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Climate

# **For the climate, for life, for us and our children now is the time to fight!**

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**“Life on Earth can recover from major climate change by evolving into new species and creating new ecosystems. Humanity cannot.” This is what can be read in the IPCC draft report (6th assessment report, expected for February 2022).**

The text is unambiguous on the dangerous threshold not to be crossed: going beyond 1.5° C will have “progressively serious, centuries’ long and, in some cases, irreversible consequences.” Among other phenomena, the dislocation of the Greenland and Antarctic ice caps would indeed be irreversible on the historical scale of time. However, the disappearance of the threatened glaciers in these regions (for some glaciologists, the process is under way and will not stop) would cause the level of the oceans to rise by about 13 meters in the centuries to come.

## **“The worst is yet to come”**

The Paris agreement set the goal of “of keeping the temperature change to well below 2 degrees and to make efforts to prevent a change greater than 1.5 degrees....” IPCC experts are not satisfied with this ambiguous formula. According to the text, it should be well below 1.5° C: indeed, “even at 1.5° C, living conditions will change beyond the capacity of certain organisms to adapt”, according to the report. As a reminder, the average temperature rise compared to the pre-industrial era is already 1.1° C and the World Meteorological Organization warns that at the current rate of emissions, there is a 40% risk that the threshold of 1.5° C over one year is exceeded by 2025.

“The worst is yet to come”, says the IPCC, with implications for the lives of our children and grandchildren far more than ours. Without radical anti-neoliberal measures 130 million more people will fall into extreme poverty within ten years. At 2° C of warming, the number of hungry people will increase to 80 million by 2050, and hundreds of millions of people in coastal cities will experience more frequent flooding, leading to greater migrations. Even at 1.5° C, the number exposed to water shortages will increase by 350 million by 2050.

It needs to be said over and over again: the poor and poor countries will be hardest hit by the escalation of the disaster. The draft report notes that “adaptation costs in Africa are projected to increase tens of billions of dollars per year if global warming exceeds two degrees Celsius”. Who will pay? As a reminder, more than ten years after the COP in Cancún (2010), the rich countries have still not honoured their promise to contribute 100 billion dollars per year to the climate fund intended to help the countries of the global South. This is one of the sticking points in the negotiations ahead of the COP 26 scheduled for Glasgow at the end of the year. Thus, amidst the discretion carefully maintained by the financial and political leaderships, an unprecedented crime against humanity is slowly being prepared. A crime against the poor who bear almost no responsibility for climate change!

## **It’s time to fight!**

The text that has leaked to the press is not the draft report itself but the draft summary of the report for policy makers. The usual practice of the IPCC - an intergovernmental body, it should be remembered - is that this summary is the subject of negotiations - often fierce - between the scientists who wrote the full report and the representatives of the states. It seems likely that those who leaked the document did so to disseminate the original text, before state officials imposed watering down or elimination of the most alarming formulas. This hypothesis is very likely, because the capitalist fossil lobby has been striving for decades to deny or minimize the danger and has powerful political

contacts (for example, China and Saudi Arabia have ensured that the press and NGOs cannot attend the preparatory discussions for COP 26). The leak therefore constitutes a double alarm signal: on the extreme gravity of the objective situation, and on the danger that the final version partially conceals this extreme gravity from world opinion.

Whatever the case, there is no need to squirm: more than ever, social movements must ring the alarm bell with all their might and mobilize as widely as possible to force states to immediately adopt the radical measures needed to stabilize warming well below 1.5° C, in social justice and North-South justice (strict respect for the principle of “common but differentiated responsibility”). Without sleight of hand, without “temporary overshoots”, without resorting to sorcerer’s apprentice technologies, and by only deploying measures compatible with the imperative protection of biodiversity.

## **“Zero net emissions”, a criminal policy**

Let’s be clear: this is not at all what governments are concocting by promising us “carbon neutrality” (or “net zero emissions”) by 2050. At best these governments are preparing us for a scenario of “temporary overshoot” of 1.5° C accompanied by an increase in “low carbon technologies” (code name for nuclear energy) and the deployment of so-called “negative emission technologies”. While most of these only exist at the prototype or demonstration stage, some would have us believe that they will allow the planet to be cooled by removing huge amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere in the second half of the century, and by storing it underground. In truth, these sci-fi scenarios are only invoked to defend the holy cow of capitalist growth, and to protect the profits of those most responsible for the mess: the oil, coal, gas and gas and agribusiness multinationals.

The recent report by the International Energy Agency (IEA) on “net zero emissions” points the way to this criminal policy. Indeed, to achieve “net zero emissions” by 2050 without affecting growth, according to the IEA, would take: twice as many nuclear power plants; accepting that one fifth of the world’s energy continues to come from fossil fuel combustion, emitting 7.6Gt CO<sub>2</sub>/year; capturing and storing underground these 7.6Gt of CO<sub>2</sub> every year in geological reservoirs (the sealing of which cannot be guaranteed); devoting 410 million hectares to biomass energy monoculture (this is equivalent to a third of the agricultural area under permanent cultivation!); doubling the number of large dams; destroying everything - even on the moon - to grab the “rare earths” essential for “green technologies”; and so on.

With variations, it is this senseless productivist policy that is being set in motion by the countries and groups of countries which are today rushing down the path of “green capitalism”. Their objective is not to save the planet but to offer capitalists the largest possible share of the new technologies market, the largest possible share of profits. Need it be said that this also implies, in order to “attract investors”, continuing neoliberal policies of destruction of social and democratic rights?

PS:

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