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Santa Marta Climate Conference — 50+ Nations Develop Fossil Fuel Phase-Out Roadmaps

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Santa Marta Climate Conference — 50+ Nations Develop Fossil Fuel Phase-Out Roadmaps

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WHY IN NEWS

Over **57 countries** representing a significant share of global GDP gathered in **Santa Marta, Colombia** (April 24–29, 2026) for a climate conference co-hosted by **Colombia** and the **Netherlands**, focused on developing national fossil fuel phase-out roadmaps. The conference operated **outside the UNFCCC framework** — bypassing the consensus requirement that has slowed progress at annual COP meetings. Major emitters — the **United States, China, and India** — did not participate. The next conference is planned for **early 2027 in Tuvalu**, co-hosted by **Ireland**.

KEY OUTCOMES

COUNTRY	COMMITMENT MADE
France	Coal phase-out: 2030; Oil phase-out: 2045; Gas phase-out: 2050
Netherlands (co-host)	Coal: already ended (2019); accelerating oil and gas transition
Colombia (co-host)	Moratorium on new fossil fuel contracts
Small Island Developing States	Called for immediate global fossil fuel treaty

Note: The Santa Marta conference was held April 24–29, 2026 — results reported in early May 2026.

FOSSIL FUEL NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY (FFNPT)

The Santa Marta conference operates in the spirit of the proposed **Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty** — an initiative originally championed by **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**, academics, and civil society organisations.

ELEMENT	DETAIL
Proposed by	Timor-Leste, Vanuatu, Tuvalu + civil society (from 2019)
Core asks	1. No new fossil fuel extraction; 2. Phase-out production; 3. Just transition support
Inspired by	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) model
UN status	Not formally adopted; outside UNFCCC
Supporters	Small Island States, several EU nations, some African and Latin American countries
Opponents (de facto)	Major fossil fuel producers: USA, Saudi Arabia, Russia, India, China

WHY OUTSIDE UNFCCC?

UNFCCC Limitations

- **Consensus rule:** Any country can block decisions — coal-producing or oil-exporting nations have repeatedly diluted language on fossil fuel phase-out
- **COP28 (Dubai, 2023):** First ever language on “transitioning away from fossil fuels” — but “phase-out” language was blocked
- **COP29 (Baku, 2024):** Focus on climate finance; fossil fuel phase-out language remained contested
- **COP30 (Belém, Brazil, 2025):** Modest progress; no binding fossil fuel commitments

Coalition of the Willing Model

By meeting outside UNFCCC, the Santa Marta group:

- 1 Can set **binding national commitments** without global consensus
- 2 Can move faster and more ambitiously
- 3 Can create **peer pressure** on non-participants
- 4 Risk: excludes major emitters — limiting global climate impact

MAJOR ABSENTEES — INDIA'S POSITION

India was **not present** at Santa Marta. India's consistent position on fossil fuel phase-out:

- 1 India has a right to use its coal and fossil fuel reserves for **development** — not having caused historical emissions, it should not bear disproportionate transition costs
- 2 Phase-out must be paired with **adequate climate finance** from developed nations

- 3 India will transition on its own timeline — **Net Zero 2070** commitment; 500 GW non-fossil capacity by 2030 (NDC)
- 4 India supports the **Panchamrit** commitments (COP26, Glasgow): 50% electricity from renewables by 2030, 1 billion tonnes CO₂ reduction by 2030

GLOBAL FOSSIL FUEL PHASE-OUT — STATUS

FUEL	GLOBAL STATUS
Coal	~50 countries have pledged phase-out dates (UK: 2024 — achieved; Germany: 2038; India: No date)
Oil	Few countries have firm dates (Norway: new field moratorium debated; France: 2045)
Gas	Least progress; considered “transition fuel” by many nations

IEA Net Zero by 2050 Scenario: Requires no new oil, gas, or coal development beyond projects already approved as of 2021.

KEY CLIMATE BODIES AND AGREEMENTS

BODY / AGREEMENT	ROLE
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992); treaty under which COPs operate
Paris Agreement (2015)	Limit warming to 1.5–2°C; NDCs; no fossil fuel phase-out language
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change — science body; AR6 report (2021–22)
IEA	International Energy Agency — tracks energy transitions; Net Zero 2050 scenario
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency — renewable energy data
COP	Conference of Parties under UNFCCC; annual; COP30: Belém 2025; COP31: 2026

UPSC RELEVANCE

PAPER	ANGLE
GS3 — Environment	Climate negotiations, fossil fuel phase-out, UNFCCC, Paris Agreement
GS2 — International Relations	Multilateralism, India’s climate diplomacy, SIDS, coalition diplomacy
GS3 — Economy	Energy transition, carbon markets, just transition

Mains Keywords: Santa Marta conference, Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, UNFCCC, COP, Paris Agreement, coal phase-out, Small Island Developing States, India’s climate commitments, Panchamrit, Net Zero 2070, IEA Net Zero 2050, coalition of the willing

Prelims Facts Corner

ITEM	FACT
Santa Marta conference	April 24–29, 2026; Colombia + Netherlands co-hosts; 57 nations
India, US, China	Did not participate
Next conference	Early 2027; Tuvalu + Ireland
FFNPT	Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty — proposed by SIDS; outside UNFCCC
COP28	Dubai, 2023; first “transition away from fossil fuels” language
India Net Zero	2070 commitment
India NDC	500 GW non-fossil by 2030; 50% electricity from renewables by 2030
UNFCCC	1992; 197 parties; secretariat in Bonn, Germany
Paris Agreement	2015; NDCs; 1.5°C target
IEA Net Zero 2050	No new fossil fuel projects from 2021

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