



SUBMISSION

Operationalisation of the Just Transition Mechanism (United Arab Emirates Just Transition Work Programme, COP30)

12 March 2026

Attention: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat

Dear Members of the (UNFCCC) Secretariat,

The Institute for Economic Justice (IEJ) thanks you for the opportunity to make the following written submission on the proposed UNFCCC Secretariat United Arab Emirates (UAE) Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP). Given the centrality afforded to public participation in the UNFCCC, the IEJ trusts that you will give this submission, and its considered and substantiated proposals, meaningful consideration.

Should you have any questions regarding this submission, please feel free to contact Ms Moliehi Mafantiri, Junior Researcher: Climate Finance at moliehi.mafantiri@iej.org.za.

1. Preamble

We recall the objectives, principles, and goals of the Convention and the Paris Agreement, in particular Article 2, paragraphs (paras.) 1 and 2, including equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances;

We further recall decisions 1/CMA.3, 1/CMA.4, and 3/CMA.5, which laid the foundations for the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP);

We welcome the decision adopted at COP30 under the UAE JTWP, including the decision to develop a Just Transition Mechanism to enhance international cooperation, technical assistance, capacity-building and knowledge-sharing, and to enable equitable and inclusive just transitions (para. 25);

We acknowledge that just transitions are multisectoral, multidimensional, and cross-cutting, and that there is no one-size-fits-all approach, requiring whole-of-society and whole-of-economy responses (paras. 5, 12(c), and 12(f));

We further acknowledge that developing country Parties face persistent structural constraints, including limited fiscal space, high debt burdens, capacity constraints, and an increasing adaptation finance gap, which may hinder the implementation of Just Transition pathways (paras. 12(t) and 21–23);

We recognise that social protection, labour rights, care systems, and income security are integral to ensuring that Just Transition pathways leave no one behind (paras. 12(e), 12(g), and 12(k));

In recognition of the above, the IEJ submits the following views on the process for operationalising the Just Transition Mechanism.

2. List of recommendations

2.1. Purpose and orientation of the mechanism

The Just Transition Mechanism must be explicitly equity-oriented and guided by CBDR–RC, in line with the Paris Agreement and the COP30 decision (paras. 2, 12(b), and 25).

The mechanism must support nationally determined Just Transition pathways implemented through NDCs, NAPs, and LT-LEDS, and be responsive to national development priorities (paras. 2, 12(a), and 15).

2.2. International cooperation

The mechanism must strengthen international cooperation in a manner that addresses systemic and cross-border constraints affecting national Just Transitions, including debt, fiscal space, and global economic governance. Finance mobilised through the mechanism must be new, additional, and primarily grant-based, and must not be subject to conditionalities that constrain policy space or impose prescriptive transition pathways on recipient countries (paras. 12(u) and 21–23).

Governance arrangements under the mechanism should ensure meaningful participation of developing country Parties and affected stakeholders (paras. 12(d) and 14).

2.3. Technical assistance

Technical assistance must be demand-driven, non-prescriptive, and context-specific, supporting not only energy systems transformation but also labour markets, social protection systems, industrial policy, and public finance (paras. 2, 12(e), and 12(q)).

A one-size-fits-all or purely market-led approach should be avoided because every country and community faces unique economic structures, labour markets, and social protection systems that a single template cannot adequately address, and because the transition extends far beyond energy to include industrial policy and public finance considerations that require deliberate, context-specific intervention. Purely market-led approaches tend to optimise for economic efficiency while ignoring the cascading social effects on vulnerable communities, particularly those most dependent on fossil fuel industries, and who risk being left behind if market signals are the only driver (paras. 5 and 12(l)).

2.4. Capacity-building and knowledge-sharing

Capacity-building should be treated as a long-term institutional process and should prioritise strengthening public institutions, including those responsible for finance, labour, social development, and energy, in recognition of capacity constraints faced by many developing country Parties (paras. 12(t), 19, and 23).

Knowledge-sharing should promote South–South cooperation and peer learning, and include political economy analysis, and rights-based approaches, consistent with the emphasis on human rights, equity, and international cooperation (paras. 12(h) and 23).

2.5. Enabling equitable and inclusive just transitions

The mechanism must explicitly support social protection systems, including measures that provide income security and protect people in vulnerable situations, to manage transition-related risks and ensure that Just Transition pathways are equitable and inclusive (paras. 12(g), 12(k), and 21).

Care-centred approaches, gender equality, and the protection of affected workers and communities must be treated as core components of Just Transition pathways. Transitions that fail to account for unpaid care work, gender-differentiated labour market impacts, and the needs of marginalised groups will reproduce existing inequalities and undermine the social legitimacy of the transition itself. Integrating these dimensions is therefore essential to transition effectiveness, and not only to transition justice (paras. 12(e), 12(g), and 12(h)).

2.6. Operationalisation

The subsidiary bodies should recommend an operationalisation process that includes clear governance and accountability arrangements, predictable, adequate, and primarily grant-based finance to support developing country Parties, and modalities that do not exacerbate debt burdens or undermine fiscal space (paras. 21–22 and 12(v)).

The draft decision for consideration at CMA 8 should clearly define the scope, functions, and review modalities of the Just Transition Mechanism, including linkages to the review of the effectiveness and efficiency of the work programme (paras. 25 and 27).



The Institute for Economic Justice (IEJ) is a progressive economic policy think tank committed to advancing economic justice, systemic change, and the equitable distribution of resources to ensure rights realisation and planetary wellbeing.

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