

WOMEN & GENDER CONSTITUENCY

WGC submission on work to be undertaken under, as well as possible topics for the dialogues under the UAE Just Transition Work Programme

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Feminists have [consistently advocated for](#) a worldwide overhaul of the systems of extraction, exploitation, and oppression affecting both people and the planet. A vision of a gender-just Transition - at a global macroeconomic level, including and beyond a vision for an equitable energy transition - is fundamental to this structural transformation.

Current economic models based on extraction and fossil fuel production have led to human rights and Indigenous rights abuses, worker exploitation on the basis of gender and geographical location, and land grabs that degrade the environment and threaten the rights and wellbeing of women, trans and gender non-conforming people, and those of other marginalised identities. The transition away from societies and economies built on fossil fuels requires a holistic, systems approach. This includes meaningful participation in decision-making around financing a just and equitable transition that includes women, youth, trade unions, Indigenous Peoples, people with disabilities, and local communities; commitments to social justice and equity at all levels; creation of feminist economies built on care; mechanisms for accountability that guarantee respect for human rights and labour rights, advance poverty eradication, and promote decent work; international cooperation on resource mobilisation to finance the Just Transition; and achieving food and energy sovereignty so that people and communities have access to the resources they need to live in dignity.

The Women and Gender Constituency (WGC) believes that the UAE Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP) can catalyse the realisation of this vision by placing human and labour rights, social dialogue, equity, and justice at the heart of climate action globally. We emphasise that all work carried out under the JTWP must be gender-responsive and transformative, and that gendered aspects of the Just Transition must be considered, discussed, and prioritised in all sessions and discussions of the JTWP.

Sessions of the JTWP in 2024 should, guided by the scope now established, facilitate learnings to accelerate the Just Transition globally while identifying necessary mechanisms and approaches to strengthen the justice aspects of the transition. The below-proposed areas of focus for the work to be undertaken under the work programme are listed in order of WGC priority.

Themes for discussion in 2024

Priority Theme 1: The care economy

The Women and Gender Constituency has [consistently highlighted](#) that current systems commodify, profit from, invisibilise, and marginalise life-sustaining care work. We have furthermore advocated that care work must not act as the unpaid, undervalued and ignored scaffolding that allows present and future economies to operate. [Women carry out approximately 76% of the 16.4 billion hours of unpaid care work undertaken globally. The ILO estimates](#) the value of unpaid care and domestic work to be as much as 9% of global GDP (USD 11 trillion). Additionally, the care economy is a low-carbon economy, and thus investment in care work can have social, environmental, and economic benefits, and strengthen the infrastructure for vital universal social protections, [while delivering more jobs than investment in other sectors](#). As work begins on the JTWP, it is vital that the role of care work is examined and recognized at the outset. If this does not happen, the work programme risks entrenching existing gender norms and inequalities in future economies.

Sessions on the JTWP in 2024 must prioritise discussions on: the role of care work in current and future economies; how investing in a care economy can help to deliver a Just Transition; the role of universal social protection in the delivery of Just Transition. Sessions must also aim to: examine and influence social norms of gender at home and at work to share and value care; recognise that paid care jobs are low-carbon jobs; recognise the dual benefits of the care economy of job creation and increased tax revenue; examine the co-benefits for economies of investing in care, such as increasing employment and economic opportunities for workers, particularly women (by investing in paid care jobs that are already done in an unpaid capacity, for the most part by women), and increasing the quality of childcare, elder care, and disability care that people from all economic backgrounds can access; and broaden understandings of “green jobs” to include jobs in the care sector.

Sessions should facilitate learnings and best practice sharing from Parties, experts and academia, civil society and other non-state actors, multilateral organisations and governments to allow for a robust discussion and identification of pragmatic ways forward for the work programme and for regional and domestic Just Transition strategies.

Priority Theme 2: Finance and resource mobilisation to enable the Just Transition

International cooperation on resource mobilisation, including finance, capacity-building and transfer of technology, will be key to realising the Just Transition globally. The current climate finance landscape, dominated by loans and skewed towards private investment, perpetuates colonial cycles of debt, denominated in foreign currencies, and dependency for vulnerabilised territories, particularly in the Global South. This exacerbates and maintains gender disparities, roles and discrimination in the access and use of domestic financial resources, undermining the ability of governments to finance climate policies and provide gender-responsive public services and social protections that fulfil human rights.

Under the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) established in the Convention, countries that historically have contributed the most to the climate crisis must fulfil

their responsibility to provide the trillions needed to transition to a low-carbon economy. Just financing sources towards the transition include the redirection of fossil fuel subsidies, the systematic cancellation of debts, the reallocation of a record high of USD \$2.24 trillion in military expenditures in 2022, as well as a just and equitable tax system. These finance flows are critical to the redistribution of wealth both within and across countries, and will enable public finance to be directed to universal social protections infrastructure, supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises, grant-based finance of locally-led feminist solutions, and capacity-strengthening and skill-building programmes for transitioning workers, among others.

Sessions of the JTWP in 2024 should focus on resource mobilisation, [challenging and exploring the interlinkages between trade, taxation, debt, military expenditures, and overall macroeconomic systems and structures](#). Sessions should cover: mechanisms for gender-responsive and transformative resource mobilisation and catalysing public resources towards grant-based finance mechanisms to finance the Just Transition; the overall macroeconomic policy context including fiscal policy; learning and gaps on resource mobilisation, particularly in relation to funding arrangements; gender-responsive budgeting; clarification from a technical and practical perspective on the potential components of Just Transition resourcing strategies that are distinct from and additional to mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage.

Priority Theme 3: Institutional arrangements and mechanisms for meaningful participation

[Experiences to date of dominant policy approaches to transition](#) show that “formal spaces of participation have been created and used by state and private sector actors seeking to shape energy policy in their own favour”. It is therefore necessary for the JTWP to deal with the range and complexity of justice issues associated with the Just Transition and to address power differentials within and outside of the UNFCCC space (power in the sense of whose space it is and how safe it is for different actors, who can speak, who sets the rules of engagement, and who benefits from those rules).

Decision 1/CMA.4 highlights the importance of “meaningful and effective social dialogue and participation of all stakeholders” to achieve a Just Transition. The CMA5 decision confirms social dialogue and “inclusive and participatory approaches to Just Transitions that leave no one behind” as falling within the scope of the work programme. As priority, sessions of the work programme must facilitate learnings and best practice sharing on the participatory elements of Just Transition strategies at domestic and international levels, particularly involvement of non-state actors. Sessions should also allow conversations on how to apply learnings to create mechanisms for meaningful and inclusive participation in the work of the JTWP. The intent must be to establish institutional arrangements for participation and the integration of the observer constituency groups in the JTWP, including via the establishment of its advisory body.

Topics for discussion beyond 2024

Priority Theme 4: Securing human rights and environmental justice in the Just Transition

A Just Transition away from extractive economies requires not only an investment in renewable and sustainable energy models but also a transition away from the dominant economic model of neoliberalism. [Excessive exploitation of the commons to supply materials and energy](#), mainly for Global North countries, have caused permanent and irreversible loss and damage to various communities around the world. This process continues to pollute ecosystems, advance deforestation, harm communities, and threaten traditional lifeways and livelihoods.

[According to Global Witness](#), at least 1,910 environmental defenders have been killed between 2012 and 2022 for defending the right to a healthy, clean, and sustainable environment, with most of the murderers –individual and institutional– not being held to account. Between July and September of 2023, there were 1,375 attacks against at least 300 women defenders and 21 organisations [reported](#) in the Mesoamerican Registry of Attacks against Women Defenders.

With growing calls for a just and equitable fossil fuel phase-out, a review of human rights violations in energy models is necessary. [The 500% projected growth in demand for raw minerals for the “green” transition by 2050](#), primarily extracted from the Global South, will exacerbate the destruction and pollution of marginalised communities' territories into [racial sacrifice zones](#). Additionally, [reports confirm](#) that systemic forced labour and other human and Indigenous rights abuses are present in the mining, processing, and production of materials for the clean energy industries; women in these realities can be [systematically targeted under the pretence of gendered poverty alleviation programmes](#). Moreover, dangerous distractions such as carbon markets and geoengineering technologies, such as solar radiation management (SRM), [shift attention and resources away from the real need to address the systemic causes](#) of climate change while increasing gender inequalities and human rights violations. There is no Just Transition pathway without the inclusion and protection of human rights, Indigenous rights, and gender equity.

Work under the JTWP should focus on examining how the extraction, processing, and production of fossil fuels and critical minerals for the “green” economy impacts communities and territories, with a view towards establishing a process for the collection of disaggregated data and indicators, as well as supporting a systemic restructuring of the economy away from green extractivism. As a priority, sessions must discuss the importance of safeguards and resource mobilisation for environmental, land and human rights defenders, human rights, gender equity, and Indigenous rights– including [free, prior and informed consent \(FPIC\)](#)– across all industries. Sessions should also discuss initiatives that help countries move away from extractivism through technology transfer and diversification of their economies, including investments in a care economy.

Priority Theme 5: Food and agriculture

The COP28 decision text outlines that a broad sectoral approach will be taken to the JTWP, an element welcomed by the WGC. Addressing injustice and inequality within the global food system is urgent. The Just Transition Work Programme can pioneer Just Transition work on food systems through enabling policies that address rights violations and exploitation, protect the environment

and restore ecosystems, halt deforestation, advance food sovereignty and nutrition security, and strengthen the position of workers and communities, farmers, women, and Indigenous Peoples.

JTWP dialogues should consider the food and agriculture sectors in conjunction with the following considerations: land-use, land-tenure rights, and land-use change for industrial food production; extraction and processing of raw materials and minerals to be used in the energy transition; and the impacts of these sectors on the environment, on communities, and on human rights. Work on food and agriculture under the work programme must promote inclusive processes that engage affected communities, preserve the cultural identities and livelihoods of racialised peoples and marginalised communities, and prioritise environmental decision-making and food sovereignty at the most local levels.

Priority Theme 6: Technology and call for international governance

As Parties propose technological solutions to phase out fossil fuels, the role of climate technology emerges as a focal point in the discourse on Just Transition. This centrality arises not only due to the potentially disruptive nature of such solutions, which may exacerbate ecological harm and intensify resource exploitation in developing regions (such as lithium extraction in the Chaco region of Latin America), but also because the transfer, development, and use of these technologies often exhibit significant disparities between developed and developing countries. An assessment of the potential methods and governance frameworks needed for an international system to regulate the suite of climate technologies is urgently needed, due to the risk of false solutions being implemented by governments, corporations, or other businesses without any international oversight.

Thus, the JTWP should not mean an imposition of technologies and innovations on the countries of the Global South and much less an increase in debt. Discussions should be oriented on how to articulate the technology mechanism of the UNFCCC to ensure countries have access to climate innovation resources that boost their national innovation systems for a Just Transition. Existing data and studies shed light on how women are more vulnerable to precarity and job loss in the energy transition, due to gender stereotypes and discriminatory social patterns that prevent women and girls from studying and benefiting from STEM areas. Therefore, dialogues should cover strategies to increase women's representation and participation in technical and leadership positions in the climate technology and energy sectors to ensure the transition does not leave women in all their diversity behind.

Conclusion

The importance of having a Just Transition Work Programme that can address injustice and inequality and integrate the views of civil society cannot be understated. The perspectives and realities of women, girls, trans and non-binary people must be considered and prioritised in the work of the JTWP. The Women and Gender Constituency will provide further input following information from the SB co-chairs on priority themes and dialogues for 2024, and welcomes any opportunities to recommend gender experts and/or resource materials in various sectors to ensure that gender is considered, discussed and prioritised in each session.

Key references

Anti-Slavery International (2024). [Respecting Rights in Renewable Energy: Addressing forced labour of Uyghurs and other Muslim and Turkic-majority peoples in the production of green technology](#)

CambiaMO (2023). [Social Justice at the Centre of Sustainable Projects Evaluation](#).

COP28 UAE (2023). [UAE Declaration on Gender Responsive Just Transitions](#).

OHCHR (2022). [A/77/549: Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, E. Tendayi Achiume](#)

Oxfam (2023). [Radical Pathways Beyond GDP: Why and how we need to pursue feminist and decolonial alternatives urgently](#).

WECAN (2023). [Prioritizing Care Work Can Unlock a Just Transition for All](#)

WEDO (2023). [Gender Just Transition: A Path to System Change](#).