Alliance for a Just Energy Transformation

Alliance Statement of principles

A transition of the global energy system that is not people-centred, renewables- and nature-based, equitable and inclusive will fail. This statement sets out the principles that will guide the Alliance for Just Energy Transformation (‘the Alliance’) as it works to promote a just and sustainable global energy transformation.

The Alliance is an inclusive, voluntary initiative to promote policies and frameworks that support and accelerate sustainable energy transitions. Such transitions must deliver clean, renewable, affordable and reliable energy, in ways that are people-centred, renewables- and nature-based, and which deliver development goals.

The Alliance aims to identify and address gaps in energy transition frameworks, policies and measures, taking into account different national, local and sectoral contexts. It seeks to ensure energy transitions are successfully implemented, by putting nature, communities, workers and all peoples at the centre, leaving no one behind.

Sustainable energy transitions can enable the achievement of climate friendly development goals and universal energy access. They can contribute to wellbeing, better quality of life and generate Just Transition opportunities for decent work. They offer the promise to help hundreds of millions of people gain access to electricity and to energy for heating, cooling and mobility, addressing a major cause of global inequality and injustice.

Timely energy systems decarbonisation is vital to avoid the most severe climate change impacts, which are felt more strongly by the poorest and by vulnerable communities. Unlocking synergies between social and environmental goals can address existing inequalities, as well as avoid creating new ones, in turn improving public acceptance of decarbonisation measures and boosting the likelihood they will succeed.

Unmanaged energy transitions risk failing to deliver benefits for human development and will leave some groups of people behind. Decarbonisation must therefore be inclusively planned and managed, integrating mitigation, adaptation, regeneration and economic transformation aspects.

Sustainable energy transitions must recognise the interconnectedness and equal importance of social and environmental goals in human development. Energy systems are both dependent upon and impact nature. Although much lower than fossil fuels, the environmental impacts of renewable energy on nature can be considerable, and deploying best practices is therefore crucial to protect and restore biodiversity for people and planet.

Like energy systems, wellbeing and development are intimately linked to nature. Over half of the world’s GDP is moderately or highly dependent on natural resources and functioning natural systems.
ecosystems\textsuperscript{1}, but unsustainable exploitation of natural resources and raw materials for energy threatens these, undermining human development and prosperity.

The decarbonisation of energy systems happens through many energy transitions. These happen at different levels, including the local and country level, within companies and across sectors, but they do not happen in isolation. Frameworks are needed so that together they will deliver the decarbonisation of the global energy system, while enabling, rather than hindering, equitable nature- and people-centred development. Energy transitions should be managed to deliver an overall system transformation: a Just Energy Transformation.

For the Just Energy Transformation to succeed, we will need to address gaps and challenges in energy system decarbonisation governance at local, national and international levels, as well as more generally in economic and social policy. We must also act to ensure finance flows towards sustainable energy systems, noting that around 75\% of energy transition technology investment is likely to be from the private sector\textsuperscript{2}.

An indispensable element for delivering a Just Energy Transformation is the implementation of Just Transition frameworks. These set out how to design and implement Just Transition policies and measures to ensure that the energy transitions taking place on the ground drive development, are nature-based and people-centred, create decent work and quality jobs and together deliver the systemic change needed for the energy system to help meet our environmental and social goals.

A successful Just Energy Transformation will mean upholding procedural, distributional, intergenerational, restorative\textsuperscript{3} and recognitional justice, for a renewable and nature-based, people-centred transformation.

The members of the Alliance for Just Energy Transformation endorse the messages in this statement and will work together to drive its achievement. They further commit to its interpretation and application through the following eight principles and practices. A just energy transformation should:

1. Be fair; protect the rights and needs of everyone, and respect values, without privileging any one group over another.
   
   - We call for energy transition policies, measures and frameworks that address systemic inequalities at local and global level, avoiding the creation of new inequalities and injustices, while protecting the rights and needs of all, with particular attention to vulnerable and marginalised groups, as well as future generations.
   
   - We recognise that existing fiscal, financial and policy systems might not enable equal access to opportunity and may privilege some groups and interests over others in ways that increase inequality and injustice.

\textsuperscript{1} Managing nature risks: From understanding to action, PWC April 2023

\textsuperscript{2} IRENA (2023), World Energy Transitions Outlook 2023: 1.5°C Pathway, Volume 1, International Renewable Energy Agency, Abu Dhabi. This notes that “some 75\% of global investment in renewables from 2013 to 2020 came from the private sector.”

\textsuperscript{3} In the context of a Just Energy Transformation; restorative justice recognises that the existing system is not just and seeks to tackle systemic inequalities and injustices. The Alliance draws its definition of ‘restorative justice’ from the 2022 Presidential Climate Commission Report: A Framework For A Just Transition In South Africa. This definition does not seek to replace the specific use of the term by other social movements.
• We commit to promoting the fair sharing of benefits, costs, and burdens, by systematically considering the impact of transitions to sustainable energy on the most vulnerable, by extending specific support to those who already or would suffer social inequalities, and by enforcing the Polluter Pays Principle.

2. Ensure climate and energy justice.

• We call for procedural justice in energy transition finance, design and decisions. Energy permitting and siting must respect basic civil liberties and communities must be meaningfully informed and represented in energy decisions.

• We call for the equitable sharing of the costs associated with the adaptation of energy systems to climate change and their decarbonisation. This should include the promotion of accessible, people-centred, renewables and nature-based, climate finance that exceeds the annual US$100 billion international climate finance commitment to developing countries for both adaptation and mitigation.

• Seek to address barriers to accessing finance for community-led energy transitions at the local level. Finance must support jobs, local communities and improve human wellbeing for current and future generations, especially in the developing world.

• We call for the urgent protection of environmental and indigenous rights defenders and the protection and enhancement of civic spaces.

3. Deliver energy access and development.

• We recognise that access to sustainable, renewable, affordable, safe and reliable energy is fundamental to social wellbeing and prosperity, an enabler of sustainable development and of improved livelihoods. Viable energy access for all must be at the heart of the transformation process and energy transitions must be delivered with development goals in the driving seat.

• We call for urgent action and finance to accelerate access to clean, safe and reliable renewables-based energy to achieve SDG 7 by 2030.

4. Be comprehensive, coherent and transparent

• We call for clear, well-communicated, time-bound Just Transition frameworks and strategies as part of energy transition plans and accompanying energy transition targets and clear accountability mechanisms.

• We call for just energy transformation strategies that are locally-driven and led in their design by communities, including indigenous groups, and workers to ensure coherence with national and sectoral strategies.

5. Include clearly defined, robust and inclusive stakeholder engagement and social dialogue

• We call for social dialogue at all stages of transition planning as it relates to employment, employment conditions and labour rights.

• Structures and mechanisms must be introduced to protect and implement labour rights, in line with the ILO Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the ILO Just Transition Guidelines.

• We demand transparency and inclusivity in energy transition planning and decision-making, engaging all impacted
stakeholders fairly and equally, including NGOs, citizens’ and indigenous groups, women, youth, businesses, public authorities and academia. Particular support must be given to those who have historically had the least power to engage.

- We demand and support compensation for stakeholder engagement to address resource and capacity differences, while recognising civil society’s role to represent dispersed interests and groups who cannot be represented directly in decision-making (such as future generations). There must be specific focus on social protection and gender equality policies, to promote equitable access to benefits.

6. Ensure justice, transparent decision-making and access to reliable information for all people impacted by energy transitions

- We advocate for a common approach to investment planning and the implementation of energy-related strategies. It must uphold indigenous rights, local community rights and gender equality.

- Decision-making processes and energy transition planning must be open and transparent, and support the integrity and freedom of information.

7. Be sustainable, ambitious and consistent

- Decisions to drive forward energy decarbonisation must be accompanied by assessments of their impacts on social and development goals, and on biodiversity, including land and ocean sinks.

- We call for an approach to Energy transition investments, plans and policy decisions that goes further than avoiding negative impacts to also promote social and development goals and the protection and restoration of nature, seeking synergies wherever possible and placing equal importance on, social and environmental goals.

- We recognise that energy transitions should align with the delivery of the Paris Agreement while ensuring they contribute to the recovery of biodiversity and ecosystem services by 2030 as agreed in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

8. Be science-based

- Recommendations, targets and transition plans must follow meaningful and urgent timescales, in line with the best available science to deliver the goals under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the emissions reductions in line with the Paris Agreement.

- The transformation must recognise the need to end dependence on fossil fuels, with developed countries moving fastest, no new investment in fossil fuel reserve development, and a phase out of coal in OECD and EU power systems by 2030 and by 2040 for other countries.

- We must build a globally fossil-free, energy efficient energy system by 2050 at the latest.

This is a working version of the Alliance’s statement of principles. It reflects the general consensus among the member organisations. However, member organisations may request modification until a final version is published.