

GYA Member [Peter Gan Kim Soon](#) participated in the **Act on Climate: A Convening on Planetary Health and Just Transition**, held from **October 14-19, 2024**, in **Bogotá, Colombia**, organised by [Atlantic Institute](#) and [Dejusticia](#). This event brought together a diverse group of researchers, activists, and policymakers dedicated to exploring the intricate relationship between climate change and equity. The discussions were framed around the urgent need for a **just transition**—a concept that emphasises fairness and inclusivity in the shift towards sustainable practices.

Humanising Climate Conversations

During this convening, fellows shared personal narratives that illuminated the often abstract discussions surrounding climate change. By humanising these conversations, we were able to connect the dots between climate action and live experiences of those disproportionately affected by environmental degradation. The stories shared highlighted how climate change has exacerbated existing health inequities, particularly among marginalised communities who have long faced systemic injustices.

The Intersection of Climate Change and Health Equity

The convening underscored that climate change is not merely an environmental issue; it is fundamentally a **health equity issue**. The impacts of climate change are unevenly distributed, with vulnerable populations bearing the brunt of its consequences. This reality compels us to advocate for the **decolonisation of global health practices** by critically examining how historical power dynamics have shaped international health interventions, as well as advocating for culturally sensitive approaches, empowering and prioritising the needs and knowledge of local communities and including them in the decision-making processes. As we navigate this complex landscape, it is imperative that we strengthen collaborations across sectors to address these pressing challenges.

Indigenous Voices Take Centre Stage

In what many fellows described as a watershed moment, the convening placed Indigenous knowledge and leadership at the forefront of climate action discussions. This approach represents a significant departure from traditional policy-making processes, which have historically marginalised Indigenous perspectives.

We are witnessing a fundamental shift in how climate action is conceived and implemented. Indigenous Peoples and local communities are not just stakeholders – they are essential partners and knowledge holders in our collective journey toward planetary health.



Commitment to a Just Transition

As **Fellows of Fellows**, we are committed to taking charge of redefining climate conversations. Our discussions emphasised that a just transition must prioritise resilience, justice, and equity. This approach involves not only transitioning away from fossil fuels but also creating sustainable economic opportunities that benefit all communities, particularly those historically

marginalised in both environmental and economic contexts. The principles of a just transition call for:

- **Inclusivity:** Ensuring that all stakeholders, especially those directly impacted by climate policies, have a seat at the table.
- **Equity:** Addressing historical injustices and ensuring a fair distribution of resources and opportunities.
- **Sustainability:** Promoting practices that protect both human health and the planet.

Building Collaborative Pathways

Throughout our time in Bogotá, we identified significant synergies among our work. Fellows representing diverse disciplines and geographical regions identified common ground in their work and a shared commitment to tackling these pressing issues during the brainstorming sessions. This collaborative spirit is crucial for developing effective, multi-faceted solutions that address the interconnected challenges of climate change and inequity.



The Road Ahead

As the dust settles on this landmark gathering, the real work begins. The frameworks and approaches developed in Bogotá provide a robust foundation for action. However, success will require sustained commitment and collaboration across sectors, regions, and communities.

With [COP30](#) on the horizon, the Atlantic Fellows' vision offers a timely reminder that effective climate action must be both ambitious in scope and grounded in principles of health equity and social justice.

The message from Bogotá is clear: the time for transformative action is now, and the path forward must be one that ensures no community is left behind in our collective journey toward planetary health and climate resilience.

