

Expectations on Sweden and the EU ahead of COP28, by 27 member organisations in CONCORD Sweden's working group for Environmental and Climate Justice.

COP28: A CALL FOR AMBITION AND JUSTICE

Throughout the year, we have witnessed the devastating effects of the climate crisis all over the world. The climate crisis is a crisis for global justice, where those who have contributed the least to global warming are most affected by its consequences. Ahead of COP28, these are four areas where Sweden and the EU need to take action:

- ➡ Cut emissions and put an end to fossil fuels.
- ➡ Finance for the most affected groups and countries.
- ➡ Inclusive decision-making and broad participation.
- ➡ Tackle the climate and nature crisis together.

The 2023 IPCC Synthesis report shows yet again alarming current and future impacts of a changing climate and emphasises the urgency of action.¹ The effects of climate change can be felt and seen all over the world, but countries and communities that have contributed the least to the climate crisis are disproportionately affected. While prioritising equity, inclusion and a just transition in climate action is a matter of climate justice, these factors also improve the sustainability of outcomes, according to IPCC.² It is high time for high-income countries to take real responsibility for their greenhouse gas emissions and to put the people most negatively impacted by the climate crisis at the center of their policies and actions.

As countries meet again for negotiations at COP28 in Dubai, we expect Sweden and the EU to show leadership in promoting climate justice, human rights, gender equality and children's rights in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. This would entail the following more ambitious commitments and measures for mitigation, climate finance, inclusion and tackling the climate and nature crises together.

CUT EMISSIONS AND PUT AN END TO FOSSIL FUELS

The nationally determined contributions (NDCs) submitted by Parties so far will not put the world on track to meet the 1.5C temperature target.³ The EU has taken important steps through its new climate law, but its targets are still insufficient and exceeds the Union's fair share of emissions.⁴ Sweden awaits a new climate action plan, but it is clear from the state budget for 2024 that current policies will not meet the national climate goals. On the contrary, projections show that emissions will increase in the coming years with the government's priorities. Ambitions must be scaled up, while also ensuring a just transition that benefits marginalised or socio-economically disadvantaged communities and people. Large emitting sectors and actors, including corporations, must be held accountable for their climate and environmental impacts, and be more strongly regulated.



Sweden and the EU should:

- Lead by example and publicly commit to revising the emission reduction target in the **EU's NDC** to at least 75% by 2030, relative to 1990 levels, and encourage other parties to sharpen their plans and targets. Sweden should keep and sharpen its national climate goals and step up policies and actions to meet them.
- Ensure that the **Global Stocktake** outcome reflects the latest science, as set out in the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, and is guided by the principles of equity and of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.
- Work for a just and **equitable phase-out of fossil fuels**. This includes phasing out existing fossil fuel production, putting an end to all exploration of fossil fuels and supporting real solutions for a just transition. The EU should refrain from promoting uneconomic and technical solution

¹ [IPCC 2023 Climate Change Synthesis report.](#)

² Ibid, section C5.2

³ According to the IPCC 2023 Synthesis report, global greenhouse gas emissions need to peak before 2025 at the latest, and be reduced by at least 43% by 2030, and by at least 60% by 2035, compared to 2019 levels.

⁴ Climate Action Tracker: [EU | Climate Action Tracker](#)

such as CCS and CCU⁵ rather than tackling the main root cause of the climate crises – fossil fuels.

- Use the dialogues on **Article 2.1c**⁶ to outline an equitable approach to international financial reform including fossil fuel finance phaseout, and action on debt and tax justice. Parties should commit to phasing out all fossil fuel subsidies, without qualifying language or circumstances.
- Take a cautious approach towards **Article 6 and carbon markets** as these mechanisms involve risks related to double counting of emission reductions and finance, additionality, ambition, and adverse social and environmental impacts on local communities.
- Work for mandatory target-setting and reporting for the climate impact of **sectors with large emissions**, including military production and activities, and international aviation and shipping.

FINANCE FOR THE MOST AFFECTED GROUPS AND COUNTRIES

The IPCC report also highlights the growing costs of inaction. There is a vast and growing gap between climate finance needs of countries and communities in the Global South and the current climate finance available. Finance for adaptation, as well as for climate induced loss and damage, is particularly important to the most affected countries and communities. To date, the climate finance commitment of 100 billion USD annually for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries has still not been met.⁷ Furthermore, adaptation receives far less support than mitigation, despite the urgent need to build resilience that safeguards peoples' fundamental rights in a changing climate, including the right to clean water and sanitation. Funding pledges for new and additional finance for loss and damage are still lacking.

In addition, the larger part of public climate finance is delivered in the form of loans, and contributions are rarely new and additional⁸ to ODA commitments, thus competing with other development priorities within countries' ODA budgets. Climate resilience can only be built in combination with overall sustainable development and achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Studies also show that climate finance efforts are largely gender blind⁹ and insensitive to children's rights, and most of the finance is difficult to access for local initiatives and CSOs.



Sweden and the EU should:

- Ensure delivery on the **annual USD 100 billion climate finance goal**, disbursed on average over 2020-2025 to make up for shortfalls in earlier years, and without contributing to debt burden on countries vulnerable to both debt and climate crises. This includes scaling up Sweden's and other EU members' own contributions of grants-based public climate finance, while making sure these contributions complement and are additional to, rather than replace or undermine, other development finance priorities.
- Promote a roadmap for UNFCCC Parties' delivery on the promise **to double adaptation finance** by 2025 from 2019 levels¹⁰, in particular targeting communities, minorities and countries that are hardest hit by the climate crisis. A larger portion of adaptation finance should support

⁵ Carbon capture and storage (CCS) and carbon capture and utilisation (CCU)

⁶ Sharm el-Sheikh dialogues: Sharm el-Sheikh dialogue | [UNFCCC](#)

⁷ According to the [latest compilation by OECD DAC](#), climate finance provided and mobilized in 2020 amounted to \$83.3 billion in 2020. 2021 figures are not yet available.

⁸ In several agreements under the UNFCCC, it is stated that climate finance should be new and additional to previous commitments.

⁹ See for example Oxfam's, page 30.

¹⁰ Agreed in the [Glasgow Climate Pact](#) from COP26.

locally led initiatives and adhere to the principles of locally led adaptation¹¹.

- With regard to the loss and damage finance arrangements, commit to new and additional **loss and damage finance**, to be delivered in the form of grants. Also support making the new loss and damage fund accountable to the Parties to the Paris Agreement, and ensure that it is guided by democratic principles, equal access and non-discrimination.
- In the negotiations for a **New Collective Quantified Goal**, support a quantum that responds to developing countries' real needs and is science-based. The new goal should have sub-goals for mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage, and have a core of public finance contribution that is clearly defined as new and additional to ODA.
- In the context of both the NCQG and the loss and damage fund, work for the introduction of **innovative sources** of climate finance, including global, EU and national taxes and levies, designed in a way that promotes global and social equity and adheres to the Polluter Pays Principle.¹²
- Work to ensure that all mechanisms guarantee **rights-based and gender transformative approaches**, as well as increased access for, and consultation with, organisations by and for affected communities. These include Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), small scale farmers and fishers, children and youth, women's rights groups and displaced communities. Reporting on gender integration to the UNFCCC should be mandatory for all types of climate finance.

INCLUSIVE DECISION-MAKING AND BROAD PARTICIPATION

Inclusive, transparent and accountable decision-making is imperative to achieve a just transition for everyone. Like most global conversations and negotiations, those on climate action risk being dominated by powerful countries and interests. Representatives of local communities most affected and rights-based civil society organisations – including those focused on the rights of women, indigenous peoples, children, youth and people with disabilities – need to be included in climate negotiations and processes at all levels. These are often the voices that emphasise human rights, gender equality, participation, intergenerational equity and a just transition, while also representing hugely diverse groups of people and interests that all must have influence in decision-making, in defining the problems and in the creation of sustainable solutions. Religious actors with a strong grassroots base have a particular responsibility and role to play in norm-setting. Rights-groups have raised concerns about the restrictions of civic space in the United Arab Emirates and how these will affect the civil society participation during the conference¹³, similar to the troubling situation at COP27 in Egypt.¹⁴



Sweden and the EU should:

- Be a strong voice for a just and inclusive people-centered approach to climate action. This includes promoting human rights, gender equality, participation, and equity perspectives in climate commitments, decision-making, implementation and reporting processes at all levels.
- Ensure respect for the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, expression and participation at and in connection with COP28 and future COPs. Civil society actors, including from the host

¹¹ [Principles for Locally Led Adaptation](#), as of November 2022 endorsed by over 100 organisations.

¹² For more suggestion on equitable innovative funding sources, see [New Sources for Public Climate Finance and for the Loss and Damage Fund - CAN Europe](#).

¹³ See comments by [Amnesty International](#) and [Human Rights Watch](#).

¹⁴ See for example: [Egypt: UN experts alarmed by harassment of civil society actors at COP27 climate summit | OHCHR](#).

country, must be allowed to participate, without surveillance, threats and other intimidations.¹⁵ Host countries of coming COPs must be able to guarantee, and demonstrate a track record of, respect for and protection of civil society organisations' right to participation.

- Enable civil society participation at COP28 and future COPs through financial assistance and removal of practical barriers for meaningful participation, especially for civil society from the Global South. This includes providing spaces for meetings and manifestations on site, improving access to information and transportation at the venue, and ensuring access to affordable lodging and food.¹⁶
- Create opportunities and safe spaces for gender-balanced participation in climate-related decision-making, including NDC processes and international negotiations, and actively contribute to ensuring compulsory monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the [Enhanced Lima Work Programme and its Gender Action Plan](#). Documents should consistently refer to gender as opposed to 'women and men'.
- Offer meaningful opportunities for children and youth to demand justice and accountability for climate related rights violations at all levels, and recognise children and youth as important actors in addressing the climate crisis, while ensuring that they do not have to shoulder the burden of solving it.¹⁷
- Work for enhanced transparency in the implementation and reporting of the Paris agreement to improve possibilities for civil society and the general public to hold decision-makers accountable for their commitments.
- Avoid corporate capture¹⁸ of climate negotiations that risk shaping commitments after private interests, instead of global interests. This would include limiting accreditations for fossil fuel lobbyists and companies in favour of civil society participation, ensuring civil society access to all spaces where corporate actors are allowed, demanding full transparency of all financial sponsoring of sessions, exhibitions, and other visible or invisible forms of presence.

TACKLE THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISES TOGETHER

The climate crisis and loss of biodiversity are intrinsically linked. Whereas climate change is one of the main drivers for biodiversity loss, high biodiversity is a prerequisite for resilient ecosystems and in regulating the climate. Food production and consumption is one of the critical areas in which climate change mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity policies intersect. Today's food systems contribute to one-third of global anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, and agricultural land-use change is the leading cause of biodiversity loss.¹⁹ Another important intersection between climate and biodiversity are policy initiatives such as ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions (NbS) to climate change. NbS such as ecosystem and wetlands protection or conservation of land, freshwater systems and sea, are already practiced by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) and can significantly reduce global net emission. However, there is a worrying development when NbS are being misused for greenwashing. Promoting NbS as car-

¹⁵ This includes providing protection for environmental and climate defenders, in line with the Human Rights Council resolution 40/11.

¹⁶ Report from Global Focus on how to improve meaningful participation at COPs: [Ensuring Civil societys Vital role in global climate policy.pdf \(globaltfokus.dk\)](#)

¹⁷ The urgency of addressing the climate crisis to safeguard children's rights are outlined here: [General comment No. 26 \(2023\) on children's rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change | OHCHR](#)

¹⁸ [About Corporate Capture | ESCR-Net](#)

¹⁹ [Chatham house: Aligning food systems with climate and biodiversity targets](#)

bon “offsets” and as part of Article 6 projects is not a solution to climate change. This particularly affects IPLCs in low-income countries and risks undermining both human rights and environmental goals. It is imperative that climate change and the loss of biodiversity are tackled together and not as separate issues. Using Nbs as a loophole, without transparency and with the lack of stringent rules, to keep up a business-as-usual scenario is not a good solution.



Sweden and the EU should:

- Support increased integration and synergies, along with commitments and adequate finance, for actions under the climate change and biodiversity conventions, while keeping financial commitments and reporting separate to avoid double-counting.
- Promote solutions that guarantee both climate and biodiversity benefits, while ensuring respect for the human rights of IPLCs as well as gender equality. All investments in NbS must be based on functional and sustainable local solutions, and be developed together with IPLCs in line with their free, prior and informed consent.
- Ensure that states and business actors enact their obligations to protect and respect the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and condemn threats and attacks against environmental and human rights defenders. Specific gender-based violence and threats that face many women environmental and human rights defenders must be acknowledged.
- Promote a food system transformation based on food sovereignty and the principles of agroecology that is consistent with climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity targets. In the development of the new work program for agriculture, show support for three new thematic workshops planned on the themes “agroecological methods”, “fisheries and cooperation” and “synergies and communication”.

SIGNED BY:

Act Church of Sweden

ActionAid Sweden

Afrikagrupperna

Amazon Watch Sweden

Barnfonden

Fairtrade Sweden

Framtidsjorden

Friends of the Earth Sweden

IM Sweden

Islamic Relief Sweden

Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation

Left International Forum

LM International (Läkarmissionen)

LSU– The National Council of Swedish

Children and Youth Organisations

Oxfam Sweden

Plan International Sweden

PMU

Save the Children Sweden

Swedish Mission Council

Swedish Society for Nature Conservation

Swedwatch

The Hunger Project Sweden

The Swallows India Bangladesh

Vi Agroforestry

WaterAid Sweden

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Women’s International League for Peace and

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