

Campaigners call for fossil fuel deadline, more climate aid

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Cars and trucks queue on a highway after an accident in Frankfurt, Germany, April 26, 2023. Environmental campaigners urged climate envoys from dozens of nations gathering Tuesday, May 2, 2023, in Berlin to discuss a global deadline for phasing out fossil fuels and ways of increasing aid to poor countries hit by global warming. Credit: (AP Photo/Michael Probst, File

Environmental campaigners urged climate envoys from dozens of nations gathering Tuesday in Berlin to discuss a global deadline for phasing out fossil fuels and ways of increasing aid to poor countries hit by global warming.

About 40 countries, including the United States, China, India and Brazil, are attending the Petersberg Climate Dialogue being held in the German capital. The two-day meeting is a key negotiating step in the run-up to this year's international climate conference in Dubai, known as COP28.

Campaign groups are concerned that countries such as the U.S., COP28 host United Arab Emirates and the European Union back the idea of [carbon capture](#) as a means of allowing oil and gas extraction to continue or even expand. Scientists say technologies for removing planet-warming carbon dioxide from the atmosphere aren't proven at scale and could require huge investments at the expense of [cheaper alternatives such as solar and wind power](#).

"They are trying their best to prolong the use of fossil fuels, especially by focusing on (...) carbon capture and storage, which is deeply worrying for us," said Harjeet Singh, head of global political strategy at Climate Action Network International.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called for an end to all fossil fuel use, which is blamed for the majority of [global warming](#) that has occurred since the start of the industrial era, warning that otherwise the goal of limiting temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) may be missed. But so far only coal has been put on notice, with a commitment by nations two years ago to "phase down" its use.

Denmark's climate minister, Dan Jørgensen, said recently that a global pledge to also stop using oil and gas "will be a part of the conversation" before and during the Dubai summit.

Singh said solutions also need to be found for millions of workers in the coal, oil and gas industry if it is to be wound down successfully, as well as alternative sources of energy for many who still rely on cheap fossil fuels.

"What we need to see coming out of the year is not just about fossil fuel phaseout, but equitable phaseout of [fossil fuels](#)," he said.

Diplomats will also be discussing how to ramp up various forms of financial aid for developing countries hardest hit by [climate change](#). A pledge to provide \$100 billion every year has yet to be met and a separate fund, agreed at last year's climate talks in Egypt, is still being set up.

U.S. climate envoy John Kerry has said the total amount needed to help all countries make the economic transition to a green economy will run into the trillions of dollars. Experts say that in addition to aid, large sums will need to come from the private sector. Other sources such as carbon taxes on air and sea travel have also been floated.

"These big questions about where the finance is going to come from for countries to deliver any of their potential climate policies or energy transition policies need to reach some answers before (COP28)," said Alex Scott, head of [climate](#) diplomacy at the environmental think tank E3G.

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