

Speeding up destruction for profit: COP 25 is a dismal failure.

The Conference of the Parties (COP) was held in Madrid last week, and rewarded petroleum producers and the biggest polluters with a continued clear path to disaster for profit. Scientists tell us that a child born today will have a reduced life span compared to the current generation. Health systems are at risk of total collapse as early as the mid-century. Our oceans, having trapped heat for decades, can no longer act as an absorbent sponge and are desalinating. Species are going extinct at an alarming rate. Indigenous people are reporting unprecedented changes, where we now see moose in the high arctic, the birds are growing smaller, and environmentally related diseases are killing people.

COP 25 a dismal failure. It is clear that some parties, especially the biggest producers and consumers of petroleum, driven by self-serving greed and a lack of imagination, condemn life on the planet as an afterthought. The contentious article 6 became a display about how to continue a morally bankrupt oil economy that is not a bargain at all, but a highly subsidized one. What we are seeing is little more than mass murder for profit on a grand scale that we are paying for. Island states and those places in the world on the front line of climate change are seeing their local economies collapse, followed by drought, erosion of the land they live on, and even disappearance. This situation is not a fault of their own but the overcharged and unaccountable burning of fossil fuels elsewhere. Yet the greediest nations, the source of this destruction, offer no compensation for loss and damage in what is essentially a mass crime against humanity and all living things. It is genocidal on a global scale where the criminal offers no compensation or repentance for their killing.

These criminal organizations masquerading as democratic governments have aligned themselves with industry and capital. In the face of all humanity and on a global stage, it appears marching orders have come from the petroleum industry lobbyists, rather than the billions watching and living climate disaster from around the globe. Governments have managed to commit only to infinite and unsustainable growth and colonialist models on a finite planet. It's evident the message of civil society, workers, youth, women, grandmothers, elders, scientists, human rights groups, indigenous land, water and air protectors have been inconvenient voices of truth in patriarchal societies. Human rights and the right of all living things, the very biosphere of our home, Earth, is at serious risk. Like the tobacco companies of old, appearing at health conferences to extol the virtues of nicotine as something healthy, we now see the petroleum agents and their money show up at climate summits to try to convince us that there is such a thing as clean oil as our atmosphere heats up with their filth. Indigenous peoples, who have the wisdom and experience for laying out a sustainable future, remain sidelined in a continued attempt of erasure and elimination; colonialism has not ended, it only changed forms. As Canadians, we must express deep shame as Teck Resources Ltd attempt to construct the largest oil mine in the world, on Indigenous lands, at a time when the atmosphere remains saturated with rising levels of carbon. Some are projecting a rise of nine degrees by 2100. This is catastrophic and unprecedented.

There is decent work found in a mass transfer to new and sustainable energy projects. Today, there are more jobs in sustainable energy projects than in oil production. Those that work in extractive industries also deserve better and should not be left without dignity or as collateral damage in a zero-carbon future. They should not be the pawns of oil companies but rather part of a holistic and historical shift to a just transition that benefits families and communities.

There was a great deal of discussion on article 6, or rather how the polluter nations can continue their carbon destructive feast on the backs of current and future generations. This does not reflect the intention of the historic 2015 Paris Agreement. They intend to find ways to “trade” their carbon emissions, as always, with an eye to short-term profit to benefit a few.

Yet questions around human rights and protecting future life on the planet remain very much in the background and rendered insignificant. There can be no ambition without human rights. We cannot keep repeating the same mistakes of the past. It is very clear that oil-extraction companies have more rights than humans and feel little accountability other than to their shareholders and CEOs.

If we are to prevent mass destruction from consuming our world, we will need to act. One positive is that the climate offenders and their political enablers have become more naked in their tyranny for profit, their greed and intent even more exposed. This potentially invites us all to unify as different and diverse forces globally in a common front to save life on the planet and prevent certain destruction before it is too late.

We are working diligently to create a post-carbon workplace with our employer, and we all have a role to play to decarbonize our society and workplaces. We can make a difference.

As for climate criminals masquerading as saviours of our economies, we can no longer afford them.

This COP has failed the people and the planet. We will not forget. People power, climate justice!

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