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## Issues and Options for the Topics of Dialogues Under the UAE Just Transition Work Programme

*Submission to the UNFCCC*

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### A. Summary

- With new nationally determined contributions (**NDCs**) due in the first quarter of 2025, this year is crucial to take forward the signals in the global stocktake (**GST**) outcome, translating them into effective domestic policies and measures as well as enhancing international cooperation on climate action.
- The UAE Just Transition work programme (**JTWP**) launched at COP28 provides an opportunity this year to focus discussion on key just transition issues related to the signals coming from the GST.
- The following topics could be taken up as dialogues in 2024:
  - Facilitating a just transition away from fossil fuels, including by tripling renewable energy capacity
  - Facilitating a just transition for sustainable agriculture and resilient food systems
- This paper considers:
  - key challenges and barriers to address in dialogues
  - key dimensions of the just transition away from fossil fuels and the just transition for sustainable agriculture and resilient food systems for discussion under the JTWP
  - key actors that could be involved in the dialogues, noting that the JTWP should take a multi-stakeholder approach, encouraging knowledge sharing by NPS through participation and presentations of lessons learned
  - principles to guide future work under the JTWP
  - options for possible outputs by the JTWP.



## B. Context

1. To realize the purpose and long-term goals of the Paris Agreement and to secure a sustainable future, the GST outcome at COP28 identified a number of important, transformative signals. Informed by the signals from the GST,<sup>1</sup> each Party is expected to communicate a new NDC representing a “progression” beyond its previous NDC and reflecting its “highest possible ambition.”<sup>2</sup>
2. With new NDCs due in the first quarter of 2025, this year is crucial to take forward the signals in the GST outcome, translating them into effective domestic policies and measures as well as enhancing international cooperation on climate action. However, substantial barriers and challenges remain for the global community to advance on the signals agreed at COP28, including their inclusion in NDCs and subsequent implementation. One key challenge is ensuring just transition pathways to achieve the Paris Agreement goals.
3. In the context of the outcomes of the GST, the UAE JTWP launched at COP28 provides an opportunity this year to focus discussion on key just transition issues related to the signals coming from the GST, in line with the JTWP’s objective to “discuss pathways to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement outlined in Article 2, paragraph 1, in the context of Article 2, paragraph 2.”<sup>3</sup> It should pursue its objective in a manner that accounts for the differentiated national circumstances of Parties and ensures that no one is left behind.
4. This submission elaborates potential topics for the two JTWP dialogues in 2024 and outlines potential outputs for the work programme.

## C. Topics for dialogue

**The following topics could be taken up as dialogues in 2024:**

- Facilitating a just transition away from fossil fuels, including by tripling renewable energy capacity
- Facilitating a just transition for sustainable agriculture and resilient food systems

<sup>1</sup> UN Framework Convention on Climate Change [hereinafter UNFCCC], Further guidance in relation to the mitigation section of decision 1/CP.21, Decision 4/CMA.1, Annex I, ¶4(c) (19 March 2019), [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2018\\_3\\_add1\\_advance.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2018_3_add1_advance.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> UNFCCC, “Paris Agreement,” Art. 3 and Art. 4 ¶ 3, conclusion date: December 12, 2015, United Nations Treaty Series Online, registration no. I-54113, [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english\\_paris\\_agreement.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> UNFCCC, United Arab Emirates Just Transition work programme, Decision -/CMA.5 ¶ 1 (December 13, 2023), [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma5\\_auv\\_5\\_JTWP.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma5_auv_5_JTWP.pdf) (Advance unedited version).



## Facilitating a just transition away from fossil fuels, including by tripling renewable energy capacity

5. At COP28, the outcome included key signals to Parties, recognizing the need for “transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade, so as to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science” and “tripling renewable energy capacity globally and doubling the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030.”<sup>4</sup>
6. Implementing these signals will be critical to achieving net zero by 2050 and staying on track to meet global temperature targets.
7. To implement the signals effectively, Parties will need clear strategies for how to protect the rights of communities, including “the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, the right to health, the rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity,” as outlined in the COP28 decision on the JTWP.<sup>5</sup>
8. The JTWP is uniquely positioned to discuss the conditions for a transition away from fossil fuels that accounts for the disproportionate impact that climate change and climate policy can have on communities that suffer the most despite contributing the least to greenhouse gas emissions.
9. Achieving the target to triple renewable energy and double energy efficiency, and facilitating a transition away from fossil fuels, will be essential in this critical decade.
10. Implementation of the renewable energy transition could face significant **challenges and barriers** that affect workers and vulnerable communities, including:<sup>6</sup>
  - regulatory hurdles, including mitigation targets for buyers, high upfront capital costs (particularly in developing countries), perceived investment risks (higher risks for investors in new markets), the amount of land required, and the need for public acceptance
  - lack of accessible support and human capacity for electricity sector transition in developing countries, including grid flexibility mechanisms and services
  - negative social impacts of plant shutdowns, such as the loss of jobs and livelihoods
  - impact of the removal of fossil fuel subsidies.

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<sup>4</sup> UNFCCC, Matters relating to the global stocktake under the Paris Agreement, Decision -/CMA.5, ¶ 28(d),(a) (December 13, 2023), [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma5\\_auv\\_4\\_gst.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma5_auv_4_gst.pdf) (Advance unedited version).

<sup>5</sup> UNFCCC, United Arab Emirates Just Transition work programme, Decision -/CMA.5.

<sup>6</sup> Guilanpour et al., *A Solutions-oriented Approach to the Paris Agreement's Global Stocktake*, <https://www.c2es.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/a-solutions-oriented-approach-to-the-paris-agreement-s-global-stocktake.pdf>.



11. The JTWP dialogue could cover **key dimensions** of a just transition away from fossil fuels, including:
- strategies for transitioning away from fossil fuels, including through tripling renewable energy capacity, doubling energy efficiency and phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, that “leave no one behind”
  - best practice for developing participatory approaches to a just transition away from fossil fuels in distinct local contexts
  - knowledge sharing and case study presentations of successful just transition initiatives from a range of regional and country contexts, including examples of gender-responsive renewable energy transitions, pathways for poverty eradication, intergenerational equity, and social equity
  - ways that NDCs and long-term low emission development strategies (**LT-LEDS**) can complement the JTWP in a manner that is not prescriptive, but rather facilitates locally driven, participatory approaches
  - lessons learned from Just Transition Energy Partnerships (**JETPs**)
  - means and forms of delivery of finance that ensures just and equitable transitions away from fossil fuels
  - best practices for skills development to support workforce transition in the energy sector.
12. The JTWP should take a multi-stakeholder approach, encouraging knowledge sharing by NPS through participation and presentations of lessons learned. **Key actors** that could be involved include:
- the **High Level Climate Champions (HLCs)**, including insights from the **2030 Climate Solutions**<sup>7</sup> and links to the 2030 Breakthroughs (particularly the **Clean Power Breakthrough**, which aims for solar and wind to make up at least 40 percent—and all renewables to make up at least 60 percent—of global electricity generation by 2030)<sup>8</sup> and the Breakthrough Agenda’s (particularly the **Power Breakthrough**, which aims for clean power to be the most affordable and reliable option for all countries to meet their power needs efficiently by 2030).<sup>9</sup>
  - **Key country partners, banks, subnational actors, and civil society supporting current JETPs**
  - the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**.
13. Insights and lessons learned from initiatives seeking to accelerate the energy transition may be useful. These initiatives include, for example:
- those working to mobilize finance for electricity sector transition, including the **Energy Transition Accelerator**
  - **Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL)**, which works in partnership with the United Nations to drive the achievement of SDG7, expanding access to energy, increasing the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix, and doubling the rate of improvement in energy efficiency<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> UNFCCC, “2030 Climate Solutions: Implementation Roadmap,” *High Level Climate Champion*, December 2023, <https://climatechampions.unfccc.int/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2030-Climate-Solutions-Publication-Implementation-roadmap.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Climate Champions, “2030 Breakthroughs,” UNFCCC, n.d., <https://climatechampions.unfccc.int/system/breakthroughs/>.

<sup>9</sup> Climate Champions, “Breakthroughs Agenda,” UNFCCC, n.d., <https://breakthroughagenda.org/#targets>.

<sup>10</sup> “Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7),” *Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL)*, n.d., <https://www.seforall.org/sustainabledevelopment-goal-7-sdg7>.



- the **Powering Past Coal Alliance**, which was launched at COP23 and is a coalition of 48 national governments, 48 subnational governments, and 71 global organizations “working to advance the transition from unabated coal power generation to clean energy.”<sup>11</sup>

### Facilitating a just transition for sustainable agriculture and resilient food systems

14. COP28 renewed attention to the vital role of food systems in climate action. The GST outcome urged Parties to attain “climate-resilient food and agricultural production and supply and distribution of food, as well as increasing sustainable and regenerative production and equitable access to adequate food and nutrition for all.”<sup>12</sup> More than 150 countries also signed on to the UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action at COP28.<sup>13</sup>
15. A transition to resilient food systems must be a just one. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (*IPCC*), behavior change in diets and food waste is not only highly beneficial for ecosystems and ecosystem services, but it can also reduce the exposure or vulnerability for more than 5 billion people.<sup>14</sup>
16. Transforming agriculture and food systems will have a great impact on tackling the climate and biodiversity global crises, with potential benefits that increase human resilience. It can also contribute to greenhouse gas emissions reductions while establishing sustainable food production alternatives, inspired by agro-ecological approaches, that are affordable and effective, although the transition will require time and money.<sup>15</sup>
17. Building sustainable food systems could face significant **challenges and barriers** that affect workers and vulnerable communities, including:<sup>16</sup>
  - some current food production areas will be unsuitable due to climate change, increasing economic strain on farmers and causing increases in climate-induced migration
  - climate change will increase the number of people at risk of hunger in mid-century, concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Central America
  - increased ground-level carbon dioxide concentration will reduce the nutrient density of some crops, exacerbating food insecurity
  - slower implementation of electrification measures in rural areas, coupled with potentially disruptive fossil fuel subsidy phase outs, could impact agricultural production in the absence of alternative clean power or low-carbon fuels.

<sup>11</sup> “Who We Are,” *Powering Past Coal Alliance*, n.d., <https://poweringpastcoal.org/>.

<sup>12</sup> UNFCCC, Matters relating to the global stocktake under the Paris Agreement, Decision -/CMA.5, ¶ 62(b).

<sup>13</sup> “COP28 UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action,” *COP28 UAE*, n.d., <https://www.cop28.com/en/food-and-agriculture>.

<sup>14</sup> IPCC, *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the IPCC*, (Geneva, Switzerland, 2023), Ch. 17, figure 17.3.

<sup>15</sup> United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), “Global Land Outlook 2,” (2022), 5, <https://www.unccd.int/resources/global-land-outlook/glo2>.

<sup>16</sup> Kaveh Guilanpour et al., *A Solutions-oriented Approach to the Paris Agreement’s Global Stocktake* (Arlington, VA: Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, November 2023), <https://www.c2es.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/a-solutions-oriented-approach-to-the-paris-agreement-s-global-stocktake.pdf>.



18. A dialogue under the JTWP could cover **key dimensions** of a just transition for resilient food systems and sustainable agriculture, including:
- best practice for just transition pathways toward climate-smart and sustainable agriculture
  - case studies of successful participatory approaches to scaling regenerative agriculture practices, including examples of gender-responsive agriculture
  - ways that national adaptation plans (**NAPs**), NDCs, and LT-LEDs can complement the JTWP and integrate agriculture and food systems in a manner that is not prescriptive, but rather facilitates locally driven, participatory approaches
  - means and forms of delivery of finance for resilient food systems
  - best practices for skills development to support workforce transition in the agriculture sector, including by building synergies with and drawing lessons from the Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security.<sup>17</sup>
19. In approaching this challenge, the JTWP could similarly encourage knowledge sharing by NPS through participation and presentations of lessons learned. Several initiatives exist that promote resilient food systems, including:
- the **Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security**, which is a four-year work program established at COP27 that builds upon the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (**KJWA**) to address food security, hunger, and the adverse effects of climate<sup>18, 19</sup>
  - the **Marrakech Partnership**, which works together with multiple organizations and initiatives in advancing these solutions, including Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate (**AIM4C**), Africa Food Systems Transformation Initiative (**AFSTI**), Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**), EAT Foundation, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, the Sustainable Consumption and Diets Platform, Global Alliance for Future of Food, and Good Food Institute<sup>20</sup>
  - the **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)**,<sup>21</sup> which is led by the United Nations Environment Programme (**UNEP**) and the Food and Agriculture Organization in collaboration with the secretariats of the Rio convention, other relevant multilateral environmental agreements, and entities of the United Nations system<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United States, "Agriculture experts gather in Rome ahead of COP28 for First Informal Dialogue on Sharm el-Sheikh joint work," October 11, 2023, <https://www.fao.org/climate-change/news/news-detail/agriculture-experts-gather-in-rome-ahead-of-cop28-for-first-informal-dialogue-on-sharm-el-sheikh-joint-work/en>.

<sup>18</sup> United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, "Preventing, Halting and Reversing Loss of Nature," n.d., <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org>.

<sup>19</sup> UNFCCC, Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security, Decision 3/CP.27 (17 March 2022), [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2022\\_10a01\\_adv.pdf#page=16](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2022_10a01_adv.pdf#page=16).

<sup>20</sup> UNFCCC, "Marrakech Partnership Background," n.d., [https://unfccc.int/climate-action/marrakech-partnership/background?gclid=Cj0KCQiA5rGuBhCnARIsAN1vgSfc3TYk749nJnl9Xx-QXoje4ry9fT4bU\\_kABdTAvZK137HQuM7IUkaArorEALw\\_wcB](https://unfccc.int/climate-action/marrakech-partnership/background?gclid=Cj0KCQiA5rGuBhCnARIsAN1vgSfc3TYk749nJnl9Xx-QXoje4ry9fT4bU_kABdTAvZK137HQuM7IUkaArorEALw_wcB).

<sup>21</sup> United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, "Preventing, Halting and Reversing Loss of Nature," n.d., <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org>.

<sup>22</sup> United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), A/RES/73/284, 69th plenary meeting, 1 March 2019.



- the **Coalition of Action for Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for Children and All**, which was formed as an outcome of the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit and brings together UN Member States, UN agencies, civil society organizations, academic institutions, and social movements<sup>23</sup>
- the **Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi)**, which has elaborated the Forest, Land and Agriculture (**FLAG**) Guidance to provide a standard method for companies in land-intensive sectors to set science-based targets that include land-based emission reductions and removals.<sup>24</sup>

### Topics for future dialogues

20. Beyond 2024, future topics for dialogues under the JTWP could include:

- just transitions toward climate resilience, including through establishing just early warning systems and climate risk reduction services
- just transition pathways for preventing biodiversity and ecosystem loss.

### D. Other views on work under the JTWP

21. Future work under the JTWP should be guided by the following principles:

- Work should enhance information sharing through the exchange and sharing of experiences, best practices, and lessons learned with just transition and sustainable development; and sharing understanding of just transition in the context of national circumstances.
- The JTWP should complement other workstreams under the UNFCCC, rather than duplicate work.
- Work should be cooperative and not confrontational.
- Work and future dialogues should mainstream cross-cutting themes, including:
  - just transition pathways for the workforce
  - gender-responsive just transition pathways
  - just transition pathways for poverty eradication
  - social and environmental equality/climate justice
  - just transition pathways for intergenerational equity.

22. Possible outputs could include:<sup>25</sup>

- technical papers
- case studies
- guidelines
- gap analysis
- a “toolbox” of best practices across different sectors

<sup>23</sup> World Health Organization (WHO), “The Coalition of Action on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for Children and All,” n.d., <https://www.who.int/initiatives/food-systems-for-health/the-coalition-of-action-on-healthy-diets-from-sustainable-food-systems-for-children-and-all>.

<sup>24</sup> Science Based Targets, “Forest, Land, and Agriculture (FLAG),” n.d., <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/sectors/forest-land-and-agriculture>.

<sup>25</sup> Jennifer Huang, *Issues and Options for a Just Transition Work Programme* (Arlington, VA: Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, November 2023), <https://www.c2es.org/document/issues-and-options-for-a-just-transition-work-program/>.



- an assessment of just transition work across other agenda items
- annual reports, which could feed into the high-level ministerial roundtable on just transition
- compilation report(s)
- summary reports on dialogues
- CMA decision that includes summary of actions and initiatives under the work program and the outcome of the ministerial roundtable.

## **E. C2ES Resources**

**Issues and Options for a Just Transition Work Programme** (November 2023)

<https://www.c2es.org/document/issues-and-options-for-a-just-transition-work-program/>

**A Solutions Oriented Approach to the Global Stocktake** (November 2023)

<https://www.c2es.org/document/a-solutions-oriented-approach-to-the-paris-agreements-global-stocktake/>

**Reinvigorating the UN Climate Regime in Wider Landscape of Climate Action** (November 2023)

<https://www.c2es.org/document/re-invigorating-the-un-climate-regime/>