



27th Conference of the Parties (COP27) of the UNFCCC

Statement of Dr. Carlos Correa, Executive Director of the South Centre

We all are aware of the magnitude of the climate crisis the world is facing. We are also aware that its impact is not the same for all countries and populations. The disasters we are witnessing affect most severely developing countries which historically have not been responsible for the emissions that put at risk the life in the planet. Those countries, the most affected, have the lowest capacity to address the devastating effects of climate change events and to adapt to and mitigate them.

Climate change is a cross-cutting issue. However, the international system operates in silos and has been incapable of ensuring the adoption of the multiple and coordinated policies necessary to address it. The South Centre, as an intergovernmental organization of developing countries, attaches particular importance to and focuses its work on the intersection of climate change policies with other policy frameworks.

Thus, finance for development and climate finance are closely interconnected. The fulfillment and further expansion of the commitments by the developed countries on climate finance, in full consistency with the UNFCCC principle of common and differentiated responsibilities, demand genuine additions to Official Development Assistance (ODA). Climate finance should not come from existing, strained aid budgets, reallocated from other areas such as infrastructure, health or education. Climate finance must not increase either the debt burden of recipient developing countries. Likewise, an effective financing facility for loss and damages, distinct from adaptation finance, needs to be established.

In this regard, it is disappointing that the human rights impact was mentioned only twice in the outcome document of COP26. We welcome the recognition by the Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right. Access to clean drinking water is also a human right recognized by the UN General Assembly in 2010. However, more than 2 billion people lack access to drinking water and the growing water scarcity is exacerbated by unprecedented climate events. We hope that COP27 agrees on actions to realize these rights.

Climate change action is not possible without wide and timely access to technologies. An effective fulfillment of the developed countries' obligations in this regard is indispensable. A suitable international regime for the appropriation and transfer of cutting-edge technologies needs to be put in place. It should ensure that green technologies are treated as 'public goods' and facilitate patent-free green technology transfers and dissemination through UNFCCC and other mechanisms. Such a regime

should move away from a purely market-based approach and be rather based on the principles of cooperation and solidarity.

There are initiatives to link climate change with trade rules. However, the World Trade Organization (WTO) is only competent to deal with the conduct of trade relations among its members. New trade rules are unlikely to contribute to effectively address climate change; they may rather create trade barriers to developing countries' participation in the world market. The UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement should remain the primary framework for the green transition and the adoption of the measures necessary to compensate and support developing countries to address climate change.

The international investment regime is inadequate to promote green projects that reduce CO₂ emissions and promote sustainable development. Moreover, carve out provisions in international investment agreements have proven to be insufficient to protect governments' actions guided by environmental concerns. A profound reform of such a regime is critical to align it with actions against climate change.

Climate change is also about impacts on human health. The damage to several ecosystems threatens human health. Infectious and vector-borne diseases linked to global warming put additional pressure on the already strained health system of developing countries. This is another issue that requires attention in the climate change context and not just as a purely public health issue.

Finally, South-South and Triangular Cooperation can play, as a complement and not a substitute of North-South cooperation, a major role in assisting developing countries to fight climate change in a manner compatible with their developing needs. Its potential should be fully exploited through appropriate national ecosystems that enable them to engage in and benefit from such a cooperation.

Sharm El-Sheik, November 16, 2022