

Resolution on Environment and the Climate Crisis

1. After the latest failure of COP27 to make any significant progress in the direction of addressing the disastrous climate change, the [UN web page refers to “five key takeaways”](#)¹ from COP27. They try to present a picture less disappointing than the real one, referring to their decision to establish a “fund for loss and damage” (a fund to aid the most vulnerable countries that are being hit by floods, droughts, etc) and their “clear intention” to keep 1.5°C within reach.

2. In reality, [the fund for loss and damage](#)² is nothing more than an abstract idea, since COP27 did not specify which countries will provide or receive funds, and there was no specific timeline agreed over the rolling out of the fund. As for their “clear intention” to keep within reach the target of 1.5°C, even their own reports explain that this is very far from reality.

3. According to the [UN “Emissions Gap Report”](#)³, keeping alive the target for 1,5°C temperature rise would demand an “**urgent, system wide transformation**”. The Report estimates that:

“Policies currently in place point to a 2.8°C temperature rise by the end of the century. Implementation of the current pledges will only reduce this to a 2.4-2.6°C temperature rise by the end of the century...”

4. But even those “pledges” are just words. The energy crisis, intensified by the war in Ukraine and the EU sanctions against Russia, has led to a frenzy of search and extraction of new sources of fossil fuels all over the world. The use of oil, gas and coal is expanding instead of being phased out, while scientists were warning that the situation was critical even before the war, the energy crisis and the mass shift to coal.

5. [COP26 was also a complete failure](#)⁴, with the world’s leaders avoiding to commit to any binding targets for reducing the use of fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions. However, after the war in Ukraine, even those tepid, “voluntary” efforts were abandoned. During 2022 new coal mines opened or are planned to open in Europe. In December 2022 [Britain approved the opening of a new coal mine](#)⁵ for the first time after many decades. In [Germany, coal mines](#)⁶ are expanding, threatening the local residents and climate activists with evictions. Other European countries are extending the life of coal mines and coal-based energy factories that were supposed to close.

6. [Globally, coal consumption](#)⁷ is expected to go back to the levels seen ten years ago, while its price rose by about 170% in the months that followed the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Coal is not only threatening local communities, public health and ecosystems, but is also a huge climate hazard, as it is considered the most damaging fossil fuel regarding climate change.

7. We can only imagine what the world would look like in the case of a 2.8°C temperature rise above pre-industrial levels by the end of the century. But we already have the first indications of this nightmarish future, some of which are described by an article of [September 2022 on the UN web](#)⁸ page:

“The most recent seven years, 2015 to 2021 were the warmest on record.

¹ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/sharm-el-sheikh-climate-change-conference-november-2022/five-key-takeaways-from-cop27>

² <https://www.internationaliststandpoint.org/cop27-wishful-thinking-but-no-commitments-as-climate-crisis-deepens/>

³ <https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2022>

⁴ <https://xekinima.org/cop26-the-global-climate-meeting-in-glasgow-was-a-tragic-failure/>

⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britain-approves-first-new-coal-mine-decades-2022-12-07/>

⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64187212>

⁷ <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/02/coal-consumption-is-expected-to-return-to-2013s-record-levels-iea.html>

⁸ <https://unfccc.int/news/united-in-science-we-are-heading-in-the-wrong-direction>

“The number of weather, climate and water-related disasters has increased by a factor of five over the past 50 years, causing US\$ 202 million in losses daily.

“...3.3 to 3.6 billion people living in contexts that are highly vulnerable to climate change”.

“In June and July 2022, Europe was affected by two extreme heatwaves and drought. Portugal had a new July national temperature record of 47.0 °C, and for the first time on record, temperatures in the UK exceeded 40 °C.

“Floods, droughts, heatwaves, extreme storms and wildfires are going from bad to worse, breaking records with alarming frequency. Heatwaves in Europe. Colossal floods in Pakistan. Prolonged and severe droughts in China, the Horn of Africa and the United States.

“Around 90% of the accumulated heat in the Earth system is stored in the ocean, the Ocean Heat Content for 2018–2022 was higher than in any other 5-year period, with ocean warming rates showing a particularly strong increase in the past two decades”.

8. **While burning fossil fuels is the most obvious cause of the ongoing climate change, the situation is far more complex. Extreme weather conditions, driven by the rise of the world's temperature, make the planet's ecosystems more vulnerable and thus undermine their ability to act as a natural protection against global warming. Forests are being destroyed more frequently by wildfires, resulting in a more limited absorption of CO₂. Melting glaciers reveal land, which absorbs more solar radiation, rather than reflecting it back to the atmosphere, as glaciers would do. The rising temperature of the oceans stresses marine plant organisms, compromising their ability to photosynthesize, thus to produce oxygen and absorb CO₂. Climate change is a self-powered mechanism; therefore, we cannot expect to just reduce carbon emissions and go back to normal. Drastic changes are necessary, to restore the damages on the planet's forests, oceans, plains, rivers, etc. But the disastrous profit driven system, is doing exactly the opposite.**

9. The world's ecosystems are not being destroyed only because of climate change, but in many other different ways as well. Deforestation is usually deliberate, since forests “get in the way” of more profitable activities – from mining, to industrial food production, to gigantic wind farms (with the latest being promoted as a “clean” energy form). The planet's oceans are being polluted with millions of tons of plastic waste, oil spills or methane leaks caused by offshore drilling.

10. Only between January and June 2022, the [Amazon rainforest lost 3,988 square kilometers](#)⁹, cleared to give their place mostly to agricultural and other food producing companies. Only within the last month of [Bolsonaro's presidency \(December 2022\)](#)¹⁰, deforestation of the Brazilian part of the Amazon rainforest rose by 150%. Compared to previous decade, deforestation rates during Bolsonaro's years rose by more than 75%. Today, about 17% of the forest has been destroyed, leading to the displacement of indigenous people, the loss of animal and plant species and the worsening of global warming. Agribusiness is also threatening the [tropical forests of South East Asia](#)¹¹, where it is estimated that with the current deforestation rates, more than 40% of the region's biodiversity will be lost by 2100.

11. Agricultural land is also being affected by the practices of intensive farming. Hybrid seeds, introduced by the so called “green revolution” during the 1950s and 60s, demand huge amounts of water, pesticides and fertilizers, compared to the traditional seed varieties. The introduction of GMOs a few decades later, made sure that each seed would be patented and sold with its own “set” of pesticides and fertilizers, by companies like Monsanto and Syngenta that aim to a total control over agricultural production. The biggest amounts of crop production today are being used as livestock feed, to meet the gigantic demands of meat production. These intensive methods exhaust the soil of agricultural land which leads agribusiness to invade forests, causing additional environmental damage on many levels.

12. In addition to the above, the [global biodiversity crisis has also led to the rise of viruses](#)¹² and infectious diseases such as Covid-19. The destructive actions and policies of big business and governments across the globe created the environmental conditions that caused the pandemic and then left the working-

⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-62103336>

¹⁰ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/7/brazilian-amazon-deforestation-up-150-in-bolsonaros-last-month>

¹¹ <https://earth.org/deforestation-in-southeast-asia/>

¹² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7725765/>

class masses to pay the price with their lives.

13. **Plastic pollution is threatening human health as well as terrestrial and marine ecosystems and wildlife. [99% of the worlds plastic](#)¹³ production is based on oil, natural gas, or even coal and cannot be biodegraded; it breaks into smaller and smaller pieces continuing to live forever as microplastics and nanoplastics. On average, according to some estimates, we consume 5 grams of plastic each week, or the equivalent of a credit card. Plastic waste is also responsible for the deaths of millions of seabirds, marine mammals and other aquatic species every year and for destabilizing ocean ecosystems.**

14. [Only about 10% of plastic materials](#)¹⁴ ever produced have been recycled once and only about 1% has been recycled twice. Although not all plastics can be recycled (which is the most important reason why we need an urgent plan to stop their production) the result could have been better if it was not much cheaper to produce new plastic objects than to recycle old ones. Governments, big businesses and media around the world are trying to convince the general public that recycling plastic and other waste is the consumers' responsibility. In reality, their policies and the involvement of the private sector in waste management, leads to the very low percentages of recycling, to huge landfills, or the even more dangerous practice of using waste as a fuel in factories.

15. [Recent talks on the issue of plastic pollution, organized by the UN](#)¹⁵ were an additional failure after COP27. The negotiations that took place at the end of 2022 among delegations from 160 countries, concluded that plastic pollution must be ended but once again there was no binding agreement on how to achieve this goal; with big plastic producers, like the US and Saudi Arabia insisting that the effort must be voluntary and no mandatory measures should be implemented.

16. At the same time, the energy crisis has led to an absolutely chaotic situation on the ground of searching for and extracting even more fossil fuels, while “more green alternatives” –in reality equally harmful for the environment– are also gaining ground. Underdeveloped countries are the most common victims of this “treasure hunt”, but this does not mean that western capitalist powers spare their own countries from environmental disasters.

17. **The energy crisis that intensified after the Ukraine war has led states to rely more on nuclear energy. Nuclear is classified as “alternative energy” but, as is well known, this is not true because of the nuclear disasters throughout history. Now, in addition to this, modular nuclear power plants are in fashion. But the modularity of a nuclear power plant only makes it easier to install, it does not reduce the damage it can cause. The ease of installation increases the speed of the spread of the danger.**

18. Europe's desperate search for natural gas has been a great business opportunity for US energy companies, that have recently been selling much more of their expensive and environmentally hazardous LNG to the European market. The US natural gas industry saw a huge expansion a few decades ago, with the discovery of the “fracking” method, which allows the exploitation of deposits that are in great depth and are “trapped” between rocks, mainly shale. Earthquakes increase, underground water contamination and huge amounts of clean water being wasted, as well as methane leaks into the atmosphere, are just some of the environmental risks linked to fracking and gas drilling in general.

19. The search for oil is also continuing. Some of the latest discoveries include huge deposits in Africa, the extraction of which is threatening vulnerable ecosystems of global importance, like the [Okavango Delta in Botswana](#),¹⁶ included in UNESCO's World Heritage List. New pipelines are also being planned, or built. EACOP (East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline) is expected to be complete by 2025 and will transfer 216.000 barrels of crude oil per day, from west Uganda, to the port of Tanga in Tanzania, traveling [dangerously close to Lake Victoria](#),¹⁷ the greatest lake of Africa, on which fishing communities in three different countries depend for their survival.

20. As if all of these were not enough, world coal production (planned to steadily decrease before the

¹³ <https://www.internationaliststandpoint.org/4-reasons-why-we-should-plan-a-ban-on-plastics-2/>

¹⁴ <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-its-so-hard-to-recycle-plastic/>

¹⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/countries-split-plastics-treaty-focus-un-talks-close-2022-12-03/>

¹⁶ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1432/>

¹⁷ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Lake-Victoria>

war in Ukraine) is being revived by the energy crisis. Countries like [China, India and South Africa](#)¹⁸, have seen their production grow by 7.8% (from 5.1 billion tons in 2021 to 5.5 billion tons in 2022). Coal is not only the most harmful fossil fuel regarding its impact on greenhouse gas emissions, but is also an environmental nightmare in the areas where it is being extracted. In some of India's coal mine areas, the ground is hollow and unsteady. The huge reserves of coal that extend on vast areas above and beneath the ground, have led to big fires, some of which have been burning for decades, with disastrous consequences for public health and the environment.

21. **Searching for “alternatives” to dirty fossil fuels, energy companies and governments have suggested, or are already trying some of their more “environmentally friendly” ideas. Among them, the horrifying labeling of nuclear power as “green” by the European Commission (that can lead to subsidizing it) the mass destruction of fragile mountain ecosystems in order to set in gigantic wind farms, or the promotion of electric vehicles, whose batteries require the use of the so called “green” metals, like cobalt, lithium, copper, etc. Those metals are being mined at the expense of local communities in countries of the global South, by people who work under dreadful conditions, including child labor, while their local environment is being poisoned.**

22. In August 2018 Greta Thunberg, a school student from Sweden, decided to start skipping school every Friday and spend some hours outside the Swedish parliament, demanding action to address global warming. Her example was soon followed by millions of youths across the globe in a movement known as “Fridays for Future”. With mass demonstrations, combative mood, imaginative slogans, the youth launched an important movement, which, despite the lack of political clarity in its ranks, helped a section of young people to question the capitalist system and its role in climate change and the ecological destruction in general. Others of course continued to believe that it is possible to make the world leaders understand how crucial the situation is and take action, which shows the limitations of the movement. The movement was halted (as others) by the pandemic, although some layers are still active today. Despite this, the environmental crisis is still one of the most important issues affecting the consciousness of the youth and mass sections of the general population.

23. Today though, the setback of the youth climate demonstrations has brought to the surface a kind of “activism” that has nothing to offer to the environmental movements and their causes. The “tomato soup activists”, who attack works of art in order to draw the attention of the public, might momentarily succeed in doing that, but only to alienate working class people and the majority of the youth from the ideas they are supposedly trying to put forward.

24. **Climate activists, local environmental movements, the youth that is looking for a way out and for radical ideas, need to build common demands and common structures with the working class, need to link the struggle for protecting the planet with the one to overthrow capitalism and establish a socialist society, as the only way to put an end to the frantic march towards ecological destruction.**

25. **In order to address the growing threat of global warming and other environmental catastrophes, drastic measures, that exceed the narrow limits of the limited concessions capitalism could make, are needed. As well as a plan on energy and food production and distribution, waste management, restoration of damaged ecosystems, protection of endangered species’ habitats, a plan to ban plastic production and nuclear energy, to control and correct as much as possible of the damage made so far.**

26. Mass public investments on research to evolve renewable energy sources, technology and scientific studies on their most suitable placing is also necessary. Investing on renewables does not mean filling every mountain top with wind farms, according to what mostly benefits the energy companies. It means carefully calculating the energy needs and the environmental sensitivity of every different area, choosing the most suitable energy producing unit (wind, solar, geothermal, sea wave, tidal energy, hydrogen technology, etc) and trying to minimize the energy loss during its transportation. This means that we need small, local energy producing units, in order to minimize losses due to transportation and their effects on environment. We have to put an end to expenditure on wars, armies and weapon systems, we need to plan and built our cities and transportation in an energy saving way.

¹⁸ <https://www.mining-technology.com/comment/global-coal-production/>

27. All new mechanical devices should be designed and built for a maximum useable life-span. There must be an end to the practice of built in obsolescence. Most washing machines for example have a life-span of between five and eight years. However, it is perfectly simple to design machines that last for a minimum of twenty years. Machines should also be designed so that they can be readily repaired when they have a fault, rather than be thrown away.

28. **Food production needs to address the real nutritional needs of people, not the greed of the multinational companies that control it from the seed to the super market shelf. A drastic change in the nutritional habits of the world's population, which have been shaped by these same multinationals, is necessary in the interests of the better health of the general population and of the environment.**

29. Processed foods as well as too much consumption of meat, all of which are of low quality, are dangerous to health and to the environment. In order to sustain the present nutritional habits, a massive destruction of forest ecosystems is taking place in favor of big agricultural and meat companies. Meat production is [responsible for about 14.5%](#)¹⁹ of the total human-caused emissions of greenhouse gasses, especially methane. Meat production is very demanding on natural resources – just to site one example, 13.000 liters of water are required in order to produce one kilogram of beef, while the production of a kilogram of potatoes demands only 100 liters of water. Fish should be caught using sustainable methods and fisheries should be carefully managed to ensure that fish stocks are maintained.

30. It is also necessary to preserve and promote local agricultural traditions and seeds in order to reduce agriculture's need for water, fertilizers and pesticides. The control on food production has to be taken away from companies like Nestle and Cargill, to make sure that the food that is produced is safe and GMO free and that it will not end up in a landfill because it doesn't look attractive enough to sell while at the same time up to [828 million people faced hunger in 2021](#)²⁰ (the number has obviously shot up in the course of 2022 and will get even worse in 2023).

31. **There should be an immediate ban on single-use plastics (with small scale exceptions in fields such as medicine) and drastically reduce plastic packaging. We need to plan on how to replace plastics with natural materials and to end the use of hydrocarbons for their production, by increasing public funding for democratic and independent scientific research to further develop safe and environmental-friendly materials. Waste management in total should be planned on a small, local scale, focusing on separate distribution, recycling of what can be recycled and turning biodegratable waste into natural soil fertilizer. Waste burning factories and landfills must be banned, as they are responsible for serious environmental and health hazards.**

32. Environmental disasters, oil and gas leaks, plastic pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, the nuclear threat, as well as rising temperatures and natural disasters like wildfires, floods and droughts cannot be stopped by borders. Today, it is hard to find a country or even local province that is not in some way affected by an environmentally harmful project, or by the effects of climate change. From extreme weather conditions or natural disasters, to plans of drilling, mining, building fossil fuel burning facilities, or other attacks on ecosystems, the whole world is a terrain of possible environmental catastrophes.

33. **No place on earth is safe as long as capitalism continues to base its profits on destroying the planet. This makes the necessity of internationalism on the ground of environmental movements and working class struggles even greater and more urgent.**

34. In some cases, internationalism can be of even greater importance, when environmental threats are combined with nationalist tensions. Such is the case of the conflict in the Aegean Sea, where multinational energy companies are searching for oil and natural gas, while the governments of Greece, Turkey and Cyprus are competing for the exploitation of these resources. In a context of global instability and rising tensions between big imperialistic blocks, such developments can pose even greater risks for the regions' peoples.

35. Thus, it is important to maintain and expand initiatives like *"Kasma Birak / Don't Dig it / Maç*

¹⁹ <https://www.dw.com/en/fact-check-is-eating-meat-bad-for-the-environment/a-63595148#:~:text=According%20to%20FAO%20data%2C%2014.5,CO2%20in%20driving%20global%20warming>

²⁰ <https://www.fao.org/hunger/en/>

Σκάβουν το Λάκκο”, a joint campaign against fossil fuels, nationalism and war, between local environmental groups from Greece, Turkey and Cyprus, as a way to play a role in the development of joint struggles for peace and against nationalist antagonisms in the area and for the environmental protection of the whole Mediterranean Sea. It is also important to continue our intervention in environmental movements of the youth, like the “Fridays for Future” movement in Romania, that mostly consists of school and university students. These layers have already shown a significant interest on issues concerning ecological destruction and climate crisis in particular, and it is possible to see them mobilizing again in the future.

36. In order to be effective and win victories, the environmental movements need to link their demands to those of the working class, they need to combine their own forms of action with strikes, the method that directly attacks capitalists’ profits. Local environmental movements, also need to put forward demands on issues like creating new jobs on fields like research, renewable energy, restoring and conservation of local ecosystems, etc, as well as protecting the existing jobs (in agriculture, tourism, fishery, etc) from the devastating effects of activities like mining, drilling and others. In every one of these cases, the big “investors” and local authorities argue that it is their project that will create new jobs and will improve the local and national economy. This argument can be convincing to some layers of the poor and the unemployed, unless environmental and workers’ movements suggest their own, well processed proposals, while also demanding:

- **Mass public investments on research concerning renewable sources of energy** (wind, solar, geothermal, sea wave energy, tidal energy, hydrogen technology, etc) and a plan to end dependence on fossil fuels for energy production the soonest possible – impose a ban on nuclear energy, as it poses a huge threat for peoples’ lives and health, as well as the environment.
- **Immediate ban of single-use plastics** and a plan to create environmentally friendly alternatives to plastic.
- **A publicly owned and democratically controlled system of waste management**, based on the idea of local, waste management units, focused on recycling and composting.
- **A ban on GMOs and a program to replace hybrid seeds with traditional crop varieties and to remove the control of food production from the hands of multinational companies.** A mass campaign to gradually change nutritional habits, essentially created by the food multinationals to serve their profits, is also necessary.
- **Protection of important wildlife habitats** and vulnerable ecosystems, restoration of those that have been damaged in the most complete way possible.
- **The elimination of the practice of built-in obsolescence** by manufacturers. All machines should be built to last.
- **Bring into public ownership under workers’ control and management the agrobusiness giants**, in the context of a socialist planning of national and regional economies and the global economy, in order to plan food production and distribution on the basis of the needs of the planet’s population, for healthy nutrition and with concern to the environment; and not on the basis of the insatiable greed for profits of the capitalist corporations.