

P R E S S E M I T T E I L U N G

COP28: FOSSIL FUEL AGREEMENT WILL HELP PROTECT CHILD RIGHTS BUT MORE IS NEEDED FOR A JUST TRANSITION – SAVE THE CHILDREN

Dubai, 13 December 2023 – An agreement to ‘transition away’ from fossil fuels is a step in the right direction but falls short of the rapid fossil fuel phase-out desperately needed to secure a just transition for children globally. The time for half measures is over, Save the Children said as COP28 came to an end.

[Save the Children's latest data](#) paints a stark picture for children showing that extreme weather events in 2022 pushed more than 27 million children into the clutches of hunger, a jump of 135% from the previous year. The production and burning of fossil fuels are the largest contributors to climate change, and Save the Children said it has hoped for more robust language from COP. The child rights organisation urged world leaders to step up national actions and ambitions to secure a safe and sustainable future for children, with those in high-income countries and historical emitters leading the way.

Without a unified front against the climate crisis, these numbers are set to rise, casting a long shadow over children’s lives now and in the future, said the child rights organization. The adoption of the Loss and Damage Fund to support low and middle-income countries suffering losses and damages caused by climate change was agreed on the first day of the UN climate summit, but more needs to be done to urgently fill the fund in order to protect children now and in the future.

Michael, 15 from Malawi spoke at COP28 on the need for just climate finance:

“In my country a lot of people, including my mother, can’t afford to buy biogas for cooking. So, we have to rely on charcoal and firewood. If we want countries like Malawi to make the transition to biogas, they should be supported with funds to decrease its cost.”

Faith, 15, also from Malawi, added that children in communities affected by cyclones should be better supported, with funds to promote safer and resilient schools that can adapt to climate impacts.

The importance of access to climate finance for local communities, and the integration of human rights are painfully limited in the new agreement. Climate finance pledges have also been woefully insufficient at COP28. Rich countries and historical emitters must urgently lead the way in providing the huge sums needed for climate finance supporting children and local communities in low and middle-income countries to adapt to climate change.

[Save the Children asked](#) children ahead of COP what they wanted from the summit, and they said that their priorities were climate education, more funding for climate-resilient infrastructure, and most importantly a place at the table so their voices are heard.

Children are rarely invited into climate negotiations, and if they are, information is often inaccessible to them. This year’s COP summit saw a positive increase in child participation, with at least 40 children receiving accreditation to the ‘blue zone’ which hosts the formal negotiations at the heart of COP. However, there is still a long way to go to ensure that COP is a safe, meaningful and accessible space for children.

Naomi, 13 from South Sudan said:

"I came to COP to represent the voice of the voiceless, the children of my country. Climate change is affecting badly the children of South Sudan. It's causing floods in different areas and children have to move from one place to another, losing their rights to safety and education. That's how climate change is taking away our success and the development of our nation. We need climate action now. If climate action had been taken, we wouldn't have had 28 COPs."

Save the Children said that it was positive to see children finally have a space on the agenda of COP with an expert dialogue on the disproportionate effects of climate change on children, and that hopefully this is just the first step towards a COP process that prioritises children's rights, needs, voices and equity.

Inger Ashing, CEO of Save the Children International said:

"The agreement on transitioning away from fossil fuels can only be a starting point to protect children who continue to bear the brunt of the climate crisis, a crisis not of their making. Year after year, children like Naomi, Faith, and Michael share how the climate crisis impacts their lives. Imagine a world where your home, your school, and your family's livelihoods are swept away. It's a harsh reality that children on the frontlines of the climate crisis are facing today. It's high time we stand with children and place their voices at the heart of every aspect of climate change decision-making and financing. Governments worldwide must take this decision to heart, accelerate towards a greener, safer, and more sustainable future for our children. We need to act now, our children's lives depend on it."

Bei Interviewanfragen wenden Sie sich bitte an unsere Pressestelle.

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Über Save the Children

Im Nachkriegsjahr 1919 gründete die britische Sozialreformerin und Kinderrechtlerin Eglantyne Jebb Save the Children, um Kinder in Deutschland und Österreich vor dem Hungertod zu retten. Heute ist die inzwischen größte unabhängige Kinderrechtsorganisation der Welt in rund 120 Ländern tätig. Save the Children setzt sich ein für Kinder in Kriegen, Konflikten und Katastrophen. Für eine Welt, die die Rechte der Kinder achtet, in der alle Kinder gesund und sicher leben sowie frei und selbstbestimmt aufwachsen und lernen können – seit über 100 Jahren.