

SCIENCE CLEAR ON NEED TO 'PHASE OUT' FOSSIL FUELS: U.S. CLIMATE ENVOY JOHN KERRY

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John Kerry, U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, speaks during a press conference on Day 7 of the UNFCCC COP-28 Climate Conference at Expo City Dubai on December 6, 2023. | Photo Credit: Getty Images

"The science was clear on the need to phase out some fossil fuel," the U.S. lead climate negotiator, John Kerry, said at a press conference on December 6. "Else we are not going to be able to make the goal of being net zero by 2050 or have a shot at keeping temperatures below 1.5°C."

On December 5, a draft text of the [Global Stocktake \(GST\)](#), said to be the most important and contentious element of the climate talks ongoing in Dubai, for the first time mentioned that [countries ought to be undertaking a "just and orderly phase out of fossil fuels"](#).

While this could mean all of the major fossil fuels – coal, oil and gas—that are responsible for human-led greenhouse gas emissions, Mr. Kerry said that there would be some "tough negotiations" in the week ahead.

He said that the United States and China had reached agreements on reducing methane emissions and the position of both countries as the "number one and number two economies" of the world were critical to achieving these goals.

He endorsed the need for the use of "carbon capture and storage", a contested and largely unproven technology, to capture carbon emissions as necessary towards achieving the 1.5 degrees Celsius target. "You can raise some very legitimate questions around it, [but] I believe it is working to some extent," he said at the briefing.

Mr. Kerry, however, refrained from commenting on what potential roadblocks to a deal on fossil fuels existed. In COP-26 at Glasgow, countries had veered close to a commitment to phase out coal until India objected to it and proposed instead that all fossil fuels be phased out. Ultimately it was agreed that all countries would 'phase down' coal and "inefficient fossil fuel subsidies." There is, however, considerable opacity on the definitions around these terms.

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