

From the Accomplishments of COP27 to the Key Areas of Focus for COP28

WHAT MUST AFRICAN COUNTRIES PRIORITISE?



APRIL 2023



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Introduction

The 27th Conference of Parties (COP27) transpired in Egypt in 2022. Billed the African or implementation COP, it took place amid urgent concerns about the increasing rather than decreasing global warming despite commitments by all parties to cut emissions. COPs monitor how countries individually and collectively manage the shift from high-carbon to low-carbon economies. All countries have committed to combat climate change as equal partners, despite some being far more polluted than others. It is, however, clear that the nations do not have the same financial, technological, institutional, systematic and

human resources capabilities to make that shift. Several challenges require fixing to ensure that commitments transform into practical steps necessary to cut carbon emissions.

Most (if not all) African countries cannot fulfill their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), despite their commitment.¹ There is consensus at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that least-developed countries need financial and technological assistance from developed countries to become active participants in the fight against climate change. For the past decade, developed countries have not fulfilled their promise. The UN has asked developed countries to contribute the most towards cutting emissions on their home ground “as they are the largest contributors of past and current greenhouse gas emissions.” On the contrary, it has become apparent that developed countries are not ready to make the necessary shift, partly due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Instead, developed countries have increased their investment in fossil fuels at home and abroad. Meanwhile, African countries are demanding preferential treatment, especially in the use of fossil fuels, to ensure that the development impulse of



1. The Paris Agreement requires each Party to prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions (NDCs) it intends to achieve.

recent decades is not interrupted. The global fight against climate change suffers from a lack of implementation. Countries make promises and set goals but fail to allocate sufficient financial resources to ensure the attainment of goals. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warns that “many changes in the climate system, including extreme events, will become excessive in the near term with the increasing global warming. Multiple climatic and non-climatic risks will interact, resulting in increased compounding and cascading impacts becoming more difficult to manage.

Losses and damages will increase with increasing global warming, while excessively concentrated amongst the poorest vulnerable populations (high confidence). Continuing with current unsustainable development patterns will increase exposure and vulnerability of ecosystems and people to climate hazards (high confidence).¹²

This paper analyses the general outcomes of COP27, and specifically, how it advanced Africa's interests and those of poor African communities. It then discusses how Africa should prepare itself for COP28.

2. IPCC, Synthesis Report of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), 2023, p 62

Historical Context of the Conference of Parties

The UNFCCC entered into force on 21 March 1994. The objective of the convention is to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations to a level that prevents dangerous anthropogenic (human-induced) interference with the climate system.³ In total, 198 countries have ratified the convention. These members are referred to as Parties. Twenty-seven COP sessions have held since 1995. The most recent COP27 occurred in Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt in 2022. The COPs' task is to review the national commitments and emission inventories submitted by the Parties. Based on this information, each COP session assesses the effects of the measures taken by Parties and the progress made in achieving the ultimate objectives of the Convention.⁴ COP sessions take place annually.⁵ The presidency and the venue of the COP rotate among the five recognised UN regions: Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and Eastern Europe, and Western Europe and Others. COP27 was the fifth conference to be convened in Africa since 1995.

The COPs can so far be divided into three periods. The first period starts with the first session of Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, which was held from 28 March to 7 April 1995 in Berlin,⁶ and ends

with COP15, which produced the much-celebrated Paris Agreement. A global climate change governance regime emerged during the this first phase. In Berlin, the Parties agreed to meet annually. In 1997 the Kyoto Protocol was adopted with the commitment to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases in industrialised countries. In 2007 COP13 in Bali set a timetable for negotiations for a new international agreement to replace the Kyoto Protocol and to include all nations. In COP15 in Copenhagen in 2009, developed countries committed to finance developing countries in the long term to enable them to achieve the objective of keeping global warming at less than 2°C above pre-industrial levels. In 2010 in Cancun, COP16 formalised the Copenhagen commitment, introducing the Green Climate Fund. In Durban 2011, during COP17, countries agreed to start reducing emissions, including the US and emerging countries known as BRICS (Brazil, India, China, and South Africa). It was decided to negotiate a global agreement that would come into force in 2020. In 2012 in Doha, COP18 extended the Kyoto Protocol until 2020.⁷ In Lima in 2014 at COP20, all countries agreed to develop and share their commitment to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases. In 2015, COP21 unanimously adopted the Paris

3. United Nation, <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/what-is-the-united-nations-framework-convention-on-climate-change>, accessed 29/01/2023
4. Conference of the Parties (COP), <https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/supreme-bodies/conference-of-the-parties-cop>, accessed 28/01/2023
5. COP was not organised in 2019 and 2020 due to the COVID19 pandemic.
6. It was held from 28 March to 7 April 1995 at the invitation of the Government of Germany in accordance with Article 7.4 of the Convention and General Assembly resolution 48/189 of 21 December 1993.
7. Countries like the US, China, Russia and Canada did not support the extension.
8. Aimed at strengthening climate collaboration for the period up to 2020.



Agreement to keep global warming below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and continue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C. The significant achievement of the Paris Agreement was to have introduced a framework for global climate action, urging countries to set ambitious national climate plans (known as nationally determined contributions, or NDCs). In the Paris Agreement for Climate Change, most countries committed to raising their carbon-emission commitments on a recurring five-year basis.⁸ These national plans are becoming an area for citizen mobilisation to push governments to transform commitments

into practice on mitigation, adaptation, or resilience. Two prominent achievements are notable during this first period— building a world coalition against climate change and the agreement at COP15 to keep global warming below 2°C above pre-industrial and continue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C.

The second period is marked by efforts to implement the Paris Agreement. During this period COP sessions focussed on negotiating the rules, procedures, modalities, and operational guidance that govern the implementation of the agreement. It is a period during which support mechanisms to implement the Paris Agreements are designed and agreed to. In Marrakesh in 2016, for example, COP22 produced three key outcomes which determine the future of the Paris Agreement. The Marrakesh Action Proclamation⁹; the Marrakesh Partnership¹⁰; and the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA). It was COP23 in Bonn in 2017 which introduced the Paris Agreement Rulebook. It details how the Paris Agreement will work in practice. It is a framework that promotes transparency. In Bonn, the Talanoa Dialogue¹¹ was also created, and a Gender Action Plan was

9. A process allowing countries to share experiences and good practices to achieve the Agreement objectives. The Talanoa Dialogue Platform was launched to promote the participation and dialogue of local and indigenous communities.
10. The Kyoto Protocol operationalises the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by committing industrialised countries and economies in transition to limit and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in accordance with agreed individual targets. The Convention itself only asks those countries to adopt policies and measures on mitigation and to report periodically. The Kyoto Protocol also established a rigorous monitoring, review and verification system, as well as a compliance system to ensure transparency and hold Parties to account. Under the Protocol, countries' actual emissions have to be monitored and precise records have to be kept of the trades carried out.
11. The Paris Agreement target is to keep the global temperature from exceeding 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. That is considered the upper limit to avoid the worst fallout from climate change. The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties at COP21 in Paris on 12 December 2015 and

adopted. The fight against global warming could not happen with a framework that excluded women. The Gender Action Plan promotes women playing a central role in decision-making related to climate change. COP24, COP25, and COP26, which took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, continued with efforts to conclude several matters concerning the full operationalisation of the Paris Climate Change Agreement. The significant achievement of COP26 in Glasgow was to inspire private sector organisations to step up their commitments to reducing emissions. It was also at COP26 that the announcement was made that South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo will receive \$8.5bn and \$500 million respectively (to help end reliance on coal and to protect forests).

The third period starts with COP27, termed “the Africa COP” or “the Implementation

COP”, which took place in Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt. Many initiatives were introduced, one key structure being the global stocktake dialogue, which evaluates how countries are implementing their commitment to the Paris Agreement and accelerating climate actions and setting up the Loss and Damage Fund.

Each COP is built on previous COP successes and paves the way for the next COP. From COP1 to COP27, progress has been made by all parties to put in place solutions, frameworks and agreements to reduce carbon emissions using scientific evidence (such as the Convention in 1992, the Kyoto Protocol in 1997¹², and the Paris Agreement in 2015¹³). Some of the solutions that have been agreed upon through the different COPs include cutting emissions, adapting¹⁴ to climate impacts, and financing the required adjustments.

entered into force on 4 November 2016. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels. Implementation of the Paris Agreement requires economic and social transformation, based on the best available science. The Paris Agreement works on a 5- year cycle of increasingly ambitious climate action carried out by countries. By 2020, countries submit their plans for climate action known as nationally determined contributions (NDCs). In their NDCs, countries communicate actions they will take to reduce their Greenhouse Gas emissions to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement. Countries also communicate in the NDCs actions they will take to build resilience to adapt to the impacts of rising temperatures.

12. Adapting to climate consequences protects people, homes, businesses, livelihoods, infrastructure and natural ecosystems.
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14. Adapting to climate consequences protects people, homes, businesses, livelihoods, infrastructure and natural ecosystems.

Whither COPs? Progress and Challenges of the Energy Transition?



A global reality is climate change is happening; no country can escape. Climate change manifestations are becoming more frequent and more severe. It is affecting our ability to grow food, health, housing, safety, and work. There are also strong indications that nature's ability to absorb carbon in the atmosphere is getting weaker.¹⁵ The move away from fossil fuels is an urgent matter, but as we move from fossil fuels to renewables, we need to ensure all countries have access to enough renewable energy to sustain livelihoods. This section reviews what COPs have achieved over the decades and where they have fallen short to achieve the 1.5-degree target necessary to protect the world against global warming, and what progress made to ensure that renewables are accessible to all citizens of the world.

15. Luomi, M. (2020). Global Climate Change Governance: The Search for Effectiveness and Universality. IISD Brief No. 6, 2020.

Paris Agreement: Strong coalition weak implementation

The greatest achievement for UNFCCC is to convince the key players in developed and less-developed countries to work together to fight climate change despite their differing contributions towards creating the climate crisis. This global recognition that all Parties must work together to achieve what is needed to save the planet is one of its kind. All Parties agree that transiting from fossil fuels to renewables is a crucial shift to be executed by all - poor or developed.¹⁶

There has also been admission that polluters and non-polluters cannot be treated the same way. The convention set an obligation for industrialised countries to report regularly on their climate change policies and measures, including issues governed by the Kyoto Protocol (for those countries that have ratified it). They are required to submit an annual inventory of their greenhouse gas emissions, including data for their base year (1990) and all the years since. However, developing countries that have not contributed significantly to climate change are only required to report in more general terms on their actions both to address climate change and to adapt to its impacts: and their reporting is contingent on their getting funding for the preparation of the reports,

particularly in the case of the least-developed countries.

Despite their commitments, Parties are not cutting their greenhouse gas emissions. The high-level ministerial roundtable on pre-2030 goals confirmed that fuel production must decline by roughly 6 per cent every year between 2020 and 2030 to keep warming below 1.5°C. This is not happening. On the current path of carbon dioxide emissions, temperature could increase by as much as 4.4°C by the end of the century. The high-level ministerial roundtable suggested that: “the world is way off track to stay below the Paris Agreement’s temperature goals. The report from roundtable shows that the implementation of current pledges by national governments would increase emissions by 10.6% by 2030 and put the world on track for a 2.5°C warmer world by the end of the century.”¹⁷

One commitment that must be considered as making progress is the financial support to least-developed countries by industrialised countries. In 2009, developed countries committed to delivering \$100 billion annually in climate finance by 2020 to less-developed countries, but nothing was successful. This

16. The UNFCCC borrowed a very important line from one of the most successful multilateral environmental treaties in history, the Montreal Protocol of 1987 which binds member states to “act in the interests of human safety even in the face of scientific uncertainty.” The transition will need a lot of money.

17. Government Ministers at COP27 Call for More Ambitious Climate Action

commitment is crucial for Africa and other least-developed countries. They will not be able to meet their Paris commitment without financial assistance from developed countries. Unfortunately, developed countries have failed to fulfil their financial commitment, although this commitment remains on offer and developed countries continue to recommit this support. The cost of actualising the 54 African countries' commitment to contribute to zero carbon emission is estimated at \$2.8 trillion, and Africa's transition will only be plausible when it has access to finances, and technology. The UNFCCC estimates that the world will need "about USD 4 trillion per year to be invested in renewable energy up until 2030 to be able to reach net zero emissions by 2050."¹⁸ For the IPCC, "Finance, international cooperation and technology are critical enablers for accelerated climate action. If climate goals are to be achieved, both adaptation and mitigation financing would have to increase many-fold. There is sufficient global capital to close the global investment gaps but there are barriers to redirect capital to climate action."¹⁹ Countries that have not contributed to the current emissions which have brought about climate change are demanding compensation for the emission gap.²⁰ Africa contributes only three per cent to global emissions, and yet it

suffers most from climate change.

The African Development Bank estimates that climate debt requires a transfer from the rich world to Africa of more than \$150 billion annually until 2050. Under the UNFCCC, climate funds are allocated under the three core pillars: mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. The challenge has been that available funds are not commensurate to the continent's needs for adaptation and resilience, and accessing the funds has been difficult for most countries. What is worse is that some of the funds that have been raised replace traditional development aid, and much of what is spent is tilted toward mitigation and not adaptation. A recent ACET report showed that for "the period 2020-2030, the average annual climate funding needs for Africa are estimated at over \$140bn per year—around \$30bn for adaptation, \$70bn for mitigation, and \$40bn for loss and damage. This compares to current flows of only \$20bn per year."²¹ The lack of financial support to Africa has rendered most African countries unable to do anything meaningful to support any transformational adaptation activity for communities to cope with climate impacts. COP cannot be a forum that oversees the establishment of an unequal energy transition system.

18. UNFCCC, *Unleashing Renewable Energy's Full Potential* Accessed

19. IPCC, *Synthesis Report of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6)*, 2023, p 80

20. (AfDB 2022).

21. Aurore Sukpoh, Ishac Diwan, Martin Kessler (2023), *Climate Finance: How to move from the Trillions to the People*, In *Insights and Idea*, ACET, <https://acetforafrica.org/research-and-analysis/insights-ideas/articles/trillions-people/> accessed 27/01/2023

Renewables: Increased Capacity in Exclusion

Another identifiable achievement being celebrated is the remarkable progress in producing technology capable of securing a sustainable supply of green energy—including batteries for electric vehicles, solar and wind technologies. Cutting carbon emissions is only possible if there is an increase in renewable energy production. Globally, research shows an increase in renewable energy capacity. The International Energy Agency's report *Renewables 2021: Analysis and Forecast to 2026*, suggests that:

"The growth of renewable capacity is forecast to accelerate in the next five years, accounting for almost 95% of the increase in global power capacity through 2026... renewables are set to account for over 90% of global electricity capacity expansion in the next five years and [that] renewables will become the largest source of global electricity generation by early 2025, surpassing coal."²²

It is argued that renewables are moving further and faster than projected. This increase plays an important role in cementing

the commitments of the Parties to abandon fossil fuels. Without tangible progress in renewables becoming a dominant source of energy, it will be difficult to maintain commitments to move away from fossil fuels. What is more encouraging is the economic impact of renewables. They are increasingly being seen as sources of job creation. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA),

"in 2021 worldwide, renewable energy employment reached 12.7 million, a jump of 700,000 new jobs in one year. Solar energy was found to be the fastest-growing sector. In 2021 it provided 4.3 million jobs, more than a third of the current global renewable workforce."²³

However, this increase in renewables is accompanied by injustice and exclusion. The progress in renewable energy is only happening in the industrialised countries, leaving behind the least-developed countries which are also the most vulnerable to climate change. Put differently, the much-acclaimed progress of renewables reflects the realities

22. IEA, *Renewables: Analysis and forecasts to 2026*, <https://www.iea.org/corrections> <http://www.oecd.org/about/publishing/corrigenda.htm> (2021)

23. *Ibid.*

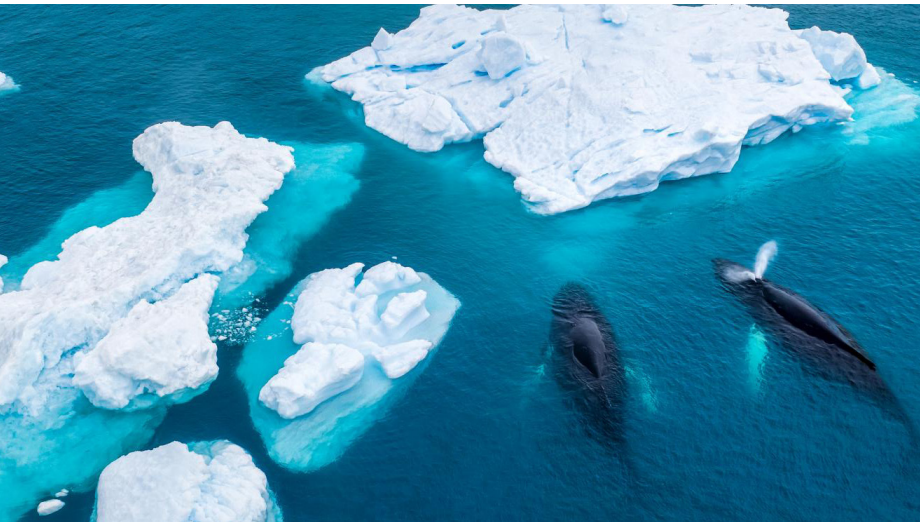


in developed countries and not in least-developed countries. The energy transition is reinforcing the North-South divide and deepening the development gap between rich and poor. COP will not be a legitimate forum if one part of the world has full access to green energy and another has not. This division reflects the failure by developed countries

to honour their promises to finance energy transition in less-developed countries, which should include technological transfer. In the absence of access to renewables, African countries will have no option but to seek to secure energy access and development through high carbon emission activities.

African and other less-developed countries will only see the benefits of renewables if developed countries realise all their financial commitments, including the US\$100 billion a year. The urgent problem of finance to support the least-developed countries will make or break the Paris Agreement. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate is correct when it says in its report that "If technology, know-how and suitable policy measures are shared, and adequate finance is made available now, every community can reduce or avoid carbon-intensive consumption. At the same time, with significant investment in adaptation, we can avert rising risks, especially for vulnerable groups and regions."

From COP27 Achievements to COP28 Focus Areas



COP27 took place against an inadequate will to curb greenhouse gas emissions and the Russia-Ukraine War backdrop, which affected discussions on energy transition. According to the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), CO² emissions must be cut 45

per cent by 2030, compared to 2010, to meet the central Paris Agreement goal of limiting temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of this century. However, most key decisions and commitments taken in previous COPs have not been implemented. At COP27 ("the implementation COP") a number of positive decisions were taken to reinforce old commitments, and new ones were made. Five agreements or decisions have been identified as key outcomes of COP27: maintaining a clear intention to keep 1.5°C within reach; holding businesses and institutions to account; mobilising more financial support for developing countries; making a pivot toward implementation; and the establishment of a Loss and Damage Fund.

With the exception of the Loss and Damage Fund, these involve pre-existing commitments that have not been implemented.

Maintaining A Clear Intention to Keep 1.5°C Within Reach

The decision to keep global warming down to 1.5°C came from the Paris Agreement. The Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan (SHIP) reemphasised the urgent need to shift from fossil fuels to renewables, a part of the Glasgow Climate Pact. There, however, was no sense of urgency to push Parties to agree on mitigation targets or clear commitments to phase out fossil fuels. We know why this was difficult. Parties to COP who have power, the EU countries, went to COP facing a huge energy deficit following the decrease in access to Russian gas. It was, therefore, not the right time to push for the shift. It shows that COP is not a neutral space. Its decisions and approaches are dictated by the most powerful. How could COP insist on reducing emissions when the more powerful Parties were reopening coal plants that closed decades ago and involved in aggressive finance of gas globally to satisfy their energy needs? While the UNFCCC has persuaded states to commit, these commitments are not binding.

COP27 at least ensured commitments remain on the table, and put pressure on Parties to move from commitment to implementation. Two key events took place at COP27 to push parties in the direction of implementation.

Firstly, COP27 dedicated a full day to the agriculture and climate change theme. A Food and Agriculture for Sustainable Transformation initiative was launched at the event. The initiative aims to improve the quantity and quality of climate finance contributions to transform agriculture and food systems by 2030.²⁴ The focus on food security was important to sensitise all Parties on urgent need to cut emissions. Research shows that there is an intensification of the effects of climate change on food loss. There is growing concern that the world may not feed itself because of climate change. Food insecurity is expanding globally with devastating consequences for parts of Africa. The link between global warming and food security is critical to showing the severity of the problem. For the first time, a COP meeting referred to “food security risks, climate tipping points, and the need for financial systems reform”.

Secondly, in an effort to force implementation of the commitments already made, COP27 has established a stocktake working group which measures the progress towards meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement. According to Simon Stiell, UN Climate Change Executive Secretary, the stocktake approach is crucial.

24. Fazal Issa, COP27 outcome: Reflections on the progress made, opportunities missed. <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/news/cop27-outcome-reflections-progress-made-opportunities-missed>

"It's an exercise intended to make sure every Party is holding up their end of the bargain; they know where they need to go next and how swiftly they need to move to fulfil the goals for the Paris Agreement. The stocktake is much more than just a technical exercise. It's an accountability exercise. It's an acceleration exercise."

The stocktake is a positive step in holding Parties to account. In an effort to measure progress, "you cannot manage what you cannot measure"²⁵—unless we measure, we will not know what progress we are making toward net zero. It is the pursuit of transparency in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. For the Global Climate Ambassador and CEO of the Caribbean Climate Smart Accelerator, Racquel Moses, "transparency challenges climate actors to

do more, to do better, and by identifying leaders, it helps us all to learn from those who are blazing the trail." This way, transparency becomes a tool to end greenwashing. The significance of a global stocktake will be felt at COP28. For the first time, countries will be evaluated when findings of the technical assessment are presented. There are three phases in the stocktake approach: information collection and preparation, technical assessment, and consideration of outputs. The technical team is at work with the collection and preparation of the technical assessment. The last phase, the consideration of outputs, will take place at COP28 in 2023. That is when findings from the technical assessment will be synthesised and presented, and their implications discussed and evaluated.

25. Al Gore and High-Level Speakers: Transparency and Accountability Underpin Effective Climate Action

Holding Businesses and Institutions To Account

An effort was made at COP27 to enlighten business as a key player in the fight against climate change. If the world is going to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, everyone must ensure that commitments are implemented. Transitioning from fossil fuels to green energy globally will require a strong commitment not just from Parties to the UNFCCC but also

from private actors, especially the businesses involved in fossil fuel extraction.

One of the reasons the world is unable to contain global warming is because of a lack of commitment by the private sector. Despite the scientific evidence, fossil fuel companies, supported by states and financial institutions in most cases, are reluctant to implement realistic plans to phase out gas, coal and oil. They instead continue to lobby for continued extraction and use of fossil fuels, claiming that technological advances will help curb the emissions. It is clear that, as James Murombezi and Claudious Chikozho argue,

"...the climate response has so far not necessarily sought to change existing social and global relations, but rather found ways of maintaining them, even advancing them, through technological innovations driven by the market."²⁶



26. James Murombezi and Claudious Chikozho (2023), Westphalian Sovereignty and the Free-Rider Conundrum in the Atmospheric Commons: Examining Global Governance Regimes for addressing Climate Change Adaptation, In International Journal of Commons.

At COP27, it is said there were more than 600 fossil fuel companies' lobbyists. The world cannot afford this game when the climate is changing before our eyes.

"Momentum seems to be on the side of denial. COP27 was swarmed by fossil-fuel lobbyists pushing their go-slow agenda, and this year's confab will be, too."²⁷

The fight to secure a full pivot from fossil fuels will be long and not easy. It will need organised movements to expose and name-and-shame governments and corporations that continue to support fossil fuels. There are several organisations, communities and individuals who are exposing and fighting coal, gas and oil exploration and extraction in Africa. The oil and gas companies are powerful and mostly in collusion with political elites and financial institutions who work tirelessly to protect their financial base. Oil and gas companies are working to slow down the transition from fossil fuels to renewables, and this includes silencing decarbonisation campaigners, communities, and activists. They are prepared to use violence and strategic

lawsuits against public participation to remove individuals and organisations trying to hold them to account. At COP28, threats against activists fighting fossil fuel extraction must be exposed. Clear commitment is needed from all Parties to sanction any government or business threatening the lives of activists. Going to COP28, mechanisms must be implemented to hold business to account. Otherwise, we should give up on the idea of a zero-carbon world by 2050. This echoes Stiehl's cry:

"There is absolutely no point putting ourselves through all that we've just gone through if we're going to participate in an exercise of collective amnesia the moment the cameras move on."²⁸

The world needs commitment from business, and COP28 should prioritise this. COP28 will also need to discuss tools that could be put in place to monitor how commitments are being transformed into implementation. It is here that civil society and communities on whose land coal, gas and oil are extracted could play a leading role in monitoring the companies.

27. https://washingtonpost.com/business/energy/big-tech-helps-big-oil-spread-subtle-climate-denialism/2023/01/23/26192cea-9b29-11ed-93e0-38551e88239c_story.html via

28. Stiehl promised a new focus on accountability during his opening speech at COP27.

Mobilising More Financial Support for Developing Countries

Meeting the mitigation target of 1.5°C requires funding. Experts agree that without adequate funding models, the world will not win the fight against climate change. All critical areas – mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, climate technology – require sufficient funding to function effectively and to yield desired results. COP27 concluded that it will cost at least US\$4-6 trillion a year for the world to transform to a low-carbon economy. On this crucial topic, COP27 created a pathway to align broader finance flows towards low emissions and climate-resilient development.²⁹ COP27 also finalised a mitigation work

programme focused on pooling ideas to accelerate action, with no binding elements. Calls to ensure a peak in emissions by 2025 and a phase-down of fossil fuels were excluded from the final text.³⁰

It is clear that the current financial systems that are based on egocentric models for dominance will be able to provide the required climate finance. There is increasing consensus at a global level that there is need for deep and comprehensive transformation of current financial systems. To speed finance mobilisation, the UN Climate Change's Standing Committee on Finance was requested to prepare a report on doubling adaptation finance for consideration at COP28 in 2023, as well as the biennial progress report on the US\$100 billion goal starting 2024. The World Bank announced a financing facility to support the Global Shield against Climate Risks initiative for climate disaster impacts. The Global Environment Facility received pledges totalling US\$105.6 million from six EU Member States, the Walloon region in Belgium and Switzerland, for climate adaptation in low-lying and low-income states. There is a call for developed country Parties to provide resources for the Green Climate Fund.³¹ It is clear that the least-developed



29. UNFCCC, Mobilizing more financial support for developing countries: Key takeaways from Cop 27. <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/sharm-el-sheikh-climate-change-conference-november-2022/five-key-takeaways-from-cop27/mobilizing-more-financial-support-for-developing-countries>, Accessed 24 March, 2023.
30. A GLANCE Towards climate neutrality EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service Author: Liselotte Jensen with Sara Svensson, Climate Action Research and Tracking, Members' Research Service PE 739.230 –December 2022 <http://www.eprs.ep.parl.union.eu>; <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank>; <http://epthinktank.eu>
31. All countries welcomed the recent pledges made to the Adaptation Fund (totalling USD 211.58 million), the Least Developed Countries Fund (totalling 70.6 million), and the Special Climate Change Fund (totalling 35.0 million).



countries will not contribute to this fund.

The challenge for developing countries to access climate finance remains the biggest problem. It has demanded countries to think innovatively on how to resolve this issue. The “Bridgetown” initiative could be considered as an innovation for financially supporting the least-developed countries. An initiation which generated interest at COP27 recommends

reforming the world of development finance and how rich countries help poor countries to adapt to climate change. This initiative was proposed by the Government of Barbados. Like most African countries, Barbados is vulnerable to climate change. The Bridgetown initiative recommends that money given under this fund should be disbursed as grants and not loans. It also proposes changing the terms for how funding is loaned and repaid by developing countries. This is to relieve developing nations from increasing the debt burden by borrowing to respond to climate disasters. It includes suspending interest rate payments on finance while a country is tackling a pandemic or natural disaster, giving them an opportunity to rebuild. Poorer countries need liquidity to intervene during a climate crisis. The initiative encourages the inclusion of a natural disaster clause which stipulates a temporary suspension of interest rate payments on debt owed by a country facing a climate disaster. It is imperative to reform the global financial architecture to make it more efficient, and to make it able to respond to global issues.

Making the Pivot Toward Implementation

“The heart of implementation is: Everybody, everywhere in the world, every single day, doing everything they possibly can to address the climate crisis.”

Although COP27 was widely dubbed the implementation COP, there is a realisation that COPs risk becoming mere talk shows for commitments and pledges. There is increasing sense to compel nations to move from commitments and pledges to implementation. “If Paris gave the world an agreement on 1.5 degrees and Katowice and Glasgow gave us the plan, Sharm el-Sheikh shifts us to implementation.”³² The entire implementation machinery is about mitigation and adaptation, which both require substantive finances, accessible technology, and support for developing countries. However, for less-developed countries in general, and Africa in particular, implementation cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach. It must consider the different capacities of countries and regions for technology, finance, and infrastructure. For implementation to be just and equitable, it must produce results that impact every person, every community, every country, and every continent. That is the only way to achieve a just transition. It is understood that the least-developed countries cannot, in their current circumstances, finance their own

mitigation, adaptation and resilience. They need financial support from the polluters. The polluters’ pledges will not change the equation; what will change things is making the finance promised to least-developed countries available. If this is not achieved, the call for implementation will remain nothing more than rhetoric.

A crucial and positive step was taken at COP27 to establish a just transition work programme to build on and complement the work of urgently scaling up mitigating goals and implementation.

However, there is still work to be done to define what a just transition is for each cluster of people. A just transition cannot be a blanket approach; it has to consider the people’s diversity and preferences. According to the International Institute for Sustainable Development,

“A just transition is not a fixed set of rules, but a vision and a process based on dialogue and an agenda shared by all stakeholders.”³³

For Africa, and all least-developed countries, a just transition can only be achieved if there is structural transformation at global and national levels on how power is structured and distributed.

32. UNFCCC, Making the pivot toward implementation: Making the pivot toward implementation Key takeaways from COP27, COP 27, 2022

33. Purva Jain, Tom Moerenhout, Yuliia Oharenko |Real People, Real Change Strategies for just energy transitions, International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2018

34. ANDREW GILDER & OLIVIA RUMBLE, An African Perspective on Loss and Damage, Policy Insights 130 June 2022.

Establishment of Loss and Damage Fund

Africa has prioritised funding for Loss and Damage in international climate negotiations for over a decade.³⁵ After decades of resistance by developed countries, it was eventually agreed at COP27 to establish the Loss and Damage Fund. The Loss and Damage Fund, regarded as the most significant accomplishment, aims to offer financial support to countries most affected by climate-related disasters, serving as compensation for their vulnerability³⁶

Ghosh, the president of the Indian Society for Ecological Economics gives a perspective

of what loss and damage is..." It is not just an assessment of economic losses like loss of properties, embankments and human livelihoods. Damage of ecosystem services has to be taken into consideration." The Loss and Damage Fund has been touted as an important victory for Africa when we consider the droughts and floods that are increasingly severe in several regions in Africa. Despite the existence of the Fund, there must be a recognition that "There are human consequences, including health impacts, of the climate crisis that communities can no longer adapt to."³⁷ The question remains, will developed countries fulfill their responsibility?

While developing countries welcomed the Fund, it remains just a commitment and there is nothing to suggest that it will be implemented. There are still many questions that need to be answered and it will take years before it is fully operational, if it ever will be. Some of the critical questions to which we need to find answers even before COP28 are: Who will contribute to the fund? Do they have the finances or are they ready to contribute? Who will benefit? What criteria will be used to determine the beneficiaries? How to determine how much a recipient (country or community) should receive? The operation



35. Kiara Worth, COP27 Reaches Breakthrough Agreement on New "Loss and Damage" Fund for Vulnerable Countries

36. Guinto RR, Deivanayagam TA, Chuji PT, Hossan A, Jensen A, Jung L, et al. (2022) Achieving climate justice, safeguarding planetary health: Diagnosis and demands from next generation leaders for COP27 and beyond. PLOS Glob Public Health 2(11): e0001304. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0001304>

37. The first meeting of the transitional committee is expected to take place before the end of March 2023

of the fund will remain a key challenge. There is a need for innovative thinking about the governance system for such a fund, which will be acceptable to all. While this is an important step in the right direction to ensure fairness and justice, the operation of the fund will remain a challenge for years to come. As with many such funds which have not worked, including the \$100 billion commitment by developed countries, there needs to be the assurance that the fund will be operational in a relatively short time. However, to give credit to COP27, a transitional committee³⁷ was agreed upon. It is expected to make recommendations at COP28 on operating the fund, with emphasis on finding new and innovative funding arrangements.³⁸

The Loss and Damage Fund is a great opportunity for African communities whose lives and livelihoods were ruined by the worst impacts of climate change to receive compensation. However, a transparent and accountable operation for the fund cannot be left to governments alone. Affected

communities will need to play a determinant role in how the funds are managed and distributed. For this to happen, African civil society and communities will need to be mobilised and organised to start auditing the loss and damage they have suffered. There will be a need for communities to link loss and damage to adaptability. It will not make sense if, on the one hand, communities are being compensated for their loss, and on the other hand, their lives and livelihoods continue to be ruined by the worst climate change impacts. Such adaptation measures could include “projects to build defences against sea-level rising, reducing salinity intrusion and floods, making resilient road and bridge infrastructure, and increasing water conservation. As an important additional benefit, adaptation will improve food security in a world with greater variability in food prices.” Here again, communities will need guidance to identify areas for adaptation and indicate where they would prefer investments to be spent.

38. Kiara Worth, *ibid.*

Conclusion and Recommendations

The UNFCCC has failed in its key mandate of stabilising greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere, despite the progress achieved to build a coalition behind the climate change architecture. The global temperature and greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase. Despite the failure of developed countries to cut their emissions, a majority of Africa's 54 countries continue to hold admirably to their commitments towards net zero emissions.

Developed countries have failed to cut emissions and fulfil their promise to fund Africa's energy transition, adaptation and resilience. The tension between development and the climate and financing energy transition continues to undermine efforts to secure a credible agenda for fair transition that benefits vulnerable communities. Despite commitments and pathways identified, COPs were not able to resolve this. The unfulfilled financial commitments made by industrialised nations may hinder Africa's energy transition. There are fundamental questions that a continent like Africa must begin to ask:

Should Africa continue to wait for developed countries to fund its energy transition? Does Africa have other options? What are these

options, and what do they look like?

How should Africa's civil society respond ahead of COP28?

- i. Civil society in Africa has four key issues to work on as it prepares for COP28. First, to exert pressure on developed countries to fulfil their promises to finance the least-developed countries. Civil society must collect evidence from communities within Africa disproportionately affected by climate change (as cyclone Freddy has just shown). This evidence will compel perpetrators to prioritise finance transition. Civil society must exert pressure on developed countries to give finance they promised for adaptation and resilience for most African countries, including contribution to the Loss and Damage Fund. Civil society must amplify its voice for the \$100 billion annual commitment to be prioritised. On loss and damage, COP27 agreed to set up a dedicated fund. It established a Transitional Committee to work on the modalities of this fund with a view to decide at COP28 in 2023. Civil society must work with governments at national and regional levels to propose mechanisms to take to COP28 for

constituting and operating the fund. Civil society must ensure this is separate from other financial commitments and schemes already in place. There is tendency for developed countries to fuse commitments when they must be separate.

- ii. Second, civil society must intensify the campaign for the transformation and modernisation of the global financial architecture to give African countries easy access to climate finance. The commitments in place are not adequate to finance Africa's energy transition. There is a need to introduce reforms that allow easy access to finance with low interest rates for least-developed countries to fund population resilience. Civil society must fight against energy loans availed to developing countries by developed countries, but instead demand for grants. By providing grants, countries that produce the most emissions will pay back part of their historic carbon debt. One of the clear suggestions currently on offer is the Bridgetown Initiative.
- iii. Third, civil society must compel African governments to implement their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

COP28 will focus on stocktake. We need to see progress in the implementation of NDCs. Linked to this, civil society and communities must call for COP28 to establish a framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation that contains high level indicators and targets to galvanise collective global action and support. This will help move from talking to action. Currently, there are no indicators to monitor how countries NDCs are being implemented and the impact. We know the problems that countries are facing in each area—health, food security, jobs, land use, transport, biodiversity, and cities. COP28 must focus on practical solutions to increase the resilience of populations in the world's least-developed countries.

- iv. Fourth, civil society must call for a space at COP that includes more youth and women from Africa to voice their concerns. Although participation at COP reflects national-level interest, inclusive participation must start at local levels.
- v. Fifth, the fight against climate change is too important to be left to government and civil society alone. We need the private sector in Africa to play a significant

role. The private sector must be urged by civil society to take concrete actions and actively participate in the implementation of NDCs to accelerate the process. Civil society must also urge governments to make climate change a fiduciary duty for corporations and hold them accountable.

Finally, civil society must also start to ask hard questions and propose solutions. An important question that civil society must ask is:

In the absence of financial support from developed countries, how can Africa fund its energy transition?

It is crucial to starting local resource

mobilisation for climate change. It is possible considering the abundant solar energy, hydroelectric power and green mineral endowments in Africa. Africa can use its abundant green minerals and the carbon market for domestic resource mobilisation. First, a fair tax regime on green minerals in demand globally to achieve the energy transition could bring billions of dollars to the continent. Second, the carbon market could unlock numerous sources of finance. Third, manufacturing new technology on the continent using these minerals will ensure swift investments in inexpensive solar and wind energy and access to lithium batteries for most people in African.

