

# AQOCI'S ADVOCACY DOCUMENT FOR

# COP 28



Association québécoise  
des organismes de  
coopération internationale

# Why participate in COP28?

We know that this year the COP will take place in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, one of the 10 largest oil producers in the world<sup>1</sup>. We also know that the country has entrusted the presidency of the COP to the President and CEO of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company. In this context, while lobbyists in the oil and gas sector had already invested forcefully the COP27 (their number was up 25% compared to the COP26 in Glasgow), they can be expected to attend in even greater numbers at COP28.

So, knowing all this, why did AQOCI<sup>2</sup> decide to participate in COP28?

## There are three main reasons

# 1

Occupy the COP28 space so as not to leave all the space and power to lobbyists in the oil and gas sector. It is imperative that civil society occupy the space of the COP to make diverse voices heard and to put forward critical perspectives. AQOCI will participate in the COP with the Climate Action Network Canada, which will allow it to support their key demands.

# 2

Amplify the demands of groups from the Global South that are amongst the most affected by the impacts of climate change. To do this, we will hold several activities to amplify the keys asks of five Global South partners of AQOCI.

# 3

Promote the active participation of youth. It is notably through the AQOCI Youth Delegation to COP28, and their active participation in several activities, that the demands of young people will be heard.

AQOCI approaches international climate negotiations from a feminist climate justice perspective. We consider the climate crisis as not only an environmental and climate issue but also a complex social justice problem at the intersection of several systems of oppression (sexism, racism, colonialism, extractivism, etc.). The people who are most concerned and most vulnerable to the effects of the climate crisis need to be at the center of decision-making and actions for a just, equitable and inclusive transition to be achieved.

This advocacy document was based largely on the political demands of AQOCI's partners from the Global South. The partners involved in this process are the Congo Basin Conservation Society (CBCS-Network), the Coordinating Committee of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA), the Latin American Network for Economic and Social Justice (LATINDADD), the People's Coalition on Food sovereignty (PCFS) and Jeunes volontaires pour l'environnement (JVE) Sénégal, (*Young Volunteers for the Environment*).



# Key asks at **COP28**

In general, AQOCI calls on the states that have contributed the most to the climate crisis, including Canada and Quebec, to recognize their excessive contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and to do their fair share in reducing their emissions and in providing international climate finance.

In the context of COP28, we seek in particular to amplify key demands of civil society networks based in Latin America, Africa and Asia, to support the key demands of Climate Action Network Canada, and to support the key demands of youth, women and Indigenous groups.



# 1 Transform food and agricultural systems away from fossil fuels towards agroecology and food sovereignty

This ask is put forward by the [People's Coalition on Food sovereignty \(PCFS\)](#) and supported by AQOCI.

The PCFS is a network of various grassroots groups of small food producers particularly of peasant-farmer organizations and their support NGOs, working towards food sovereignty.

The current dominant food system is largely controlled by transnational corporations and promotes monoculture, long circuits, and chemical pesticides and fertilizers made from fossil fuels: all elements that negatively affect not only the climate and the environment, but also health and food production.

**At COP28, we call on States to take action to transform our food systems by:**

- ▶ Prioritizing local production for domestic needs in a food sovereignty perspective;
- ▶ Committing to eliminate fossil fuels; and
- ▶ Promoting agroecology, a community-based approach to production that integrates local, Indigenous and scientific knowledge and practices to preserve land, nature and people.



## 2 Provide fair climate financing for the Amazon region

This demand is put forward by the [Latin American Network for Economic and Social Justice \(LATINDADD\)](#) and supported by AQOCI.

**LATINDADD is a network of institutions and social organizations from Latin American countries that are working to solve the problems arising from the systemic crisis and create the necessary conditions to build an economy at the service of the population, in which economic, social and cultural rights are respected.**

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) generate only 11% of global emissions that are causing the climate crisis. However, it is a region that is highly vulnerable to its impacts and that does not have sufficient resources to cope with it and be more resilient. Latin American and Caribbean countries, classified by the World Bank as middle- and high-income countries, have limited access to concessional financing and debt relief solutions.

The public debt of Amazonian countries reached levels similar to those observed in the early 2000s, before the processes of multilateral debt relief. It is very alarming that more than 80% of climate finance reaches the region through loans, the majority of which are non-concessional. This increases the external debt of countries that are made even more vulnerable to the climate crisis and whose creditors bear the main responsibility for this global problem.

### **At COP28, we call on States to:**

- ▶ Reform of the climate finance architecture of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which should promote non-repayable and highly concessional financing for low- and middle-income countries, from public sources and in addition to official development assistance (ODA); and with new direct access windows for the most climate-vulnerable populations, especially for adaptation and to cover loss and damage;
- ▶ Provide debt relief to free up resources to finance adaptation and the conservation of the Amazon.



### 3 Mobilize financial resources for the protection of forests in the Congo Basin and support a flexible and innovative financing mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and civil society

This demand is put forward by [the Congo Basin Conservation Society \(CBCS-Network\)](#) and supported by AQOCI.

The CBCS (Congo Basin Conservation Society) is a philanthropic organization under Congolese law which is concerned with actively participating in the pursuit of sustainable development objectives by mobilizing forces in an overall movement highlighting the combined efforts of actors working in the region by breaking down regional barriers between producers of ecosystem services and consumers in the Congo Basin.

The Congo Basin is one of the most important places in the world to help reduce the effects of climate change, storing even more carbon than the Amazon<sup>3</sup>. Estimated at 237 million hectares by the CBCS-Network, the Congo Basin forests span six countries: Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon. While preserving the “lung of Africa” is vital for the future not only of Africa but of the entire world, the rate of deforestation in the Congo Basin forest has increased at an alarming rate in recent years.<sup>4</sup>

**At COP28, we call on States to:**

- Mobilize financial resources for the protection of forests in the Congo Basin and support a flexible and innovative financing mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and civil society.



## 4 Establish a clear and binding mechanism for financing loss and damage

This demand is put forward by Jeunes volontaires pour l'environnement (JVE) Sénégal, (Young Volunteers for the Environment) and supported by AQOCI.

**Jeunes volontaires pour l'environnement (JVE) Sénégal, (Young Volunteers for the Environment), is an NGO created in 2001 whose main mission is to protect the environment, ensure social justice for all, and promote sustainable development. It has 32 local branches in Senegal, 25 national representations in Africa, and more than 1000 members.**

The agreement to create a new fund to finance loss and damage suffered by vulnerable countries hard hit by floods, droughts and other climate disasters was perhaps the biggest success of COP27 in Egypt in 2022. Indeed, when climate disasters occur, countries vulnerable to climate change should not be held hostage by random acts of charity but benefit from a fair and automatic financial support mechanism based on the principle that those who contributed the most to the climate crisis must pay for the damage done in the least responsible and hardest-hit countries.<sup>5</sup>

**At COP28, we call on States to:**

- Agree on the operationalization of this fund, which should be integrated into the UNFCCC financial mechanism and should prioritize grants over loans.<sup>6</sup>



## 5 Recognize the key role of Indigenous Peoples and territories in preserving ecosystems and in addressing the climate crisis

This demand is put forward by the Coordinating Committee of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA) and supported by AQOCI.

COICA brings together nine Amazonian Indigenous organizations from Ecuador, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela. It represents about 511 Amazonian Peoples who live in an area covering about 240 million hectares of forest and is considered the largest Indigenous organization in the world.

The Amazon is considered to be the biological heart of our planet since it regulates the global climate, among other benefits; however, it is under constant pressure, with negative implications for the planet. The disappearance of Amazonian ecosystems has multidimensional repercussions on the planet and on the Indigenous Peoples who inhabit and protect it. International and national conventions on the environment and biodiversity have systematically neglected the role of Indigenous Peoples, depriving humanity of ancestral practices and knowledge to combat climate change<sup>7</sup>.

It is essential that international and national conventions recognize the key role of Indigenous Peoples in preserving ecosystems and in addressing the climate crisis.

**At COP28, we call on States to:**

- Expand Indigenous rights and territories, which would help mitigate the climate and biodiversity crisis, since 80% of the remaining global biodiversity is in these territories<sup>8</sup>.





## 6 Ensure greater representation in climate governance of the populations most affected by the climate crisis

The concept of global climate governance was officially recognized in 1992 in the UNFCCC. However, there is a flagrant lack of representation in climate governance of the populations most affected by climate change (youth, women, Indigenous Peoples, members of racialized communities, LGBTQI2S+ people and people living with disabilities). Yet the participation of these populations is essential. First, they are important actors of change mobilized for social, environmental and climate justice. Second, their role is crucial in advancing States' climate action commitments. And third, in the case of Indigenous Peoples, they are the front-line protectors of the environment and biodiversity globally.

### At COP28, we call on:

- ▶ States to support the active participation of these groups in the development and implementation of climate policies to ensure inclusive and representative climate governance.
- ▶ The governments of Canada and Quebec to support the active participation of women and other groups most affected by climate change in decision-making and negotiating bodies on climate action (including youth, Indigenous Peoples, racialized communities, workers, LGBTQI2S+ people, people with disabilities, etc.).



## 7 Create a permanent Youth Council on Climate in Quebec's National Assembly

Today's youth and future generations will have to deal with the adverse consequences of climate change, even though they have contributed little to it. It is essential that young people are consulted on political decisions that have an influence on States' environmental action plans<sup>9</sup>. In April 2022, a cross-partisan motion was passed unanimously, urging the Quebec government to consider the creation of a permanent Youth Council on Climate, in a horizontal, inclusive, participatory and transparent process. This council will facilitate a meaningful intergenerational dialogue on climate.

### At COP28, we call on the Quebec Government to:

- ▶ Move from the research phase to the establishment of the permanent Youth Council on Climate in the National Assembly. An independent, representative and adequately funded council.



## 8 Improve the quality of Canada's climate financing

The 2023 report of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) finds that developing countries' adaptation financing needs are 10 to 18 times greater than international public funding flows, and that progress on climate adaptation is slowing when it should be accelerating to keep pace with the growing consequences of climate change.<sup>10</sup>

Canada's adaptation commitments are currently estimated at 33%.<sup>11</sup> While we were pleased to see Canada's decision to increase this commitment to 40%, it is still insufficient to meet keep up with the needs.

**At COP28, we are calling on the Government of Canada to commit to increasing the proportion of its climate finance dedicated to adaptation to 50%.**

Another important aspect of the quality of climate finance is the share of financing provided in the form of grants rather than loans. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), more than 70% of the world's public financing for climate change takes the form of debt and is mainly spent on climate change mitigation<sup>12</sup> (rather than adaptation). For the period 2015–2021, only 34% of Canadian climate funding was provided in grants. Canada's commitment to increase this proportion to 40% is insufficient to enable countries of the Global South to combat and adapt to the impacts of climate change without incurring further debt.

**At COP28, we are calling on the Government of Canada to commit to increasing the share of its climate finance allocated through grants to 75% by 2025.**



## 9 Promote greater and better access to climate finance for women's groups in the Global South

Women's groups are not only among the most affected by climate change : they are also important agents of change in climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives. It is essential that climate change projects and their financing reflect the priorities and needs of women. It is therefore important, on the one hand, to promote climate finance that takes gender dimensions into account in climate mitigation and adaptation programmes.

Gender dimensions must also be considered in relation to the intersection with other identity factors such as age, sexual orientation, religion, class, disability, ethnic origin, etc. On the other hand, increasing access to finance for women's groups fighting for greater social, environmental and climate justice is crucial. Access to climate finance must ensure flexible financing adapted to the different contexts, realities and needs of women's groups in the Global South. It should include women's groups in decision-making processes on financing, for example, in the development of criteria for financing and allocating funds for projects to tackle the climate crisis. It must also ensure recognition of the knowledge, expertise and lived experiences of women, in their plurality. Ensuring greater access to climate finance by women's groups in the Global South will improve women's adaptation to climate change.

**At COP28, we call on the Governments of Canada and Quebec to:**

- Commit to increasing access to climate finance and to make climate finance more flexible for women's groups in the Global South.



## 10 Raise greenhouse gas reduction targets in Canada and Quebec to reflect their fair share in the fight against the climate change

States which have contributed the most to the climate crisis must do their fair share of the international climate effort. On the one hand, this means contributing to the financing of climate change mitigation and adaptation in the Global South, as well as to the loss and damage fund. On the other hand, it also means that they must reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions to limit the increase in global temperature to 1.5 degree Celsius.

**At COP28, we call on:**

- The Government of Canada to raise its target to reduce emissions in Canada by at least 60% below 2005 levels by 2030;<sup>13</sup>
- The Government of Quebec to raise its target to reduce emissions in its territory by 65% below 1990 levels by 2030.<sup>14</sup>

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