

INTERVENTION: HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

Delivered by Catherine Abreu, Climate Action Network Canada

I live and grew up as a settler in colonial Canada and this is only my fifth COP - my experience pales in comparison to my countless colleagues who have been here fighting for climate justice for decades, to Indigenous peoples who have been fighting for their rights and the rights of mother earth for centuries, to the millions who are watching the place they have called home for millennia burn up or slip into the sea.

But I have been here long enough to notice a few things. And I am no longer willing to write placating press releases that pretend everything is ok.

Year after year you talk about running out of time. But for so many people gripped by devastating floods, fires, and storms, time is up. And instead of helping them, rich countries hold on to your dollars and hold up loss and damage.

You talk about inclusivity and then developed and developing countries alike bicker over the few paltry words that enshrine human rights and the rights of Indigenous peoples in these talks. You delay just transitions for workers and communities. You systematically chip away at civil society space. You can't even land a gender action plan.

You talk about urgency but you can't even decide when to decide what time period your future plans should cover.

You talk about ambition and then make plans to expand fossil fuel production and make your emissions everyone else's problem.

Public mobilizations are swamping the streets. The status quo you are working to protect is not working for people or the planet. Rest assured everything will change. The question for your governments is whether you will lead that change or be left behind.