



# FOSSIL FUEL NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

## HOW A FOSSIL FUEL TREATY WILL ACCELERATE THE GOALS OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT

**It's taken almost 30 years for climate negotiations to name the biggest cause of climate change – fossil fuels.** There is still a huge challenge to get global consensus on phase out language at COP. While acknowledging there are different national contexts and needs – we cannot successfully tackle climate change by **setting emissions goals while fueling the problem for years to come through new oil, gas, and coal projects.** We need novel approaches to help countries to phase out fossil fuels now.

Climate science and economic trends show that fossil fuels don't fit our future, and renewables can provide energy security worldwide. **The transition is underway and first mover countries will reap the long term economic, social, and environmental benefits.** Indeed – as research shows, expanding fossil fuels is actually a path to “undermine almost every element of development – increasing risks of stranded assets, expensive energy, encouraging foreign ownership, creating fewer jobs and harming health and livelihoods”. Yet, new fossil fuel development is underway at pace, with planned production **110% higher than would be consistent with limiting warming to 1.5 degrees.**

Momentum is building towards a new mechanism to complement the Paris Agreement, build intergovernmental cooperation and future-proof our policies. **Governments must negotiate a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty that manages the fossil fuel phase out so it is fast, fair and financed.**

### THE UNFCCC IS NOT SET UP TO DELIVER THE FOSSIL FUEL PHASE OUT

Language around fossil fuel phase out is expected at COP28, but in the challenge to get consensus, it is anticipated to be with loopholes. A phase out is unlikely to be negotiated there, because:

#### *The Paris Agreement is crucial, but has some key gaps*

The UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement have set the threshold for successfully combating climate change through the 1.5C goal, ratcheting ambition and tracking success. They play a critical role in climate governance, but alone are not sufficient to tackle fossil fuel production, because:

- **No relevant text** – Paris doesn't mention the words 'coal', 'oil' or 'gas' once, even though they are responsible for 86% of CO2 emissions in the past decade (IPCC, 6th Assessment).
- **COP commitments are non-binding on their own** – a mention of a fossil fuel phase out in the outcome text will indeed be an important political signal. But we need governments to stop expanding the problem, and negotiate a global Just Transition plan that provides a framework for phasing out fossil fuels fast and fairly. This won't happen in the UNFCCC due to the consensus model, and that is why we need a Treaty as a complementary mechanism.
- **Lack of equity** – an equitable fossil fuel phase out cannot be negotiated through NDCs. There is a need to assess the different rates at which countries can transition based on fair shares, historical emissions, economic capacity and dependence on fossil fuel production.
- **Focussed on emissions and not production** – limiting emissions is fundamental, but only half of the problem. We cannot rely on demand reduction alone while the fossil fuel industry establishes new extraction projects that threaten to undermine all the progress made under Paris. We must 'cut with both arms of the scissors' and address fossil fuel supply too.

## *There are challenges with the UNFCCC process*

- **Consensus model** – consensus based decision-making leads to ‘lowest common denominator’ outcomes that all nation-states can agree to. Most fossil fuel producers won’t negotiate science-aligned phase out dates at a COP in the near future.
- **Industry influence** – at recent COPs, the largest delegation by far has been the collective number of fossil fuel lobbyists who have unduly and unfairly influenced the negotiations.
- **Unproven and unreliable technologies** – such as Carbon Capture and Storage, continue to be pushed through the UNFCCC process. As the Global Stocktake synthesis report outlines – we can not rely on these unproven technologies to keep us within 1.5 C by 2030.

## **A NEW TREATY CAN MOVE FASTER THAN THE UNFCCC**

Climate agreements must reflect the latest science by acknowledging the need to phase out all fossil fuels, constrain fossil fuel production and not rely on watered down language like “unabated” and “inefficient”. These create loopholes for public money to keep going to coal, oil and gas projects. It’s taken almost 30 years – 27 COPs – for the UNFCCC to manage a weak mention of fossil fuels. The UNFCCC will continue to play a crucial role in climate governance, but to truly address the fossil fuel challenge a complementary agreement is needed. A negotiating mandate for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty could be secured in the near future.

COPs 26 and 27 saw the fossil fuels debate get stuck with developing countries feeling under pressure to phase out fossil fuel development pathways while others maintain an inequitable dependence on fossil fuels. Simply insisting on a fossil fuel phase-out, or phase-in of renewables without considering equity, and the financial and technological support necessary to transition or avoid fossil fuels altogether, will get us nowhere. A treaty will be a binding global plan – driven by countries, supported by civil society, science and business – to phase out fossil fuels fast, fair and forever.

## **HOW DO WE KNOW A FOSSIL FUEL NON PROLIFERATION TREATY IS POSSIBLE?**



**It’s been done before:** e.g. in Nuclear Disarmament, Landmines Ban, Tobacco and Ozone Depleting substances – and a treaty negotiation is underway in Plastics. History shows us that treaties work.



**Countries are endorsing:** A growing bloc of 8 nations – Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Antigua and Barbuda, Fiji, Niue, the Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Tonga – are calling for a global coalition to negotiate a Fossil Fuel Treaty. Many more have expressed interest in discussing the possibilities of a treaty.



**The bloc is backed by thousands:** Scientists, Nobel laureates, organizations and institutions including the European Parliament, World Health Organisation and almost 100 cities and subnational governments, including the State of California. Other governments must now join them to build the core group of countries required to secure a negotiating mandate for a new Treaty.

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For more information contact

**Gillian Cooper** | Political Director at

***[Gillian@fossilfueltreaty.org](mailto:Gillian@fossilfueltreaty.org)***; +447776375919



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