

Principles for a just ecological transition

Greenhouse gases cause global warming which subsequently increases drought, forest fires, dangerous storms and flooding, thereby impairing human living conditions and health. These impacts are already a reality. Humanity needs to transition quickly from the current society based on the fossil-fuel economy and the overuse of natural resources towards an ecologically sustainable welfare society that respects the planet's boundaries. This change is called the ecological transition.

Transition must be well managed in order to be just. In this position paper, we, the undersigned, define the principles that must be followed in a just transition. We commit to them in our own actions and advocacy work, and we also encourage political decision-makers to respect them.

1. Global warming must be limited to 1.5 degrees compared to pre-industrial times. Biodiversity loss must be stopped.
2. Decisions regarding the necessary actions have to be based on the best scientific knowledge available.
3. When evaluating the extent and rate of the necessary actions, both the precautionary principle and future generations must be taken into account. For this reason, the necessary emission reductions and the actions to prevent biodiversity loss have to be prioritised. Rich countries like Finland have a responsibility to take these actions sooner than developing countries, and to contribute to funding the climate action and the work to stop the biodiversity loss in developing countries.
4. The transition has to be planned and implemented in a long-term manner. Finland has to adopt a holistic, concrete plan for a just ecological transition of the whole society that is based on expert knowledge and is regularly updated. In the transition, it is important to take into account policy coherence: also those actions that are not directly connected to the ecological transition need to be aligned with it.
5. Human rights are at the core of a just ecological transition. Climate action and the work against biodiversity loss must comply with Finland's human rights obligations.
6. No one is left behind in the development. In transition, special attention must be paid to those in a disadvantaged and vulnerable position and to those who are marginalised and susceptible to discrimination, and their rights must be protected. Employees, farmers and entrepreneurs in the transition sectors must also be recognised and supported.

7. A just ecological transition decreases poverty, and social and economic inequality. Sharing the costs of the transition fairly requires funding based on a progressive tax system.

8. The just transition of the workforce to jobs in carbon-free production and service sectors must be ensured by upskilling and creating decent work and high-quality jobs both in Finland and globally.

9. Labour market organisations, civil society organisations, other stakeholder groups and individuals must have an opportunity to take part in the planning, implementation and decision-making regarding climate action and the work against biodiversity loss, as well as the evaluation of the actions taken.

10. In Finland, the progress and impact of the ecological transition must be measured separately in the following areas: human rights, employment and competencies, economic inequality, security of supply while paying attention to marginalised and vulnerable people who are prone to discrimination. This could be done, for example, as part of the Annual Climate Report. The Annual Climate Report should also examine the international impacts that Finland's ecological transition has on other countries, especially on developing economies.