In Response to the Call for views of Parties, observers and other non-Party stakeholders on opportunities, best practices, actionable solutions, challenges, and barriers relevant to the topics of the dialogues mandated by decision FCCC/PA/CMA/2023/L.14, para. 8. To the chairs of the SBs notice that the topic for the 1st dialogue under the UAE JTWP in 2024 is: “Just Transition pathways to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement through NDCs, NAPs and Lt-LEDs.”

Introduction
As countries prepare their new nationally determined contributions (NDCs) on the road to Belem in 2025, they are faced with the challenge of striking a balance between the speed and scale of ambition needed and the feasibility of implementing their goals. It is important to note that plans are being developed in a context of diverse national sustainable development priorities and alongside efforts to eradicate poverty. Ensuring the inclusion of Just Transition strategies in the next round of NDCs is a means of enhancing the ambition and effectiveness of countries’ climate action.

Currently, only 31% of the NDCs incorporate social dimensions and reference Just Transitions. However, research from our South-to-South project (S2S) has shown that NDCs that account for Just Transitions are more likely to attract the international public and private investment required for their successful implementation. By integrating Just Transitions into their NDCs, countries signal to stakeholders, including vulnerable populations, that JTs are a long-term national priority.

Incorporating Just Transition plans that are both ambitious and realistic into NDCs is an ongoing challenge for decisionmakers. Policymakers have consistently highlighted the need for capacity building and support to tackle this endeavour at the UNFCCC, including technical and institutional capacity. The Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP) could provide support with drafting feasible targets for Just Transitions goals, mainstreaming social justice and integrating considerations for Just Transitions across all implementation areas.

This submission draws on research and scientific evidence from programs including South to South Just Transitions (S2S), Transition Indicators and ELEVATE to share relevant opportunities, challenges, best practices, useful resources and actionable solutions.

Opportunities
In partnership with researchers around the world, Climate Strategies has been tracking and supporting the evolution of the Just Transition concept since 2018. Evidence from our S2S project indicates that by integrating Just Transition strategies, NDCs could emphasise socio-economic consequences, enhance equity, protect Human Rights, include vulnerable communities, and empower previously marginalized groups in future climate policies.

As the discourse around Just Transitions increases at the national and international level, policymakers can leverage this growing interest to foreground restorative and procedural justice in the transition to a low-carbon society to increase ambition and implementation, the international community could provide support by:

- Broadening the awareness of Just Transitions and expanding their utility in different developing country contexts. This may include, for example, translating Just Transition
literature into local languages, convening dialogues with different stakeholders, and sharing lessons learned from other countries.

- Closing the data gaps that inhibit dialogue and planning for Just Transitions.
- Enabling decisionmakers to create context specific and coordinated Just Transition plans to ensure that transitions occur in an inclusive, economy-wide and cross-sectoral manner.
- Clarifying the non-economic co-benefits of Just Transitions, such as increased equality, enhanced ecology, improved health, and increased procedural engagement. These co-benefits can have long-term benefits for communities, countries and the international community.

Our country-specific research has highlighted the increased role that Just Transition policies have played in national NDCs and national policy dialogues. Our country partner reports highlighted the following key areas of progress:

- In **Indonesia**, Just Transitions have become increasingly popular and are included in several national and international policies. The country’s updated NDC in 2021 and 2050 LTS-LCCR identifies Just Transition principles as a cross-cutting approach, applicable to all priority sectors for mitigation and adaptation. However, there is no institutional or financial framework in place for a thorough cross-sectoral Just Transition, and the approach is likely to be a sector-based rather than all-encompassing change to the economy. Additionally, there is an opportunity to reflect on positive developments in the energy sector and incorporate Just Transitions into other priority sectors under the NDC.

- **Kenya** has a sound climate change framework, including a robust climate change legal and policy framework centred around the Climate Change Act (2016). The country’s revised NDC (2020) mentions Just Transition as an aspiration, and policymakers have an opportunity to mainstream the objectives of a Just Transition into their wider development agenda.

- In **Malawi**, decisionmakers have an opportunity to explicitly include the concept of Just Transition in climate policies and broader development strategies. In the agriculture sector, various aspects of the National Agricultural Policy 2016, the Malawi Vision 2063 and the country’s NDC promote changes that are well aligned with the concept of Just Transition. For example, the greater inclusion of smallholder farmers in planning processes and improved participation by youth in climate-smart agriculture practices. The NDC’s emphasis on improving community participation in seed selection, storage, and management, as well as the establishment of community and multiplication seed banks, is consistent with strategies for Just Transitions.

- In **Argentina**, Just Transition thinking is starting to guide dialogues which could support the creation of more justice-focused climate policies in the future; highlighting the benefits of the transition will be key to building cooperative dialogue. Furthermore, creating a unified national plan for decarbonisation that can be applied across states and sectors could respond to ongoing debates regarding which regions and sectors bear primary responsibility for the transition.

- **Laos** is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change but has historically been a low-emitting nation. Balancing development and environmental policy is a challenge given the country’s poverty rate of 18-24%. Laos has several policies in place to support emissions reduction and climate change mitigation, including the 9th Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2021-2025), which aims to reduce disaster risk and improve environmental
protection. These policies may support Just Transitions but do not explicitly reference them. There is an opportunity to help Laos address several issues to enable Just Transition planning across multiple sectors, including: a) increasing governmental capacity, building awareness, and developing cross-governmental coordination mechanisms on Just Transition planning; b) addressing gaps in sectoral data to enable data analysis; c) mobilizing national and international financing in a coordinated and synergized manner; and, d) developing expertise in social dialogue and participatory processes.

- **Vietnam**'s increasing reliance on coal imports suggests that Just Transitions to greener energy could increase energy security, improve the trade balance, and free up funding for other national initiatives. However, the energy transition will need to be carefully managed, as the coal industry employs roughly 122,000 workers. There is an opportunity to learn from the coal phase out occurring in Northern regions, where plants were first installed and are aging rapidly. The Vietnamese government will have to pay attention to reskilling labour, as well as accelerating renewable energy in the region to maintain energy security. If the transition is well managed in the region, it could become a model for subsequent—and much bigger—closures in other regions of the country.

- **Colombia** committed to developing a strategy for Just Transitions within the workforce in its updated NDC, as well as a Just Energy Transition Strategy. The country is now working on including a broader, cross-cutting vision for Just Transitions in the next round of NDCs. Colombia’s experience could be useful for other countries in terms of, for example, their selected pathway, the lessons learnt in the process, and the challenges in capacity building, among others.

- **Bangladesh** has relatively low per capita greenhouse gas emissions compared to the rest of the world; despite this, in its 2021 NDCs the government included the target of reducing emissions by 6.73% by 2030 without external support, and by 21.85% if sufficient international technological and financial support is provided. Just Transitions are present in national debates and policy and the country has pledged to shift to renewables in the energy sector. There is therefore an opportunity to integrate Just Transition strategies into sectoral reforms and national development and climate action plans. Doing so would provide a common conceptual language and support frameworks for reducing emissions and persistent underlying inequalities, while also furthering the government’s development goals. Furthermore, including Just Transition frameworks in Bangladesh’s education sector provides an opportunity for youth to develop the skills needed for green careers (including local and indigenous knowledge) and enhance equality through educational accessibility.

- In **Ghana**, decisionmakers have an opportunity to further integrate the social objectives of the country’s transition into national climate policies and NDCs. Policymakers can do this by integrating Just Transition thinking with the technical aspects of low-carbon transitions and climate adaptation, which may also help draw attention to the need for additional financing.

**Challenges**

Our research in the Global South has shown there are numerous gaps in approaches to implementing just transitions, particularly in developing countries. These gaps, which we found in country research across the Global South, are highlighted in our flagship report, ‘Exploring Just Transitions in the Global South’ and are summarized hereafter:
• Much of the labour market in the Global South is informal and thus lacks union representation.
• Land rights are not always clearly defined, regulated, or recognized in the Global South, so land-related transitions can leave some people particularly vulnerable.
• Access to natural resources, such as forests, is part of the spiritual and cultural identity of some communities, which creates social impacts where access becomes more restricted because of measures to tackle climate change.
• Persistent poverty, high unemployment, energy access gaps, and weak regulation of land-related activities are common features in many countries, and this socio-economic context makes implementing climate policy in a just way even more complex – but also more important.
• Transition debates in the energy sector do not necessarily begin from the premise of a low-carbon transition, but the just transition concept can still be useful in helping to understand the distributional impacts of energy choices.
• Developing countries are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change – but those most in need of support are often less aware of the transitions they may be facing, and/or less able to access support.
• There are instances of adaptation programs which exacerbate vulnerabilities. Just Transition thinking is important to apply to adaptation and resilience policies and programs.
• Skills and knowledge gaps can impair the low carbon transition and need to be addressed to empower stakeholder engagement and sound decision making. For instance, there can be a lack of data on the impacts on income, poverty, and employment, which then hinders dialogue and transition planning.
• It is challenging to maintain continuity in planning where there is only a small, emerging pool of local expertise about just transitions, so wide capacity building about the concept is needed.
• Alignment of climate and development policies/goals will be critical to securing buy-in and coherence for Just Transitions.
• The use of international climate finance is presently focused on implementing techno-economic transitions with little financial support for ensuring the outcomes are socially, economically, and environmentally just.

In addition, our research has shown that there are ongoing challenges to planning and implementing Just Transitions that manage the socioeconomic impacts of mitigation policies. These include issues such as lack of access to data for planning, limited financing for social engagement and dialogue, no central body to coordinate Just Transitions across sectors, limited institutional knowledge and capacity on the subject (particularly at the local level) and limited financing to implement a Just Transition outside the energy sector.

There are some policies that already impact human rights, worsen inequalities, and exclude vulnerable people who are most impacted by climate change. For example, gender inequalities are being replicated in green energy sectors in Colombia. In Kenya, plans to transition to a circular economy threaten the livelihood of informal urban waste workers. In Laos, indigenous forest communities are having their access to sites of cultural and economic importance restricted. In Malawi, smallholder farmers are being impacted by the drive to rapidly industrialize agriculture. In Argentina, policies that aim to improve the efficiency of livestock production and management may worsen pre-existing distributive inequalities in the sector.
While these issues are contextually specific, there are actions that the international community can take to increase ambitions related to socio-economic justice in climate action. These include providing more funding for social dialogue, supporting efforts to create centralized commissions for Just Transitions, increasing capacity to plan Just Transitions, facilitating dialogues across ministries and regions, and investing in projects that support both practical efforts (such as labour reskilling) and theoretical efforts (such as building sectoral employment databases) to enable Just Transitions.

Best practices

Our Transition Indicators project has found that to enhance public and political support for transitions, it is necessary to recognise and emphasise their wider benefits (e.g., job protection, biodiversity, improved living standards, better mobility, better housing insulation). In this context, “further monitoring systems need to be established, improved, and embedded in the local context, and core benefits and Just Transitions must be considered more thoroughly.” This includes the need to develop transition indicators that are comprehensible for public and political discourse, as well as measurable and supportive for the effective implementation of NDCs.

Identified best practices on the development and implementation of transition indicators include:

- **Foster an inclusive social dialogue to identify and address transition needs, challenges, and opportunities.** This can help (a) improve the quality and feasibility of indicators; (b) address concerns about the potentially negative impacts of the transition; (c) establish a shared understanding of the shape and desired speed of the transition and (d), in creating this shared understanding, help increase public support and commitment to transition pathways, thus contributing to climate ambition.

- **Develop tangible pathways for specific transitions.** A focus on a specific transition could allow everyone to participate in discourse, as tangible developments are more easily accessible than abstract emission numbers. Transition indicators could provide comprehensible and tangible metrics for this purpose. When possible, setting a small number of transition indicators per sector (our report provides 3 per sector) reduces complexity, and facilitates public dialogue to understand progress and failures throughout the transition.

Useful resources

As part of the ELEVATE project, the following resources were designed to help policymakers and other key stakeholders in navigating the complexities of mitigating climate change, including evaluating NDCs considering fairness.

- **The Climate Policy Database** aims to gather information on climate mitigation policies and benchmark these against a policy matrix, that represents a comprehensive policy package to mitigate the effects of climate change. It is an open-access and collaborative resource for climate policymakers and researchers to track policy adoption and identify global and national policy coverage gaps. Through identifying, categorising, and analysing mitigation-relevant policies, the database can be used to support efforts to raise national ambition. The database contains climate mitigation policies for 192 countries—allowing decisionmakers to visualise policy coverage across various sectors, mitigation areas, and policy instruments.

- **ELEVATE’s Interactive Carbon Debt Explorer** aims to support stakeholder intuition regarding the concept of carbon debt, allowing users to explore various scenarios grounded in an individual's principled assessment of regional 'fair' shares and to offer insights into carbon debt
and credit projections across 10 aggregated macro-regions\(^1\). For questions or suggestions regarding this tool, please contact Setu Pelz.

- The Carbon Budget Explorer is a free and open-source online dashboard that allows users to explore climate targets under different conditions around the globe, as well as various climate policy pathways and how differing views on fairness lead to different emission allocations for individual countries. The tool aims to inform about the consequences of one’s view on fairness and requirements of climate targets. In that sense, it allows navigating through the implications of different views on fairness based on three core principles of fairness identified in scientific literature: (1) responsibility, taking into account historical emissions, (2) capability, emphasizing a country’s financial and institutional means to implement mitigation, and (3) equality, where each person on Earth gets equal allocations. The calculations in this tool act as a ‘mirror’ to reflect on how the ambition gap can be closed and evaluate NDCs considering fairness. For more information, please contact Dr. Mark Dekker.

### Actionable solutions

Justice and sustainability are critical prerequisites for the feasibility and acceptability of the required climate transformation, including the evaluation of NDCs. These principles can also result in outcomes and perceptions of policy legitimacy. Many of these dimensions, however, are poorly represented in modelling studies. Taking that into account, the ELEVATE project proposes salient innovations in modelling, methodology, and application that would allow to endogenously represent justice and sustainability in the climate mitigation pathways, fully integrating insights from social sciences.

The following recommendations are taken from ELEVATE’s first international co-creation workshop titled “Beyond the GST”, particularly from the session on new frontiers in justice and climate modelling, which engaged stakeholders to understand what types of justice concerns should be incorporated into models and share new findings. Please refer to the report of the workshop for more information.

Key takeaways from the participatory dialogue between researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders include:

- Incorporating social values into climate modelling is essential to informing ambitious just transition policies and promoting well-being.
- An important part of incorporating justice into Integrated Assessment Models (IAMs) is acknowledging different national needs and contexts. This includes varied understandings of justice, and the increased responsibility of historically high emitting countries.
- Diverse metrics, beyond income and GDP, are needed to measure what it means to live a ‘good life.’
- Stakeholder participation is critical to identifying nuanced and varied understandings of justice, fairness, and living well.

ELEVATE’s second international co-creation workshop titled “Beyond the GST: aligning global goals and national commitments” included a session on “Navigating Just Transitions in the next round of NDCs: unravel the different dimensions, forms and metrics of justice.” This session investigated different

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\(^1\) Net-zero carbon debt is a measure that contrasts ‘fair’ allocations with expected emissions trends and allows to define exceedance and drawdown responsibilities.
perspectives to calculate fair emission allocations across different geographical regions and understand the implications for the level of ambition.

Key takeaways from the participatory dialogue between researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders include:

- The concept of carbon debt promotes a collective reflection on the perceptions of climate ambition in different geographical regions.
- Preliminary results suggest that exploring the different criteria used to calculate fair emission allocations might be a useful exercise to strengthen the inclusion of justice considerations in mitigation targets.
- The understanding that justice is a multi-faceted and complex dimension: beyond emissions, it is important to account for other aspects, such as adaptation challenges and loss & damage.

About Climate Strategies

Climate Strategies is an international, not-for-profit research network with a Secretariat based in the UK and the Netherlands. Our international network includes some of the foremost thinkers and researchers on a range of multidisciplinary climate change topics. Climate Strategies enables its members and other researchers to place impact at the heart of their research. We catalyse climate action by providing robust evidence for decision-making and facilitating meaningful interactions between decision-makers and researchers.

About South to South Just Transitions

South-to-South Just Transitions (S2S) is a multi-layered (and multi-year) initiative that supports and empowers countries in the Global South to advance research on Just Transitions in diverse national contexts. Our project currently works with research partners in nine countries in the Global South to develop national recommendations for strategies on Just Transitions. The initiative aims to spearhead Just Transitions by identifying cross-cutting issues, challenges, opportunities and trends for Just Transitions in key sectors drawing from Just Transition applications in diverse countries of the Global South.

About the Research on Transition Indicators Project

Through a research exercise based on a series of country case studies, the ‘Research on Transition Indicators’ project will create a set of national-level transition indicators that are comprehensive, measurable, and supportive for the policy implementation process. The project will provide tangible input to the follow-up process of the Global Stocktake – and, in doing so, aims to support national policy processes in alignment with the implementation of NDCs and ensure accountability in the transition to net-zero and climate resilience. Our project convenes research on a wide range of country case studies, including Germany, South Korea, China, India, and Indonesia.

About the ELEVATE Project

ELEVATE aims to develop new scientific insights to support the preparations of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and national climate policies focused on achieving net-zero emissions in line with the Paris Agreement. The project is developed by a transdisciplinary consortium of national and international climate research teams interacting actively with policymakers and other stakeholders in climate policy and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
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