

# Impose climate tax on fossil fuel giants, media groups urge

The Guardian and dozens of international media titles publish a joint editorial calling for radical thinking on how to fund climate action in poorer countries

[The Guardian view on Cop27: this is no time for apathy or complacency](#)



Activists outside Cop27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, calling for climate justice. Photograph: Sean Gallup/Getty Images

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Dozens of media organisations from around the world have **published a joint editorial article** calling for a windfall tax on the biggest fossil fuel companies.

The funds raised should be redistributed to poorer, vulnerable countries, the editorial says, as they are suffering the worst impacts of the climate crisis despite having done the least to cause it.

“Humanity has to end its addiction to fossil fuels,” the joint editorial, which was coordinated by the Guardian, says. “Rich countries account for just one in eight people in the world today but are responsible for half of greenhouse gases. These nations have a clear moral responsibility to help.”

The UN secretary general recently called for a windfall tax on fossil fuel companies, whose profits have soared as Russia's war in Ukraine drives up energy prices. Oil and gas companies made \$100bn (£85bn) in the first three months of 2022 alone. Any success at the UN's Cop27 summit, taking place in Egypt, is widely seen as dependent on rapidly increasing the flow of climate funding to developing countries.

"Climate change is a global problem that requires cooperation between all nations," the editorial says. However, without adequate funding, there is no trust between the global north and south, according to Cop27 observers. "This is no time for apathy or complacency; the urgency of the moment is upon us," the article states.

A series of reports in the run-up to Cop27 have laid bare how close the planet is to irreversible climate catastrophe, with "no credible pathway [of carbon cuts] to 1.5C in place", the internationally agreed temperature limit to contain global heating.

Rather than the rapid fall in emissions needed, Cop27 was told they were likely to rise to record levels this year, with the UN chief, António Guterres, warning humanity is on a "highway to climate hell".

The editorial, published by more than 30 media organisations, notes the world's growing economic crisis but says: "During the pandemic, central banks across the world lubricated states' expenditure by buying up their own governments' bonds. The trillions of dollars needed to deal with the ecological emergency demands such radical thinking returns."

The organisations that published the joint editorial come from almost every continent, including the Hindu in India and Tempo in Indonesia, the Mail & Guardian in South Africa and Haaretz in Israel, Rolling Stone in the US and El Espectador in Colombia, and La Repubblica in Italy and Libération in France.

Katharine Viner, the editor-in-chief of Guardian News and Media, which led the initiative, said: "With Cop27 taking place in Egypt, we wanted to publish an ambitious editorial that highlights how strongly many different news organisations, and our readers, feel about the climate crisis. This joint editorial

is a powerful demonstration of how news organisations around the world can come together to collaborate in the public interest.”

Ozayr Patel, the climate and environment editor at the Mail & Guardian, said: “We realise that climate change cannot be fought alone. Collaboration is key and, in that spirit, we are delighted to be media partners with the Guardian and other outlets front and centre of the climate struggle. It is time to hold polluters accountable and we hope this is the first step to achieving that.”

Aluf Benn, the editor-in-chief of Haaretz, said: “The climate crisis is the biggest challenge of our generation – and one that only international cooperation can attempt to solve. At a time when governments fail to do what is needed – both on an international and a national level – we must recognise the need for a combined effort, including by media outlets who have the moral responsibility to show the way.”

Andre Wright, the acting editor-in-chief of the Gleaner, Jamaica’s leading newspaper and also part of the initiative, said: “We join in the advocacy that the time has come for action. Experts believe we are already on an existential precipice; further procrastination will push the world over the edge. Climate justice is one of the most important global mandates of modern times. Major economies guilty of unsustainable investments in fossil fuels must be held accountable.”

The issue of “loss and damage”, which is the funding needed to rebuild in poorer countries after unavoidable climate impacts, has become central to Cop27. At past summits, rich countries, including the US, have rebuffed calls for such finance.

The joint editorial states: “The UN [summits] must be about the power of argument not the argument of power. The UN process may not be perfect. But it has provided nations with a target to save the planet, which must be pursued at Cop27 to stave off an existential risk to humanity.”

Natalie Hanman, the head of environment at Guardian News and Media, said: “My hope is that in speaking with one voice, we remind people that this is a global crisis, threatening all of us. It’s now imperative that world leaders listen, and act.”