

From idealism to cynicism in only one decade

John Gault * and Nordine Ait-Laoussine[†]

ABSTRACT

Ten years after the Paris Agreement was approved, an era of cynicism has emerged. This retreat from earlier idealism has many causes. In the energy sector, the retreat can be seen to have begun even earlier, since the late 1970s. And more broadly, a worldwide decline in respect for international institutions and humanitarian law can be traced back to flaws in the body of structures instituted in the immediate aftermath of WWII. The authors argue that, at least as far as combatting climate change, a continuation and even acceleration of the Paris Agreement process may be possible. This assumes that a coalition of willing Parties will focus their attention on investing in renewable energy infrastructures in non-OECD countries.

It feels like a long time since 2015, when all good things seemed possible. That was the year when Angela Merkel said ‘Wir schaffen das’ (‘We can manage this’), and German citizens spontaneously turned out to welcome trainloads of mostly Syrian refugees arriving from Hungary. That was also the year in which 195 participating Parties (plus the European Union (EU)) consented to the Paris Agreement at COP21. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were launched in the same year. Perhaps 2015 was our last year of such self-confidence.

Today, in contrast, we feel helpless as we watch Apocalyptic scenes of unnecessary death and destruction occurring in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, and elsewhere. Attitudes towards migrants have hardened. Few still believe that limiting global warming to ‘well below 2.0°C’, the target agreed in Paris, remains possible. The UN’s 2025 annual report on SDG progress showed ‘only 35% of targets are on track or showing moderate progress’.¹ In March 2025, the USA withdrew from and denounced the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.²

HOW DID THE WORLD MOVE SO RAPIDLY FROM IDEALISM TO CYNICISM?

Some observers will cite the global coronavirus disease (COVID) pandemic (2020–2021), which isolated people from each other and interrupted world trade. Drastic public health measures, introduced rapidly and unevenly across countries, left many disillusioned and confused, and contributed to the rise of conspiracy theories and a collapse of civic trust.

* John Gault, Energy Economist, Switzerland. Email: johngault@bluewin.ch

† Nordine Ait-Laoussine, Energy Economist, Former Algerian Energy Minister, Switzerland

¹ ‘Five years to go: UN sounds alarm on SDG progress as Africa seeks acceleration’ 15 July 2025 <<https://africarenewal.un.org/en/magazine/five-years-go-un-sounds-alarm-sdg-progress-africa-seeks-acceleration>> accessed 30 September 2025.

² ‘Remarks at the UN meeting entitled 58th plenary meeting of the General Assembly’ 4 March 2025 <<https://usun.usmission.gov/remarks-at-the-un-meeting-entitled-58th-plenary-meeting-of-the-general-assembly/>> accessed 30 September 2025.

Others will point to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in early 2022, a blatant violation of the Minsk agreements (2014–2015) and the UN Charter (1945). The invasion led to a dramatic rise in hydrocarbon prices, as Western Europe sought to cut its dependence on Russian oil and gas. Rapid development of options for importing liquefied natural gas (LNG) gradually moderated prices over the following 2 years, but the sharp disruption demonstrated what had been a lack of foresight and preparedness. Again, public confidence was shaken.

One could point out that both of these catastrophic upheavals stimulated praiseworthy reactions. A COVID vaccine was developed, manufactured, and distributed through cooperation between government and private sector actors in record time. Similarly, installation of LNG receiving and regasification terminals in Europe, as well as diversion of supplies to meet Europe's urgent demand, demonstrated that public–private collaboration could be implemented rapidly. Cynicism was not the only possible conclusion. Collectively, humans were able to overcome adversity.

Nevertheless, wars in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, Yemen, the Republic of Congo, and elsewhere continue to cause enormous suffering and widespread despair, contradicting human efforts to invoke higher values. It would be difficult to argue that these wars, and their seemingly intractable causes, have not contributed to the current eclipse of idealism.

Cynicism may also be attributed by some to a gradual realization, after 10 years of efforts, that the framers of the Paris Agreement made tacit unrealistic assumptions. It may have seemed, ten years ago, that whatever could be agreed on an intergovernmental level could be implemented on a local, individual level. In practice, good intentions have run into technical and/or public acceptance problems. Here are a few examples:

- Emissions reduction in almost every country involves investment in renewable energy sources, which often are located far from centres of consumption. Yet expansion of power grids to transport energy frequently faces local opposition. Germany's SuedLink north–south line, now under construction from the wind-abundant North Sea to industry-intense Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, faced local opposition, which compelled planners to place the DC line underground at much greater cost.³ The US Grain Belt Express, to carry power from wind farms in Kansas to consumers as far away as Indiana, would have been one of the longest US electrical interconnections, but has now been cancelled, due to opposition from landowners along the route.⁴
- Homeowners have been encouraged and incentivized to install rooftop solar panels. Most now realize that all solar panels produce power at the same time, driving the price of power downward when the sun shines. To amortize their investment, they demand subsidized prices for power injected into the grid—even when market prices fall below zero on the sunniest days. Who will provide such a subsidy to owners of solar panels? Taxpayers? Other power customers? Despite a continuous decline in the cost of solar panels,⁵ developers of solar farms are demanding greater price support.⁶ How long can such a system prevail?⁷ Similar problems of saturation are reported in grid-connected batteries.⁸

³ 'New North-South German Power Line Expected in Mid-2027' 15 April 2025 <<https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/new-north-south-german-power-line-seen-mid-2027-2025-04-15/>> accessed 30 September 2025; 'Germany Starts Construction of North-South Power Line Critical for Energy Transition' 12 September 2023 <<https://www.cleanenergywire.org/news/germany-starts-construction-north-south-power-line-pivotal-energy-transition#>> accessed 30 September 2025.

⁴ 'A Power Line for Clean Energy Was in the Works. Now an Investigation Looms' 2 July 2025 <<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/02/climate/grain-belt-express-missouri-power-line.html>> accessed 30 September 2025. 'Trump Axes Loan for Grain Belt Power Transmission Project' 23 July 2025 <<https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/trump-axes-loan-grain-belt-power-transmission-project-2025-07-23/>> accessed 30 September 2025.

⁵ 'Global Cost of Renewables to Continue Falling in 2025 as China Extends Manufacturing Lead: BloombergNEF' 6 February 2025 <<https://about.bnef.com/insights/clean-energy/global-cost-of-renewables-to-continue-falling-in-2025-as-china-extends-manufacturing-lead-bloombergnef/>> accessed 30 September 2025.

⁶ 'ASPs for AR7 Prove Renewables Are Not Cheap' (*Watt-Logic*, 27 July 2025) <<https://watt-logic.com/2025/07/27/asps-for-ar7-prove-renewables-are-not-cheap/>> accessed 30 September 2025.

⁷ 'Summer 2025: A Record Season for Solar Cannibalisation in GB' 3 July 2025 <<https://www.edfenergy.com/wholesale-market-services/wholesale-market-services-news/summer-2025-solar-cannibalisation-GB>> accessed 30 September 2025.

⁸ 'British Battery Saturation Offers Warning to Germany' <<https://montelnews.com/news/6acef652-a9d2-44d2-be07-28361c2b347f>> accessed 30 September 2025.

- The share of renewable energy connected to power grids is rising everywhere, but this increase renders grid balancing more challenging. Grids must at all times maintain stable AC power frequency and voltage. Excess power supply or demand can cause volatility in both frequency and voltage. Rotating generators—in hydro, nuclear, or fossil fuel plants—offer an inherent inertia which helps grid operators maintain balance. Most inverters inserting solar power into the grid offer no such inertia. Insufficient inertia, related to a very large share of solar power, may have contributed to the blackout in Spain on 28 April.⁹

Perhaps the most important realization is that a wide variety of humans have strong special interests in preserving the status quo. Not only coal miners, oil companies, and governments of oil-producing countries fall into this category, but also airlines, aircraft manufacturers, tourism promoters, manufacturers of internal combustion engines, and many others organize to resist changes in their accustomed ways of life. Their political power dilutes or offsets that of investors who see opportunities arising from the energy transition.

These and other outcomes have slowed—but will not halt—the transition away from fossil fuels. Some readers may suggest a different title for this article: ‘From naiveté to realism in only one decade’, with smugness enabled by hindsight. But recognizing such obstacles and searching for ways to overcome them are rational, not cynical, responses.

YET, THE DESCENT TO CYNICISM CONTINUES

Cynicism in our title refers instead to what we observe to be the abandonment of distant collective goals because they are inconsistent with immediate individual wishes, and because achieving those goals would require short-term sacrifice.

We see cynicism in forecasts that project ever-growing global consumption of fossil fuels such as oil to 2050 and beyond. We see cynicism, especially in those forecasts that do not bother to estimate the impact of their projections on greenhouse gas emissions or on average global temperatures.¹⁰ These forecasts often are based on an implicit (and unreasonable) assumption that no further policies to combat climate change, beyond those already in place, will ever be implemented. When published by oil companies, such forecasts must be viewed as tools for shareholder relations and political advocacy, not as objective assessments. We have urged all forecasters to calculate and publish the anticipated climate consequences of each scenario.¹¹ Some still fail to do this.

Our prize for cynicism, however, is reserved for the government of a country that has twice withdrawn from the Paris Agreement (2017 and 2025),¹² that plans to rescind the ‘endangerment finding’,¹³ which underlies all of its own environmental regulations, and that has threatened to leave the International Energy Agency over the Agency’s ‘unrealistic’ green energy forecasts.¹⁴

THE DESCENT TO CYNICISM IS PART OF A LONGER-TERM TREND

As we look back, though, we realize that the descent from high ideals to today’s cynicism merely accelerated after 2015. The trend actually began much earlier than 10 years ago.

⁹ ‘Europe’s Massive Blackout a Warning for US Grid’ 1 May 2025 <<https://www.eenews.net/articles/europes-massive-blackout-a-warning-sign-for-us-grid/>> accessed 30 September 2025, ‘Inertia on the Power Grid: A Guide Without the Spin’ May 2020, US National Renewable Energy Laboratory <<https://docs.nrel.gov/docs/fy20osti/73856.pdf>> accessed 30 September 2025.

¹⁰ For eg, ‘OPEC’s Annual World Oil Outlooks’ <<https://www.opec.org/world-oil-outlook.html>> accessed 30 September 2025.

¹¹ John Gault and Nordine Ait-Laoussine, ‘Should We Relax the 1.5°C Global Warming Target?’ Energy Intelligence Group, 29 April 2024, and ‘Are We All Kidding Ourselves?’ Energy Intelligence Group, 8 November 2024

¹² ‘Putting America First in International Environmental Agreements’ 20 January 2025 <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/putting-america-first-in-international-environmental-agreements/>> accessed 30 September 2025.

¹³ <<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-releases-proposal-rescind-obama-era-endangerment-finding-regulations-paved-way>> 29 July 2025, accessed 30 September 2025.

¹⁴ <<https://www.worldoil.com/news/2025/7/15/u-s-threatens-to-leave-iea-over-unrealistic-green-energy-forecasts/>> accessed 30 September 2025.

The creation of OPEC in 1960 was a revolutionary moment in global justice. OPEC wrested control—peacefully—over oil pricing from major oil companies, and asserted members’ sovereignty over national resources and revenues. At the time, this was only one step in the post-World War II worldwide revolt against imperialism and colonialism. OPEC members terminated prior concessions and gradually nationalized the upstream assets of European and American oil companies, who had for decades exploited their resources. Companies were compensated either through negotiation or arbitration.¹⁵ The process—which took longer in some cases than others—was a triumph of legal recognition of human and national rights.

OPEC attempted to leverage its achievement to aid other developing countries, especially countries that had been victims of colonial exploitation. In 1974, OPEC member Algeria called for a ‘New International Economic Order’ during a UN Extraordinary Session.¹⁶ This, in turn, led to the ‘North-South Dialogue’, discussions under UN auspices concerning trade and tariffs, finance, and foreign aid, between countries of the industrialized North and Newly Industrializing Countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Thereafter, the idealism of the 1970s waned. ‘By September of 1980, the discussions in the United Nations that had characterized this [North-South] dialogue had lost their momentum. Although some dialogue on these issues continued, it remained a series of discussions on economic issues and never presented the workable solution that its proponents had hoped it would.’¹⁷

UNFORTUNATELY, A MUCH BROADER FAILURE OF IDEALISM HAS ALSO TAKEN PLACE

The retreat of idealism in the fields of energy, economic development, and climate change is only part of a longer-term global collapse of higher aspirations.

After two major wars in the first half of the 20th century, leaders sought to construct a system of public international law, beginning with the Charter of the United Nations in 1945. Subsequent contributions included the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948), the UN Genocide Convention (1948), and the Fourth Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949). These agreements, together with UN Covenants on Civil, Political, Social, and Cultural Rights (1966–1976) and treaties on nuclear non-proliferation and arms control, collectively aspired to define a rule of law for the post-war world.

It rapidly emerged that these agreements were flawed and suffered from a lack of adequate enforcement mechanisms. The veto power of the permanent members of the UN Security Council gave those members and their allies immunity from responsibility, even for direct violations of the UN Charter.¹⁸ Numerous violations of the UDHR are documented annually by Amnesty International, which concludes in its latest report: ‘For a decade or more, the world has witnessed a steady spread of authoritarian laws, policies and practices, shrinking civic space and eroding enjoyment of freedom of expression or association.’¹⁹ The Geneva Conventions have been violated so many times that, according to former Swiss President Micheline Calmy-Rey, ‘no one any longer respects them.’²⁰

¹⁵ See eg, the Final Award 24 March 1982 in *Aminoil v Kuwait* <<https://jsumundi.com/en/document/decision/en-the-american-independent-oil-company-v-the-government-of-the-state-of-kuwait-final-award-wednesday-24th-march-1982>> accessed 30 September 2025.

¹⁶ Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, UN General Assembly, 6th Special Session 1974 <<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/218450?ln=en&v=pdf>> accessed 30 September 2025.

¹⁷ United States Department of State, ‘The North-South Dialogue and Economic Diplomacy’ <<https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/qfp/103527.htm>> accessed 30 September 2025.

¹⁸ For eg, the NATO intervention in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999 allegedly violated UN Charter art 2(4) <<https://www.icty.org/en/press/final-report-prosecutor-committee-established-review-nato-bombing-campaign-against-federal>> accessed 30 September 2025.

¹⁹ Amnesty International, ‘The State of the World’s Human Rights’ April 2025, 9 <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/8515/2025/en/>> accessed 30 September 2025.

²⁰ ‘Les Conventions de Genève ne sont plus respectées par personne’ Micheline Calmy-Rey, ‘Introduction to Jean-Daniel Ruch’ *Crimes et tremblements*, Editions Favre, 2024, 7. An example of an alleged violation of art 49 of the Fourth Convention is the creation

The greatest demonstration of cynicism today consists of attacks on international judicial institutions and individual judges, prosecutors, and rapporteurs. Parties who launch such attacks appear unwilling or unable to respond to substantive charges. The attacks seem intended to divert attention from the attackers' own responsibility.

THE PERSISTENCE OF INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IS A CAUSE FOR HOPE

There remain a few straws to which an idealist may cling in 2025. The energy transition is well underway and will continue, albeit too slowly to meet the original Paris Agreement goals. Economic incentives as well as government encouragements will yield further investments in renewable energy, even if a few nations take steps in the opposite direction. Electric vehicles are popular with drivers and will gain market share rapidly as prices decline and battery life extends. Concerns about energy security will, in many countries, bring policies promoting local power generation, often solar, wind, hydro, or nuclear, thus contributing to emission reductions.

Judicial institutions are supportive. The International Court of Justice (ICJ, or 'World Court') recently found (unanimously) that 'States have an obligation to protect the environment from greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and act with due diligence and cooperation to fulfill this obligation. This includes the obligation under the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.' States who breach these obligations 'incur legal responsibility and may be required to cease the wrongful conduct, offer guarantees of non-repetition and make full reparation depending on the circumstances.'²¹

The European Court of Human Rights recently found that 'States have the responsibility to combat climate change to protect human rights. The Court confirmed a violation of the right to respect for private and family life of Swiss elderly women because Switzerland failed to implement sufficient measures to combat climate change.'²²

Parties and governments suffering from the impacts of global warming (rising seas, floods, landslides, etc) will continue to use litigation to seek relief and compensation. One current example: residents of the Indonesian island of Pulau Pari are suing cement manufacturer Holcim in Swiss civil courts.²³ Plaintiffs argue that Holcim and other cement manufacturers are responsible for a significant quantity of cumulative CO₂ emissions. These emissions, they argue, have led to global warming, which threatens to render their island uninhabitable by 2050.

More broadly, with regard to the rule of law, judicial institutions remain the last guardrails between civilization and the abyss. The International Criminal Court (ICC), despite attacks on its judges and prosecutors, continues to investigate allegations of violations of human rights and war crimes.²⁴ The UN Human Rights Council receives complaints about violations, appoints Commissions of Inquiry, and publishes reports by the Commissions.²⁵ The International Court of Justice resolves disputes between states, and, besides climate change, has been solicited recently for rulings on other issues, including genocide.²⁶

of Israeli settlements in Palestinian-occupied territories <<https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-199015/>> accessed 30 September 2025.

²¹ 'World Court Says Countries are Legally Obligated to Curb Emissions, Protect Climate' 23 July 2025 <<https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/07/1165475>> accessed 30 September 2025, 'Obligations des états en matière de changement climatique' Avis consultatif, 23 July 2025 <<https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/187/187-20250723-adv-01-00-en.pdf>> accessed 30 September 2025, in response to questions from the UN General Assembly, Resolution 77/276, 29 March 2023. See also 'Inter-American Court of Human Rights Reaffirms Right to Defend the Environment' 9 July 2025 <<https://ishr.ch/latest-updates/inter-american-court-of-human-rights-reaffirms-right-to-defend-the-environment/>> accessed 30 September 2025.

²² 'The Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights Issues Groundbreaking Judgement on Climate Change and Human Rights' 12 April 2024 <<https://ennhri.org/news-and-blog/the-grand-chamber-of-the-european-court-of-human-rights-issues-groundbreaking-judgment-on-climate-change-and-human-rights/>> accessed 30 September 2025. *KlimaSeniorinnen v Switzerland* (ECtHR), 9 April 2024 <https://climatecasechart.com/wp-content/uploads/non-us-case-documents/2024/20240409_Application-no.-5360020_judgment.pdf> accessed 30 September 2025.

²³ <<https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/climate-solutions/indonesians-vs-swiss-company-holcim-we-want-to-save-our-island/89933528>> accessed 30 September 2025.

²⁴ <<https://www.icc-cpi.int>> accessed 30 September 2025.

²⁵ <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/list-hrc-mandat>> accessed 30 September 2025.

CAN THE FORMER IDEALISM BE REVIVED?

Latest developments suggest that a return to idealism is unlikely in the foreseeable future. Peaceful solutions to conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza, and elsewhere might give some credibility to idealism, but for now they are out of reach. The USA has upended the global diplomatic and commercial game board, preferring to impose its own power unilaterally on others rather than respecting multilateral agreements reached over decades of painstaking negotiation. Aggressors' assertions of moral righteousness are now widely and correctly interpreted as thin veneers that fail to hide egregious acts of narrow self-interest. Major oil companies and oil-producing countries are announcing plans to boost oil production, without acknowledging the long-term global impact.²⁷ And in many democracies, political life has become polarized into extremist parties uninterested in compromise. So much for idealism.

An alternative, pragmatic way forward may, however, be possible, at least concerning climate change. It remains to be seen how many Parties will continue to support and participate in the Paris Agreement process even in the absence of the USA. Achieving any specified global temperature targets will be more difficult without one of the largest GHG-emitting countries, especially when that country is working at counter-purposes. Parties wishing to reinforce the Paris Agreement should reaffirm their commitment to the 1.5°C target, while admitting that the target was already extremely challenging when the USA was playing a constructive role.

The COP process may be frustratingly slow for Parties wishing to move more rapidly. The consensus rule ensures that the least willing Parties dictate the pace. In order to accelerate progress toward any agreed targets, a coalition of the willing may proceed on its own. The coalition could be composed of Parties that have recently updated their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), who thereby indicated their enthusiasm for pursuing the process.

Any group of Parties must utilize its limited resources as efficiently as possible. Strengthening carbon markets and reducing methane emissions are methods by which significant impacts can be achieved. But by far the greatest emphasis must be on mitigating and adapting to global warming in the non-OECD world. Emissions in OECD have been declining for many years and will continue to decline.²⁸ Developing countries, on the other hand, are currently projected to expand fossil fuel use and CO₂ emissions.²⁹ Moreover, according to authors at the Brookings Institution,

Developing countries will be the most severely affected by accelerating climate change and, even excluding China from the calculation, are likely to emit more than half the annual global total of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as early as 2030. But the international community has not focused sufficiently on the range of development, adaptation, and resilience priorities and constraints these countries face in tackling the world's interwoven emissions mitigation imperative.³⁰

The non-OECD world will require massive financial assistance to avoid catastrophe. Modest progress was achieved in the agreement at COP29 by the Parties to the Paris Agreement on a new climate finance goal of \$300 bn annually for developing countries.³¹ The Conference noted that this amount is inadequate: '... costed needs reported in nationally determined contributions of

²⁶ <<https://www.icj-cij.org/home>> accessed 30 September 2025, See, in particular, the cases of *United Arab Emirates v Sudan*, *The Gambia v Myanmar*, and *South Africa v Israel* <<https://www.icj-cij.org/decisions>> accessed 30 September 2025.

²⁷ 'ExxonMobil Plans to Increase Production by 18% by 2030' <<https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/exxon-mobil-forecasts-higher-capital-spending-2024-12-11/>> 'ADNOC (Abu Dhabi) Plans to Increase Oil Production Capacity from 3 mmbd to 5 mmbd by 2027' <<https://www.adnoc.ae/en/ourstrategy/responsible-growth>> accessed 30 September 2025.

²⁸ OECD, 'Environment at a Glance Indicators' 30 June 2025 <https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/environment-at-a-glance-indicators_ac4b8b89-en/full-report.html> accessed 30 September 2025.

²⁹ IEA World Energy Outlook 2024, Stated Policies Scenario, projects oil consumption increase of +40% and CO₂ emissions increase of +24% from 2023 to 2050 for the combined regions of Central and South America, Africa, Middle East, India, and Southeast Asia <<https://www.iea.org/reports/world-energy-outlook-2024>> accessed 30 September 2025.

³⁰ Amar Bhattacharya, Homi Kharas and John W McArthur, 'Developing Countries are Key to Climate Action' 3 March 2023, Brookings Institution <<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/developing-countries-are-key-to-climate-action/>> accessed 30 September 2025.

³¹ UNFCCC, 'COP29 UN Climate Conference Agrees to Triple Finance to Developing Countries, Protecting Lives and Livelihoods' 24 November 2024 <<https://unfccc.int/news/cop29-un-climate-conference-agrees-to-triple-finance-to-developing-countries-protecting-lives-and>> accessed 30 September 2025.

developing country Parties are estimated at USD 5.1 to 6.8 tn for up until 2030, or USD 455 to 584 billion per year.³² Only if the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG) of \$1.3 tn per year for developing countries is agreed, and if Parties meet their obligations, will one begin to believe that serious progress is again possible.

An enhanced program of rapid electrification, with major reliance on renewable energies, could slow projected increases of fossil fuel reliance in developing countries, cited above. That such a program is possible is demonstrated by the actual and continuing impact of the US Rural Electrification Act of 1936.³³ Wealthy countries that have to date emitted the bulk of cumulative emissions contributing to global warming have barely begun to compensate those who will suffer the greatest consequences. Contributions to the electrification of the low-income world would be a significant form of restitution.

If such an outcome were to be achieved by Parties still working within the Paris Agreement, it would begin to fulfil the 1974 appeal of Algerian President Houari Boumédiène:

The economic development and liberation of the Third World can be a victory for all humanity. For the developed countries, the question is whether they have realized that their future cannot be separated from that of the peoples of the Third World. If so, it is up to them to assume the responsibilities that such an awareness implies.³⁴

That would also be a first step to restoring our former idealism.

³² FCCC/PA/CMA/2024/L.22 <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2024_L22_adv.pdf> accessed 30 September 2025.

³³ In 1936, the Rural Electrification Act in the USA provided federal loans to farmers who formed cooperatives to bring electric power to rural areas <<https://www.nps.gov/home/learn/historyculture/ruralelect.htm>> accessed 30 September 2025. The programme, now part of the Department of Agriculture, still provides loans for improvements in rural electric infrastructure. <<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/electric-programs>> accessed 30 September 2025.

³⁴ Le pétrole, les matières de base et le développement. Mémoire présenté par l'Algérie à l'occasion de la session extraordinaire de l'Assemblée Générale des Nations Unies. April 1974, XXIII.

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