

Keyword: global-warming

Headline: Thunberg: Not phasing out fossil fuels a 'death sentence'

Byline: By Agence France-Presse

Published Date: June 14, 2023

Section: world

Word Count: 395

Content:

BONN, Germany: Failure to end the use of fossil fuels will be a "death sentence" to millions worldwide, Swedish activist Greta Thunberg warned on Tuesday, urging politicians to take more ambitious action.

"It will be impossible for us to stick to the 1.5-degree limit without a rapid, equitable, fossil fuel phaseout," Thunberg told a news conference.

She was referring to the 2015 Paris Agreement, at which world leaders pledged to cut greenhouse gas emissions enough to prevent the Earth's annual temperature rising by more than 1.5 to 2.0 degrees Celsius, and thus halt runaway global warming.

"If we don't, it will be a death sentence to countless of people," she said on the sidelines of United Nations-led climate talks in the city of Bonn, western Germany. "It is already a death sentence to countless of people living on the frontlines of the climate crisis."

Scientists and climate activists are pleading for a more rapid expansion of renewables, and a phaseout of oil, coal and gas, given the significant proportion of climate-warming greenhouse gas emissions produced by these energy sources.

They want world leaders to agree to phase out fossil fuels at the 28th UN Climate Change Conference — or COP28 — in the United Arab Emirates city of Dubai in late 2023, after failing to do so at their summit in the Scottish city of Glasgow in 2021 and in the Egyptian city of Sharm-El-Sheikh in 2022.

But major oil and gas exporters are keen to shift the focus further downstream, arguing that the world can reduce carbon emissions without ditching the fossil fuels that generate them.

Activists disagree and are equally alarmed at the choice of an oil giant boss to preside over the COP28, to be held from November 30 to December 12.

Kenyan climate campaigner Eric Njuguna told the Bonn news conference that the appointment of Sultan al-Jaber, head of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Co., to lead the Dubai climate negotiations was akin to allowing "a mosquito (to) lead the fight against malaria."

Al-Jaber last week acknowledged that a reduction in the use of fossil fuels was "inevitable." But he has defended a COP28 roadmap that — while it includes a "global goal to triple renewable energy, double energy efficiency and double clean hydrogen, all by 2030" — does not include any explicit pledge to end the use of fossil fuels.