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# ***It’s about our present and future: A guide on securing an ambitious and equitable GST***

**YOUNGO’s final submission to the 3rd Technical Dialogue of the 1st GST**

**March 2023**

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**About** [**YOUNGO**](https://youngoclimate.org/)**:**

###### YOUNGO is one of the nine Civil Society Constituencies of the UNFCCC. We are a network of children and youth organizations, groups, and individuals who identify themselves as children or youth below the age of 35 years. YOUNGO is by youth, with youth, for youth. YOUNGO consists of many youth-led organizations, groups, delegations, and individuals working in climate change-related fields.

###### YOUNGO is organized into different Working Groups that focus on different aspects of the UNFCCC negotiations and beyond, and work to ensure that the perspectives of young and future generations are taken into account in the international decision-making processes. Besides that, YOUNGO members observe and report on climate negotiations and the implications of their outcomes.

###### YOUNGO focuses on the following areas:

1. Awareness, Knowledge, and Capacity Building
2. Collaboration, Cooperation, and Network
3. Policy, Lobby, and Advocacy
4. Youth Action

###### We aim and envision:

###### A climate-positive and just society living in harmony with nature and the planet

###### An empowered youth generation, who are driving meaningful, impactful, and positive change locally, nationally, and internationally

###### A UN where youth is sitting at the decision-making tables and is taken seriously.

**Executive Summary**

In our [1st submission to the 1st Technical Dialogue](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fRhxG0ZDepWwFrUGV8UNoQbGo0_A67Nj/view?usp=sharing), we addressed the enabling actions and barriers related to the critical components of the Global Stocktake. In our second and final submission, we provide specific asks on what should be included in a comprehensive and robust GST report and what political outcomes it should provide.

The GST must at the minimum highlight the importance of a phase-out of all fossil fuels, eliminating Its subsidies, and should not be tricked by dangerous distractions such as CCS, BECCS, or nuclear power and carbon markets. Instead, GST should play a pivotal role in providing a clear transition roadmap (and equitable roadmap for developing countries with lesser capital to accelerate energy transition) from fossil fuels to renewables, ensuring a fair, sustainable, and equitable shift.

Loss and Damage should also be profoundly reflected upon in the Global Stocktake (GST) report to establish a baseline for where we are in the world vis-a-vis addressing loss and damage. To achieve the Paris Agreement and contribute to climate-resilient development pathways, cooperation beyond the UNFCCC system such as science policy interfaces like the IPCC and IPBES as well as cultural institutions like UNESCO is needed.

Region-specific recommendations are necessary, taking into account the unique circumstances of each country and its regional political-economic landscape. The GST report must also encourage Parties to meaningfully engage children and youth from the beginning in the formulation and implementation of NDCs and recognize the huge potential of climate education, nature-based solutions, leadership, and knowledge of indigenous and local peoples, carbon sinking capacity of forests, oceans, wetlands, and mangroves and reflect those widely in the next round of NDCs.

Given that the concept of the Global Stocktake (GST) is relatively new and unclear, there is a pressing need to develop adequate capacity, especially among LDCs and SIDs, and youths to ensure transparency and accountability in the process.

Monitoring and evaluating topics like adaptation, mitigation, finance, and loss & damage within the GST process is necessary to ensure accurate and timely data insertion, processing, and updates. Additionally, the GST should capture existing technologies and mechanisms that are used by parties that effectively monitor and evaluate existing mitigation and adaptation strategies at the national and regional levels.

# **It’s about our present and future: A guide on securing an ambitious and equitable GST**

# **Introduction and Message of Urgency**

From prolonged droughts in the Horn of Africa to the widespread flooding in Pakistan, it is more than evident that even in a 1.2ºC rise in temperature,[[1]](#footnote-1) the climate crisis is already severe and will worsen if immediate and ambitious actions are not taken now. The world is clearly not on track to reach the long-term temperature goal of the Paris Agreement and global temperatures can rise up to 2.8°C by the end of the century.[[2]](#footnote-2)

With 1.8 billion young people aged 10 to 24, the current generation of youth is the largest in history.[[3]](#footnote-3) However, children and youth face a grave threat from climate change, which jeopardizes their health, education, freedom, and future. If we do not act quickly to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and remove excess gases from the atmosphere, we risk reaching tipping points that will have irreversible consequences for the global ecosystem and human civilization.

Amid all the fears and worries, Global Stocktake stands as hope as it can bring the world back to the trajectory of achieving 1.5 degrees Celsius. The global stocktake is very crucial for assessing collective progress, identifying and addressing gaps, and putting forward concrete recommendations for Parties to tackle the climate crisis and achieve climate justice. The 1st GST report must provide concrete and tangible recommendations and urge Parties to increase ambition in all aspects from mitigation to adaptation, finance, and addressing loss and damage that should be based upon human rights, gender, and intergenerational equity.

This submission entails YOUNGO’s key recommendation for the output of the 1st GST.

1. **Cross-cutting issues**

**A. Pathways consistent with Climate Resilient Development**

Climate resilient development (CRD), as defined by the IPCC, describes a process of implementing greenhouse gas mitigation and adaptation options to support sustainable development for all.[[4]](#footnote-4) It goes beyond the Agenda 2030 and highlights the importance of including various stakeholders, such as the private sector and civil society, influenced by science, local and Indigenous knowledge, and the media are both active and passive in designing and navigating climate resilience pathways (CRDP).

With the GST having the aim to put the world back on track to achieving the Paris Agreement, jointly created CRDPs are considered helpful for conceptualizing the interdependence of mitigation and adaptation and systems transitions. For developing CRDPs, the GST must at the minimum highlight the importance of a phase-out of all fossil fuels and investments in renewables and should not be tricked by dangerous distractions such as CCS, BECCS, or nuclear power and carbon markets as specified below:

**I. Phase-out of all fossil fuels and fossil fuel subsidies:**

Fossil fuels are equal to the climate emergency. They are the single biggest cause of climate change as they are responsible for 86% of Carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions in the last decade.[[5]](#footnote-5) At least 90% of coal reserves and 60% of oil and gas reserves[[6]](#footnote-6) must stay in the ground to limit global warming to 1.5°C.[[7]](#footnote-7) Fossil fuel also creates air pollution and has a negative impact on human health and biodiversity. It is critical that GST be informed by the best available science and press the urgent need to phase out of all fossil fuels as well all fossil fuel subsidies with a just transition approach, adapted to the national contexts, but this has to happen before 2050 everywhere in the world, and ideally before especially for developed countries and larger emitters. This should also include restrictions on the exploration and extraction of new fossil fuels and instead, opt for wide economy diversification.

**II. Investing in Renewables:**

Nearly two-thirds - 62% of the wind, solar and other renewables that were built in 2020, were cheaper than the cheapest new fossil fuel.[[8]](#footnote-8) Wind and solar energy can be scaled up at the rate needed, without risking energy security or creating undue impacts on land.[[9]](#footnote-9) There need to be substantial and scalable investments in renewable energy and its supporting RE infrastructure to meet the growing energy demand, reduce costs, create more green jobs, and meet the net zero targets. The adoption of renewable energy sources, energy storage systems, and energy efficiency measures would generate unparalleled prospects for economic growth, surpassing those offered by traditional fossil fuels. In this regard, GST should play a pivotal role in providing a clear transition roadmap (and equitable roadmap for developing countries with lesser capital to accelerate energy transition) from fossil fuels to renewables, ensuring a fair, sustainable, and equitable shift.

**III. Consideration of Loss and Damage**

Loss and Damage should also be profoundly reflected upon in the Global Stocktake (GST) report to establish a baseline for where we are in the world vis-a-vis addressing loss and damage. The parties need to ensure that the collected information on the GST reflects the opinions of the people who are most affected by loss and damage, marginalized groups, indigenous people, women, people with disabilities, and youth as it is necessary to collect data directly on the ground to inform on the reality of loss and damage.[[10]](#footnote-10)

**IV. Dangerous distraction No. 1: CCS and other false solutions green washing:**

Carbon capture and storage, solar radiation management, natural oil, and gas, and other false solutions are dangerous distractions in achieving the 1.5 degrees target. There exists a significant disparity between the commitments made by Parties in their NDCs and the actions they are taking to fulfill those commitments. For example, the Government's plan to produce more than twice the amount of fossil fuels in 2030 would be consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C and most major oil and gas producers are planning on increasing production out to 2030 or beyond, and several major coal producers are planning on continuing or increasing production.[[11]](#footnote-11) Countries, especially higher emitters, must as a matter of urgency phase out fossil fuels before 2050 with an equitable just transition by adopting a human rights-centered approach. There needs to be an enhanced accountability mechanism that compels Parties and Non-State Actors (NSA) to report their progress in a transparent manner.

**V. Dangerous distraction No. 2: Green washing through Carbon Markets**

The carbon market has the potential to exacerbate the climate crisis and may involve green washing through carbon offsetting. Therefore, it is crucial to establish clear and consistent global standards to address these risks. Although robust carbon markets are growing, there is only a limited number of initiatives in place, making it necessary to ensure their integrity. While the voluntary carbon market scheme claims to be net zero, it is essential to define what constitutes a carbon credit and what co-benefits are necessary. Therefore it is critical to establish clear guidelines for the use of carbon credits and co-benefits.

**B. Opportunities for international cooperation**

For a successful GST global cooperation is pivotal. The Paris Agreement is built upon cooperation and we take the importance of cooperation within the UNFCCC system as a given. But to achieve the Paris Agreement and contribute to climate-resilient development pathways (mentioned above), cooperation beyond the UNFCCC system is pivotal: Below we highlight the importance of cooperation with science policy interfaces like the IPCC and IPBES as well as cultural institutions.

**I. The GST as a platform for knowledge co-production between GST stakeholders and IPBES, UNCCD SPI, and IPCC scientists**

YOUNGO welcomes the UNFCCC secretary's words that the IPCC and its Synthesis Report are key inputs to the GST. The GST, as per article 14 of the Paris Agreement, needs to be science-based and the IPCC provides an invaluable starting point for this. However, next to the IPCC, we urge the GST to consider the input from other science-policy interfaces, such as the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) or the science-policy interface of the United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD SPI).

Considering their inputs solely, however, is not sufficient. For the GST to be based upon relevant scientific knowledge, science on effective knowledge for sustainability outcomes shows the importance of the co-production of knowledge.[[12]](#footnote-12) This means that knowledge is co-produced between the scientists and stakeholders of the policy-making process. Based upon the concept of co-production of knowledge, we suggest that the GST functions as an important platform for bringing together the GST stakeholders and scientists from IPBES, UNCCD SPI, and IPCC.

**II. Cooperation with Cultural Institutions**

As mentioned above, knowledge and especially scientific knowledge is pivotal for a successful GST. But science often lacks the ability to touch us emotionally. Emotions, are systematically excluded from science but are needed for us to take prompt actions. Culture plays a significant knowledge more emotionally engaging. This was seen for instance in the previous technical dialogue at COP27, where inputs to the GST were delivered in the form of posters, videos, and theatre. We believe that these creative inputs are essential and necessary, and we urge cooperation with global cultural institutions such as UNESCO to make this happen.

**2. Context-Specific messages**

LDCs and SIDS- countries that are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and contribute to only 7% of global GHG emissions are collectively leading the way in pledging to raise ambition. In 2021, 93% of all SIDS and LDCs have plans to enhance their NDCs (up from 42% in 2019), of which 86% intend to raise mitigation ambition (up from 40% in 2019).[[13]](#footnote-13) The achievement of their target is highly dependent on conditional funding, which means that it is crucial for the Global Stocktake (GST) to serve as an opportunity to significantly increase the provision of finance, technological support, and accessible capacity building. This support should not come in the form of loans, but rather as grants to ensure that it is readily available and easily accessible.

It is necessary to provide region-specific recommendations, taking into account the unique circumstances of each country and its regional political-economic landscape. For example, in countries such as Brazil and the Philippines, where deforestation and violence against environmental defenders and indigenous peoples are prevalent, the recommendations should focus on addressing these issues. Conversely, in countries like the USA, Australia, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia, etc. which are major fossil fuel producers and in a better position to transition away from such fuels, specific recommendations should be provided.

**3. Subject-specific messages**

**a. Intergenerational equity aspects of the GST**

It is evident that the present generation of children and youth will bear the enduring consequences of the climate crisis, though we have no role in causing this, making it a matter of intergenerational injustice. Nonetheless, we have been at the forefront of organizing global climate strikes and spearheading awareness, policy engagement, and advocacy campaigns. But only 42% of all NDCs contain a direct reference to children or youth while only 20% mention children specifically and only 2% mention the rights of the children.[[14]](#footnote-14)

There are 1.8 billion young people (ages 10-24) in the world, expected to reach 2 billion by 2050, representing the largest generation in history.[[15]](#footnote-15) We are the global shapers and leaders of the world. There is no ambition in NDCs without the proper engagement and participation of young people. Therefore, GST must encourage Parties to compensate for the significant missed chance, and meaningfully engage children and youth from the beginning in the formulation and implementation of NDCs, thereby supporting them with capacity-building, funding support for youth participation and youth-led projects that support NDCs, and investing in education and entrepreneurship, including green and decent jobs for youth.

**b. Making up for the missed opportunities in NDC targets**

96 NDCs submitted by 12 October 2021 included nature-based solutions in the context of mitigation measures and 91 in the context of adaptation plans and 30 NDCs explicitly refer to the Indigenous peoples and local communities in relation to the development and implementation of Nature-based Solutions (NbS).

Only 40 out of 133 NDCs as of October 2022 mention climate change education and none are calling for compulsory climate change education as a strategy to achieve countries’ climate mitigation and adaptation targets.[[16]](#footnote-16) This is disappointing because education plays a crucial role in building knowledge, and is instrumental in achieving the targets of the NDCs on the ground. We cannot achieve the Paris Agreement goals in silos therefore the GST report should also ask Parties to make up for the missed opportunities and recognize the huge potential of climate education, nature-based solutions, leadership, and knowledge of indigenous and local peoples, carbon sinking capacity of forests, oceans, wetlands, and mangroves and reflect those widely in the next round of NDCs.

**c. Importance of Capacity building for SIDS and LDCs and especially for youths**

It is imperative to enhance the understanding of the stocktaking process among both party and non-party stakeholders, as well as the media, and youths, to establish a network of accountability partners who can hold governments and parties responsible. Given that the concept of the Global Stocktake (GST) is relatively new and unclear, and many seem unaware of the GST, particularly those from Small Island Developing States (SIDS) or Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and there is a pressing need to develop the adequate capacity to ensure transparency and accountability in the process.

**d. Transparency, accountability, and credibility through digitalization**

Technology will help improve the accuracy, speed, and efficiency of data collection and analysis, enabling more informed decision-making and policy development. Monitoring and evaluating topics like adaptation, mitigation, finance, and loss & damage within the GST process is necessary to ensure accurate and timely data insertion, processing, and updates. Additionally, the GST should capture existing technologies and mechanisms that are used by parties that effectively monitor and evaluate existing mitigation and adaptation strategies at the national and regional levels. Digitalization can help to provide transparency to the process and accountability towards the much-needed implementation of the process.

**Our vision for the political phase of the Global Stocktake**

In February 2023, CAN-International as well as several constituencies worked together on submissions to present their views on the approach to the consideration of the outputs component of the first global stocktake. The submission from CAN-International only can be found in the annex part, the next pages are presenting the entire content of the cross-constituency submission. Both were also uploaded on the GST submission portal.

As the heart of the Paris Agreement’s ambition mechanism, **the Global Stocktake (GST) is essential to ensure its effective and timely implementation. And by ambition, we mean all aspects necessary to reach all of the Paris goals:** mitigation, adaptation, means of implementation and support, finance flows, addressing loss and damage, science, technology transfer, and capacity building while securing intergenerational justice, gender equality, and a just transition, protecting human rights, labor rights and biodiversity. Thus, **the GST aims to support Parties and the international community to raise their climate ambition with the ultimate goal to protect people, their rights and livelihoods, and natural ecosystems,** from the impacts of climate change. Young people and vulnerable communities shall be supported to mitigate and adapt, and to build resilience in order to reach climate justice. A just transition for affected workers and communities will guarantee social justice which is crucial to enable the move away from fossil fuels. The science is clear: **Parties and the global communities are far off track to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius**. The GST outputs must therefore propose clear, actionable, and specific paths forward to get on track with the Paris goals**,** with concrete policies and plans that take a gender-responsive, evidence-based, and human rights-based approach, including the rights of Indigenous Peoples, taking into account social justice and inter-generational equity. **This process cannot result in a mere repetition of vague commitments that have been made before,** and the final Consideration of the Outputs phase - or “political phase” - must be thoughtfully designed and carried out to avoid this very real possibility. In this submission, we propose a set of recommendations to ensure the GST lives up to its intended purpose in a way that galvanizes all Parties and the global community to commit to the transformational action needed before 2030.

The GST Consideration of Outputs phase must be guided by the principles of the Paris Agreement, and especially:

**Be Inclusive**: The success of the GST outcome will be deeply linked with its level of participation and inclusivity. With this in mind, we as constituencies, request efforts are maintained to

* Allow and support the meaningful participation of observers in all upcoming meetings related to the GST, both political and technical (additional workshops, high-level events, climate weeks…)
* Provide us timely information about the recent developments in GST so that we can also contribute to the process.
* Ensure the inclusion and meaningful representation of diverse groups, including traditional knowledge *vis-a-vis* local context on panels, informal meetings, and discussions (especially youth, indigenous people, the disabled, local communities, trade unions, women, farmers, fishers…)
* This does not mean that any interest promoting dangerous distractions should be heard. Conflicts of interest must be made transparent and stay outside.

**Be Evidence-informed**: The GST must be science and local knowledge-driven, with institutions such as the IPCC, but also Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge -incl. Indigenous women’s knowledge- and the experiences of affected communities and groups on the ground. It is not a space meant to allow the representation of private interests, especially those aligned with perpetuating business-as-usual emissions. When private interests are entering the GST space, conflict of interest must be avoided, especially by requiring a declaration of conflict of interest by all private actors attending the GST events in advance, as well as confirming the participants of the events 3 to 4 weeks before the event.

**Be Balanced:** must be equitably balanced across all elements and mandates of the Paris Agreement, and should have wide political support from developed and developing countries

The GST Consideration of Outputs phase must be carried out via a strategy purposefully designed to build consensus on and momentum toward ambitious GST outcomes in both global and national forums: **there must be a clear vision for how the activities will lead to the achievement of its goals.** This is why we request a dedicated work plan elaborating on the activities of the GST in 2023.

**Activities during the political phase must actively engage with leaders from the public and private sectors at all levels** - from international to local - both inside and outside of the UNFCCC context. While these may be held at splashy international gatherings - e.g. UNGA, G7/G20, MEF, APEC, World Bank/IMF, and Regional Climate Weeks - the activities must not be centered on grand announcements or photo opportunities. Rather, they must invite thoughtful reflection and facilitate concrete suggestions for collaborative, transformational, and inclusive action. Activities should review and consider key information collected and themes/conclusions drawn during discussions from the Technical Dialogues (TD) in a manner that emboldens participants to think critically about what they can commit to in light of the GST outputs. **Activities should also continually emphasize the importance of GST outcomes not being empty words on paper**, challenging participants to build consensus around goals that can and will be met within a stipulated time frame with verification and accountability for results. The UNFCCC Secretariat and co-facilitators of the TD and COO phases should prepare a variety of fit-for-purpose materials to present potential outputs to various audiences, aiming to be as comprehensive as possible with a view toward narrowing down outputs that receive wide support to draft the final outcomes. In order to achieve this, **the outcomes must be developed to address both the depth and the breadth of needed climate action**, such as:

* Sector-specific issues and cross-sectoral complexities
* Cross-cutting issues, especially around equity, human rights, finance, capacity-building and education/training
* Both national and international actions are needed, including mechanisms within the UNFCCC
* Transformational pathways needed to shift away from business as usual

To conclude, we are expecting several outcomes at COP28 in order to adapt the global climate governance to fight for the long-term Paris Agreement target in the coming years:

* A clarification on the need to limit global warming temperatures to 1.5°C, the science-based response measures this implies and the actions to address already occurring and unavoidable climate impacts. **This should include a shift in nationally determined actions,** planning, and support to align with these goals, both in considering climate ambition and implementation and addressing climate impacts pre-2030 (recognizing the linkages to ongoing processes, including the Mitigation Work Programme, the Global Goal on Adaptation and efforts to provide support for addressing loss and damage, the New Collective Quantified Goal) and post-2030 agenda.
* A shift of the UNFCCC into an ‘**implementation crisis**’ mode and away from a business-as-usual forum that is stuck in divisive politics and negotiations. The Global Stocktake is the momentum to re-think the functioning of the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement implementations in terms of participation of all actors of society, implementation tracking, mandate, and missions of the secretariat. **Inclusivity is crucial in this process,** especially for rights holders in a fair and just process. There should be concrete safeguards on conflict of interest so that the crisis implementation mode can be highly ambitious. **At COP28, we are expecting the creation of a task force with Parties and constituencies to work on several institutional and policy reforms that should be implemented at least by 2025, for the next round of NDCs.** This task force should be piloted by the UNFCCC secretariat and supported by Parties and all UNFCCC constituencies.
* **We expect the GST will acknowledge the need to improve accountability for non-state climate actors, and kick-start work on new evaluation mechanisms.** For example, as recommended by the UN High‑Level Expert Group on the Net Zero Emissions Commitments of Non-State Entities, as a minimum, non-state actors should report on progress made towards commitments in a standardized, open format and via public platforms that feed into the UNFCCC Global Climate Action Portal (GCAP). A new accountability system for non-state actors could include both coordinated support to improve reporting frameworks, and penalties for non-action (such as being ineligible to participate in the Race to Zero or Race to Resilience until such reporting is completed). Such an evaluation mechanism is critical to assess the progress of non-state actors on their climate commitments and the credibility of corporate transition plans.
* **Parties should engage in a global, equitable, and socially just fossil fuel phase-out before 2050**, including an immediate stop on fossil fuel expansion and development, as well as phasing out all fossil fuels and environmentally harmful subsidies. This means, just transition policies around social dialogue, social protection, labor rights, and decent work, consistent with human rights and gender equality. Parties should also acknowledge the fact that natural gas is also a fossil fuel that we need to transition away from, and exclude all false solutions and related technologies such as Carbon Capture Storage, nuclear energy or solar radiation management, that prolong dependence on fossil fuels and come with high human rights risks.
* **Parties should align their responses to the climate and biodiversity crises**, including by acknowledging and strengthening the stewardship and protection of ecosystems by Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and addressing key policies and financial gaps [to help guide more coherent and integrated near and long-term planning
* **Parties should clarify the process for scaling up both quantity and quality of climate finance provision**, with Parties confirming that adequate and predictable public grant financing must remain at the core of all future financial support,, with a focus on at least doubling adaptation finance before 2025 and with Parties confirming that additional public grant financing will be provided for addressing loss and damage, with concrete contributions and leads for innovative sources of funding to the new Loss and Damage Fund which was decided at Sharm El Sheikh in 2022.

The IPCC is loud and clear: we have less than 8 years to get on track to keep warming below 1.5°C. **The GST is the only accountability mechanism of the Paris Agreement: if it is a failure, we will have to endure another 5-year delay for any progress and we will not be able to meet the Paris Agreement target.** It HAS to raise credible ambition and action with strong commitments already at COP28.

**SIGNATORY CONSTITUENCIES**

ENGO Constituency

WGC (Women and Gender Constituency)

YOUNGO (Children and Youth Constituency)

ITUC - TUNGO

*This submission was developed by several members of the constituencies mentioned above, who may not be able to sign as an individual co-writer but wish to show the collective effort around this submission.*

**SIGNATORY ORGANIZATIONS**

Climate Action Network International

Africa Climate and Environment Foundation (ACEF)

International Student Environmental Coalition (ISEC/ CAN International)

TEAL Climate

Caribbean Youth Climate Council

Independent Global Stocktake (iGST)

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