



# WWF Policy Brief on the First Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels, Santa Marta, Colombia, 24–29 April 2026

April 2026

The First Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels will take place in Santa Marta, Colombia, from 24 to 29 April 2026, co-hosted by Colombia and the Netherlands. It aims to contribute to the implementation of the outcome of the Global Stocktake from 2023, which assessed the progress of the Paris Agreement, to pursue a transition away from fossil fuels in a just, orderly and equitable manner. The conference is structured into stakeholder-led dialogues (24–27 April), bringing together civil society, the private sector, Indigenous Peoples, workers, business and other groups, followed by a High-Level Segment (28–29 April) for ministers and high-level government representatives.

## Summary

Santa Marta builds on the momentum generated at COP30 and is an opportunity to establish political will, build a coalition of committed states, and begin designing the architecture of what comes next. WWF expects a strong Co-hosts' Report, the emergence of leadership among committed governments, and the launch of a credible next steps to accelerate implementation. We expect the report to be a substantial contribution to the COP30 Presidency Roadmap on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in a just, equitable and orderly manner. WWF also presents concrete recommendations for each of the thematic pillars of the conference: overcoming economic dependence, transforming supply and demand and advancing international cooperation and multilateralism.

## Context

The urgency of action cannot be overstated, the decisions made in this decade will determine whether a liveable climate future remains within reach. The Santa Marta Conference is a strong signal of the shift to implementation acknowledged by COP30: targets are well defined and countries should move towards delivering on them, either individually or collectively.

WWF strongly supports the conference and its objective of “advancing practical enabling pathways toward a just, orderly and equitable transition away from fossil fuels”. Despite the historic COP28 agreement on the need for a fossil fuel transition, production and investment continue to rise. Governments collectively plan to produce more than twice the amount of fossil fuels in 2030 than is consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C.

As set out by the co-hosting governments of Colombia and the Netherlands, the conference aims to (1) build a broad coalition of countries, subnational governments, and other key actors committed to a just, orderly, and equitable transition away from fossil fuels toward a sustainable, prosperous economy; (2) establish a science-based follow-up process to continue dialogue and coordinate implementation of the enabling pathways identified; and (3) deliver a Co-Hosts’ Report that consolidates those pathways and informs the follow-up as well as related processes, including the COP30 Presidency’s UNFCCC roadmap.

## WWF Expectations

WWF sees Santa Marta as a pivotal moment to shift the center of gravity on fossil fuel phase-out political discussions and establish a political coalition that sets an ambitious political agenda for the transition. The Santa Marta Conference should also be a strong signal of the shift to implementation acknowledged by COP30: as targets are already well-defined, the conference should call on countries to accelerate delivery.

With that in mind, WWF’s expectations for the conference outcomes are:

- The emergence of a ‘coalition of the willing’ that can meaningfully accelerate implementation and promotes the potential socio-economic benefits, and economic

development that can be achieved through an accelerated, just, equitable transition away from fossil fuels. Participation must be geographically diverse and serve as the foundation for a new diplomatic center of gravity on fossil fuel transition.

- A Co-Hosts' Report that can shape the intellectual and political architecture of the emerging process and influence the COP 30 Presidency's Roadmap. The report should clearly articulate the governance gap on fossil fuels, present science-based enabling pathways across all pillars, and illuminate areas where leadership and practical action are already emerging.
- Additionally, a strong joint statement or set of aligned national statements from participating governments that explicitly affirms commitment to continued cooperation beyond Santa Marta. This would demonstrate that meaningful leadership on fossil fuels is emerging and that a politically credible grouping is prepared to carry this agenda forward in the years ahead and to take action to deliver on the GST commitments.
- That Santa Marta is the first step in a sustained process, which must be explicitly complementary to the UNFCCC. The next steps should be clearly defined and enable governments to accelerate national implementation, develop coordinated supply and demand side pathways, and, to the extent possible, align efforts with the COP30 Presidency's "Roadmap on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in a Just, Orderly and Equitable Manner".
- Recognition of the need for Global North countries to be first movers, as well as visible engagement developed and producer countries within the coalition. This would help reinforce that the transition is not only a consumer-side agenda, but one that addresses production directly and credibly.

## WWF's Recommendations for the Thematic Pillars

### 1. Overcoming Economic Dependence

- **Phase out fossil fuel subsidies for production and consumption** and redirect these resources to a just and equitable energy transition, strengthening price signals, reducing emissions, and unlocking major public funds for renewables, energy efficiency, electrification, public transport, and targeted social protection.
- **Reduce fiscal dependence on fossil revenues through planned diversification.** Support fossil-dependent developing countries and regions to reduce exposure to volatile oil, gas and coal revenues by embedding phase-out strategies into

macro-fiscal planning, national budgets, and long-term development strategies. Prioritize economic diversification, stable public revenues, and long-term resilience over short-term extractive plans.

- **Address debt and financial constraints that lock countries into fossil expansion.** Advance international solutions to debt that enables fossil dependent countries to transition through debt relief, debt-for-climate or debt-for-nature swaps, and concessional finance, ensuring that fiscal space is created for clean energy, social protection, and economic diversification rather than continued fossil dependence.
- **Invest in workers, communities, and regions affected through just transition measures.** I.e. social dialogue, income support, reskilling, regional development funds, and long-term employment strategies, to ensure workers and communities are protected and benefit from the transition rather than bearing its costs.

## 2. Transforming Supply and Demand

- **Adopt national science-based sectoral decarbonization targets aligned with net-zero pathways** to provide clear, credible signals for investment and regulation, driving electrification, renewable deployment, energy efficiency, and sustainable fuels across key sectors.
- **Adopt the Shipping Net Zero Framework:** The NZF, currently being considered for adoption by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), is the most comprehensive regulatory measure currently under consideration to transition an entire global sector away from fossil fuels. The Framework includes a fuel standard and a carbon price that work together to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of fuels used by the sector over time, and generate finance for a fund that will be used to support a just transition and to reward zero and near zero emission fuels and energy sources. The full NZF should be adopted this year with the IMO's implicit ratification procedure.
- **Stop fossil fuel licensing and establish binding national phaseout roadmaps.** First, ensure that governments stop expansion of new fossil resources and issue no new exploration licenses. Then, roadmaps should include clear timelines for winding down production and identify which assets must retire.
- Reduce energy demand through energy efficiency and sufficiency, the fastest and most cost-effective way to increase energy security, lower bills, and strengthen economic

resilience. This includes strict minimum energy performance standards, large scale building retrofits, and transport measures that cut fossil fuel dependence.

- **Transform energy demand while ensuring universal access, in line with the targets of tripling renewables and doubling energy efficiency by 2030, as well as SDG 7, by:**
  - scaling national programs that boost efficiency across buildings, industry, and transport;
  - rapidly replacing fossil fuels with clean electricity and sustainable alternatives through electrification and renewables (using sustainable fuels only where electrification is not feasible);
  - prioritizing decentralized renewables, clean cooking, mini-grids, and affordability measures to deliver clean, affordable energy for all while lowering structural fossil-fuel demand and supporting economic diversification.

### 3. Advancing International Cooperation and Multilateralism

- **Address the governance gap on fossil fuels:** if the world is ultimately to achieve the transition away from fossil fuels in a just, orderly and equitable manner, then that structural gap – the absence of any international instrument governing fossil fuel production – needs to be filled. Santa Marta is an opportunity to name that gap explicitly and begin building the political and institutional conditions to address it, laying the groundwork for the negotiation of a Fossil Fuel Treaty.
- **Use Santa Marta to launch credible next steps**, including future conferences, political coordination, and technical workstreams. Ensure the processes are enabling countries to cooperate on fossil fuel phase-out pathways, share lessons, and progressively build the international architecture required to govern the transition away from fossil fuels.
- **Close the implementation gap by strengthening international cooperation** that translates high-level climate commitments into concrete national action. Align fossil fuel phase-out plans with NDCs, long-term strategies, finance flows, and development planning, and by enabling peer learning, transparency, and accountability between countries.
- **Developed countries should provide for a fully financed and orderly transition** by leading with public finance and technical support that reflects common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities to enable developing countries to transition

away from fossil fuels without compromising development priorities or poverty-eradication goals.

- **Enable a coalition of willing governments and key actors to move ahead** collectively and to demonstrate leadership, coordinating timelines, and setting political norms. At the same time, the process must be kept open, inclusive, and complementary to the UNFCCC and the COP30 TAFF roadmap process.
- **Brazil, Colombia and the Netherlands should work together in Santa Marta** to generate actionable outputs that can be directly incorporated into the COP30 Presidency-led TAFF roadmap process, including concrete policy and regulatory frameworks, clear milestones for a just and equitable transition away from fossil fuels, and a structured analysis of key barriers and enablers (e.g. fossil fuel subsidies, financing and derisking mechanisms).

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