

# COP29: POLICY BRIEF

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## Introduction

2024 saw the warmest year on record, with UNEP's [2024 Emissions Gap Report](#) finding that without transformative shifts and action, we are on track for global temperature rise of at least 2.6°C this century. Across the world, we are witnessing climate breakdown: floods across Brazil, heatwaves across North Africa and the Sahel, Hurricane Beryl, Hurricane Helene, and many more unreported and underreported devastations caused by climate change across the globe. Meanwhile in Canada, an unjust transition is taking place: as communities and ecosystems were burning across the countries, firefighters in British Columbia had to brave dangerous conditions with low wages and no hazard pay; and Indigenous nations are being hidden the fact that toxic tar sands tailings had been leaking and endangering community members who a few months later had to be evacuated because of forest fires.

At the same time, the world gathers in Baku at a time when climate multilateralism is hanging by a thread.



Deeply intertwined with climate justice, rising attacks on human rights across the world have also been front of mind throughout 2024. The Presidency has attempted to position COP29 as a “Peace COP,” putting forward a [solemn appeal for a truce](#) for the duration of the negotiations. Unfortunately, the declaration does not deal with the fundamental and systemic issues causing wars, conflict and human rights issues. As civil society and as an organization working in a colonial state, we recognize and amplify the calls and urgent need for decolonization everywhere. CAN-Rac [calls](#) for an immediate ceasefire and safeguarding human rights, and [joins](#) CAN International’s condemnation of the escalation of violence by Israel in Lebanon and Palestine. There is no peace without justice and there is no climate justice without human rights. Until the conventions and institutions to protect the most fundamental human rights are respected, international cooperation on tackling the climate crisis will remain fragile, incomplete, and incoherent.

As we approach ten years following the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015, COP29 marks an opportunity to rise to the calls to raise ambition and take action on the promises made in the first Global Stocktake (GST), and to deliver an ambitious needs-based climate finance goal that makes the implementation of the Paris Agreement not only fair, but possible.

The outcomes of the GST acknowledged the critical need to transition away from fossil fuels, to triple renewable energy capacity globally, and to double the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030. A year after the GST was adopted, COP29 must build the momentum towards fossil fuel phase out and rapid decarbonization. All eyes are on countries’ next Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the climate finance goal that will be decided at COP29. To meet the crucial 1.5°C limit, global emissions must fall by [42% by 2030](#) compared to 2019 levels.

Canada, as a Global North country, among the world’s biggest polluters and producers and exporters of fossil fuels, must show up with raised ambition, be among the first-movers in the energy transition, and pay up its climate debt in alignment with its historical responsibility and capacity to contribute to the global effort to limit warming to 1.5°C. Furthermore, as Canada assumes the role of the G7 chair in 2025, we have an opportunity to step up and champion an ambitious agenda, and climate finance target to advance climate justice.

COP29 must be an opportunity to set the world on the right track to drastically reduce emissions, rebuild trust, and take ambitious steps towards a more just, equitable, and climate-resilient future for all.

## Our Vision

CAN-Rac is attending COP to fight against fossil fuel interests—to resist, organize and build the world we want. As the deep and intrinsic relationship between climate action and human rights is further exposed by the intersecting crises facing the world, we aim to build cross-movement power as civil society for a clear unified voice for justice and transformative action. Alongside our members and allies, we are attending COP29 with a strategy and plans informed by the principles of common but



differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC), climate justice, human rights, and in solidarity with the Global South.

COP29 will not be the first time that a COP is held in a country that holds contradictions in its record of climate action and protection of human rights – including Canada, a large fossil producer with a history of rights violations against Indigenous peoples. COPs are moments where the international spotlight shines on the host country. Therefore, it is important that Canada shows up to COP29, not only to negotiate an ambitious climate finance goal which millions of lives depend on, but to advocate, with humility, for human rights and uplift local and marginalized voices and ensure they are heard on the international stage.

The negotiation of the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) offers an opportunity for Canada to come to COP29 as a partner to the Global South with an offer built on equity, solidarity, and climate, environmental, and energy justice. Without this, the Paris Agreement goals – and the historic transition away from fossil fuels that was agreed upon at COP28 – cannot happen.

## Adopting an ambitious new climate finance goal

In 2009, Global North countries agreed to provide US \$100 billion a year by 2020, and extended it to 2025 at COP21. The OECD announced in May 2024 that a total of US \$115.9 billion had been mobilized in 2022, meeting the 100 billion per year goal for the first time. However, an Oxfam study found that the real value of financial support for climate action provided without inducing and perpetuating further indebtedness – i.e. in grant or grant-equivalent terms – amounted to [US \\$28-35 billion](#).

In accordance with Article 9, paragraph 3 of the Paris Agreement, Parties agreed that prior to 2025, the CMA would set a NCQG from a floor of USD \$100 billion per year ([1/CP.21, paragraph 53](#)), taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries.

At COP29, deemed the “Finance COP”, the delivery of a fair and ambitious NCQG that meets the needs of frontline and developing countries is paramount and sets the foundations for climate justice and action for the next decade at this critical juncture of temperature rise. The [2024 UNEP Emissions Gap Report](#) found that emission reduction potential for 2030 and 2035 is substantial, yet realizing this potential requires massively boosting finance. The NCQG represents an opportunity to rebuild the trust between Global North and Global South countries, in the multilateral process, and in the Paris Agreement. A more ambitious, just, and climate-resilient world is possible and within reach – but only if we get the NCQG right.

Over the years, Canada has been championing gender-transformative climate finance with the Feminist International Assistance Policy. Building on this leadership, Canada must work to deliver an NCQG that sends an important signal to developing countries that they will receive adequate support to develop and implement more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and Long-term Strategies (LTS) aligned with the 1.5C target.

For an ambitious and fair NCQG, Canada must ensure the following elements are incorporated:



- Signal its ambition and solidarity with developing countries by reiterating the need for the NCQG to be aligned with COP decision 1/CP.21 paragraph 53, the wider historical climate debt developed countries owe to developing countries, and driven by the needs and priorities of developing countries;
- Adopt a minimum public finance provision target of US \$1 trillion per year provided in grants and grant-equivalent terms from developed countries to developing countries to meet the evolving needs of developing countries;
- Push for [new and innovative sources of finance](#) to contribute to the public finance core, including an emissions levy on hard-to-abate sectors, solidarity levies on the super-rich, and the phasing out public financing and subsidies not aligned with 1.5°C;
- Encourage progress on the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF)'s efforts to adopt a commonly agreed definition of climate finance that limits ambiguity, includes the need for loss and damage and does not count fossil fuel finance as climate finance. Parties must also adopt an exclusion list that excludes false solutions, carbon markets, loans at market rates, and ODA finance (to reflect additionality);
- Address the historic imbalance between mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage finance, allocating a minimum of US \$300 billion to mitigation, US \$300 billion to adaptation, and US \$400 billion to loss and damage annually;
- Take a proactive approach to build consensus on the expectations for contributions from countries, and how such expectations may evolve dynamically according to key criteria based on the principles of CBDR-RC, and manage the debate to ensure it does not block an ambitious agreement;
- Explicitly recognize both the specific needs and the role of workers and communities in implementing climate solutions through the inclusion of Just Transition, through social dialogue and labour rights, both under the NCQG's qualitative elements and quantitative elements.

## Raising ambition by putting forward a 1.5°C-aligned NDC

Parties must submit their updated NDCs by February 2025. COP29 is an opportunity for Canada to show its ambition as a first-mover among G7 countries and put forward an NDC that presents a decisive and ambitious roadmap towards a more just, rights-based, fair, and zero-carbon future.

Canada's NDC is more than just an emission reduction target; it's about the relationship between people and the planet. NDCs are also tools to build resilience and to mainstream adaptation planning for rural and urban communities, leveraging and cross-referencing Canada's National Adaptation Strategy. As people in Canada recover from climate-induced losses and damages, Canada's NDC must communicate how we seek to respond to future climate impacts.



In 2021, CAN-Rac established [seven benchmarks](#) to enhance and inform a transformative NDC aligned with the 1.5°C target. Those benchmarks include: equity, upholding human rights and Indigenous Peoples' rights, just transition, rapid decarbonization, whole-of-country cooperation, shifting financial flows, and nature-focused NDC that increases resilience, social, and health co-benefits. Canada's new NDC must reflect the country's highest possible ambition.

Canada's new NDC should commit to cutting GHG emissions by 80% below Canada's 2005 levels by 2035, as well as stepping up its international solidarity efforts to implement the Paris Agreement globally. This is based on a [new evaluation of Canada's fair share](#) of the global effort to limit warming to 1.5°C completed by CAN-Rac. By committing to fulfill the domestic emissions reduction portion of its fair share and providing the necessary resources, such as financing, to support frontline communities and countries that need it, Canada can step up its leadership through accountability and rebuild trust with those who contributed the least to the climate crisis, yet face disproportionate impacts.

In its 2035 NDC, Canada must:

- **Advance equity**
  - Revise its domestic emissions reduction target to 80% below 2005 levels by 2035 with efforts to fully decarbonize the Canadian economy to achieve net-zero as early as possible and by 2050 at the latest;
  - Enable a reduction in developing countries' greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to an addition 80% of Canadian 2005 emissions through climate finance;
  - Triple Canada's bilateral climate finance to \$15.9 billion between 2026–2031 with 40% allocated to mitigation, 40% to adaptation, and 20% to loss and damage. Adaptation and loss and damage must be provided in only grants and all funding should be aligned with the Feminist International Assistance Policy.
- **Uphold human rights and Indigenous Peoples' rights**
  - Ensure a rights-based and feminist implementation of the NDC, consistent with international human rights obligations and principles;
  - Reaffirm the constitutional mandate and obligation to ensure all climate and nature policies, measures, and investments respect Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination and self-governance and incorporate UNDRIP as a guiding framework.
- **Decarbonize rapidly**
  - Implement and strengthen sector-specific goals and policies for oil and gas, transportation, electricity, buildings, governance, carbon pricing.
- **Shift financial flows**
  - Include plans to achieve a complete fossil fuel subsidies reform, ensure Export Development Canada aligns its portfolio with 1.5°C, and reflect coherence between



Canada's domestic and international approach in eliminating financial support to the fossil fuel sector.

- **Promote resilience, social, and health co-benefits**
  - Increase resilience and strengthen mitigation co-benefits resulting from adaptation actions, as well as social and health co-benefits through the National Adaptation Strategy, that is aligned with the Global Goal on Adaptation and the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience;
  - Prioritize nature and align with the commitments under the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;
  - Integrate health into Canada's climate approach with action set out in the COP28 UAE Declaration on Climate and Health;
  - Advance intergenerational justice to increase access to green jobs and engagement for youth.
- **Advance a Just Transition**
  - Commit to the proper implementation of the Sustainable Jobs Act in a manner that is well-advised, well-guided, and well-supported.
- **Ensure better whole-of-government approach**
  - Increase action and engagement with subnational jurisdictions to collectively meet Canada's NDC objectives.
  - Build Canada's capacity to adopt climate action across all sectors and levels of society.

## Keeping 1.5°C alive through a just transition and slashing emissions before 2030

### Just Transition

The transition – not only in energy systems but across all sectors including transport, agriculture, food systems – cannot happen at the required pace to limit warming to 1.5°C without working with people to build an economy in a way that is just and inclusive, underpinned by the principles of CBDR and international cooperation. Without workers, communities and civil society fully seated at the energy transition decision-making table, we risk a political backlash – already visible in many jurisdictions across the world – that will, at best, slow things down, or at worst, lead to the backtracking of hard-won progress.

In other words: while conventional wisdom may posit that fairness would slow the transition, it is actually a precondition for its success. And Canada still has a chance to get it right – but the clock is ticking.



At COP28, the Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP) outcome addressed the workforce and socio-economic dimensions of the transition; recognized rights-holders including workers and Indigenous Peoples; and provided the space to discuss international cooperation as an enabler of just transition pathways for the first time within the UNFCCC process. Now the JTWP must continue to serve as a space to identify common ground and opportunities for speeding and scaling up Just Transition both domestically and internationally, working towards delivering real-world impact for workers and communities, and those most affected by the transition.

Canada has played a constructive bridging role in negotiations so far, but needs to elevate the JTWP in its list of political priorities. There are mounting risks that the JTWP takes the shape of an exclusive talk shop, that it keeps focusing on its mandated dialogues and its deliverables and that it reopens the programme's scope. Avoiding this will require leadership among Global North countries.

The JTWP needs to deliver outcomes for real people in the real world. At COP29 parties should thus start considering, based on the substance of the two dialogues, what an urgent Just Transition Action Plan could look like, and start signaling its intention to agree on one by COP30. A summary of the dialogues will not be enough to respond to the urgency of the moment. Key dimensions of this Action Plan should include:

- Securing rights and a shared understanding of what elements of Just Transition the plan should contain. This could include the negotiation of safeguards and the establishment of a Just Transition Advisory Body in the UNFCCC, with observer constituencies having full membership.
- Launching a new wave of international cooperation to make Just Transition happen, with initiatives that could include, *inter alia*:
  - A mapping exercise of existing international Just Transition resources and initiatives
  - The launch of dedicated funding for justice-based and social protection policies in climate plans;
  - An agreement on clean technology transfer to support economic diversification;
  - The launch of a dialogue on Just Transition in food systems;
  - A cohesive approach to address Just Transition challenges connected to critical energy transition minerals.

In parallel, the tension between the positive resurgence of domestic industrial policy as a tool to accelerate the green economic transformation at a national level and international trade rules—which have for too long ignored the need to prioritize social wellbeing and environmental protection over profits—are creeping up in the UNFCCC. To make climate action fairer, an in-depth discussion about multilateral approaches and a redesign of the governance and revenue of those schemes is overdue. In response to growing tensions and interest of some parties to discuss “unilateral measures,” including the proposal for a discrete agenda item on the matter, CAN-Rac emphasizes that the topic should be addressed in Response Measures, leaving matters of Just Transition to the Just Transition Work Programme.



And for Canada to back its negotiations position with serious domestic progress in the implementation of the now adopted Sustainable Jobs Act, it must:

- Appoint the Sustainable Jobs Partnership Council so that it can begin its crucial work to provide independent advice through social dialogue with regards to measures to foster the creation of sustainable jobs;
- Ensure that its forthcoming 2035 NDC and first Sustainable Jobs Plan embeds the COP28 Just Transition Work Programme outcome;
- Correct course on the design of the Oil and Gas Pollution Cap decarbonization fund, which currently does not tie investments to support for workers and is thus at risk of becoming another venue for the subsidization of fossil fuels. The final regulations must ensure that the fund includes labour conditions on construction and training for operating new infrastructure.
- In Budget 2025, ensure adequate and predictable resourcing for workers and communities in the transition to a green economy, including the implementation of the Sustainable Jobs Plan. This is one of the most important gaps and barriers to Canada's transition being just, and must include appropriately-funded departmental initiatives to ensure that the public service has the resources and ability to actually implement the goals in the Action Plan.

## Mitigation

At COP28, Parties agreed to take significant steps to reduce emissions to set the world on a path to limiting temperature rise to 1.5C, including transitioning away from fossil fuels in a just and equitable manner and tripling global renewable energy capacity by 2030. The science is unambiguous: the International Energy Agency estimates that fossil fuel production must decline 55% by 2035 to align with the 1.5°C limit.

However, recent discussions in the G20 highlight the risk of losing momentum. Building on the historic mandate of the COP28 outcome remains as pressing as ever, which COP29 must build on.

The Mitigation Work Programme (MWP), as a standing agenda item on mitigation, could be the space where this happens, but has been challenged by political dynamics. It has so far not delivered on its mandate to urgently scale up pre-2030 ambition in complementarity to the Global Stocktake, and is in urgent need of recalibration.

Azerbaijan has shown no signs of preparing a cover decision, which is necessary to send a strong political signal and cement steps forward on the Dubai outcome. Negotiators at COP29 must affirm and surpass the ambition of the COP28 GST decision through a strong cover decision that:

- Removes the GST's references to false solutions and loopholes, such as “transitional fuels”, “low-emission technologies”, “low carbon fuels”, “abatement and removal technologies”, and “nuclear energy”;
- Ensures that the commitments for transition go beyond the energy systems and address the entire economy;
- Mandates that the next round of NDC climate plans end the expansion of fossil fuels, and specify equitable phaseout dates for their production and use;





- Empowers COP30 to demand further revisions if collective NDCs do not align with the Paris Agreement's climate targets.

As mentioned above, COP29 must also be where we see countries signal that they are operationalizing these energy transition commitments concretely in their NDCs. For Canada to show that it is reflecting this important commitment which it played an active role in securing, it must move forward in the adoption and implementation of oil and gas pollution cap final regulations by Budget 2025. Under the draft regulations, the first compliance period does not begin until 2030 – meaning that there is no guarantee the cap will drive emissions reductions during this critical decade, or that Canada will be able to achieve its 2030 climate target. It is essential that this oversight be addressed in the final regulations by clearly amending the formula to incentivize emissions reductions pre-2030.

In addition, the expansion of fossil fuel production continues, whether as fracked gas, LNG, crude oil or offshore drilling. Canada is the fourth-largest producer of oil in the world and the sixth-largest for natural gas. Oil and gas operations are present in 12 of 13 provinces and territories. While there are no signs of any explicit commitment to end the expansion of oil and gas at the federal level, the authority to limit fossil fuel development primarily falls under provincial and territorial jurisdiction. Quebec demonstrated decisive leadership in 2022 by becoming the first jurisdiction globally to legislate a complete ban on oil and gas exploration and production.

In that context, Quebec's leadership as the co-chair of the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance (BOGA) represents a critical opportunity to advance a just transition away from fossil fuels across Canada and mobilize other provinces and territories to join the alliance. BOGA calls for legislation to end new concessions, licensing, or leasing rounds for oil and gas and set a Paris-aligned date for ending oil and gas production. The engagement of Canadian provinces and territories in BOGA would foster a more favorable context for robust federal climate policy and demonstrate a whole-of-society approach to implementing the historic GST outcome.

## Putting people, lives and livelihoods at the heart of climate action

### Adaptation

Despite the known need to enhance adaptation action, progress is slowing down. The 2024 UN Environment Programme (UNEP) [Adaptation Gap Report](#) shows that while international public adaptation finance flow has increased, the flows are still dominated by loans. Latest [research](#) shows that the total adaptation finance remains highly insufficient and at just one-third of the volume required in emerging and developing economies alone. The estimated adaptation costs for developing countries range from [USD 130-415 billion per year](#) this decade. Therefore, real financial commitment is needed to support ambitious actions for adaptation.

This situation requires immediate attention and action to enhance communities' and ecosystems' ability to cope with climate change. Political attention is needed to elevate and accelerate effective and inclusive climate change adaptation actions and support.



While the Paris Agreement is clear in its guidance for adaptation to be treated and financed on par with mitigation, there has been little concrete progress in this regard. It is evident that the current goal of doubling adaptation finance by 2025 needs to be delivered on and subsequently exceeded, as the adaptation finance gap continues to widen. COP29 offers an unmissable chance to correct these shortfalls.

On adaptation finance, Canada should push for distinct and separate NCQG subgoals, one for adaptation and another for loss damage that are grant-based and needs-based, with clear methodologies on finance transparency to avoid double-counting. It is important to emphasize the importance of delivering sufficient public finance for adaptation, as most of the adaptation projects are public good and may not attract a sufficient level of private finance and investment. In addition, the NCQG should include a clear linkage with the Global Goal on Adaptation and the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience.

On the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), Canada should continue to play a constructive role in the assessment of progress in the NAP process and seek to build consensus on key elements of the final outcome, including on the discussions of means of implementation. As one of the largest donors supporting developing countries' NAP processes, Canada has the opportunity to highlight the importance of adaptation mainstreaming, gender-responsive approaches, nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based adaptation, vertical integration, and the importance of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous knowledge in adaptation planning and implementation.

## Loss and Damage

The Fund for responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) was operationalized at COP28 and hailed as a major step forward for supporting people at the frontline of the climate crisis. While some procedural progress has been made in 2024, including the selection of the Board's host country and of the Executive Director, important decisions that will allow the fund to actually start supporting people on the frontlines of climate change-induced harm are yet to be taken. These include how the funds will be allocated, who will be able to access them and how this access can be facilitated and simplified, the triggers for finance release, and what financial instruments will be used to provide funding. In addition, the COP/CMA is expected to confirm the World Bank as the interim host of the Fund for four years on the recommendation of the Board, while its capacity as host of the independent Fund secretariat to fully meet all the conditions set in the COP28/CMA5 decisions could not be fully assessed. The Fund remains severely underfunded in the light of loss and damage needs. It has so far just garnered around USD 680 million in pledges, only a fraction of which is new or additional to existing climate finance commitments.

Scaling up and delivering on loss and damage includes new and additional finance dedicated to loss and damage through the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage (FrLD) at scale and the inclusion of loss and damage as a subgoal under the NCQG.



## Protecting civic space

Across the world, there has been a decrease in civic space for people to practice their right to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, including at COPs. Without creating and protecting civic space, the distrust between governments and people widens, collaborative efforts to address climate change are undermined, and the critical voices of those disproportionately impacted by climate change are left out from decision-making spaces.

This includes the very crucial civic space in which we engage at UNFCCC COPs. Host Country Agreements should include explicit protections for freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and the right to protest, ensuring that all participants can voice their concerns without fear of retaliation.

The undue influence at COPs of fossil fuel and other industries whose profit-making depends on activities that harm the climate also contributes to the shrinking of civic space and poses a major obstacle in achieving ambitious outcomes. Yet again, COP will be overseen by a Presidency with close ties to the fossil fuel industry and which seems set on undermining established modes of engagement with Observer constituencies. CAN is calling for a strengthened UNFCCC Conflict of Interest Policy to protect against influence from harmful polluters including fossil fuel-dependent industries and agro-industrial multinationals.

The SB58 and SB60 Arrangements for Intergovernmental Meetings (AIM) conclusions confirmed that Host Country Agreements (HCA) should reflect obligations under international human rights law and enable inclusive and effective participation of Parties and observer organizations to ensure that human rights and fundamental freedoms are promoted and protected at UNFCCC meetings. Additionally, the conclusions called for HCAs to be made publicly available. Regrettably, the COP29 HCA is not yet publicly available on official channels. In the interests of transparency and accessibility, the UNFCCC should publish past, current, and future agreements on its website and publicly call upon the Azerbaijani government to respect its human rights obligations and facilitate a rights-respecting climate conference.

