



Open Letter - Santa Marta Conference

We welcome the First Conference on the Transition Away from Fossil Fuels; an event focused on generating understanding to accelerate a just and equitable transition away from fossil fuels. As organizations and actors committed to climate justice, we consider it essential that this conference explicitly incorporates international legal responsibility and reparations for climate damage to our human right to a healthy climate—dimensions that are not clearly reflected in the concept note.

The advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights have made clear that there is still a long way to go to meet existing legal obligations and protect our right to a healthy climate. We agree that fossil fuel production generates legal and state responsibilities. For that very reason, we are deeply concerned that the conference's concept note does not explicitly incorporate international responsibility and climate-damage reparations. Consequently, we consider it essential that the work agenda includes a dedicated space to discuss international responsibility, climate debt, and reparation mechanisms as an integral part of the transition.

Fossil fuel-based economies are the fundamental cause of climate change and the persistent reason why carbon emissions have not stabilized. Decades of sustained increases in extraction and the uncontrolled use of fossil fuels have led to climate impacts that exceed the adaptive capacity of our ecosystems. Speculation on fossil fuels by the private sector and by some states has caused widespread damage to our climate and human rights. Remedying these unlawful acts is intertwined with actions to eliminate fossil fuel dependence.



We bring to this conference our experience in the struggle over loss and damage, expecting reparations to be part of a just transition. Reparations cannot be understood as an add-on, but rather as a structural pillar of a truly just transition.

The transition must not overlook its responsibilities regarding loss and damage. This must be a guiding principle of the conference, as it will address the negative externalities that the fossil fuel industry has ignored in pursuit of profit and will respond to existing climate debt. Otherwise, there is a risk that the costs of damage will continue to be socialized while historic profits remain privatized.

The conference promotes the controlled phase-out of the fossil fuel industry to stimulate investment and gains in other economic activities. If responsibility and damage are not addressed in the discussion, will this transition simply leave communities to bear the cost of the harm? A transition without responsibility risks becoming a redistribution of investments that does not guarantee climate justice.

We place our hope in a transition that is not merely a transactional pathway toward new investments, but one oriented toward responsibility in the use of natural resources and the protection of the climate. Santa Marta offers a breath of fresh air after decades of slow and tedious evasion of responsibilities and the lack of tangible results in UNFCCC negotiations. We value the importance of a conference centered on implementation.

We urge the organizers to explicitly incorporate in the agenda and outcomes of the conference the debate on international responsibility, climate reparations, and historical debt. Including these elements in the conference agenda and outcomes will be crucial to ensuring that the transition away from fossil fuels is consistent with climate justice and international law.

20/02/2026





Signatures:

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Organizations:

- AbibiNsroma Foundation
- African Futures Lab
- Alianza Regional Centroamericana para el Agua y el Ambiente (ARCAA)
- Allen+
- AQOCI - Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale
- Asociacion Ciudadana por los Derechos Humanos
- Association for Farmers Rights Defense, AFRD
- CADTM
- Caribbean Youth Climate Council
- Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental A.C
- CESTA
- Child Rights International Network (CRIN)
- CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK TANZANIA
- Climate Rangers NTB
- Climate Refugees
- Coalition des Volontaires pour la Paix et le Développement, CVPD



- Comité Ambiental en Defensa de la Vida
- Conectas Direitos Humanos
- Cosmopolíticas
- Dalit with Disabilities Association Nepal
- Development Initiative for Community Impact
- DISABILITY PEOPLES FORUM UGANDA
- DYVOPAasbl
- [earth]
- Emonyó Yefwe International
- Equal Rights
- Equidad de Género: Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia
- EXTINCTION REBELLION GRABEN-RDC
- Extinction Rebellion Deutschland (Germany)
- Fastenaktion (Swiss Lenten Fund)
- For the Oceans Foundation
- Fundación Argentina 1.5
- Fundación Heinrich Boell Centroamérica
- Fundación Laberinto
- Fundación Reparemos
- Fundación ReVerdes
- GTA - Rede de Trabalho Amazonico
- Habitat Defenders Africa
- IDdecoCR/LAC
- Indigenous Environmental Network
- Instituto para el desarrollo sostenible de la mujer lenca de Honduras IDESMULH
- Maasai Buffalo Dance group
- Observatori del Deute en la Globalització
- Oxfam International
- Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum
- Plataforma Boliviana Frente al Cambio Climático
- Red Centroamericana de Acción del Agua (FANCA)
- RED-CFAL
- Red Dominicana de Estudios y Empoderamiento Afrodescendiente-RedAfros
- RESAMA - Red Sudamericana para las Migraciones Ambientales
- Resilient40



- Ritmos Climáticos
- Rivers & Rights
- Soluciones Estratégicas Sustentables
- SOMO - the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations
- Taproot Earth
- Terra40
- TIPPING POINT NORTH SOUTH
- Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development / East African Suswatch Network
- Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
- United for Climate Justice
- Vanuatu Climate Action Network
- War on Want
- World's Youth for Climate Justice
- ZERO Association for the Earth Sustainability
- Zero Hour Philippines

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