

For those of you referring to reports from the UN about how serious the climate emergency is, it is important to refer to the latest report, the “Global Stocktake” required by the Paris Agreement. The first Global Stocktake was released last week. Here is a summary of the findings and some good quotes for you.

In a major report last week, the most comprehensive analysis of global climate action produced to date, the UN again reported that Governments are failing to cut greenhouse gas emissions fast enough to meet the goals of the Paris agreement and to stave off climate disaster. Meeting these goals will require “phasing out all unabated fossil fuels” (those whose emissions enter the atmosphere), in an acknowledgment that some oil-producing countries (like the United States) may find hard to take.

The report calls for a systemic transformation of every aspect of society to happen quickly enough to halt rising emissions in the next two years. There is a “rapidly narrowing window” for governments to move faster, according to the report, as global greenhouse gas emissions must peak by 2025 at the latest, and be rapidly reduced from there, to limit temperature rises to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels.

“Achieving net zero CO₂ and greenhouse gas emissions requires systems transformations across all sectors and contexts, including scaling up renewable energy while phasing out all unabated fossil fuels, ending deforestation, reducing non-CO₂ emissions and implementing both supply and demand side measures,” reads key finding 6 of the report.

The question of phasing out fossil fuels is now at the heart of the UN global climate talks. For years, oil-producing nations have prevented the UN from adopting language that would clearly require a phasing out of fossil fuels, even though it is undisputed that burning fossil fuels is the prime cause of the climate crisis.

The “indispensable” actions required are “scaling up renewable energy and phasing out all unabated fossil fuels”, as well as ending the destruction of forests and reducing methane emissions, especially from [oil and gas operations](#).

The report does not shy away from the scale of the challenge. “It is essential to unlock and redeploy trillions of dollars to meet global investment needs,” it says. In other words, it requires reengineering the global financial system. Stopping the fossil fuel investments and [vast subsidies](#) that are throwing fuel on the climate fire is critical, it says.

The report acknowledges that “rapid change can be disruptive” but says ensuring climate policies are fair and protect the poor helps to extinguish opposition. Climate policies can also be poverty eradication policies, it says, such as replacing expensive gas power with cheap renewables.

The report also says that meeting these goals is possible--the technology and finance to end the climate crisis exist: the greatest barrier is lack of political will. Countries need to put in place durable, long-term reforms that integrate climate change risks into all aspects of planning, decision-making and implementation.