

Santa Marta Reinforces Urgency of a Fair and Planned Transition Away from Fossil Fuels

The Santa Marta Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels comes at a pivotal moment for global climate action, as geopolitical instability and energy insecurity expose the risks of continued fossil fuel dependence. For CARE International, this underscores the urgent need for a just, people-centred energy transition that places women and girls at its core. For millions of people on the frontlines of climate change, moving away from fossil fuels is not an abstract policy debate — it is about livelihoods, safety, and the future of their communities.

Although COP30 did not deliver a clear, time-bound phaseout roadmap, its aftermath signals a notable political interest. A growing coalition of developed and developing countries and civil society organizations, are calling for an economy-wide fossil fuel phaseout — marking a progressive turning point in global momentum.

In many frontline communities, women are already leading local solutions but remain excluded from decision-making and access to resources. Investing in their leadership and knowledge, expanding access to clean energy, and supporting local green enterprises are essential to building resilient, low-carbon economies.

CARE's work demonstrates what a just energy transition looks like in practice. Across Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda, improved cookstoves and solar lighting are reducing reliance on polluting biomass, lowering emissions, and supporting national climate targets. In Jordan, solar energy projects are expanding access to renewable power while creating economic opportunities for women through training and employment. In Uganda's Kyangwali refugee settlement, community solar kitchens are replacing wood and charcoal, cutting fuel demand and reducing deforestation.

The conference, convened by Colombia and the Netherlands, is the first in a series of solution-focused fora outside of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) aiming to advance a coordinated and equitable global plan to phase out fossil fuels and keep the 1.5°C alive. Fossil fuels, as widely recognised by governments, scientists, and civil society, are driving the climate crisis and undermining long-term resilience.

Governments must now turn intent into action by developing a credible global roadmap to phase out fossil fuels, scaling up grant-based climate finance, and ensuring support reaches communities directly. Santa Marta can help bridge stalled negotiations and renewed cooperation — advancing a transition that is not only fast, but fair for those most affected by climate change.

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About CARE International

Founded in 1945 with the creation of the CARE Package®, CARE International (CI) is a leading humanitarian and development organization fighting global poverty. In 2002, CARE Bangladesh launched the first specific community-based climate adaptation project, aimed at reducing vulnerability to climate change-related disasters. Since then, our engagement has grown and in 2024, CARE International and its partners implemented 273 projects across 61 countries, reaching 4.5 million poor and marginalized people, particularly women and girls, to strengthen their resilience and adaptive capacities to the effects of climate change.

About CARE Climate Justice Center

The CARE Climate Justice Center (CJC) leads and coordinates the integration of climate justice and climate resilience across CI's development and humanitarian work. The CJC is an initiative powered by CARE Denmark, CARE France, CARE Germany, CARE Netherlands, and CARE International UK. To learn more, visit www.careclimatechange.org