

WITH SIGHTS SET ON COP22, GROUP OFFERS ROADMAP FOR 'FAIR FUTURE' IN WARMING WORLD

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by Nika Knight (Common Dreams)

A sustainable solution to the climate crisis will also work to alleviate poverty and seek climate justice, says Friends of the Earth Germany

“A future without climate chaos for all human beings on our planet is only possible if we don’t pin our hopes on large-scale technologies. Instead, we have to make sure that the energy and agricultural transitions are being pushed forward as fast as possible,” said Heinrich Böll Foundation president Barbara Unmüßig



An illustration from the report by Friends of the Earth Germany

At the upcoming United Nations climate conference in Morocco, negotiations for how to fulfill COP21’s agreement to limit global warming to 1.5° Celsius must emphasize methods that will also alleviate poverty and climate injustice, rather than leaning on “questionable technologies” such as geoengineering and carbon offset, says Friends of the Earth (FOE) Germany.

“We cannot count on unproven, costly, and ecologically risky negative emission technologies to save us from climate chaos.”

*—Hubert Weiger,
Friends of the Earth Germany*

That’s the argument put forth in the group’s new report, *“A change of course: How to build a fair future in a 1.5 degree world”* (pdf, in German), published Friday alongside the German Catholic Bishops’ Organisation for Development Cooperation

(MISEREOR) and the Heinrich Böll Foundation.

The climate conference will take place in Marrakech, Morocco, from November 7-18.

The report takes aim at popular so-called “negative emissions” technologies, such as **geoengineering**, **carbon offset regimes**, and **bioenergy** with carbon capture and storage (BECCS), arguing that leaders must pursue true sustainability instead.

“The fatal flaw of all negative emissions technology proposals is this: The hope for an atmospheric line of credit allows today’s urgent need for radical reductions in CO2 emissions to fall by the wayside,” the report argues. “What’s currently Plan B is in fact the best way to force Plan A into the background—a fundamentally different economy, one that preserves the planet for all forms of life.”

Instead of such “questionable technologies,” the report argues for policies that have poverty reduction and climate justice as their central focus.

“In reaction to the Paris Agreement, we need to phase out coal, speed up the transition to renewables, phase out combustion engines, and protect and restore forests and soils,” explained Hubert Weiger, chairman of Friends of the Earth Germany, in a **statement**.

“It is crystal clear that effective climate protection and equitable, sustainable development can only be considered together,” added Heinrich Böll Foundation president Barbara Unmüßig. “A future without climate chaos for all human beings on our planet is only possible if we don’t pin our hopes on large-scale technologies. Instead, we have to make sure that the energy and agricultural transitions are being pushed forward as fast as possible. Technological fixes such as geoengineering are betting on future possibilities such as sucking CO2 from the atmosphere or keeping sunlight away from the Earth. This is a dangerous distraction from the necessary steps that we can already implement today. The coming-into-force of the Paris Agreement asks for exactly this change in course.”

“As northern countries that have caused the climate catastrophe, we need to lead by example,” Weiger continued. “We cannot count on unproven, costly, and ecologically risky negative emission technologies to save us from climate chaos. If we postpone implementing the traditional climate mitigation solutions, we will miss the rapidly closing window of opportunity to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.”

Indeed, **new research** has shown that the goal to limit warming to 1.5° is already a long-shot.

“The vague hope that we could all survive in a world that is 3 degrees warmer than before industrialization is deceptive,” said Pirmin Spiegel, director general of MISEREOR. “It is our responsibility to safeguard the lives of millions of people by limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees. This is not only a technological challenge; instead, it has widespread societal and cultural implications that we all have to face.”

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