

# ECO

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*Editorial: Andres Fuentes*

## Germany's visa war on African delegates must end

Is Germany's visa process structurally racist?

African delegates have been blocked from attending the Bonn UN climate summit for no good reason. They include climate advocates as well as Ministry officials. They all had UNFCCC accreditation. Many had their flights and accommodation booked. Yet the German government refused them a visa, or simply delayed issuing one, effectively silencing them.

Once again, people of colour from the countries and communities most affected by climate change have been excluded from the deliberations and decision-making process – all while big polluters, many of them white men from the global north, are allowed to freely roam the halls of Bonn.

These reprehensible and meaningless delays get many African delegates wondering whether Germany is fit to host the UNFCCC.

If it cannot honour the most basic of its responsibilities as the host, that is facilitating easy access to visa for accredited delegates, then ECO feels.... Perhaps it is not.

ECO has heard some Africans suggest that perhaps the UNFCCC headquarters and the Subsidiary Bodies meetings belong in a more people-friendly country instead, in the global south maybe? These meetings are, after all, where the fate of the most affected countries and communities is being determined. It is vital that representatives from these communities are able to personally engage in the decisions made about their future.

Isn't it odd that delegates are spending time discussing increasing the participation of observers from the global south in the AIM room, when the bare minimum requirement for their participation - the right to travel to Bonn - cannot be

guaranteed?

Challenges in issuing visa by a (one-off) COP host country is bad enough, but if the permanent host of the UNFCCC and the annual intersessionals is disenfranchising people from the very countries most vulnerable to climate change, that is unacceptable. ECO suggests Germany get its act together, as it is currently not fit to convene such a UN gathering.

Structural disenfranchisement and discrimination against delegates from Africa has no place within a United Nations process. So the UN also has a role to play. At a time of notable shrinking civic space and when COPs are overrun by Big Polluter lobbyists, the UNFCCC Secretariat cannot afford to turn a blind eye when voices from developing countries and affected communities are shut out. This disenfranchisement undermines the very legitimacy of these proceedings.

## The GST is NOT a buffet, it is an climate ambition mechanism

Are you hungry? Desperately looking for a place in Bonn where you could finally have a good, healthy meal of your choosing?

Just like an incomplete meal doesn't give you all the nutrients and nourishment you need, an NDC that doesn't cover all elements of climate action leaves you missing opportunities to effectively address climate change. Thankfully, the GST should be able to get you started on a balanced and complete approach.

The next generation of NDCs are

those that can keep the Paris Agreement's objective to limit warming to 1.5 degrees alive. They can save ecosystems, jobs, livelihoods, and cultures. They can save lives, many lives.

The GST process provides a large body of evidence to inform more ambitious NDCs, aligned with the best available, most recent science and human rights obligations. Countries need to transition away from fossil fuels, deliver adequate climate finance, protect people, forests, oceans and other ecosystems from climate catastrophes and enable

adaptation and respond to impacts where they are felt.

All these elements provide opportunities on their own, but when put together they pave the way to a planet that stays below 1.5°C.

But for all of us to enjoy the successes that this path promises, the approach needs to be fair, equitable and just. And for that, countries must reckon with their historical responsibilities and support others accordingly. This is the difference between a GST that's a tasting menu and one that offers a full meal.

# Aggravation!

Why farmers and negotiators should be worried about AI.

Beep boop beep boop... There's been quite a bit of talk of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and "technical innovations" in this week's Sharm el Sheikh negotiations on agriculture. ECO wonders: have agriculture negotiators become so tired of working unsuccessfully towards consensus, that they have decided to leave the fate of our food systems in the hands of AI? Clearly, they have forgotten that doing so may lead to the loss of their very own negotiating jobs and livelihoods? On the other hand, computer-led negotiations on agriculture and food security may finally make them reflect on the plight of small-scale food producers seeing their land grabbed to create sensors-and-drone-farming installations.

The recent informal note outlining a roadmap for the joint work on agriculture and food security included a dubious push for tech-based "innovation", such as AI or biotechnologies, to be discussed at the next sessions. ECO is really concerned about the focus shifting away from small-scale food producers and their livelihoods, instead being concerned with sci-fi illusions and techno-fixes to the climate crisis that will lead to unchecked loss of livelihood in rural communities and ultimately hunger.

ECO would like to remind delegates that one quarter of the world's population relies on agriculture for its livelihood. Sustainable Development Goal 2 is about creating a

world free of hunger by 2030, achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture. Agriculture not only provides the world with food, it creates jobs and incomes. The farming sector is the backbone of many developing countries' economy. This threat to livelihoods from climate change and digitised technologies is no laughing matter.

Future UNFCCC workshops, for example the proposed topic on "sustainable approaches" to agriculture, should be framed by criteria of securing farming livelihoods

amidst the threat of climate change.

Real, healthy, equitable, resilient innovation lies in farmers and Indigenous Peoples' knowledge. Everywhere in the world, communities put in place innovative techniques towards more sustainable food systems, based on agroecology and social progress. These are the kind of solutions that climate finance should be all about.

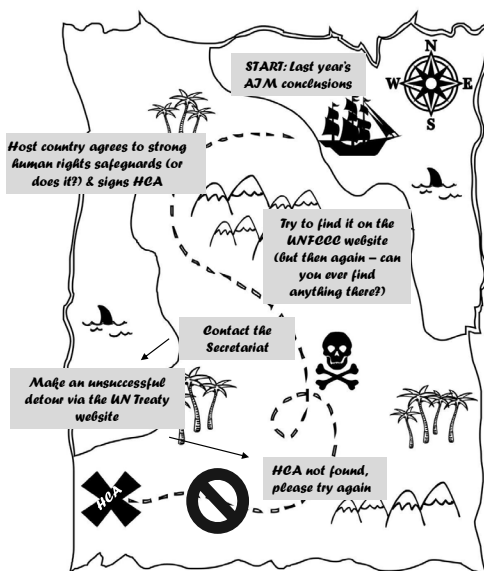
Robots that could put hundreds of millions of small farmers out of work? Thanks, but no thanks.



# Join ECO for the Host Country Agreement Treasure Hunt!

ECO saw a beautiful signing ceremony yesterday in front of Wien and could even catch a glimpse of the host country agreement for COP29. What a privilege it was, but ECO wonders if it will disappear into the deep caverns of the UN system, like all the other COP Host Agreements that have come before this one?

The short sighting was not enough to read the whole document and ECO could not see whether the COP29 host agreed to implementing strong human rights safeguards - critical to safe and meaningful participation in the COP - like Parties agreed to last year in the Arrangements for Intergovernmental Meetings



(AIM) room. It shouldn't be too hard to find out because those very same Parties decided to make the agreements public.

So are they? Join ECO on an exciting treasure hunt to find the host country agreement of COP28!

Puzzled? Yeah, ECO too. After months of trying to get a hold of the host country agreement of COP28 and being sent from pillar to post without success, ECO is not too excited to start yet another such hunt for COP29.

How about making the hunt less of a mission impossible by mandating the Secretariat to upload it on UNFCCC.int/HCApublicforreal?