

We Must All Rise Together to Keep Fossil Fuels in the Ground

This disastrous COP28 must be the end of vague political promises. The people of Earth are on to the lies.

 By SCIENTIST
REBELLION · Dec 15, 2023
Common Dreams



The United Nations climate summit, hijacked by the fossil fuel cartel, has gifted a blank check to rich countries and Big Oil to kill one billion people and force [billions more to flee their homes](#) by 2100. The so-called ‘historic’ outcome of COP28 fails to deliver the most basic and necessary measures which would have prevented societal and ‘earth systems’ collapse, as outlined by the [IPCC](#): eliminate fossil fuel subsidies and halt all new gas and oil projects. Instead, the new resolution includes numerous [loopholes](#) which will allow polluters to greenwash emissions through [fictional carbon capture](#), [meaningless carbon credits](#), and [the re-classification of methane \(“natural gas”\) as a transition fuel](#). But to remain under 2°C of warming, we [cannot afford to burn the fossil fuels we already have](#) in reserve, let alone drill for more. COP28 has taken a few tentative steps in the right direction, but only thanks to the blood and sweat of many people on the frontline of our climate crisis. The summit’s overall trend to support “business as usual” will result in further delays in meaningful climate action and condemn us to miss [“the brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all.”](#)

Wealthy countries have once again manipulated the climate summit in order to advance their ecocidal colonialism. Rich nations have been pillaging the natural resources of poorer ones for centuries and have used their fuels to emit far more than their share of CO₂. They bear the lion’s share of responsibility to

carbonize first and fastest and provide much-needed funding to poorer nations, which are already heavily impacted by the escalating climate crisis.

Instead, rich countries are racing in the opposite direction: the [US, Canada, and just three other countries](#) are responsible for more than half of planned oil and gas expansion. UN governance failure is also to blame here, however, and urgently needs addressing. Even if COP had succeeded in a commitment to phase out fossil fuels, it could not be implemented without a binding treaty and enforcement mechanisms. Additionally, COP must demand reporting of any conflicts of interest and ban fossil fuel executives and lobbyists from tainting any more climate summits.

The [Loss & Damage Fund](#) could be an important first step, but without proper financing, it is condemned to fail. Loss and damage already costs more than \$400 billion annually, but COP28 has only pledged \$429 million in initial funding—a mere 0.1% of what is needed just for this year. By contrast, governments are using [\\$7 trillion of our money every year to subsidize fossil fuels](#) (despite the 1 in 5 deaths—[12 million](#) people annually—caused by air pollution alone) while the oil industry rakes in [obscene profits](#).

That said, even a fully-financed Loss and Damage Fund can never fix a dysfunctional economic system which is fundamentally flawed, is based on [endless growth, overconsumption, and extractivism](#), and is guaranteed to accelerate the global crisis. [Studies have demonstrated](#) that greenhouse gas emissions are firmly linked to resource exploitation and GDP growth. We have no choice but to create an economic system which aligns with the goals of a fair and equal transition, because the current one has failed both humans and all other 10 million life forms on this planet. Implementing a [low-carbon economy is cheaper than sustaining the catastrophic costs of climate change](#), but the need to maintain and grow profit is preventing any progress. Profit will never fix what profit has created.

[1.5°C is dead, and 2°C will be dead by 2050](#), if not earlier, if we continue down this path. [2023 was the hottest year on record](#); we passed [2.0°C for the first time in history](#), and [2024 is projected to be even hotter](#). Human behaviors inflict massive planetary stress beyond the burning of fossil fuels. [“20 of the 35 planetary vital signs are now showing record extremes.”](#)

██████ cannot entrust the fight for all life to the very politicians, companies, and markets that forced us into this existential crisis in the first place and who are right now brutally marching us off the cliff. This disastrous COP28 marks the end of vague political promises. The people of Earth are on to the lies. It is time to [listen to the scientists](#), hundreds of whom have been driven out of their labs and into the streets to engage in civil disobedience: if we want to avoid condemning both this generation and all that follow to the worst outcomes of the climate crisis, we must all rise together in order to keep fossil fuels in the ground. The time is now.

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