



## **GELEDÉS - BLACK WOMEN'S INSTITUTE**

### **TECHNICAL NOTE - First Conference on the Transition Away from Fossil Fuels, Santa Marta - Colombia**

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### **Guidelines and principles for the anti-racist confrontation of fossil fuels**

This document presents guidelines and principles for the anti-racist confrontation of fossil fuels in the context of the climate crisis, placing this debate at the center of contemporary disputes over life, territory, and sovereignty. The climate crisis is understood here as the material expression of a historical process of accumulation based on the expropriation of the lives of People of African Descent, Indigenous, and peripheral populations. The so-called “sacrifice zones,” established in racialized territories where exploitation, pollution, illness, and premature death are concentrated, are not side effects of the system, but rather a condition of its operation, sustaining global energy and economic wealth.

The so-called energy transition, when conducted under technocratic and colonial parameters, risks merely reconfiguring this same colonial logic in new forms, maintaining extraction, inequality, and territorial violence. Therefore, this document argues that it is not only about decarbonizing the economy, but about simultaneously confronting structural racism, the coloniality of power, and the unequal global distribution of life and death.

Ending fossil fuels, from this perspective, is not a technical adjustment, but a demand for historical reparation and racial justice. It implies the restitution of territories, the restoration of the material conditions of life, and the recognition of the knowledge and practices of People of African Descent, Indigenous, and traditional communities as central to the transition and to any possible climate future. Ultimately, it is about affirming a general emancipation that repositions life—human and non-human—at the center of global climate governance. Reinforcing the decision of the document of the United Arab Emirates Just Transition Work Programme, reaffirming:

There is no just transition without reparation. There is no legitimate governance without the sovereign presence of the peoples most impacted, who nonetheless are those who produce the most solutions on how to sustain life in their territories. The Santa Marta 2026 Conference has the historic opportunity to inscribe this understanding into the architecture of global climate cooperation. General

Emancipation is not a distant utopia: it is the condition for any other future to be possible.

**In addition, this document is guided by:**

- [Paris Agreement](#) - international treaty on climate change that establishes legally binding guidelines and guides signatory countries to adopt measures to limit global warming.
- [Durban Declaration and Programme of Action](#) - a document with guidelines for the climate agenda historically built in consensus with People of African Descent civil society. Measures for a just transition must be formulated in light of environmental and climate justice; therefore, it is essential that the notion of justice always includes racial and ethnic equity.
- [A/HRC/59/42: The imperative to decarbonize our economies - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change](#) - The text recognizes that the expansion of fossil fuel production generates interconnected, severe, and irreversible impacts on the rights to life, health, water, food, culture, and self-determination, disproportionately affecting Indigenous peoples, People of African Descent, peasants, and traditional communities, as well as women and children.
- [Resolution 59/25 - adopted by the UN Human Rights Council on July 8, 2025](#) - Human rights and climate change: The Council urged States to take effective measures to meet, at a minimum, the new collective quantified goal on climate finance, while making additional efforts to assist developing countries in their adaptation and mitigation initiatives, including in the pursuit of just, equitable, inclusive, and sustainable transition pathways from a high-carbon economy to a low-carbon economy.
- [United Arab Emirates Just Transition Work Programme](#) - The Just Transition mechanism represents the main achievement of COP30 for workers and communities worldwide. No other COP decision has ever presented such ambitious and comprehensive language on rights and inclusion: human rights; labor rights; the rights of Indigenous and People of African Descent; and strong references to gender equality, women's empowerment, education, youth development, and more.
- [UN General Assembly Resolution, on March 25, 2026](#), which qualifies the transatlantic trafficking of enslaved African people as “the most serious crime against humanity” and affirms the need “to remedy the historical injustices that affect Africans and people of African descent in order to promote justice, human rights, dignity, and reparation, and highlights that claims for reparation constitute a concrete measure to repair the historical injustices committed against Africans and people of African descent.”

In view of the above framework, we reinforce the following principle:

The confrontation of global dependence on fossil fuels must be guided by a **process of global historical reparation and self-determination of People of African Descent**, not limited to the mere technological substitution of energy sources. This implies ensuring that:

(i) People of African Descent will not be penalized again in the social, political, economic, and cultural spheres,

(ii) decisions, actions, and activities aimed at this purpose must combat the racial inequalities and discriminations that structure social reproduction broadly and in specific cases.

Accordingly, we present considerations and proposals for review:

### **Pillar 1**

- Titling of People of African Descent territories and promotion of land policies that legally support the existence of areas of common use.
  - Full and prior legal recognition of property rights over territories historically occupied by People of African Descent, including titling;
  - Establishment of community ownership models or binding co-ownership in specific cases.
- Strengthening of community councils in People of African Descent territories to deliberate on actions and activities related to the energy transition.
  - Special attention must be given to the participation of women of African descent in these councils.

### **Pillar 2**

- Infrastructure for renewable and non-renewable energy production must ensure the reduction of inequalities, without penalizing People of African Descent populations through:
  - (i) forced displacement of people and communities;
  - (ii) contamination of natural goods for use and enjoyment;
  - (iii) restriction of traditional and religious forms of interaction with nature.
- Special attention must be given to new projects related to changes in the energy matrix.
- Combat energy poverty.
  - Promote projects for the decentralization of energy generation through financial and institutional incentives, encouraging community initiatives and small-scale renewable energy generation projects that do not alter land use or cause expropriation processes in People of African Descent

territories.

- Prior implementation of Consultation Protocols and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) Terms in People of African Descent territories.
  - Strengthening of the effective power of veto, self-determination, and the right to say no.
- Establishment of mechanisms for the direct redistribution of profits and benefits for all actions and activities aimed at reducing fossil fuels.
  - Creation of autonomous territorial funds managed by community councils in People of African Descent territories;
  - Creation of redistribution mechanisms in urban contexts, with priority allocation to housing and transportation projects in urban peripheries.
- Application of the polluter pays principle with a racial justice approach, ensuring that the costs of reparation and remediation are not transferred to States or affected communities, although they should be managed by them.
- Creation of international mechanisms that strengthen the accountability of companies and States, including the advancement of binding treaties on business and human rights.
  - Application of the polluter pays principle with a racial justice approach, ensuring that the costs of reparation and remediation are not transferred to States or affected communities, although they should be managed by them.
- Creation of international mechanisms that strengthen the accountability of companies and States, including the advancement of binding treaties on business and human rights.
  - Expansion of corporate and state responsibilities regarding business activities related to fossil fuels and energy transition projects, in order to include obligations of historical reparation for the generated liabilities and full remediation for current violations, in line with the guidelines of the [United Nations Human Rights Council and the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#).

Integration of health and climate in the context of fossil fuels:

- Official recognition of which stages of the fossil fuel chain are potentially associated with health damage.
  - Promote epidemiological and toxicological research in affected territories, with a focus on race, gender, and territory;
  - Make the production and transparency of data on exposure to pollutants and health impacts mandatory;

- Incorporate these links into official protocols, guiding public policies and corporate accountability.

For pre-existing risk situations and disasters:

- Creation of mandatory reparation funds
  - Resources for this type of fund must be guaranteed by responsible companies and States, through direct transfer and/or taxation on fossil assets and profits;
  - Resource management must be carried out by the affected communities themselves, strengthening community councils, in partnership with States;

### **Pillar 3**

Governance within the UNFCCC:

- Strengthening the recognition of People of African Descent within the UNFCCC;
- Recognition of Environmental Racism in UNFCCC documents and mechanisms;
- Incorporation of racial equity criteria in all climate finance mechanisms.

Militarism:

- Recognize militarism as a structural driver of the climate crisis in international negotiations.
  - Eliminate current exemptions that exclude the military sector from climate commitments;
  - Make the full accounting of military emissions mandatory in national inventories.
    - Proposal: Develop a specific methodology within the IPCC for measuring these emissions.

Finally, it is understood as necessary to strengthen the production of racialized data, in order to make visible that environmental racism permeates non-renewable energy projects, such as fossil fuels, as well as projects aimed at transition through renewable energy, such as hydraulic, wind, and solar sources.

In this sense, we propose:

- Mapping of current oil and gas extraction and refining infrastructures, in order to generate global knowledge about sacrifice zones and systematize information on affected populations.
- Damage and loss reporting must include racial/ethnic disaggregation.
  - Establishment of accountability mechanisms that require State Parties to report differentiated impacts by race/ethnicity.