

## COP27: A Post Mortem

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### Introduction

COP27 is the global negotiation to address climate change. The full title of the 27th meeting is the conference of the parties of the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Paris Agreement was negotiated by 196 parties at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference near Paris, France. The agreement was signed by 194 members of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in September 2015. Governments meet once a year to negotiate a coordinated global response to climate change. Since it was formed in 1992, this was the 27th time that governments of the world have come to meet and they still have not managed to make a concrete agreement for addressing climate change although we know this is an emergency and the most important thing that needs to be addressed. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations remarked, *“We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot on the accelerator. Our planet is fast approaching tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible. We need urgent climate action”*.

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# WHAT IS COP27? UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE SUMMIT

This year is the **27<sup>th</sup> annual summit (COP27)**, of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It's a **major opportunity for all stakeholders to find solutions to the challenges our planet is facing.**

**WHEN?**  
6<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2022

**WHERE?**  
Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt



**THE AGENDA**  
A range of topics will be discussed, focused on **enhancing implementation and raising ambition** on a broad range of **issues related to climate change.**

Youth and Future Generations	Agriculture and Food Systems
Decarbonization	ACE and Civil Society
Adaptation	Gender
Energy	Solutions
Biodiversity	Human Settlements
Finance	Science

Conference Of the Parties | 27<sup>th</sup> Edition



The UN brings together 197 countries for **global climate summits** – called COPs – which stands for ‘Conference of the Parties’, where the **climate crisis is brought centre stage.**

**COP26: AGREEMENT RECAP**

The **26<sup>th</sup> Climate Change Conference (COP26)** took place in **Glasgow, Scotland**. It was the first conference to **assess the progress made since the Paris Agreement** in the fight against the climate crisis.

**MAIN AGREEMENTS**

Phasing out coal and fossil fuels	Speeding up affordable and green technology	Supporting developing countries	Reversing deforestation	Cutting methane emissions
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SOURCES: COP27, UNFCCC, UKCOP26 @agency@akepa akepa

Source: COP27, UNFCCC

## What was achieved?

### US-China climate talk:

At COP26, there was a noticeable sense of relief that the United States had re-joined the Paris Agreement under President Joe Biden. Leading US climate advocate John Kerry had been seen throughout. Kerry was once again present at COP27, but this time he had more influence because the US had passed the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) over the summer, which offers multi-billion dollar incentives for the development of renewables and green technologies. It also provides incentives to reduce methane emissions and ensure food security. However, one of the good surprises of COP26 was the agreement reached between the United States and China to establish a bilateral conversation on climate concerns in 2022, regardless of other difficulties between the two nations. However, Nancy Pelosi's summer visit to Taiwan undercut this strategy and brought all conversations to a standstill, resulting in the world's two greatest

emitters not starting COP27 on speaking terms.<sup>2</sup> This was a significant obstacle to progress since, as UN Secretary-General Guterres stated, "There is no way in which we can address the climate challenge that we face without the cooperation of all G20 members and in particular without the cooperation of the two biggest economies, the United States and China."<sup>3</sup>

### **Africa raised voice:**

The establishment of the African Climate Risk Facility, a \$14 billion local, market-based financial mechanism to assist African countries in increasing the resilience of their vulnerable people, is a wake-up call for a world disappointed by rich countries' false commitments. The finance is a climate solution proposed by Africa for Africa to help with losses and damage. It should also serve as a model for Asia.<sup>4</sup> Over 85 African insurers have promised to establish a financing facility to give \$14 billion in coverage to assist the continent's most vulnerable populations in dealing with climate disaster risks such as floods and droughts.<sup>5</sup> Climate change has long been projected to have a significant impact on Africa, which accounts for less than 4% of greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>6</sup> The African insurance plan is based on the development of a scalable, local market-based funding mechanism to assist governments in better managing the financial risk of climate shocks and increasing the resilience of their most vulnerable citizens.

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<sup>2</sup> COP27 – achievements and disappointments. (n.d.). <https://a9w7k6q9.stackpathcdn.com/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Insight-125-COP27-%E2%80%93Achievements-and-Disappointments.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Sevastopulo, D., & Williams, A. (2022, November 14). Cop 27: US-china climate restart provides relief to downbeat UN summit. Financial Times. <https://www.ft.com/content/57aad7fd-de16-4f76-bac0-7db5b4863698>

<sup>4</sup> Basir, R. (2022, November 24). COP27: Africa took climate action into own hands, Asia must too. Climate Crisis | Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/11/24/cop27-africa-took-climate-action-into-own-hands-asia-must-too>

<sup>5</sup> Person; Virginia Furness, S. J. (2022, November 10). African insurers take up climate change fight with \$14 BLN pledge. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/business/cop/african-insurers-take-up-climate-change-fight-with-14-bln-pledge-2022-11-09/>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Namibia has received approximately 540 million euros (\$544 million) in climate money from the Dutch government and the European Investment Bank in this COP27.<sup>7</sup> Namibia, one of the world's sunniest and least densely inhabited countries, aspires to manufacture green hydrogen and establish itself as Africa's renewable energy powerhouse. The Dutch contribution comes from the infrastructure finance organisation 'Invest International', while the European Investment Bank facility will be used to create green hydrogen and renewable energy projects in Namibia.

# What Africa wants FROM COP27

- FINANCING**  
Developed nations to fulfil their promise of providing 100 billion dollars annually to support low-income countries and make this pledge a reality.
- COMPENSATE**  
The establishment of a fund to compensate for irreparable loss and damage caused by the rise in greenhouse gas emissions, mostly from rich industrialised countries, that cause extreme weather events.
- TECH**  
Access to, and shared knowledge on how to develop environmental technologies like advanced solar panels, green steel, and smart grids
- INVESTMENT**  
Wealthier nations to invest in the infrastructure for scaling up irrigation coupled with localised climate monitoring systems and data to ensure resilience and food security.
- CARBON CREDITS**  
Developing a carbon market through carbon credit" schemes, where foreign governments and companies pay for tree planting in exchange for producing greenhouse gases.

<sup>7</sup> Person. (2022, November 9). Namibia secures \$544 million in climate finance at COP27. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/business/cop/namibia-secures-544-million-climate-finance-cop27-2022-11-08/>

## **What was not achieved?**

### **Loss and damage fund:**

Affluent countries referred to as the ‘Global North’ are responsible for around half of all emissions since the Industrial Revolution, as estimated by the World Inequality Database. Privileged lifestyles in Europe, North America and other nations in the Global North produce a carbon footprint 100 times greater than that of the world’s poor nations combined.<sup>8</sup> Developing countries also referred to as the ‘Global South’ are on the frontlines of suffering all climate disasters. Vanuatu was representing the small island states, which are among the most vulnerable countries to climate change. In 1992, they called for a fund for loss and damage. The Global South countries are paying the cost of climate change and a form of compensation was created which is the loss and damage fund. Industrialised countries were reluctant to do this, and the USA was wary of financial liabilities so developing nations have been asked to do this since 1992 but it only happened this year. A fund for loss and damage was established.<sup>9</sup> They have recognised the establishment of the fund but no money has been committed to it. This is a real problem because rich countries have made this commitment before and they tend not to follow through. It is being described as an ‘empty bucket’.

In COP15 - the biodiversity summit<sup>10</sup> countries pledged to fund \$15 billion to help low-income countries de-carbon, but they never followed through or delivered the money. In this situation, where they have not even given the money they already promised, they're promising to give more, with positive words. Unfortunately, this will not count for anything till the money is paid

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<sup>8</sup> Soergel, B., Kriegler, E., Bodirsky, B.L. et al. *Combining ambitious climate policies with efforts to eradicate poverty*. Nat Commun 12, 2342 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-021-22315-9>

<sup>9</sup> Polley, C. (2022, December 1). *What was agreed at COP27 in Egypt? Key Points & Agreements: 2022*. The Sustainable Agency. <https://thesustainableagency.com/blog/what-was-agreed-at-cop27/>

<sup>10</sup> Owen-Burge, C. (2021, October 11). *What is the COP15 Biodiversity Summit, and why is it so important?* Climate Champions. <https://climatechampions.unfccc.int/what-is-the-cop15-biodiversity-summit-and-why-is-it-so-important/>

towards the fund and there is no guarantee that it will happen. The \$100 billion in climate finance pledged in COP26 was expected to reach poorer countries by 2020. That year has passed, and the number is no longer relevant. Pakistan alone would require more than \$30 billion to recover from this year's disastrous floods.

## **What failed?**

### **Greenwashing through sponsorships**

This year the conference was held in Egypt and there were talks about human rights issues. Climate change and human rights are all part of the same picture. A lot of activists were disappointed that it was held in a country with such a poor human rights record. It is a bad starting point. There's been a lot of fundamental problems with the involvement of fossil fuel industries. Both as sponsors and as official delegates at the conference. This is a real problem because the struggle against climate change fundamentally means we need to shut down and stop burning fossil fuels. When there are fossil fuels industries taking part in the process, obviously they do not want change, they do not want legislation that will stop them from producing fossil fuels because that will limit their profits. 18 out of the 20 sponsors of COP27 contribute to the fossil fuel industries in one way or another. The biggest sponsor was Coca-Cola, which is the world's largest plastic polluter. The other sponsors included Egypt Air, General Motors, banks that are bankrolling climate change, and companies that produce oil.





# COP27 vs. COKE

The United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP27) is the biggest climate event of the year and will be **sponsored by Coca Cola**. This has sparked controversy, backlash, and condemnation - and led to accusations of greenwashing. **Here's why:**

## COP27 GOALS

**REDUCING FOSSIL FUELS**, which are used to make 99% of plastic.



Bringing ocean protection centre stage by aiming for a **'STRONG POLITICAL OUTCOME RELATED TO OCEANS'**.

Securing **NET ZERO** by 2050, by neutralising **GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**.



Addressing loss and damage associated with **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**.



## COCA-COLA ACTIONS

"**PREDICATED ON FOSSIL FUELS**", producing

**3 MILLION TONNES**

of plastic annually.

Named **THE PLANET'S BIGGEST PLASTIC POLLUTER**, for 4 consecutive years while plastic pollution makes up **80% OF MARINE DEBRIS**.

Plastic production emits **3.4%** of global **GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**.

The worst of 4 global giants responsible for over **half a million tonnes of plastic pollution** in



**6 DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**.

SOURCES: UNFCCC, Environmental Justice Foundation, Ellen MacArthur Foundation, Break Free From Plastic, OECD, Tearfund

Source: UNFCCC

## Increase in lobbyists

The other issue is that there are huge numbers of professional lobbyists from agriculture, fossil fuels and other industries that are working to prevent change. There were 636 fossil fuels lobbyists at the conference.<sup>11</sup> There was a bigger delegation of fossil fuel lobbyists than the official delegation from every country. This is supposed to be a forum for governments to

<sup>11</sup> Alix Dietzel Senior Lecturer in Climate Justice. (2022, December 19). *COP27: How the fossil fuel lobby crowded out calls for climate justice*. The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/cop27-how-the-fossil-fuel-lobby-crowded-out-calls-for-climate-justice-195041>

negotiate amongst themselves and those that have a vested interest in preventing the change we need, have the biggest seats at the table. There are blurred lines between fossil fuel lobbyists and governments. We see the influence of the fossil fuel industry in the outcomes which favour the fossil fuel industries.

COP27 has been formed into a festival of greenwashing and trade shows for these fossil fuel industries. The influence of lobbyists is fundamentally constrained. In a way, they have their hands tied behind their backs in making crucial decisions towards climate progress. The COP has failed to deliver on its vision and people expect it to go differently but this year increasing the number of fossil fuel lobbyists by 26% has increased their influence even more.

### **No act on fossil fuel emissions**

None of the rich countries agreed to be legally held accountable. Despite the progress, on loss and damage, there is a big disappointment in the cut on emissions on fossil fuels. Three other main areas were under discussion: one was about limiting emissions of each country. The Paris Agreement, which was part of the UNFCCC, was agreed upon at COP21 and this is the agreement that commits countries to keep global warming at 1.5 degrees. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) shows that if countries need to keep warming lower than 50% then they need to reduce emissions globally by 45% by 2023, where only a year is left. The way the Paris Agreement works is that each country makes a commitment as to how much they are going to reduce their emissions every year. At COP26, countries agreed to what they called the ‘ratchet mechanism’ which was a way of strengthening each country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). With this, each country would have to tighten its NDC every year, unfortunately that has not worked out this year. Out of 194 countries, only 24 countries have enhanced their commitments since last year which is quite a big failure. There were some countries, including Saudi Arabia and Russia, at COP27 that tried to take out the ‘ratchet mechanism’ this year. This would have been a disaster because this is



the only thing that countries have to ensure that emissions go down, yet some countries want to take it out completely. Ultimately, it was kept but it is not an advancement on the promises of COP26, it just stayed the same.

While we still have this agreement to limit it to 1.5 without actually having any credible pathway to get there only a few countries have made proper commitments. Ultimately, the problem is fossil fuels. 82% of all our emissions over the last few decades come from burning fossil fuels. The term 'fossil fuels' has only been starting to be mentioned from COP26, according to the texts. India and other developing countries wanted the word fossil fuels to be phased out, but unfortunately, it was only phased down. There was only the mention of coal, but not oil and gas. There was a lot of resistance from fossil fuel producing countries, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and Arab states. In the end, there has been no improvement from COP26.

## **Conclusion**

It is not about what pledges or agreements that governments make in COP but the main focus should be on what governments are doing after returning to their home countries. Making a promise does not count for anything if they are not going to implement policies that will allow them to reach their problems. Near-term targets need to be set for it to be functional. Global warming needs to be reduced. COP is a useful platform for smaller nations to raise their voice. We cannot only rely on governments; the people need to take action. Future summits need to have more transparency in the negotiations to ensure positive action.