



SHE Changes Climate: COP28 closing statement for immediate release

Major decision taken at COP28 to transition away from fossil fuels by 2030 but more to be done to accelerate implementation and improve gender balance

13 December 2023 | Dubai, UAE: SHE Changes Climate acknowledges a major agreement as per the decision adopted today at COP28 in Dubai to transition away from fossil fuels in this critical decade. Yet we continue to call for a more inclusive process, both at global level and country level. Women leaders are at the forefront of climate diplomacy, but are yet to be recognised fully. Women must also be at the heart of design and implementation of the just energy transition pathways at the country level. Inclusion and diversity are essential to design and implement these pathways to make sure no one is left behind.

For two weeks, women leaders, negotiators and civil society leaders have gathered in a strongly united global movement to address the climate emergency and the need for the immediate phase-out of fossil fuels as a crucial step to limit global warming to a 1.5 degree temperature increase. This is also the result of outstanding female leadership and an unprecedented level of mobilization for fast-tracking the energy transition, slashing emissions by 2030 and co-creating a fossil-free energy future for all.

The [Unite For Climate Solutions Summit](#), which was convened by SHE Changes Climate and Project Dandelion on 21 November, featured a closing dialogue between Mary Robinson and COP28 President H.E. Sultan Al Jaber, and shed light on the crucial need to address the fossil fuel issue in line with climate science. This information has been widely broadcasted by the media, emphasized by women and climate organizations and backed by climate scientists in a strong and united call for greater climate ambition. The UNFCCC has taken it into account, and for the first time in 28 years, COP has focused on fossil fuels.

There is no debate that we still need to move faster to the total phase out of fossil fuels that is clear and complete. In particular, there are several loopholes that still need to be addressed, including the run-away false solution of carbon capture and storage. It is also urgent to stop building new coal-power plants, hence going further than phasing down unabated coal.

Women leaders must now be at the forefront of the just energy transition to ensure clean energy access for all and scaled up financial resources at country level. And so while we acknowledge the inclusion of gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity in the Global Stock Take decision, as well as in the Just Transition Pathways decision, the text ultimately falls short. It is now even more

urgent to move much faster on the implementation of the Paris Agreement, and make sure the energy transition pathways are developed through an inclusive and participatory process at country level.

We welcome the decision to implement “inclusive and participatory approaches to just transitions that leave no one behind” but stress that inclusive, open multi stakeholder dialogues are essential to emerge with a truly systemic transformation of society.

We are further pleased to announce that the Netherlands, Uganda, and Norway have joined the coalition of gender champions during this COP, following the example of the IFRC and other Non-State Actors that have endorsed the [inclusion and diversity principles](#).

SHE Changes Climate is planning to strengthen its presence and action on the ground in key countries, to accelerate the energy transition and make sure women are forefront and center in this transition.

We also take note of the new financial goals and pledges that have been put on the table at COP, including the adaptation needs of USD 215-387 billion annually up to 2030, and USD 4.3 trillion per year needs to be invested in clean energy up until 2030, increasing thereafter to USD 5 trillion per year up until 2050, to be able to reach net zero emissions by 2050. We must now ensure that the funding gets to the people and communities that need it the most at the country and local levels especially in the most vulnerable countries.

COP 28 falls short of the need for recognizing the pioneering work of women leaders and there is still an urgent need to make the UNFCCC COP process more inclusive.

Our disappointment extends to the way the COP28 closing plenary was handled by H.E. Sultan Al Jaber. We believe that H.E. Hana Al Hashimi and H.E. Razan Al Mubarak have worked both tirelessly and diligently in the preceding months in preparation, and yet no credit or visibility has been given to them.

We also regret that H.E. Sultan Al Jaber did not fully acknowledge the statement made by Anne Rasmussen, Samoa’s Lead Delegate and spokesperson for Small Island Nations. The perspective of women and island nations need to be held at the forefront of decision making. How to build a more inclusive negotiating process needs continued commitment. Our belief is that the methodology of more inclusive and authentic “circles of trust” could greatly improve the negotiation process.

As a growing women-led movement for climate justice, SHE Changes Climate will continue to unite and act for greater climate ambition and action beyond COP28, in the lead-up to COP29 in Azerbaijan and COP30 in Brazil.

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Further comments and initial reactions:

*"The COP 28 agreement marks a cautious stride forward, yet also reveals loopholes in its intent for implementation. **Climate finance commitments and pledges have been considerably increased but we must make sure that financial resources do trickle down to the people who need it the most. The onus now lies heavily on national governments to translate this into action. For nations like India, foreseeing the high risks of fossil fuel phase-out, this presents an opportunity to champion a just transition, and therefore the pivotal role of women in decision making and leadership is essential.***

Safeguarding the rights of the Indigenous people, the most vulnerable, women, and youth should be clearly and specifically committed in the text. – Mamta Borgoyary, SHE Changes Climate Co-Director

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"This is a break-through agreement. In nearly 30 years of climate negotiations, I had never seen such a massive mobilization for the phase out of fossil fuels. The unanimous decision to transition away from fossil fuels in this critical decade is definitely a step in the right direction and a strong political signal to the world. Women leaders from all five continents have played a major role to make this happen, in an unprecedented united call to phase out fossil fuels and excellent diplomatic coordination on the ground at COP28. We still need to go further and move quickly to accelerate action at the country level to ensure a just energy transition for all, leaving no one behind, with women at the forefront of this transition.

*I also wish that more visibility and political credit had been given to the outstanding leadership of H.E. Hana Al Hashimi and H.E. Razan Al Mubarak. **The COP28 closing was still terribly male dominated. We have more work to do to make the COP process much more inclusive and gender-balanced, including at the top level. I look forward to seeing COP30 in Brazil being the COP of a women's leadership, ideally with Marina Silva as COP President, as well as triple wins for climate, people and nature, better interconnecting all the Rio Conventions.*** – Elise Buckle, SHE Changes Climate Co-Founder and Co-Director

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"To hail this as significant progress, when our ecosystems are collapsing, just shows how low expectations really were for this COP. That people would celebrate a text weak on substance, with no urgency, enough funding or phase out of fossil fuels - is staggering. I applaud all of you who were there trying to fight the many vested interests stacked against a liveable future for us all." — Esmeralda de Belgique, SHE Changes Climate Steering Committee Member

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"While the text has moved forward and passed, the process has been a failure, led by the incredible leadership of Pacific Island Nations that continue to hold the line. The text is an improvement but we continue to have a small window of keeping below 1.5 to stay alive is rapidly closing.

This is just one mechanism in safeguarding a just and equitable future for all people on the frontlines of the climate crises, and there are still gaps within the text that is required to strengthen global action from Nation states, developed and G20 countries.

*While this is a step and there is acknowledgment of transition away from fossil fuels, we need to note it doesn't specifically state phase out of fossil fuels. We need to phase out fossil fuels meaning no dangerous distractions like carbon capture and storage technology, greenwashed clean gas or blue hydrogen. **We need fast and immediate action to stop new gas, coal and oil projects** so we can keep in line with limiting global warming to 1.5, starting yesterday. Within my lifetime my communities could become climate refugees. The global North needs to lead in phasing out first and the fastest in order for this process to be fair. **And we need more ambitious commitments from developed nations, G20, rich countries, for my financial resources so that everyone can transition.** We are still a long way to go, but we have seen the power and love from our indigenous, First Nations, island state communities right across the globe hold the line." – Tishiko King, Australian Communities Foundation's First Nations Program Manager and SHE Changes Climate Ambassador*

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*"This outcome is both historic and insufficient. Historic because we finally have a climate agreement that recognizes that the climate crisis is caused by oil, gas and coal. Insufficient because it includes loopholes that provide cover for continued growth in fossil fuels. **It's not a transition if we are growing the problem. This deal fails to end expansion of fossil fuels and ensure a cleaner safer future is financed and fair.** Women and children are the first to be impacted by the ravages of climate change. More fossil fuels means more climate impacts." Tzeporah Berman, Chair Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative*

About SHE Changes Climate:

<https://www.shechangesclimate.org/>

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