- How does a corporate energy transition manifest in your communities or in the communities you work with? What are some of the impacts on people and their environment?
- How do you picture an equitable and just energy transition?

Please keep your video concise—no more than 3 minutes, ideally. Afterwards, upload the file to this [drive](#) or send it to jbongon@iboninternational.org before November 23. We will broadcast your video during the online speak-out.

🗣️ Hold an action!

Actions can take many forms: art installations, marches, protests, strikes, occupations, forums, or gatherings.

On **December 9**, we are organising **actions against the corporate capture of the energy transition**. It will be a good opportunity to demand accountability from the global North for plundering the resources of the global South, linking it with your local

campaigns against fossil fuels and false 'solutions'.

If you're planning to conduct a localised action, we encourage you to coordinate with us by sending us the following details ahead of your planned action:

- Time and Location (be as specific as possible)
- The conduct—is it a public or discrete action? Does it have a short program? Is there someone on site for media interviews?
- Contact details of point person for coordination and possible media coverage (mobile number, email)

You may print and use the sample placards above for your actions. Contact us at jbongon@iboninternational.org or via WhatsApp (+639065430185) if you need help coming up with or organising an action.

👉 Useful hashtags you can use when engaging via social media:

We encourage everyone to mobilise your networks to post on their social media accounts using the hashtag **#Decolonize2Decarbonize**. This can be paired alongside other hashtags used around COP28 such as **#COP28**, and other secondary hashtags such as **#ClimateJustice**.

👉 Don't forget to tag us in your social media posts so we can help amplify!

Facebook - @IBON International Climate Justice Program

Twitter - @IBONIntlClimate

Instagram - @IBONInternational

📅 Key Dates to take part in:

- November 23, 2022 - Online Speakout Against Corporate Capture of Energy Transition
- December 5, 2023 - Global Day of Action against the Corporatisation of the Climate Agenda (Dubai, COP28 Blue Zone)
- December 9, 2023 - Global Day of Action for Climate Justice (Dubai, COP28 Blue Zone)
- December 9 - Day of Action Against Corporate Capture of the Energy Transition

(Global)

- December 10, 2023 - IBON International-led side event on the Loss and Damage Fund (Dubai, COP28 Blue Zone)
- December 10, 2023 - Day of Action for Human Rights and Climate Change (Dubai, COP28 Blue Zone)
- January - Post-COP28 Forum (TBA)

 **Some materials for further reading:**

- Publication: [Trajectories of Climate Justice](#)
- Publication: [Confronting the Climate Crisis: People-powered Climate Actions from the Global South](#)
- Publication: [Climate Justice Advocacy Toolkit](#)
- Publication: [Lessons from COP27](#)
- Article: [A perilous precedent: Drawbacks at SB58](#)
- Article: [Notes from the Frontlines: Reflections on COP27 and the Way Forward to COP28](#)
- Video: [Navigating the UNFCCC and Climate Politics](#)
- Video: [MDBs in Climate Finance: Boon or Bane?](#)
- Video: [Corporatization of Energy Transition](#)