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# Enabling the Transfer of Green Technology

**RECOMMENDATION:** *Establish a Green Technology Licensing Facility within the United Nations Green Climate Fund.* This facility would encourage licensing and the transfer of technology to developing countries, while protecting intellectual property rights (IPRs) to incentivize the development of green technology and its availability in developing countries.

**Global Challenge Update:** Some current programs do promote technology transfer and climate adaptation in the Global South, but myriad licensing and IPR laws hinder the process. To meet Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Climate Agreement, most countries will need large investments in green technology. Solar and wind power, in particular, will be needed to help countries turn away from fossil fuels. But green tech is often caught in a complex web of patent and IPR laws, which can make it hard, if not impossible, for many states to acquire the needed technology. Despite advances in funding (e.g., the Green Climate Fund) and

technical assistance (e.g., the Climate Technology Centre and Network of UNEP & UNIDO), there are still financial barriers to licensing green technology applications.

**Innovation Proposal:** To ease the transfer and implementation of green technology, the Albright-Gambari Commission recommended the establishment of a Green Technology Licensing Facility (GTLF) within the UN Green Climate Fund. This facility would eliminate current barriers to the proliferation of green technology by issuing licenses that are internationally binding and applicable in any country. This would prevent one

country's patent laws from impeding green tech applications in another country. In doing so, the facility would incentivize the use of technologies, rather than focusing solely on the protection of IPRs, for example, by developing tailor-made programs to promote recipients' absorptive capacities for environmentally sound technologies (ESTs). The facility could also promote public awareness of green tech needs to encourage innovative technology firms to transfer ESTs as an integral element of corporate social responsibility.

The transfer of technology creates frictions between nations, with

developing countries and developed countries disagreeing on how to proceed and what kinds of results these transfers should encourage, as summarized in the table below.

**Strategy for Reform on the Road to 2020 (UN75):** A Green Technology Licensing Facility could be launched relatively quickly and efficiently. First and foremost, both the Green Climate Fund and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) Member States should endorse the idea of a GTLF. Secondly, it is critical to bring on board the business sector, which is why about fifty multinational companies should also endorse the facility before moving forward. And finally, the idea of an "impact fund," as well as other conditions

that ensure the use of environmentally sound technologies rather than their "sleeping availability," should be pursued.<sup>1</sup>

The international community is currently pursuing a series of initiatives to combat climate change. Last month, the United Nations hosted the Climate Action Summit in New York, at the start of the 74th General Assembly, with participation from governments, the private sector, civil society, local authorities, and other international organizations. The summit considered, among other priorities, the importance of green energy and of further assisting least developed countries in the green economy. This has created an opening for the idea of a Green Technology Licensing Facility.

In the near term, the UNFCCC's 25th Conference of Parties (COP25), 2-13 December 2019 in Santiago, Chile, presents an important opportunity to advance this proposal, leaning on commitments made in last year's "Katowice Rulebook" and looking toward this December's first Paris Climate Agreement national progress reports. Similarly, COP26 in Glasgow (9-19 November 2020) and the UN 75 Leaders Summit in New York (21 September 2020) provide two more opportunities to adopt the Green Technology Licensing Facility idea within the UN Green Climate Fund. The ability of millions to meet the escalating dangers of climate change could well depend on it.

Developed Countries Goal	Developing Countries Goal	
X	X	Getting the right technologies to the places where they are needed to combat climate change
X	X	Finding ways to modify these technologies to local circumstances
	X	Enabling and/or installing local knowledge centers to improve or adjust technologies
	X	Ensuring that developing countries do not depend on the goodwill of industrialized countries to give or sell them specific products to combat climate change, but enable them to produce these means themselves
	X	Enabling developing countries to grow their economies

**SOURCE:** van der Veen, M. (2018). "Enhancing Technological Responses to Climate Change," Ch. 9 in *Just Security in an Undergoverned World*, edited by W. Durch, J. Larik, and R. Ponzio (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 220.

## ENDNOTES

1. van der Veen, M. (2018). "Enhancing Technological Responses to Climate Change." Ch. 9 in *Just Security in an Undergoverned World*, edited by W. Durch, J. Larik, and R. Ponzio (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 229.