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Submission to the Global Inquiry Committee Global Parliamentarians' Inquiry into the Progress of Fossil Fuel Phase Out

We congratulate and thank you and your colleagues for the laudable initiative of the Global Parliamentarians' Inquiry into the Progress of Fossil Fuel Phase Out. As leaders and policymakers in your own countries and communities, your efforts everywhere are critical to unlocking the levels of equity and ambition the world needs to meet global climate commitments and to help protect communities and ecosystems across the globe from the continuing and worsening impacts of the fossil fuel industry.

As United Nations Secretary-General Guterres has stated, *"The fossil fuel industry is at the heart of the climate crisis."* We fully agree and believe that the world urgently needs a fast, fair, full, and funded phaseout of all fossil fuels - coal, oil and gas. To those who would still ask why, we answer:

- Every new wildfire, drought, flood, cyclone, typhoon and hurricane tells us why;
- Every one of the millions of lives that are cut short each year by air pollution from fossil fuels tells us why;
- Every dollar of record profits extracted from consumers and workers who are paid tiny fractions of corporate executives' compensation tells us why;
- Every drop of polluted water and inch of polluted land tells us why;
- Every First Nation, native, aboriginal and Indigenous Peoples that has stood bravely against the destruction of their lands and their communities tells us why;
- Every farmer, fisher, and frontline community member displaced and impoverished by fossil fuels tells us why;
- Every human rights abuse driven by fossil fueled greed tells us why;
- Every forest and sensitive ecosystem destroyed by fossil fuels tells us why;
- Every dollar of illegitimate debt based in fossil finance tells us why;
- Every lie perpetrated by the fossil fuel industry for decades tells us why.

Again and again, the question of *why* we must urgently phase out fossil fuels has been asked and tragically answered. *We are not concerned only with carbon, and we are not satisfied with promises of abatement or risky technologies such as carbon capture.* The true costs of oil, gas and coal are far too great, measured not only in greenhouse gas emissions, but in impacts on workers, our neighbors, our communities, our health, our lives, and our futures. These are not acceptable costs. They never were acceptable to those of us who the fossil fuel industry has most directly impacted, and as the world yearns for a future free of fossil fuels we see this with great clarity.

The urgent question at this moment is not why, but rather, *how* to phase out fossil fuels with particular regard for justice and equity. This is no small question, and there will be no single answer.

Efforts are growing to fill the governance gap surrounding fossil fuel phaseout. In addition to your important initiative, efforts such as the Beyond Oil & Gas Alliance, and the Fossil Fuel Non-

Proliferation Treaty, clearly show the demand to fill this gap in international, national and even sub-national level governance.

We believe a World Commission on Fossil Fuels, Climate, and Development is a promising next step towards building the greater collaboration and knowledge base needed to organize a phaseout of fossil fuels. The Commission can help inform, elevate, harmonize and amplify these efforts and more still to come. *We invite you to join our call for a World Commission on Fossil Fuels, Climate and Development.*

The need for a Commission and effective governance over fossil fuel phase out could not be clearer. Efforts to date to curb the expansion of the fossil fuel industry have quickly run into legal, structural or political barriers. For example, in August 2023, a clear majority of Ecuadorans voted to ban oil industry activity in the Yasuni National Park. Yet by early September, [Moody's credit rating agency had issued a warning to the Ecuadoran government](#) that implementing the Yasuni resolution could negatively impact their credit rating, which would be economically disastrous. Similarly, other measures by governments to protect the health and environment of their citizens have been challenged under arrangements such as the [North American Free Trade Agreement](#) and the [Energy Charter Treaty](#).

Systemic barriers demand systemic solutions. What are the technical, political, social and economic barriers to a just and equitable managed decline of fossil fuel use and production? What policies could local, state and national governments enact to remove or overcome these barriers? What processes might the international community need to create to resolve these dilemmas, and foster the international cooperation necessary to make the energy transition happen faster and more cost-effectively?

This is not only about replacing dirty energy with clean, but also about how to avoid replicating the harmful extractive culture of fossil fuel dependence as we move to clean energy, and how to replace or remove the need for the revenues and foreign exchange that production of fossil fuels creates. In many countries, the debt serviced by fossil fuel revenue may need to be examined closely. The solutions will look different depending on the situation.

To be successful, a World Commission must be widely seen as independent from undue fossil fuel industry influence. We cannot ignore the fossil fuel industry's decades-long campaign of obstructing climate action at the UNFCCC and beyond. Just as the tobacco industry is not allowed to participate in the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, it is imperative to safeguard global collaboration on fossil phaseout from the lobbying, disinformation, and delays created by industry interests. We require fossil free spaces to do this work.

The fossil fuel industry continues to profit from the climate crisis today. For our health and our children, and our children's children, this industry must immediately stop expanding and be phased out over the next several decades. Political leadership and courage will be required to initiate and sustain this process. We thank you for demonstrating this kind of courage and for your visionary efforts. *We humbly request that you join us in calling for the creation of a World Commission on Fossil Fuels, Climate and Development.*

We look forward to working with you to help create our fossil free future.

Dubai, 2023