



# Joint Submission for the United Arab Emirates Just Transition Work Programme

February 2024

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The organizations endorsing this submission welcome the opportunity to present our opinions on the planned activities and potential subjects for discussion as part of the Just Transition Work Programme of the United Arab Emirates, as mentioned in FCCC/PA/CMA/2023/L.14. This resolution recognizes the necessity for Parties to adhere to, advance, and take into account their own obligations related to human rights within the scope of climate initiatives. Notably, it marks the first instance in a United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) decision that specifically addresses labor rights within the framework of the work programme's components.

The transition is inevitable, but justice is not. Achieving a just transition requires deep structural changes in systems of policy, infrastructure, technologies, scientific knowledge, and social and cultural practices. Just transitions demand profound systemic shifts beyond the energy sector alone to undo deeply entrenched legacies of exploitation, extraction, and socio-environmental harm inherent in the current economic system. For centuries, indigenous lands and rights of frontline communities have been threatened by colonizing interests seeking to appropriate value, resources, and profit from ancestral territories.

A just transition towards sustainable economies necessitates

- strong social consensus
- skill development
- broad-based societal awareness and engagement
- accessible and transparent information
- International cooperation
- Equitable benefit sharing

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement's Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) provide the foundational toolkit for implementing an accelerated just transition in an equitable, inclusive, sensible, rights-based, and responsive manner toward vulnerable communities. ACE supports the major system transformation needed to ensure people are informed, skilled, prepared, and active in delivering climate action. Thus, JTWP should complement the work of ACE at the international and national levels.

## INPUTS THEMES OF FOCUS IN 2024

The ACE Observatory and its partners view the UAE Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP) as a critical component to achieve the Paris Agreement goals. First and foremost, in our view the JTWP has the responsibility to catalyze comprehensive, equitable and swift transition from fossil fuel dependency to clean, renewable, and safe energy sources, aligning with the Paris Agreement's goals and human rights obligations. Its work should emphasize avoiding ineffective or harmful solutions such as questionable carbon credits and untested technological fixes that could extend the fossil fuel economy. The program must underscore the need for investments in renewable energies and a shift from current economic models driving unsustainable extraction practices linked to human rights abuses, including violations of Indigenous Peoples' rights and negative impacts from the mining of minerals for renewable technologies. The JTWP should call and enhance the capacity for policies that protect workers, communities, and ecosystems affected by the fossil fuel phase-out, ensuring an inclusive transition that addresses energy poverty and respects the rights of vulnerable groups. It also should highlight the importance of managing the demand for critical minerals essential for clean technologies, advocating for responsible sourcing, recycling, and fair redistribution, while addressing human rights abuses, including systemic forced labor, in the clean energy sector. This approach aims for a holistic transition that incorporates socio-economic considerations and natural resource governance.

We make the following suggestions regarding the work to be undertaken under the Work Programme and potential topics for the dialogues. These suggestions are based on the outcomes from the *COP28 Presidency Event: Ensuring a Fair, Inclusive, and Just Transition*. Where ACE practitioners discussed the crucial role Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) toolbox could play in providing enabling conditions, in particular through education and public awareness, training and public participation—in line with the objectives of the Convention and efforts to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.

A Just Transition must go beyond the energy sector ensuring all our systems are responsive to the new reality climate change is presenting. Coherent Just Transition can enable the connection with the Global Biodiversity Framework to achieve food security and increased ecosystem protection and restoration in a just and equitable way. Hence, the ACE Observatory is reframing the dialogues using the Ecological Transition narrative. Discussing "ecological transition" emphasizes the urgent need to shift towards sustainable living within planetary boundaries and safe, proven, and just renewable energy sources, highlighting the holistic approach required to address environmental challenges, as opposed to merely focusing on a "just transition," which often centers on equitable

job creation without fully addressing the broader, critical aspects of environmental sustainability and conservation.

### **Institutional and Legislative Arrangements for the Participatory Development of an Ecological Transition**

Broad, inclusive, and ongoing participation from diverse stakeholders is essential for just transition planning and policymaking. Governments must actively promote social dialogue and engagement with workers, employers, civil society, indigenous groups, women, youth, people with disability, and other stakeholders throughout the policy process – from conceptualization, including i.e. NDC and National Adaptation Plans (NAP) design, to implementation and review. This applies in particular to parliamentary chambers at all levels, as the institutions responsible for representing the people. Responding to the 1/CMA.4 ‘meaningful and effective social dialogue and participation of all stakeholders’ and CMA.5 decision for ‘inclusive and participatory approaches to just transitions that leave no one behind’ to be included in the WP, we suggest a first session of the JTWP focused on defining *leaving no one behind* and sharing development and delivery of participatory and inclusive Just Transition strategies.

The session must pay attention to the ‘*how to*’ including coordination mechanisms, institutions created or with new roles, processes implemented, equitable benefit sharing with frontline communities and indigenous people, decent work opportunities and alternative livelihoods efforts with and for non-state actors’ (NSA) involvement. It should respond to the following questions: What role does the NSA play in shaping the processes to create a JT policies and strategies? What are the best strategies to engage and leverage indigenous people, youth, women, and other frontline communities in JT implementation? What new governance structures are needed for delivering a Just Transition in an inclusive and participatory way? How can ACE skill development dimensions be leveraged to support a JT that ensures human and labor rights?

To ensure learning for enhanced Just Transition, lessons must be presented from both Parties’ and Observers’ views. Special attention should be given to inclusion and gender-sensitive considerations for indigenous, women, youth, and frontline communities. The session should allow a conversation on how to ensure and apply those learnings, including the consideration of the establishment of a Joint Party–Observers Advisory Body with a balanced representation of the NSA. This body could help in the development and diversity inclusion in the session for effectiveness.

### **Synergizing Efforts: ACE, Open Government, and Just Transition – A Convergence for Action**

The nexus between climate empowerment, open governance, and a just transition offers a unique opportunity to build resilient, inclusive, and sustainable societies. This session will serve as a platform to discuss how these areas can mutually reinforce each other to accelerate climate action, ensure equitable transitions, and empower communities. By bringing together diverse perspectives, the session will explore the role of open government principles and ACE toolbox in facilitating more effective and inclusive Just Transition.

This session aims to bring together practitioners, policymakers, and stakeholders involved in Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE), open government initiatives, and just transition strategies to foster a collaborative environment where these interconnected domains can synergize. The goal is to highlight innovative practices, share knowledge, and explore integrated approaches that enhance transparency, participation, and accountability in the context of sustainable and equitable climate action.

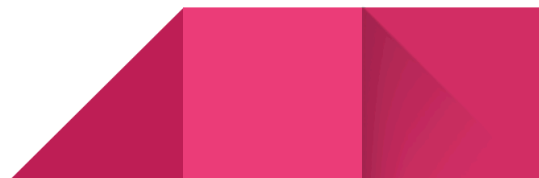
This session should explore success stories and lessons learned from integrating climate empowerment and open government principles to foster transparency, citizen participation, and accountability in Just Transition. More so, it should explore policy instruments, governance frameworks, and tools that facilitate a just transition by leveraging the principles of open government and ACE, including stakeholder engagement, information sharing, and public consultation. It should also discuss strategies for building capacity among policymakers and practitioners to implement integrated approaches to ACE, open government, and just transition, and enhancing public awareness and participation in these processes.

### **Fostering International Cooperation and Resource Mobilization for a Just and Ecological Transition**

The transition towards sustainable economies and societies requires not only a profound transformation within countries but also a robust framework for international cooperation and resource mobilization. This session will focus on creating a platform for dialogue among Parties, observers, and other stakeholders to discuss opportunities and challenges in fostering international partnerships, financial strategies, and technological innovations that support just and ecological transitions globally as a political precondition for climate action. This session should aim to explore mechanisms for enhancing international cooperation and mobilizing resources effectively to support a just and ecological transition. It seeks to identify actionable solutions for financial mechanisms, technology transfer, capacity building, and international partnerships that align with the long-term interdependent goals of sustainable development, climate justice, and ecological integrity.

This session should share successful examples of international collaboration that have and could lead to significant advancements in ecological transitions, including joint projects, shared research initiatives, and cross-border environmental conservation efforts. More so it should discuss and explore the equitable considerations for innovative funding solutions, including green bonds, climate finance, carbon pricing mechanisms, and international grants and loans for the support of just transitions in developing and vulnerable countries.

This session should discuss frameworks and agreements that facilitate the transfer of safe, proven, and just green technologies and skills development across borders, emphasizing the importance of accessible, affordable, and adaptable solutions for all countries. Special attention should be given to highlighting the role of civil society and indigenous communities in the resource mobilization priorities through investments, expertise, and grassroots initiatives.



The session will feature a mix of keynote presentations, panel discussions, and interactive workshops to allow for a comprehensive exploration of the topics. Workshops will focus on practical aspects of developing strategies for international cooperation and resource mobilization, with participants encouraged to contribute their insights and proposals. It is important that the session is co-created with a broad range of stakeholders, including the UNFCCC constituencies, to ensure diverse contributions and perspectives are part of the conversation.

A set of actionable recommendations for enhancing international cooperation and resource mobilization for just and ecological transitions. Identification of gaps and barriers in current international frameworks that hinder effective collaboration and resource allocation. Potentially an outcome could be a draft proposal for a global partnership initiative aimed at supporting just transitions through enhanced cooperation, aligned with the Common but Differentiated Responsibilities.

#### **ABOUT THE ACE OBSERVATORY**

The ACE Observatory is an independent climate governance think & do tank. We are a non-profit that works for the advancement, development, and monitoring of participatory climate governance innovation around the world. Through research, convening, and influencing, we aim to spur and track people-centered climate action. We lead thinking and agendas to deliver transformational change and bridge the gap between practitioner and civil society expectations and government actions on climate .

