

Call for Mother Earth

An initiative to address the climate emergency in Glasgow. Join us!

14 SEPTEMBER 2021, OLGA ALCARAZ SENDRA



2021 Greece wildfires

Torrential rains and floods in Germany, large forest fires on both sides of the Mediterranean basin, unprecedented heatwaves in Canada and northwest of the United States, the largest drought experienced in Chile... These are some examples of the latest climate change-related news that have come to us during the last weeks. Unfortunately, it is more evident that the impacts of climate change wreak havoc on human societies every day. It is confirmed that the predictions made by the scientific community 20 years ago, in no way exaggerated, are today an even more harsh reality than imagined.

In the IPCC's sixth report on the Physical Science Basis of Climate Change¹ presented last August 9th, the scientific community continues to warn us that if we do not manage to drastically and urgently reduce greenhouse gas emissions, future forecasts show us a planet where human life will hardly be viable. The same report leaves a single open door saying that if we act now, radically and in this decade, we could still have time to avoid a climate and humanitarian catastrophe on a planetary scale and ensure that global warming does not exceed 1.5 °C.

Carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 should be significantly reduced by 45% compared to 2010 levels to avoid the temperature increase exceeding the 1.5 °C threshold. It is terribly worrying to note that we are far away from achieving this goal, since the commitments that countries have put on the table under the Paris Agreement will lead, in 2030, not to a reduction, but to an increase in these emissions. It is imperative to mitigate emissions much more. The climate summit (COP26) to be held in Glasgow next November is perhaps the last chance to achieve this.

What has been said so far is a known thing, which we have talked about at length in our past articles. But there is an essential aspect that surprisingly, since the failure of the Copenhagen Summit in 2009, is not addressed at international climate conferences and is absent from the public debate. An uncomfortable question that is urgent to ask at once: in order not to exceed 1.5 °C, how much should every country reduce its emissions by 2030 for an overall reduction of 45% compared to 2010 levels?

Throughout this article, we will see the reason for this absence and present the [Call for Mother Earth](#) initiative, which aims to address this issue in Glasgow by placing climate justice at the center of the debate. This article's authors, Josep Xercavins and Olga Alcaraz, as promoters of the initiative, appeal to all our readers to adhere to it and collaborate to disseminate it.

Why the platform *Call for Mother Earth*?

The Paris Agreement leaves countries to decide the emissions reductions they are willing to make. There is no guide or reference on what would be desirable for them to do. Nor is there a revision mechanism compelling them to increase their ambition when confirmed (as it has already been done) that the aggregate of all reductions to which each country has committed is light years away from the 1.5 °C. This explains the poor results that, at the moment, the implementation of the Agreement is giving.

Since the adoption of the Paris Agreement, successive climate conferences have been mainly concerned with implementing it. This is perfectly understandable given the immense number of new regulations that have had to be drafted, debated, and approved for the implementation of the Agreement. However, this has also meant that the major outstanding issues are being relegated from the debate. As it is often said, the urgent (the need for regulations, procedures, records) leaves no room for the important, and key issues —such as deciding how much each country should reduce its emissions based on climate justice— have not even entered the agenda.

Faced with the prospect that at the Glasgow climate conference (COP26), the essential is again conspicuous by its absence, the *Call for Mother Earth* platform has set out to include an agenda item to decide how to distribute the mitigation efforts among all countries, so that together they adjust to the 1.5 °C pathway. On the other hand, efforts should be compatible with the viability of the ecosystems and with a legitimate aspiration to achieve a dignified life for all humanity. That is, to put climate justice and the Sustainable Development Goals at the center of climate action on a global scale.

It's now or never. If countries limit themselves to follow their current emissions policies, by 2029, humanity will have exhausted all available carbon budget. Let's recall that this budget is the quantity of CO₂ emissions that can still be released into the atmosphere without reaching the 1.5 °C temperature increase. According to the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report, this budget is 400 gigatons of CO₂, a significantly reduced number considering that we currently release 42 gigatons per year. It makes no sense to postpone the emissions reduction and to start talking, like many do, about emissions neutrality in 2050. If no action is taken during this decade, by 2030, it will be too late to maintain global warming below 1.5 °C.

How does the initiative *Call for Mother Earth* can enter and thrive at the upcoming COP26?

Two things are necessary to achieve opening the debate on what emissions reductions countries should make based on climate justice criteria in the upcoming Climate Conference (COP26):

- 1) According to the UN Climate Change Convention rules, it is necessary for one State Party of it to request its inclusion in the agenda explicitly.

In this case, the request has been made by the government of Bolivia. A country whose trajectory within the Climate Convention has demonstrated its commitment to climate justice, sustainable development, and awareness of the indigenous peoples' role in the fight against climate change. In and after Copenhagen 2009, Bolivia led the most progressive positions in the battle against climate change, specifically in the World Peoples' Conference on Climate and the Rights of Mother Earth (Cochabamba 2010) that served as a basis for the 2010 Cancun Agreements.

It should come as no surprise that a petition of this caliber comes from a country in the global South. The countries from the South are most suffering the impacts of climate change and, therefore, will benefit the most from an approach based on climate justice and sustainable human development. Nor should we be surprised if it raises the suspicions of the global North representatives; nobody likes to blush out while being shown that the emissions reductions plans they have been drawing out, and advertizing as a great historical milestone do not exceed the most basic climate justice analysis.

- 2) The proposal needs to be accompanied by broad support. Let no one be fooled into thinking that the request made by Bolivia is sufficient.

If we want the inclusion of the agenda item to thrive and, we can debate and make decisions at the upcoming COP26 on how to distribute emission reductions based on climate justice and Sustainable Development Goals; Bolivia's request must be supported by a relevant quantity of citizens from all corners of the world. The platform we promote wants to help achieve this.

Many think that their individual action will not succeed in curbing a global problem such as climate change and, to a certain extent, the authors of this article share this idea. In fact, we have always maintained that the main driving factor of solutions must come from structural actions. For example, no matter how much we ask citizens to stop using their car and use public transport more, this change in habits will not occur until the transport network works well and allows citizens to "forget" about their private vehicle. Actually, curbing the climate emergency will imply making major structural changes in economic, energy, transport, food, territorial, production... models. And achieving them will require bold policies and governments that act in the service of the common good.

But, on the other hand, the authors are absolutely convinced of the power of people, citizens, and organized civil society. We had seen this in the struggles for gender equality, labor rights, the recognition of minorities, use of water, right to vote, against racism... Struggles that have not been exempt of human suffering but have giving results thanks to people's commitment, as well initiatives such as Fridays for Future or Extinction Rebellion, appearing in the current context of climate emergency.

Join and extend the *Call for Mother Earth*!

The platform *Call for Mother Earth* already has as its first promoters more than twenty leaders of the world civil society headed by two prestigious names: Federico Mayor Zaragoza and Roberto Savio. Let's recall that Federico Mayor was director-general of UNESCO during the 90s and currently chairs the Fundación para una Cultura de Paz. Roberto Savio is one of the first promoters of the World Social Forum and chairs the communication initiative Other News.

Call for Mother Earth wants to be a platform open to people aware that humanity is part of the planet's ecosystems. We rely on them, and we should preserve them for future generations as we have received them or even better. It appeals to all those concerned about climate change and the future of humanity, for the future of young generations, children, and those who are yet to be born. People that are committed to justice, peace, and solidarity in the world. The platform *Call for Mother Earth* aims to bring together the voice of all these people, make their commitment to Mother Earth visible, and project their strength so that COP26 can answer the question mentioned above: how much should every country reduce its emissions by 2030 for an overall reduction of 45% compared to 2010 levels? If you are one of these people, do not hesitate to join and extend the [initiative](#)!

Call for Mother Earth: for the upcoming Climate Conference to bring positive outcomes and achieve agreements that allow reversing the current climate crisis.

Note

IPCC, 2021: [Summary for Policymakers](#). In: *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis*. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. MassonDelmotte, V., P. Zhai, A. Pirani, S. L. Connors, C. Péan, S. Berger, N. Caud, Y. Chen, L. Goldfarb, M. I. Gomis, M. Huang, K. Leitzell, E. Lonnoy, J. B. R. Matthews, T. K. Maycock, T. Waterfield, O. Yelekçi, R. Yu and B. Zhou (eds.). Cambridge University Press. In Press.

(Article co-authored with Josep Xercavins i Valls, retired Professor at the UPC and former co-director of the GGC at the UPC, and with the collaboration of Cindy Ramírez Padilla, doctoral student at the GGCC at the UPC)

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Olga Alcaraz Sendra

Physicist, university professor and walker. Life enthusiast. Concerned about the future of humankind, she is trying to contribute reversing the climate crisis.

[Author profile](#)



1. A series of forest fires broke out across Greece in the summer of 2021
2. In the community of Schuld and the city of Sinzig alone, at least 28 people died. The disaster was declared in the city of Hof and in the district of Hof (Bavaria) and in the district of Vulkaneifel (Rhineland-Palatinate)
3. Fires broke out across Greece in a multifaceted focal state, destroying hundreds of buildings and thousands of acres of land
4. The United Nations sees the disaster of the floods in western Germany as a result of the advance of climate change
5. Since mid-July 2021, the weather in Greece was characterized by very high temperatures. Fiery winds combined with strong solar radiation

avored the outbreak of forest fires

6. The 2021 Central European floods are a series of river basin floods in Switzerland, Germany, Belgium and other Central European countries caused by heavy rains during July of that year

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