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SUBMISSION OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES JUST TRANSITION WORK PROGRAMME (JTWP)

This submission was jointly developed by the following organizations: Geledés-Black Women's Institute, Plataforma CIPÓ, Engajamundo, Greenpeace Brazil, Conectas Human Rights, E+ Energy Transition, Climate Observatory, ClimaInfo, LACLIMA, the International Energy Initiative – IEI Brazil, and the Socioenvironmental Institute.

Issue: United Arab Emirates Just Transition Work Programme topics for the dialogues.

Title: Views of Parties, observers, and other non-Party stakeholders on possible topics for the dialogues under the work programme.

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1. Introduction and context

This submission is presented within the framework of the United Arab Emirates Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP), pursuant to the mandate established in decision FCCC/PA/CMA/2023/L.14, paragraph 6, which invites Parties, observers, and other relevant stakeholders to share their views possible topics for the dialogues to be held.

The JTWP constitutes a central space to advance the understanding and implementation of just transitions that contribute to achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement, in line with the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC). It recognizes that responses to the climate crisis must be intrinsically linked to social justice, and equity, poverty eradication, human rights, biodiversity protection, and sustainable development, in accordance with different national circumstances.

2. Views on the work to be undertaken under the JTWP

2.1 Mainstreaming just transition across national plans and policies

Recalling decision 5/CMA.7, paragraph 15, which encourages Parties to consider just transition pathways in the development and delivery of national plans and strategies, the work of the JTWP should support the systematic integration of just transition into national plans and policies. This includes Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans, and Long-Term Low-Emission Development Strategies, as well as into sectoral and local instruments, involving all ministries, levels of government, and sectors of the economy and society.

This comprehensive approach should guide the formulation and implementation of transition plans, policies, strategies, and financing instruments, ensuring coherence between climate ambition, inequality reduction, social protection, the promotion of decent work, and biodiversity conservation.

2.2 Social participation and inclusive dialogue

It is essential that the JTWP promote and strengthen mechanisms for active, broad, and meaningful social participation of different segments of society, including those potentially affected by transition projects — such as Indigenous Peoples, local and traditional communities, people of African descent, Quilombola communities, women, peasants, youth, and trade unions — in decision-making processes. Such engagement must ensure respect for the principle of free, prior and informed consent and encompass all stages, from design to decommissioning, including the operational lifetime of projects, as highlighted in decision 5/CMA.7, paragraph 14.

The effective engagement of these groups contributes to more legitimate and effective transition processes aligned with territorial realities. In the absence of adequate participation mechanisms, the risk of territorial conflicts and local resistance to transition projects increases, potentially undermining the expected social, environmental, and economic benefits of the transition.

2.3 Decent work, social protection, and professional reskilling

Special attention must be given to public policies aimed at generating green jobs, promoting workforce reskilling, and strengthening social protection systems for communities and groups and communities affected by decarbonization processes. Priority should be given to occupational categories within fossil fuel value chains, as well as rural workers adopting more sustainable and resilient practices. This should encompass both formal and informal occupations, directly or indirectly impacted, with particular emphasis on situations of greater vulnerability and labor precarity.

The objective should be to promote the productive and financial inclusion of the groups most affected, reducing the risks of structural unemployment and social opposition to the transition. These efforts should be aligned with international frameworks, such as the ILO

Guidelines for a Just Transition towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All. These measures are essential, as the absence of robust reskilling and social protection policies may undermine the legitimacy and feasibility of the transition process.

They must also ensure the development of decent work policies that combat forced labor associated with various renewable energy value chains, expanding due diligence and accountability processes. In addition, a labor-centered just transition must take into account the guarantee of labor rights, addressing informality in sectors related to the energy transition.

2.4 Cross-sectoral and territorial approaches

Just transition must be addressed in an intersectoral manner, recognizing its impacts and opportunities across areas such as energy, transport, industry, agriculture, and land use. It is also critical to adopt territorial and intersectional perspectives that consider local contexts, regional economic dynamics, and the multiple forms of social and environmental vulnerability. Overlooking these specificities tends to produce ineffective and socially unjust policies that are unable to generate lasting support.

Additionally, the just transition approach must be aligned with a pathway compatible with the 1.5°C temperature limit, promoting a transition away from fossil fuels and ending deforestation and forest degradation.

2.5 Means of implementation and the role of a Just Transition Mechanism in channeling resources

The work programme should deepen discussions on means of implementation, including finance, technology development and transfer, and capacity-building. Just transition requires adequate and predictable resources, especially for developing countries, to prevent the social costs of the transition from falling disproportionately on historically marginalized populations. Without predictable and adequate financing, the transition risks exacerbating inequalities and undermining its political sustainability in the medium term.

Additionally, the programme should explore and operationalize climate finance mechanisms that are inclusive, efficient, and equitable, without aggravating the debt burdens of developing countries. In this context, the JTWP should promote discussions on redirecting subsidies and adopting fiscal measures, including the taxation of large fortunes and polluting industries, in order to channel resources toward just transition.

Furthermore, it should promote a more equitable configuration of the new global production and supply chains linked to energy transition technologies and inputs, encouraging the decentralization of quality job creation and value addition through the local processing of raw materials in developing countries. These countries, which possess significant renewable energy potential, can not only expand their productive and industrial capacities but also play a strategic role in reducing emissions and strengthening low-carbon development pathways.

It should also support the implementation of transparency systems regarding the social and distributive impacts of climate policies, including under the Enhanced Transparency

Framework (ETF), enabling the assessment of whether the transition is in fact just and whether climate policies are inclusive and delivering positively transformative social and distributive outcomes.

In this context, the Just Transition Mechanism envisaged in the most recent JTWP decision may play a catalytic role by supporting the identification of needs and priorities, facilitating international cooperation and technical assistance, and contributing to the more effective channeling of resources to just transition policies and programmes. This may include “matchmaking” approaches between national demands and sources of finance, strengthening capacities to structure bankable projects, and promoting pathways to expand access to climate funds and other relevant initiatives under the Convention and the Paris Agreement.

3. Possible topics for the JTWP dialogues

3.1 Governance approaches and socio-environmental safeguards for critical minerals in the context of just transitions

A just energy transition depends on the accelerated expansion of renewable energy technologies and their associated supply chains, with the aim of ensuring fair energy provision for all territories and populations. Without robust governance and social participation frameworks, the growing demand for critical minerals risks reproducing historical patterns of environmental degradation, social exclusion, and the concentration of economic development. The need for reliable, diversified, sustainable, transparent, and responsible supply chains for renewable energy technologies must go beyond technical and supply security considerations. It requires the adoption of effective environmental and social safeguards throughout the entire value chain, with the meaningful participation of local communities, people of African descent, Indigenous Peoples, Quilombola communities, and workers in decision-making processes, from extraction to processing and trade.

Principles for the governance of critical minerals should:

(i) guide the extraction, processing, and trade of these resources in a manner that promotes environmental integrity and resilience, social responsibility, and respect for the rights of local communities, such as people of African descent, Quilombola and other traditional communities, and Indigenous Peoples, as well as the right to free, prior and informed consent;

(ii) promote local value addition, capacity development, and a more equitable distribution of economic benefits;

(iii) ensure independent monitoring, reporting, and verification mechanisms, as well as accountability and access to remedy.

In the absence of these elements, critical mineral supply chains risk becoming new frontiers of green extractivism, undermining public trust and political support for the energy transition itself. Socio-environmental governance must therefore be placed at the center of critical minerals strategies, articulating climate ambition, territorial development, social protection, and the deepening of democratic participation.

3.2 Social justice, equity, and groups in situations of vulnerability

The JTWP should promote dialogues on how just transition can address structural inequalities, including those related to gender, race, ethnicity, class, territory, and generation, ensuring that no one is left behind or negatively impacted in processes of economic and climate transformation. It is essential to recognize that poorly designed energy transitions may deepen pre-existing inequalities if they fail to take into account land tenure and ownership relations, land disputes, processes of expropriation, and cultural and territorial issues, as well as constraints related to access, affordability, and control of the energy produced, particularly in vulnerable territories. It must also be acknowledged that well-designed energy transitions are not merely those that avoid worsening existing inequalities, but those that actively reduce or eliminate them.

3.3 Monitoring, indicators, and evaluation of just transition

The JTWP should address the development of methodologies, indicators, and tools, in coordination with existing multilateral initiatives — such as the International Energy Agency's Just and Inclusive Energy Transition Indicators — to enable the monitoring and evaluation of the social, economic, cultural, and environmental impacts of just transition policies. This framework should contribute to strengthening transparency, accountability, and continuous learning in policy implementation.

It is also important, where relevant, to align just transition monitoring with MRV systems and with the Enhanced Transparency Framework under the Paris Agreement, in order to promote greater coherence between climate assessment and the understanding of the socio-economic impacts associated with climate action.

3.4 The fifth JTWP dialogue as a space to discuss the operationalization of the Just Transition Mechanism

The convening of the fifth dialogue under the JTWP may represent a strategic opportunity to advance the operationalization of the Just Transition Mechanism envisaged in the most recent programme decision (CMA.7), directly contributing to the development of recommendations to be considered by Parties and the Subsidiary Bodies and, subsequently, by CMA.8.

For the Mechanism to fulfill its purpose of enhancing international cooperation, technical assistance, capacity-building, and knowledge-sharing — and to help ensure it has tangible impacts on people's lives — it is recommended that the fifth dialogue address, in an implementation-oriented manner:

(i) Its functions and deliverables, including modalities of support to countries and territories. For example, platforms for exchange and “matchmaking” of needs and solutions; technical support to incorporate just transition into NDCs, NAPs, and long-term strategies; the development of guidance and planning, monitoring tools; as well as peer-learning mechanisms;

(ii) Its governance, with clear criteria for representativeness and inclusion, to ensure meaningful social participation of workers and trade unions, employers, subnational entities, Indigenous Peoples, Quilombola and traditional communities, people of African descent, youth, women, subnational governments, and civil society, as well as institutional arrangements that promote transparency, accountability, and coordination with relevant workstreams under the Convention, the Paris Agreement, and other relevant international organizations; and

(iii) Pathways for practical impact, defining how the Mechanism can generate measurable and verifiable benefits for populations affected by transition processes — such as social protection, decent work, professional reskilling, inequality reduction, and socio-environmental safeguards — including through indicators, targets, and methodologies connected to MRV systems and, where relevant, to the Enhanced Transparency Framework, in order to enable tracking of whether the transition is effectively just, equitable, and inclusive.

3.5 Environmental Racism and Just Transition

Just transition implementation initiatives discussed under the JTWP should explicitly incorporate efforts to address environmental racism, recognizing that the impacts of environmental degradation, the climate crisis, and infrastructure projects disproportionately affect Indigenous Peoples, traditional communities, Quilombola communities, people of African descent, and marginalized urban populations. Without acknowledging these structural inequalities, decarbonization policies and the expansion of renewable technologies risk perpetuating long-standing patterns of territorial exclusion, forced displacement, and the concentration of environmental risks.

In this regard, it is recommended that the JTWP:

- (i) recognize environmental racism as a key dimension to be addressed by just transitions;
- (ii) promote the collection and analysis of disaggregated data by race, ethnicity, gender, and territory;
- (iii) strengthen socio-environmental safeguards and mechanisms for access to justice and remedy; and
- (iv) prioritize investments in adaptation, resilient infrastructure, and energy transition in historically marginalized territories, with participatory and co-created models.

4. Final considerations

The United Arab Emirates Just Transition Work Programme offers a strategic opportunity to deepen the integration of climate action, social justice, and the fight against environmental racism within the UNFCCC framework. The views and topics presented in this submission seek to contribute to constructive, inclusive, and implementation-oriented dialogues, reinforcing the centrality of equity, as well as guaranteeing of human rights in the global response to the climate crisis.