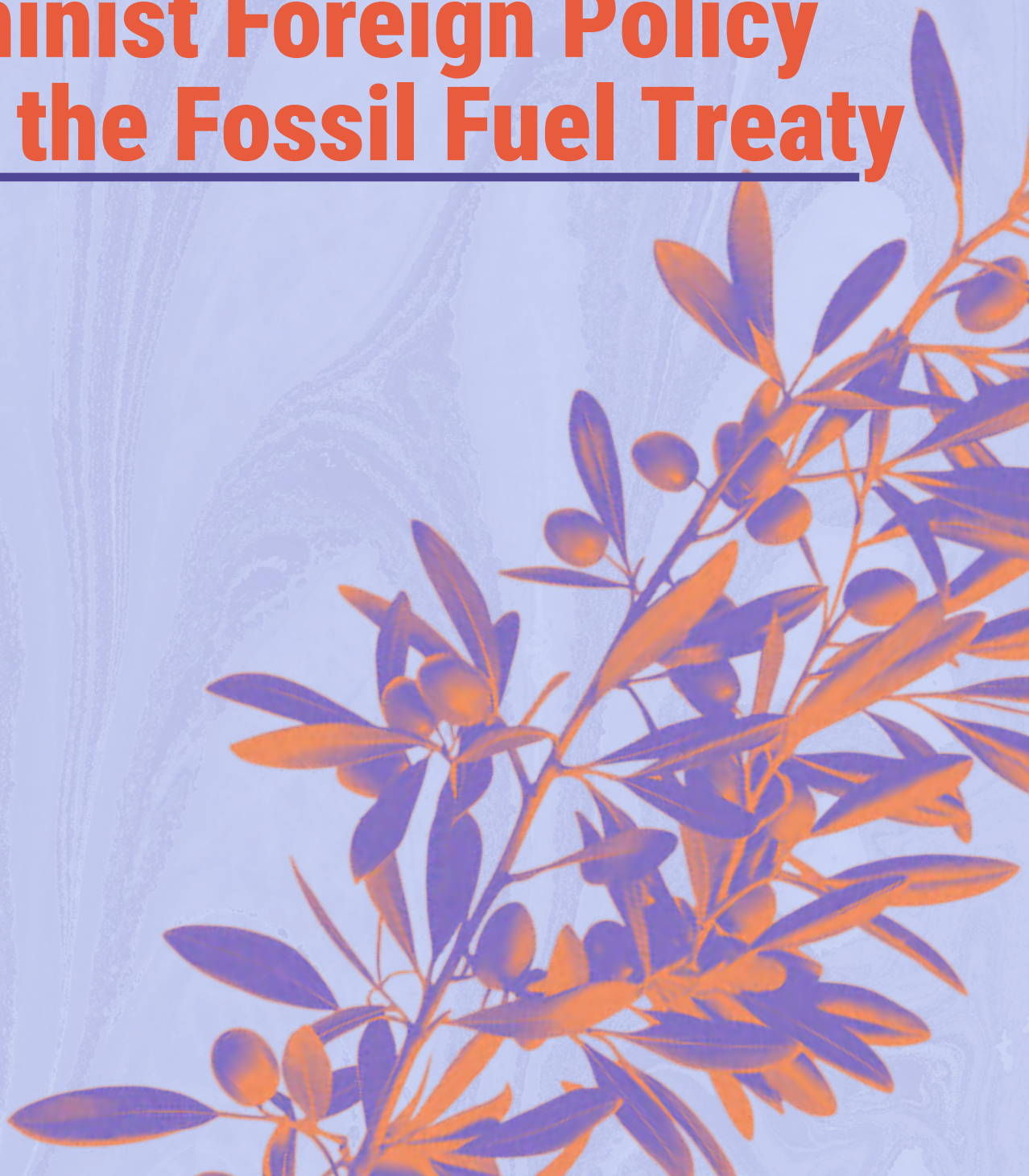
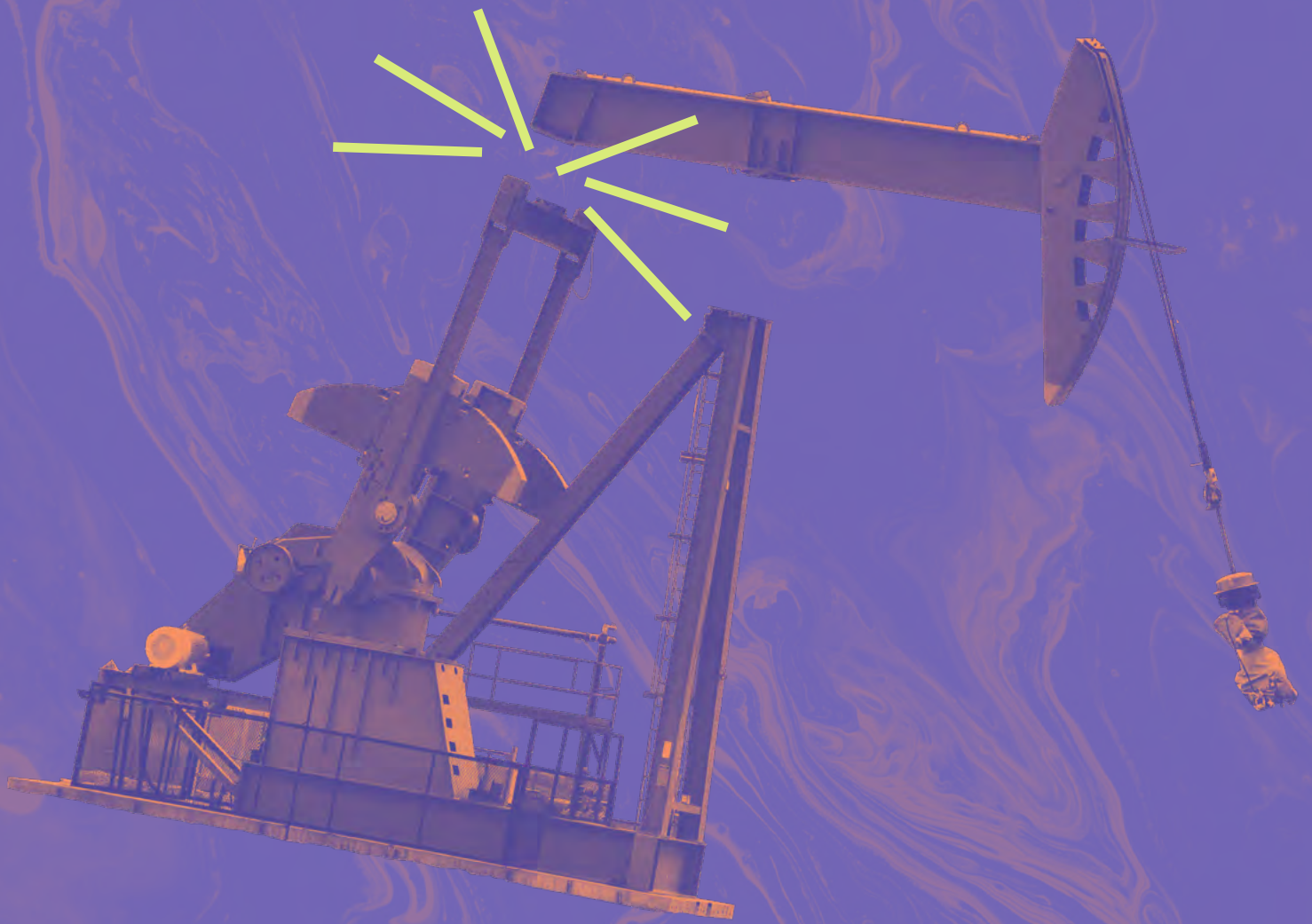


FROM FOSSIL FUELS TO FEMINIST FUTURES:

Feminist Foreign Policy and the Fossil Fuel Treaty





IMPRESSUM

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Publication: March 2026

Financially supported by the Fossil Fuel Treaty

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The entire team of this brief thank interviewees for their critical insights.

This publication reflects the opinion of the authors and not necessarily that of WILPF Germany.

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ABBREVIATIONS

COP | Conference to the Parties

FFP | Feminist Foreign Policy

FPIC | Free Prior Informed Consent

ICJ | International Court of Justice

UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

01

INTRODUCTION

The global failure to phase out fossil fuels lies at the heart of the climate crisis. Fossil fuels are the primary drivers of greenhouse-gas emissions and thus central to the climate breakdown. Yet the Paris Agreement does not explicitly mention “fossil fuels”, “oil”, “gas”, “coal” in its text, focusing instead on emissions reductions without direct constraints on fossil fuel production, use or expansion¹. While the Agreement’s mitigation framework implies the need to reduce fossil fuel demand to meet its long-term temperature goals, the implicit approach has proven insufficient to halt the ongoing expansion of fossil fuel production that is incompatible with limiting warming to 1.5 °C. After almost 30 years of climate negotiations, the “UAE Consensus” at the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2023 marked the first time Parties agreed to “transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly, and equitable manner”², yet that language lacks specific, operational commitments to an urgent, equitable phase-out.³

The scale and urgency of the climate crisis however demand decisive action to address the continued extraction of fossil fuels. The Fossil Fuel Treaty offers a concrete and fit-for-purpose response by establishing a binding framework to halt the expansion of new coal, oil, and gas projects while managing a global, just transition away from fossil fuels. It is a tool designed to center gender-transformative and human rights-based approaches.⁴ Such a framework would ensure that workers, communities, and countries are not left behind in the transition. Beyond emissions reduction, the Treaty also presents an opportunity to confront and dismantle the entrenched economic and political structure rooted in imperialism, extraction, and exploitation that continue to be reinforced by the fossil fuel industry.

Feminists – especially feminist climate activists – have long urged for and supported the development of a Fossil Fuel Treaty. Therefore, governments that commit to a Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) must acknowledge that ongoing reliance on fossil fuels sustains the very structures of patriarchy, colonialism, militarism, and exploitation. Truly feminist-informed policies – grounded in intersectional and transformative feminist principles – should aim to challenge and transform these very structures rather than reinforcing them. This policy brief argues that holistic FFPs should be inherently linked to a Fossil Fuel Treaty. For policymakers, the paper offers insight into why supporting a Treaty is a core component of FFP. And for fellow feminists, the paper provides a framework to hold FFP-endorsing governments accountable for pursuing a foreign climate policy that genuinely practices feminist values.

¹ Mutually Reinforcing: *How A Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Complements The Paris Agreement And UNFCCC*, March, 2025, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d-d3cc5b7fd99372fbb04561/t/67f6cf95432f1a0314c53932/1744228251647/MUTUALLY+REINFORCING+Paris+Agreement+complement+briefing+-+Mar+2025.pdf>

² Decision 1/CMA.5 Outcomes of the First Global Stocktake, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma5_auv_4_gst.pdf

³ Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative, “*What the F Is Up with the COP28 Outcome? – COP28 Explainer*,” Fossil Fuel Treaty blog, December 14, 2023, <https://fossilfueltreaty.org/blog/cop28-explainer>

⁴ Developing Values And Ideals For A Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, May, 2024, <https://fossilfueltreaty.org/values-and-ideals#:~:text=Existing%20notions%20of%20rights%2C%20the,accountability%20needed%20to%20be%20promoted.>

02

ON THE FOSSIL FUEL TREATY

In 2016, 14 Pacific Island nations came to discuss and consider the world's first treaty that would ban new coal mining as a pathway to achieving the Paris goal of 1.5°C. This ambition was continued by other countries and stakeholders calling for a phase out of fossil fuels. The initiative for a Fossil Fuel Treaty was launched in 2020. As of November 2025, eighteen nation states have endorsed and called for a Fossil Fuel Treaty, with the most recent announcement being made by Cambodia at COP30.⁵ There has also been a growing and urgent call out to the Treaty from 145 Cities and subnational Governments, hundreds of elected officials and over 4,200 organizations and institutions.⁶

The Fossil Fuel Treaty is structured around three core pillars⁷:

GLOBAL JUST TRANSITION

Enabling a global just transition for every country, worker and community, including through support to transition away from fossil fuel dependence, scaling up access to renewable energy, and allowing for economic diversification for fossil-free development pathways;

NON-PROLIFERATION

Preventing the proliferation of coal, oil and gas by ending all new exploration and production;

FAIR PHASE-OUT

Phasing-out existing production of fossil fuels in line with the 1.5°C global climate goal, in a manner that is fair and equitable, where wealthy nations with the capacity and historical responsibility for emissions transition fastest.

In July 2025, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), in its landmark advisory opinion on states' obligations with respect to climate change, concluded that the 1.5°C target must guide states' legally binding obligations under the Paris Agreement and that all states – particularly the largest emitters – are required to adopt ambitious mitigation measures in line with the best available science.⁸ When the COP30 decision text dropped in November 2025 with no mention of fossil fuels, the governments of Colombia and the Netherlands further announced co-hosting the first Conference on Transitioning away from Fossil Fuels in April 2026.⁹ These developments create momentum and urgency for a Fossil Fuel Treaty and reinforce the inevitability of a transition away from fossil fuels rooted in justice, equity, and reparations.

⁵ Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative, "Cambodia joins Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative as the 18th Nation-State at COP30" Fossil Fuel Treaty website, December 17, 2025, <https://www.fossilfueltreaty.org/cambodia>

⁶ Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative, "1,000,000+ endorsements of the Fossil Fuel Initiative", Fossil Fuel Treaty website, <https://www.fossilfueltreaty.org/endorsements>

⁷ Fossil Fuel Treaty Briefing for Policymakers, May, 2023, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5dd3cc5b7fd99372fb-b04561/t/6564b952be852f-2d72cf2382/1701099862127/Briefing+for+policy-makers+-+EN+-+Updated+Nov+23+%40FFT.pdf>

⁸ IISD, International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on the Obligations of States in Respect of Climate Change, 23 July, 2025, <https://enb.iisd.org/international-court-justice-advisory-opinion-climate-change-23-Jul-2025>

⁹ Fossil Fuel Treaty website, "First Conference on Transitioning away from Fossil Fuels", <https://www.fossilfueltreaty.org/conference>



03

ON FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

FFP provides an alternative approach to “traditional” foreign policies that focus on military power to expand national neoliberal interests. From a feminist civil society perspective, it is ideally grounded in feminist values, intersectionality, and cooperation. However, the exact articulation and practice depend on who defines and implements an FFP. Generally, it is an analytical tool to critically examine these existing (often violent) power structures and can provide guidance in dismantling exploitative systems. In other words, feminist perspectives urge policymakers and relevant stakeholders to shift their fixation on the state to the people, and actively deconstruct the entrenched power imbalances of patriarchy and imperialism. Furthermore, FFP is a framework that centers the social and economic well-being of marginalized communities by re-thinking safety and security from their perspectives.

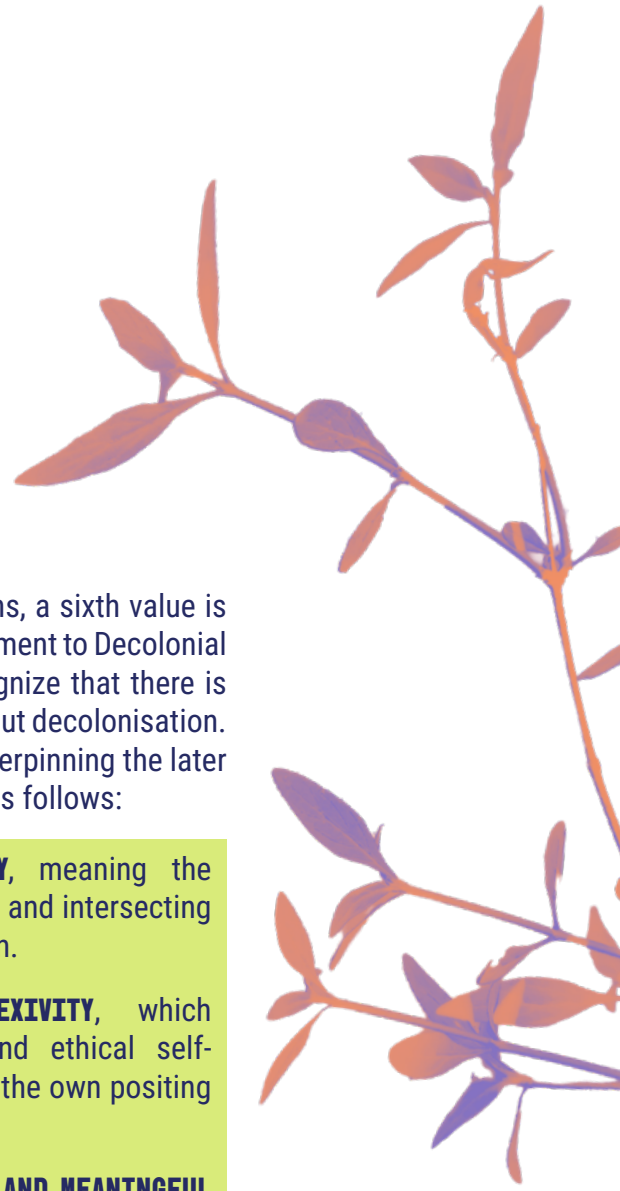
It is crucial to clarify that there is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to FFPs. To the contrary, FFP approaches are context-specific and vary in their understanding and implementation. While feminist approaches and practices to questions of global politics have long been developed and shaped by civil society organizations, researchers, and activists from across the world, governments have increasingly adopted and embraced FFP frameworks in recent

years. The policy framework was first introduced and implemented by Sweden in 2014 – who has now withdrawn from its FFP – and became more commonly known in the years after. Sweden centered the principles of Rights, Representation, and Resources (the 3 Rs), and often served as a blueprint for shaping state FFPs.¹⁰ Many countries have since been interested in the policy approach or have adopted it, however with varying degrees of clarification on how it connects to climate policies more specifically. Hereby, the adoption of a superficial interpretation of feminism that only includes a privileged few, while barely paying lip service to the underlying structural inequalities, is dangerous. Most FFPs are still staying behind promised potentials of transformative and holistic adaptations of feminist values in all policy realms. A few examples of these limitations in current FFP practices include: the discrepancy between FFP and domestic policies and norms; the lack of addressing colonial histories and legacies; the systematic discrimination of marginalized groups, and contribution to the global arms trade, ongoing militarization of societies and escalating wars and genocide. These and many more examples continue to be sharply criticized by feminist civil society who urge and demand a stronger and more holistic understanding and practice of feminism in the context of foreign policy and beyond.

¹⁰ Since then, the list of countries broadened to Canada (Feminist International Assistance Policy, 2017), France (Feminist Diplomacy, 2018), Mexico (Feminist Foreign Policy, 2020), Spain (Feminist Foreign Policy, 2021), Libya (Feminist Foreign Policy, 2021), Luxembourg (2021), Germany (2021) and Chile (2022), Argentina (2023), Colombia (2023) and more. It is important to note that with changing governments in the past years, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden have since dropped the approach of a Feminist Foreign Policy. A full overview of the most recent country profiles can be found with the Feminist Foreign Policy Collaborative: <https://www.ffpcollaborative.org/dffp-2025>

¹¹ Internationale Frauenliga für Frieden und Freiheit (WILPF) Deutschland, “Practicing Feminist Foreign Policy in the Everyday: A Toolkit”, November 22, 2021, <https://www.wilpf.de/2021/11/22/practicing-feminist-foreign-policy-in-the-everyday-a-toolkit-2/>

¹² Young Feminist Caucus, Young Feminist Manifesto, December 2024, <https://youngfeministcaucus.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/young-feminist-manifesto.pdf>



Therefore, it is imperative to underline the practical implementation of feminist ideals within policy frameworks. The following Five Core Values of FFP laid out in the paper “Practising Feminist Foreign Policy in the Everyday: A Toolkit”¹¹ by Jessica Cheung, Dilek Gürsel, Marie Jelenka Kirchner and Victoria Scheyer present a critical approach to address international climate diplomacy and fossil fuels based on (1) Intersectionality, (2) Empathetic Reflexivity, (3) Substantive Representation and Participation, (4) Accountability and (5) Active Peace Commitment. The toolkit introduces possibilities of what FFP can and should look like and puts feminist values and reflection at the core of potential FFP practices.

Grounded in our lived experience and guided by the leadership of young feminists, this paper strengthens the framework of the toolkit by redefining existing values and introducing a new core principle. While representation and participation have long been central to FFP, they are often invoked without truly dismantling unequal power dynamics or ‘truly redesign the table’. In response, this paper advances and redefines the third core value (3) Substantive Participation and Representation to (3) Full, effective, and meaningful engagement, leadership and co-ownership¹² of those historically excluded. To further align these values

with climate discussions, a sixth value is introduced: (6) Commitment to Decolonial Justice to further recognize that there is no climate justice without decolonisation. The final six values underpinning the later analysis therefore are as follows:

- (1) INTERSECTIONALITY**, meaning the recognition of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
- (2) EMPATHETIC REFLEXIVITY**, which requires a critical and ethical self-reflecting approach of the own positing within power relations;
- (3) FULL, EFFECTIVE, AND MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND CO-OWNERSHIP** relating to measures to generate substantial inclusion of peoples advocating from diverse background;
- (4) ACCOUNTABILITY** of foreign policy makers and implementers to those marginalized communities impacted by the policies;
- (5) ACTIVE PEACE COMMITMENT** to strive for gender-sensitive human security through demilitarization and non-violent mechanisms.
- (6) COMMITMENT TO DECOLONIAL JUSTICE** to confront the historical and ongoing legacies of colonialism.

04

A FEMINIST APPROACH TO CLIMATE DIPLOMACY

The intersection of climate change as a cross-cutting issue emerged as a critical concern in global policy discourse. It affects and connects key areas such as human rights and gender equality. A FFP based on feminist values and practice provides opportunities to address the root causes of the climate crisis, like ever-present legacies of colonialism, imperialism, and exploitation, that fuel environmental degradation and global inequalities. These interconnected systems have historically marginalized populations, especially in the so-called Global South. Climate justice repositions the discourse to focus on justice and equity by framing climate change as an ethical and political issue. A feminist discourse within climate justice provides an approach of reflection, accountability, and transformative change. It prioritizes leadership, co-ownership, co-creation, and full, effective, and meaningful engagement of marginalized groups in climate policies and decision making – a feminist approach to climate diplomacy.

While a feminist approach to climate diplomacy encompasses a wide range of issues, this policy brief is specifically focusing on fossil fuel phase-out as well

as just transition in line with the above mentioned three pillars of the Fossil Fuel Treaty.¹³ This builds upon existing feminist analysis of the entrenched power structures of the fossil energy systems, including the reinforcement of gendered power dynamics.¹⁴ The three core pillars governing a Fossil Fuel Treaty are not to be viewed as standalones rather as intersecting and diverse pathways. Guided by feminist principles, they allow for a fundamental shift in economic, social, and political power away from fossil fuels.

As the world is pushed to embark on a transition and rethink the current energy sector that has been heavily dependent on fossil fuels, there is still an alarming pattern of co-optation, greenwashing, and business as usual by governments and companies. Policymakers often adopt narrow definitions of a just transition that do not center social justice or the obligation to facilitate a collaborative process of decision-making. This process must involve those at the frontlines of the crisis – such as women, Indigenous peoples and local communities, farmers, trade unions, and youth – in all their diversity.

¹³ Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty: Principles for a Global Fossil Fuel Phase-Out, May 2024, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kHixi14_GXQcUGZ-774acYL7Ymt0UUbd/view

¹⁴ Feminist scholars have long examined the role of fossil fuels in perpetuating white patriarchal rule and sustaining masculine identity—a concept which Cara Daggett describes as “petromasculinity”. Cara Daggett, “Petromasculinity: Fossil Fuels and Authoritarian Desire”, *Journal of International Studies* 47(1), 22 February 2026, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0305829818775817>

¹⁵ The terms “Global South” and “Global North” are not geographical but political, socio-economic terms addressing global power hierarchies.

This leaves room for vital questions to be addressed such as:

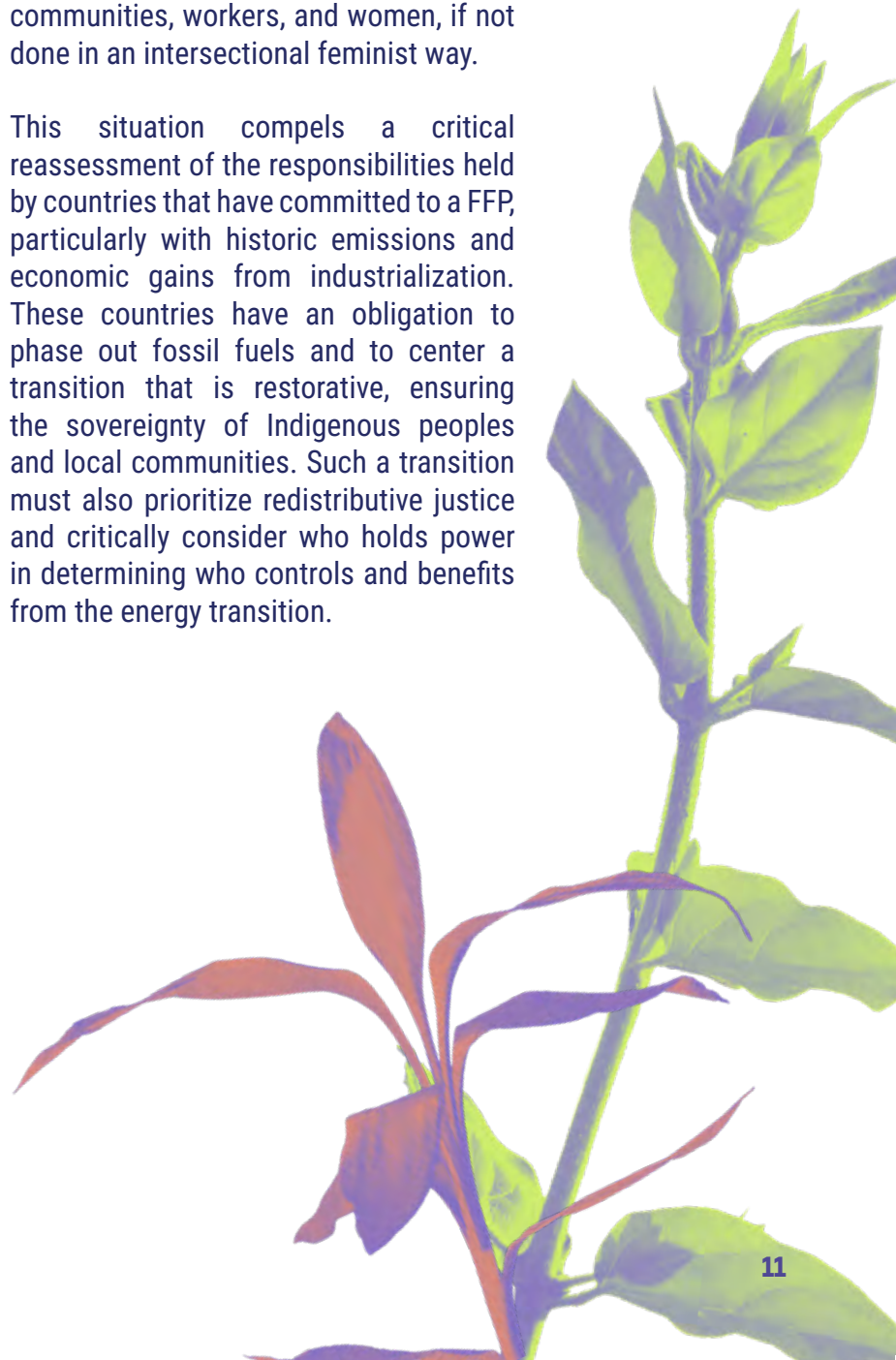
1. Energy for whom?
2. Energy by whom?
3. Energy for what?
4. How is the energy produced?

A feminist and justice lens is essential when addressing the phase-out of fossil fuels dependent economies. This requires not only a transition to renewable energy systems, but also economic diversification and development alternatives that reduce reliance on extractive industries by re-directing investments into care economies, public services, climate-resilient livelihoods, and locally rooted regenerative sectors. It also means centering equity for various affected communities and workers. The current era of the so-called just transition raises significant concerns about the continuation of exploitative practices under the guise of sustainability and economic prosperity. Corporations and governments across political contexts, in their pursuit of critical minerals for renewable energy projects, are perpetuating extractivism at the expense of local communities and Indigenous peoples.

Renewable energy projects are often accompanied by security enforcement and military involvement that forcibly remove Indigenous peoples, pastoralists,

and forest dwellers, often undermining their rights to land and energy sovereignty. These impacts are not confined to the Global South alone, but are also evident in Indigenous territories and so-called sacrifice zones across the Global North.¹⁵ The shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy risks becoming merely a transition from one extractive system to another, one that is built on the backs of marginalized communities, workers, and women, if not done in an intersectional feminist way.

This situation compels a critical reassessment of the responsibilities held by countries that have committed to a FFP, particularly with historic emissions and economic gains from industrialization. These countries have an obligation to phase out fossil fuels and to center a transition that is restorative, ensuring the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples and local communities. Such a transition must also prioritize redistributive justice and critically consider who holds power in determining who controls and benefits from the energy transition.



05

VALUES UNDERPINNING FFP AS A GUIDE TO ENDORSING THE FOSSIL FUEL TREATY

The six core values outlined in chapter three provide an analytical framework to uncover the connection between FFP and the need for a Fossil Fuel Treaty. In the following part, each value will be examined in relation to climate diplomacy and the treaty's relevance. To strengthen the analysis interviews and background conversations were conducted with feminist civil society and experts working on FFP and climate justice. Particular attention is given to Global Just Transition as it provides a key entry point for examining how FFP principles can inform equitable pathways away from fossil fuels. Given the scope of this brief, the other pillars are addressed more selectively, while still informing the overall analysis.

Additional concrete, context-specific case studies will be examined in regards to specific values. This policy brief focuses on analyzing case studies related to Germany, which offers a particularly instructive example due to its adoption of a Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) for the 2022–2025 period, including concrete guidelines that addressed climate foreign policy alongside other key areas.¹⁶ Although the change in government in 2025 led to a formal withdrawal from the framework, the country's Feminist Development Policy formally continues. This underscores the ongoing need to hold German policymakers – particularly those shaping climate and energy policies – accountable to feminist values and approaches to fossil fuel phase out. The following analysis includes examples of Germany's role and engagement in specific contexts, particularly focusing on case studies in Tunisia and Namibia. While these examples highlight context-specific settings, the insights they offer extend beyond Germany alone.

¹⁶ The guidelines in English were previously accessible on the German Foreign Ministry's website at the following link (last accessed on 23 June 2025): <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/resource/blob/2585008/d444590d5a7741acc6e37a142959170e/II-ffp-data.pdf>. However, following the termination of the FFP in Germany, they have since been removed. The German version is still available here: <https://www.lsvd.de/media/doc/12772/II-ffp-data.pdf>

1. INTERSECTIONALITY

The impacts of the climate crisis unfold in a world already marked by systemic, structural, social, and economic inequalities based on gender, class, and race. These inequalities are being exacerbated. Women, young women and girls, and gender-diverse people – especially Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour – from the Global South bear the heaviest burdens from fossil fuel extraction and pollution.

Fossil fuel extraction and expansion often occur in areas inhabited by racialized peoples and Indigenous communities, exposing them to environmental destruction, toxic emissions, and pollution of air and water.¹⁷ This environmental racism continues under the banner of a “just transition,” which risks reproducing the same exploitative systems if it is not grounded in feminist principles and values.

Raw materials for the energy transition – such as lithium, copper, and nickel – are extracted from so-called sacrifice zones in Global South countries¹⁸ and Eastern Europe (e.g. the Western Balkans).¹⁹ This process reproduces patterns of extractivism in which marginalized communities bear the social and environmental costs of extraction while value and profits are captured elsewhere.

→ The Fossil Fuel Treaty is committed to ensuring the transition it supports is rooted in principles of equity and justice. At its core, this initiative seeks to advance intersectional justice by placing the leadership and lived experiences of marginalized communities at the forefront. This ensures that the long-fought transition away from fossil fuels is just and does not perpetuate and exacerbate the history of violence, extraction, exploitation, colonialism and other forms of systemic oppression on people and the planet.

¹⁷ Geyer, Katrin (2024) *Stop Fossil Fuels from fuelling conflict: Why the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty is an essential climate tool for peace.* <https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/StopFossilFuelsFromFuellingConflict.pdf>

¹⁸ Mateo Adarve Zuluaga and Natalie Shortall, *Unjust Transition: Reclaiming the Energy Future from Climate Colonialism*, Oxfam International, September 24, 2025, <https://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/621732/bp-unjust-transition-240925-en.pdf>

¹⁹ Katja Giebel and Tibor Moldvai, “Lithium Mining in Serbia: An Open and Productive Debate Is Not Possible” Heinrich Böll Foundation, July 18, 2024, <https://www.boell.de/en/2024/07/18/lithium-mining-serbia-open-and-productive-debate-not-possible>

2. EMPATHETIC REFLEXIVITY

Countries and communities in the Global South are among the most affected by the climate crisis, yet they contribute the least to global greenhouse gas emissions. A feminist lens requires self-reflection on power, privilege, and responsibility. Practicing empathetic reflexivity within climate justice requires Global North countries – whose prosperity was built on fossil fuels – to reflect on their historic responsibility in order to address past and ongoing injustices and to provide adequate financial resources for adaptation, mitigation, and loss and damage. They must lead in phasing out fossil fuels and ensure that the global transition is just for all.

In the context of fossil fuel production and the shift to renewable energy, this calls for confronting the centralization of power over access to critical minerals and control of land for renewable energy installations such as solar and wind farms.

→ The Fossil Fuel Treaty recognizes that addressing the climate crisis requires more than technical solutions – it demands a reckoning with the historical and structural injustices that have shaped unequal responsibilities and outcomes. A fair distribution of responsibility for both limiting future climate impacts and addressing the lived consequences of cumulative emissions is essential. The Treaty not only confronts these global imbalances but actively works to correct them by enabling equity-based responses that are grounded in local, national, and regional realities. It aims to establish a fair framework for winding down existing fossil fuel production, ensuring that countries with greater capacity and a larger historical contribution to emissions undertake the most rapid transition.

3. FULL, EFFECTIVE, AND MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP, AND CO-OWNERSHIP

FFP based on feminist values and practices rejects tokenism and instead requests the full, effective, and meaningful participation, leadership and co-ownership of those most affected in designing and implementing solutions. The principle of just transition must therefore be rooted in the lived realities and expertise of the very people whose labor and lives are most impacted by the shift to sustainable energy. This includes centering people's movements, trade unions, and feminist collectives, who often shoulder disproportionate social and care responsibilities, in the decision-making process. Feminist collectives also play an important role in responding to the gendered impacts of energy transition such as job precarity, increased unpaid care work, energy poverty, and heightened risk of exclusion while also driving community based solutions. These groups' work forms the backbone of the energy transition and must not be sidelined. Instead, they must be at the forefront of shaping policies. The current systems of power, dominated by a select few with immense influence, have historically and systematically excluded these vital perspectives from governance.

→ The Fossil Fuel Treaty endorses that those most affected by systemic inequalities – Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, workers, women and gender non-conforming people, people with disabilities, migrants, refugees, and more must play a central role in shaping the vision of the transition and driving its design, implementation, and long-term oversight.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY

FFP should hold foreign policy makers accountable to marginalized communities impacted by climate policies – not profit. While those benefiting from the fossil fuel industry are a small political and economic elite and/or Global North countries and at the same time evade any accountability, the accompanying destructions, such as human rights violations or environmental harms are impacting marginalized communities in the area.²⁰ To establish accountability, mechanisms need to be in place so feminist policies are not undermined by state interests.

→ The Fossil Fuel Treaty envisions accountability measures and transparency frameworks to ensure it benefits public and common interests. Serving the public good requires confronting power imbalances and protecting decision-making spaces from interests. Treaty negotiations must be free from actors whose agendas conflict with the collective interest and a just transition. Energy systems must prioritise the needs and rights of communities. They should be grounded in principles of energy justice and democratic control instead of perpetuating similar exploitative systems such as fossil fuel projects (e.g. as highlighted by activists in regards to hydrogen projects).

ENERGY TRANSITIONS WITHOUT ACCOUNTABILITY: THE CASE OF TUNISIA

The case of Tunisia offers a critical example on how energy transitions risk reproducing neo-colonial extractive dynamics when accountability to affected communities is absent. Examined through value (4) on accountability, this case highlights how energy partnerships particularly between Global North and Global South countries can undermine justice, rights, and energy sovereignty when driven primarily by external interests.

As countries seek alternatives to fossil fuels, investment in hydrogen technologies has accelerated with a growing interest to position it as a future energy carrier.²¹ Green hydrogen is produced through electrolysis²² using renewable electricity, a process that is energy and water intensive and therefore deeply context dependent. In water stressed and energy insecure countries, its deployment raises significant social and environmental concerns.

In 2022, Tunisia launched a national hydrogen strategy²³ in partnership with Germany's development agency, GIZ, through a 31-million-euro cooperation agreement. While Tunisia has set a target of reaching 35 per cent renewable energy by 2030, renewable sources currently account for only 3 per cent²⁴ of its energy mix. At the same time, the strategy prioritises hydrogen exports to European markets, leaving the question of energy sovereignty and domestic energy access for the Tunisian population largely unanswered.

This export-oriented approach is particularly concerning given Tunisia's severe and worsening water scarcity. Hydrogen production risks intensifying resource extraction in a context where local needs such as energy access, water security, and climate resilience remain unmet. Large-scale hydrogen projects also raise serious concerns around land access, transparency, and public participation, with little clarity on how social and environmental harms will be prevented or addressed. The case of Borj Essalhi²⁵, a fishing village in northern Tunisia, is a stark reminder of what happens when renewable energy projects disregard community rights. For more than a decade, locals have fought for compensation after their land was taken for Tunisia's first wind farm in the early 2000s. Initially, the land was owned and used by villagers for agriculture, but it was later seized by the state and registered under the Directorate General of Forestry without community consent. This injustice remains unresolved to this day.²⁶ Now, similar concerns emerge with Tunisia's green hydrogen deal with Germany. Despite the scale of the agreement and potential impact on thousands of people, there has been no transparency regarding free prior and informed consent (FPIC), public consultation, or community engagement. There is also little clarity on how social and environmental impacts will be monitored or mitigated. Without open dialogue and accountability mechanisms, this project risks repeating past mistakes.

²⁰ Geyer, Katrin (2024) Stop Fossil Fuels from fuelling conflict: Why the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty is an essential climate tool for peace. <https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Stop-FossilFuelsFromFuellingConflict.pdf>

²¹ Robert Bosch GmbH, "Future of Hydrogen," Bosch Hydrogen Energy, accessed March 11, 2026, <https://www.bosch-hydrogen-energy.com/energy-system-of-the-future/future-of-hydrogen/>

²² Angelico, Ruggero, Ferruccio Giametta, Biagio Bianchi, and Pasquale Catalano. "Green Hydrogen for Energy Transition: A Critical Perspective" *Energies* 18, no. 2 (2025): 404. <https://www.mdpi.com/1996-1073/18/2/404>

²³ Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy of the Tunisian Republic, National Strategy for the Development of Green Hydrogen and Its Derivatives in Tunisia: Executive Summary (Tunis: Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy, July 2024), accessed March 11, 2026, https://www.energiemines.gov.tn/fileadmin/docs-u1/Résumé_stratégie_nationale_MIME_Anglais.pdf

²⁴ World Bank, Green, Affordable, and Financially Viable Energy Production in Tunisia: World Bank Group Assistance (brief, World Bank, January 25, 2024), accessed March 11, 2026, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/teri/brief/green-affordable-and-viable-energy-production-tunisia>

²⁵ Delpuech, *Tunisia From Benefits Who?* Strategy Green Hydrogen, 20

²⁶ Arab Reform Initiative, "Who Benefits from Tunisia's Green Hydrogen Strategy?" Arab Reform, accessed [16.03.2025], <https://www.arab-reform.net/publication/who-benefits-from-tunisia-green-hydrogen-strategy/>

5. ACTIVE PEACE COMMITMENT

Fossil fuels have played a huge role in wars, militarization, and human rights violations – they fuel conflict. From conflicts driven by oil interests to the militarization of fossil fuel extraction sites, reliance on fossil fuels is deeply entangled with systems of structural violence. An estimated 25-50 per cent of all interstate wars have been linked to oil since 1973.²⁷ Further, the military complex is among the biggest fossil fuel consumers, contributing around 5.5 per cent to global greenhouse gas emissions.²⁸

The presence of armies and private security forces to “protect” the interests of those who profit from “green extractivism” additionally leads to violence. The extraction of critical minerals for renewable energy technologies has been linked to conflict, and environmental degradation. For instance in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the global rush for cobalt and copper – essential for batteries, phones, and renewable energy technologies, has come with violence and exploitation.²⁹ New mining projects have displaced entire communities, often under the watch of armed guards and military forces protecting corporate interests.³⁰ People in rural areas/villages resisting these operations have reported beatings, sexual violence, and the burning of homes.³¹ These realities expose how the so-called “green transition” can perpetuate conflict and colonial patterns of extraction. A true Active Peace Commitment must challenge this violence and ensure that the shift toward clean energy does not come at the cost of human rights, justice, and peace.

→ The Fossil Fuel Treaty offers a vital tool within climate policy to advance peace by exposing the security risks tied to continued fossil fuel dependence and expansion. It creates space to confront the violence, human rights abuses, and conflicts driven by extractive, patriarchal, and colonial systems. By cutting fossil fuels as the life line of military activity and national, regional, and international conflicts, it allows to focus on advancing human security. Rooted in feminist values, the Treaty can help shape a just transition grounded in care, equity, ecological balance and collective well-being.

²⁷ Geyer, Katrin (2024) *Stop Fossil Fuels from fuelling conflict: Why the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty is an essential climate tool for peace*. <https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/StopFossilFuels-FromFuellingConflict.pdf>

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Amnesty International and Afrewatch, *This Is What We Die For: Human Rights Abuses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Power the Global Trade in Cobalt* (London: Amnesty International, 2016).

³⁰ Siddharth Kara, *Cobalt Red: How the Blood of the Congo Powers Our Lives* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2023).

³¹ Global Witness, *Powering Change or Business as Usual? How Mineral Supply Chains Fuel Human Rights Abuses in the Democratic Republic of Congo* (London: Global Witness, 2021).

6. COMMITMENT TO DECOLONIAL JUSTICE

Decolonial justice must be at the core of the Fossil Fuel Treaty. The fossil fuel-based economy is rooted in centuries of resource extraction carried out in colonized lands and imposed upon colonized peoples. The Treaty offers an opportunity to confront the historical and ongoing legacies of colonialism that continue to shape the global energy system – from extraction and land dispossession to the unequal power dynamics of climate and energy governance. It requires the redistribution of resources and decision-making, while recognizing the historic responsibility of former colonial powers, especially those now promoting energy transitions in their former colonies. Development aid cannot substitute for compensation or reparation. A truly decolonial approach centers the knowledge, agency, and sovereignty of Indigenous peoples, frontline communities, and countries of the Global South, and must be grounded in feminist and intersectional principles that advance collective liberation, repair, and climate justice.

→ The Fossil Fuel Treaty commits to reparative, community-led transitions and ensures not to reproduce patterns of land grabbing or forced displacement. It instead aims to support community self-determination, land rights and energy justice. Rooted in anti-colonial values, the process of phasing out fossil fuels must involve tangible repair and care – confronting historical legacies and addressing the environmental harm left behind at extraction sites through fair and accountable measures.

POWER AND COLONIAL LEGACY: THE CASE OF NAMIBIA

Germany is undertaking a major green hydrogen initiative in Namibia through the “Green Hydrogen Namibia Programme,” led by the company Hyphen and supported by both governments. The project includes the construction of wind turbines, solar parks, pipelines, a desalination plant, and a new port. It promises job creation, clean energy, and technology transfer. However, it has drawn significant criticism from local activists who highlight the lack of transparency and exclusion of nearby Namibian communities from the planning process – many of whom still lack access to electricity.

A particularly sensitive issue is the planned expansion of the port in Lüderitz, near Shark Island – the very site of a former German concentration camp where over 4,000 Nama and Ovaherero were killed between 1904 and 1908 during German colonial rule. In 2021 the governments of Namibia and Germany concluded in a joint declaration that “the abominable atrocities committed during periods of the colonial war culminated in events that, from today’s perspective, would be called genocide”,³² which Ovaherero and Nama leadership have however rejected due to their exclusion from the negotiations.

Although the German authorities have committed to providing the Namibian government with roughly €1.1 billion over 30 years to fund “reconstruction and development” initiatives, this financial support is being offered in the form of so-called development aid or international cooperation, not reparations. Germany maintains it holds no legal obligation to pay reparations to the Ovaherero and Nama communities.³³

Now, descendants and researchers fear the project will desecrate the historic site on Shark Island. According to an investigation by Forensic Architecture construction could destroy graves and disrupt the memorial landscape with roads, turbines, and industrial infrastructure, posing an “imminent risk” to preserving the site’s historical integrity.³⁴

In line with the key values (2) Empathetic Reflexivity as well as (6) Commitment to Decolonial Justice in pursuing a “just transition”, the Fossil Fuel Treaty serves as a critical tool to confront these challenges and prioritize the needs and rights of local communities – particularly their access to energy as well as transitional justice to address colonial legacies.

³² Joint Declaration by the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Namibia, “United in Remembrance of our Colonial Past, United in our Will to Reconcile, United in our Vision of the Future”, 2021, <https://www.deutsche-afrika-stiftung.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/deutsche-afrika-stiftung-joint-declaration-by-the-federal-republic-of-germany-and-the-republic-of-namibia.pdf>

³³ Amnesty International, *Namibia: More than a century since Germany’s colonial genocide, Ovaherero and Nama peoples are still fighting for reparations*, October 2 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/AFR4203612025ENGLISH.pdf>

³⁴ Forensic Architecture, *German Colonial Genocide in Namibia: Swakopmund*, October 15 2024, <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/swakopmund>

ENDORISING THE FOSSIL FUEL TREATY AS A FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY IMPERATIVE

Accepting an FFP is intrinsically linked to endorsing the Fossil Fuel Treaty. An FFP that fails to confront fossil fuel exploration and production is neither feminist nor sustainable. To prevent this from happening and translate the research and analysis provided in this policy brief into meaningful action, the following recommendations shall be made:

1. Join the bloc of nations participating in discussions on a Fossil Fuel Treaty as a key tool of Feminist Foreign Policy.

Countries committed to FFP should take leadership in supporting and co-developing the Fossil Fuel Treaty. It provides a concrete mechanism to operationalize feminist principles of care, justice, and accountability by addressing the root cause of the climate crisis – fossil fuels (and the very systems that endorse and benefit from them). Endorsing and shaping the Treaty demonstrates a commitment to peace, equity, and justice grounded in global solidarity.

2. Adopt and realign Feminist Foreign Policy along its core values and principles.

FFP countries must ensure that their feminist commitments go beyond rhetoric and are systematically applied to all foreign policy domains. This includes trade, diplomacy, and climate action – centering care, participation, intersectionality, and justice in every decision that impacts people and the planet.

3. Apply Feminist Foreign Policy principles to fossil fuel production and climate justice.

FFP must not only call for gender equality but also confront the structural drivers of climate breakdown. Applying its principles to fossil fuel phase-out strategies ensures that climate action is rooted in equity, dismantles extractivist models, and upholds the rights and agency of those most affected by the crisis.

4. Actively support and resource feminist and justice movements in co-designing the Treaty based on gender and climate justice.

States must recognize that feminist, decolonial, and climate justice movements have been advancing these arguments long before they reached policy agendas. Supporting them – financially, politically, and diplomatically – is essential to ensure accountability, sustain transformative change, and protect those defending land, water, and life.

5. Actively participate in International Conferences for the Phase-Out of Fossil Fuels.

Such moments offer a crucial opportunity for FFP countries to strengthen alliances with the Global South, feminist civil society, and frontline communities. Participation should be meaningful and accompanied by concrete commitments to financing, knowledge exchange, and intersectional cooperation.

6. Integrate fossil fuel phase-out goals across trade, diplomacy, and development cooperation.

FFP demands coherence. Integrating fossil fuel phase-out objectives across foreign policy portfolios ensures that international cooperation does not reproduce dependency, extractivism, or neo-colonial dynamics – but instead supports just, gender-responsive, and community-led transitions.

7. Exercise diplomatic leadership to advance the implementation of the ICJ Advisory Opinion within a Fossil Fuel Treaty framework.

The ICJ Advisory Opinion offers a legal and moral foundation for states' obligations to prevent further harm from fossil fuels. FFP countries should champion this process, aligning human rights and environmental responsibilities with feminist principles of care, prevention, and global justice.

To truly embody the promise of FFP, governments must move beyond declarations and act with courage – by aligning with the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, centering justice and care, and learning from the expertise of civil society and feminist movements who have long led this struggle. The time for hesitation has passed; policymakers must act with accountability and conviction, and activists must continue to speak truth to power, reminding the world that a just, peaceful, and feminist transition is not only possible – it is urgent.



