

# Expectations for the United Nations Climate Ambition Summit

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## MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

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environmental  
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On September 20th in New York City, United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) António Guterres will be holding the much-anticipated Climate Ambition Summit. The summit will be attended by government representatives from around the world, including the Government of Canada and subnational governments from Canada.

### UN Expectations for Countries Gathering at the Climate Ambition Summit

In light of the increasingly obvious gap between escalating climate disasters and inadequate climate action by governments, Guterres [issued a call to action to countries](#), called the "Acceleration Agenda". [The Acceleration Agenda](#) sets out the actions that are needed this year from government leaders to prevent crossing dangerous climate thresholds. It calls on wealthy countries like Canada to prepare energy transition plans that:

- Reach net-zero as close as possible to 2040
- Ensure net-zero electricity generation by 2035
- Cease all licensing or funding of new oil and gas extraction projects
- Stop any expansion of existing oil and gas reserves
- Shift subsidies from fossil fuels to a just energy transition
- Establish a global phase down of existing oil and gas production
- Safeguard the most vulnerable communities
- Scale up finance and capacities for adaptation and loss and damage

According to the UNSG the Climate Ambition Summit will be a global moment for "first movers and doers" to showcase concrete, credible, ambitious and new actions to ambitiously move forward across elements of the Acceleration Agenda. Countries who have demonstrated they are taking action on these points will be highlighted as climate leaders.

### Moving Beyond Oil and Gas

The science is unequivocal: oil, gas and coal are fueling the climate crisis. To have any hope of addressing the root causes of the climate crisis, leaders must address the need to phase out fossil fuels in their net-zero plans. Furthermore, they cannot be distracted by the false solutions being promoted by oil and gas companies, including carbon capture, which hinder the energy transition by prolonging our dependence on fossil fuels.

In the past, [UNSG Guterres has said](#) that "the solution is clear: the world must phase out fossil fuels in a just and equitable way - moving to leave oil, coal and gas in the ground where they belong and massively boosting renewable investment in a just transition." He has also expressed concern that too many countries are willing to "bet it all on wishful thinking, unproven technologies and silver bullet solutions."

Now, he is asking countries to come to New York with new and accelerated commitments to phase out fossil fuels, backed by concrete policy action.

## What This Means for Canada

### **Capping and Cutting Oil and Gas Emissions, Ending Public and Private Financing, Eliminating Methane Emissions and Ensuring a Just Transition Away from Fossil Fuels**

Given that in Canada jurisdiction over natural resources lies with the provinces, it is incumbent on provincial governments to develop their own plans to transition off oil and gas. However, there are many actions that can be taken to reduce fossil fuel production that lie within the federal government's control.

Though the Government of Canada has made some progress on parts of the Acceleration Agenda, such phasing out thermal coal, releasing draft regulations for a clean electricity grid by 2035 and developing new rules to end some fossil fuel subsidies, Canada needs to bring more concrete actions to the Climate Ambition Summit in order to expect to be given a speaking opportunity and recognized as first mover.

Specifically, the Government of Canada must:

- **Release the much-delayed rules to cap and cut emissions from the oil and gas industry.** The Government of Canada has committed to introduce a new regulation to cap emissions from the oil and gas sector and decrease them at the pace and scale necessary to achieve Canada's climate commitments. As Canada's largest and fastest-growing source of pollution, oil and gas companies must be forced to do their fair share to meet Canada's climate goals. [Canada cannot meet its climate commitments without forcing the oil and gas industry to reduce their emissions at par with the rest of the economy](#), which means that the emissions cap regulation needs to ensure that oil and gas companies reduce their emissions by at least 40-45 per cent from 2005 levels by 2030. Beyond the target, the rules must be robust. These rules were first promised two years ago, but the government has missed its own deadlines in publishing the draft regulations. There is no room for further delay, flexibility for oil and gas companies, offsets or free allocations of emissions allowances.
- **End all public financing to the fossil fuel industry** by the end of 2023. Though the Government of Canada has already developed rules to end international fossil financing and some domestic subsidies, [most of the support being provided by the federal government is public financing](#) through crown corporation Export Development Canada. Furthermore, the government must close loopholes that allow oil and gas companies to continue receiving massive subsidies for speculative technology, including carbon capture and storage and fossil-derived hydrogen.

- **Regulating private finance to deliver [credible climate transition plans](#) across the economy**, including banks, pensions, and insurers, to shift capital away from fossil fuels and towards a just energy transition. This includes delivering a Taxonomy of sustainable investments which excludes oil and gas activities. While Canada proposed a Taxonomy defining green investment opportunities, the current proposal endorses polluting fossil fuel investments and fails to truly align with climate commitments.
- **Release new rules to virtually eliminate methane from the oil and gas sector**. Cutting methane emissions is one of the fastest, most cost-effective strategies to reduce the rate of warming. The Government of Canada is currently developing new rules to tackle methane emissions. [These new rules must aim for virtual elimination of methane by 2030](#), a target which even international oil and gas companies have committed to meeting. Canada's regulations should be well ahead of voluntary industry commitments.
- **Strengthen and pass legislation for a fair and orderly transition away from fossil fuels**. The Government of Canada tabled in June 2023 the Canadian Sustainable Jobs Act, proposing new institutions and mechanisms to support the creation of sustainable jobs and economic growth in a net-zero economy. While a step in the right direction, [the legislation is not aligned with Canada's climate commitments](#) and fails to address the need for local planning mechanisms, a differentiated approach for Indigenous nations, and supports for workers in high-carbon industries who risk facing job loss.

With a strong cap on emissions from the oil and gas industry, regulation for private finance and investment to credibly transition away from fossil fuels, a plan to eliminate all forms of public fossil financing, legislation to ensure a just transition away from fossil fuels and new rules to eliminate methane pollution, Canada can be a climate leader on a global stage. But without these actions, Canada should not be considered a "first mover and doer" at the September 20th Climate Ambition Summit.



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