

Grow zero-carbon power to meet climate goals: analysis

September 16 2020, by Patrick Galey



The Energy Transitions Commission (ETC) said clean energy provision must be ramped up at a pace nearly six times higher than currently

All new electricity supply growth worldwide can now come from zero-carbon sources, according to a plan released by businesses and

environmental advocates Wednesday that charts the path to a net-zero world by 2050.

In one of the most comprehensive proposals to date on how the [global economy](#) can reduce its [carbon emissions](#) in line with the Paris climate goals, the Energy Transitions Commission (ETC) said clean power provision must be ramped up at a pace nearly six times higher than currently.

It said there should be "no permanent reliance" on negative emissions technologies to achieve net-zero, calling instead for increased [energy efficiency](#) and removing fossil fuel subsidies.

"We have witnessed great progress in renewables and batteries that make us optimistic about the prospects for clean electrification," Sandrine Dixson-Decleve, an energy policy expert and former chief partnership officer of UN Sustainable Development, told AFP.

She said achieving the Paris goals would require "the right policy and investment" as well as consumer pressure on industry to slash pollution and pursue greener growth paths.

This would include increasing carbon prices and working with financiers to channel more funding towards renewables.

The 2015 landmark climate deal enjoins nations to limit global temperature rises to "well below" two degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) through a rapid and sweeping drawdown of greenhouse gas emissions.

It also aims for a safer warming cap of 1.5C.

With just 1C of warming so far, Earth is already seeing a drastic increase in the scale and frequency of droughts, wildfires and storm

surges made worse by rising sea levels.

Yet in the years since the Paris accord was struck emissions have risen steadily.

The UN now says that for 1.5C to remain in play the world must slash its carbon pollution 7.6 percent every year through 2030.

The ETC is a global coalition of business leaders and environmental advocates, including heads of energy producers and [financial institutions](#).

Its analysis found it was "technically and economically possible" to achieve a carbon-free economy by 2050 for less than the cost of 0.5 percent of global GDP.

To do so, governments and businesses must work together to reduce [energy consumption](#) while improving living standards in developing countries, as well as deploying new technology such as hydrogen or sustainable biomass for industries that cannot be electrified.

"The growth in electricity demand in developing countries can be met with fast renewable deployment at no extra cost compared to fossil-based developments," said Dickson-Decleve.

'Cost of doing nothing'

The ETC estimated that additional investment required to implement its plan would be \$1-2 trillion annually, equivalent to 1-1.5 percent of global GDP.

"The transition to a net-zero-emissions economy is actually really affordable," said Dickson-Decleve.

"The costs of doing nothing are huge in dollar terms, but they are even more dramatic in human terms."

The ETC includes senior executives from oil majors BP and Shell, both of which have come in for criticism from green campaigners for continuing to invest in upstream oil and gas projects.

Dickson-Decleve said that while all companies must shift away from fossil fuels and towards low-carbon infrastructure, "the transition strategy will look different from one company to the other".

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