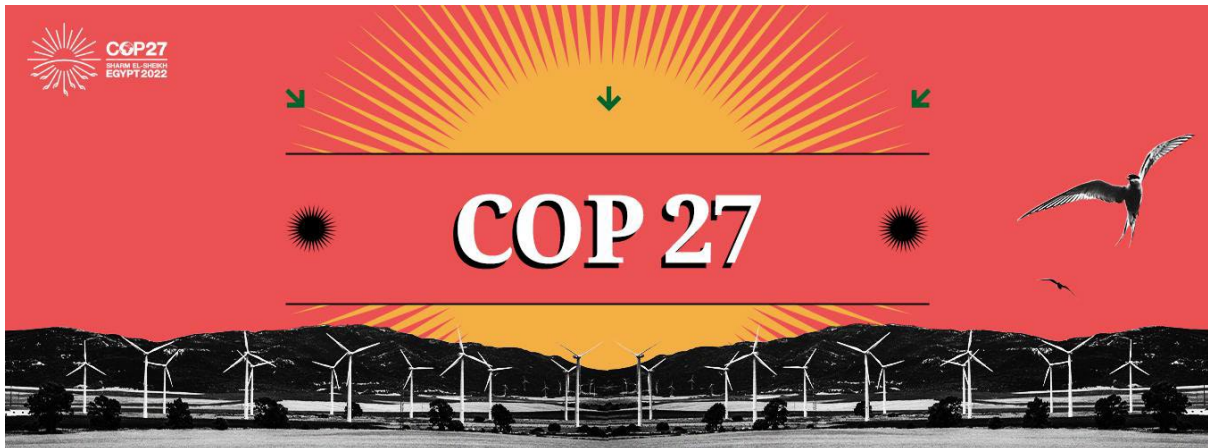


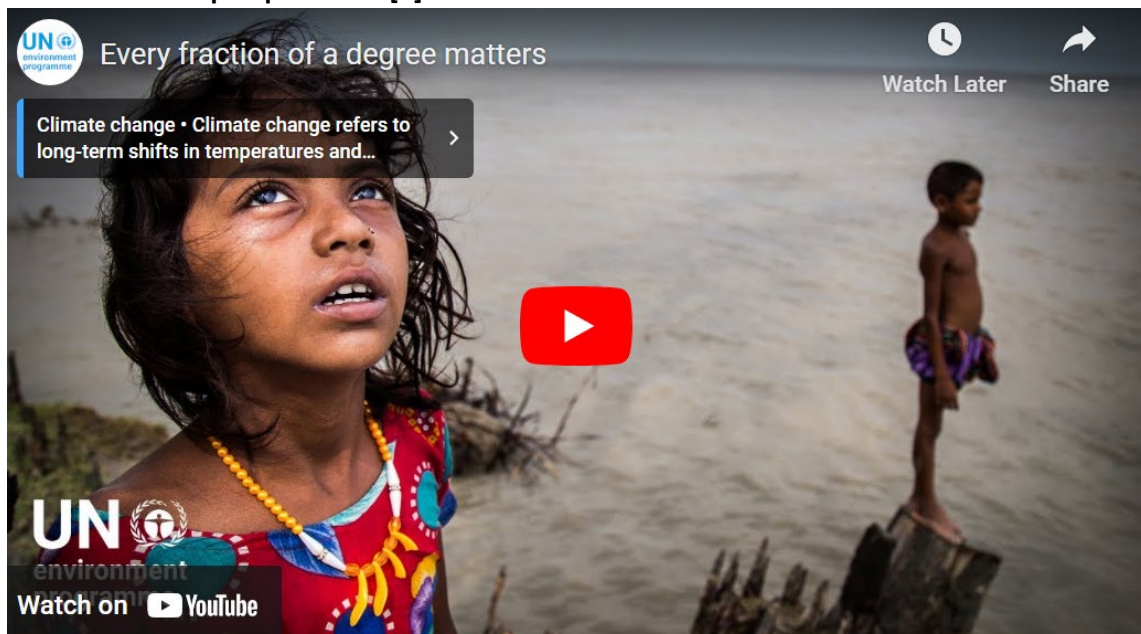
Hopes and Concerns for COP27



COP27, the annual climate change conference organised by the UN will be held in Sharm El Sheik, Egypt from Nov 6-18. The stakes could not be higher. COP27 will take place against a complex and challenging backdrop: Putin's war against Ukraine has not only left millions facing acute hunger, but the heavy dependence on Russian energy sources, especially gas, has plunged Europe into an energy crisis which some countries (including the UK!) are using as an excuse to reinvest in fossil fuels, instead of focusing on renewables. Countries also face severe economic challenges as they attempt to recover from the Covid pandemic.

At the same time, the impact of the climate crisis has accelerated with extreme weather events in many parts of the world during 2022 – including the floods in Pakistan, the hottest summer in Europe in 500 years, heatwaves in India and China, severe drought in the Horn of Africa and wildfires in California. Each of these events on their own represents suffering and destruction on a massive scale, but taken together are an alarming escalation of the climate emergency and a frightening glimpse of what lies ahead if we fail to take urgent action to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. Nature is giving us a final warning which we ignore at our peril – what we are now seeing is the beginning of climate breakdown which has consequences for all life on earth.

UN Emissions Gap Report 2022 [1]



Recent reports published in the runup to COP27 underline how far the world is off track to deliver on the Paris Climate Agreement (to keep the global temperature increase to well below 2C and ideally within 1.5C). To take one such report – the UN Emissions Gap report [1] has described progress made since the COP26 climate talks in Glasgow as “woefully inadequate” and finds that under current plans, the World is heading for a disastrous 2.4-2.8C of warming.

The updated 2030 climate plans submitted by countries this year reduce projected emissions in 2030 by less than 1%. Countries’ combined climate plans, including targets conditional on international finance, would reduce emissions by 10% by 2030 compared with projections based on current policies. **That is far off track from the 45% reductions scientists say are needed to keep 1.5C within reach.**

The UN report finds that only an urgent system-wide transformation can deliver the enormous cuts needed to limit greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. It provides an in-depth exploration of how to deliver this transformation, looking at the required actions in the electricity supply, industry, transport and buildings sectors, and the food and financial systems.

The key messages from the report are available from this [video](#).

Human Rights in Egypt

This will be the first COP in Africa since COP22 was held in Morocco in 2016. It has been dubbed the “African COP,” in focus as well as location, but concerns have been raised about human rights in Egypt. According to [CIVICUS](#), an organization which tracks the openness of civic space (which allows people and groups to organize and engage in advocacy) in different countries, Egypt is rated as closed — the worst rating there is.

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies and other civil society organizations have said: “The reality is that almost all organizations and individuals who attempt to expose or ensure accountability for human rights violations in Egypt are imprisoned, tortured, or otherwise subjected to a wide range of threats and attacks.”

[According to a recent report from Human Rights Watch](#), the Egyptian regime has successfully silenced the country’s environmentalists in the run-up to COP27, as part of its wider strategy to repress human rights, which is also threatening to quash meaningful global climate action.

What do we want to happen at COP27?

1. Climate Justice – will be a key issue at COP27. In simple terms the countries suffering the most from climate change are the ones who have done least to cause this problem. For example, Africa is the continent most impacted by climate change, but is responsible for only 3% global emissions. To what extent will rich countries accept their responsibilities to finance developing countries to combat climate change and to provide the finance at the level which is needed. These discussions will be tough, especially in view of the current economic situation. There is a real danger that agreement will not be reached resulting in a failed conference which would be disastrous for the whole world.

2. Climate Finance

- In 2009, wealthy nations pledged to mobilize \$100 billion in climate finance annually by 2020 to support vulnerable nations with mitigation (avoiding and reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (adjusting to current and future climate change impacts).

- Wealthy countries must deliver on their promise to deliver the \$100 billion per year to climate-vulnerable countries with immediate effect until 2025.
- In addition, countries must agree on a more ambitious post-2025 finance goal, co-created with developing countries and climate-vulnerable communities.

3. Adaptation

- In the years ahead, countries will need to perfect the art and skill of climate adaptation, to combat the worsening impacts of current and future climate change.
- “Adapting to climate change is a moral, economic, and environmental imperative,” Christina Chan, director of the Climate Resilience Practice at the World Resources Institute has said “Investing in adaptation is not accepting defeat and failure. It is accepting reality.”
- Wealthy countries need to deliver on their commitment made at COP26 to double adaptation funding by 2025.

4. Loss and Damage

- Loss and damage refers to the destructive impacts of climate change that cannot be avoided either by mitigation or adaptation. Loss and damage is often divided into economic loss and damage, including to livelihoods and property, and non-economic loss and damage, including loss of life and losses to biodiversity and cultural heritage.
- What is needed at COP27 is the establishment of an additional, adequate, and accessible finance mechanism to address loss and damage for the communities on the front line of the climate crisis, especially in the Global South.
- Loss and damage is likely to be the most contentious issue at COP27 with a serious possibility of a breakdown in negotiations setting rich countries against developing countries.
- Possible options for progress could include:
 - debt cancellation (many developing countries have huge interest payments on debts – if cancelled these funds could be allocated to addressing the impacts of climate change as highlighted in this article relating to the floods in Pakistan [2]);
 - imposing a global tax on the fossil fuel companies and use it to establish an international fund for Loss and Damage.

5. Phase Out of Fossil Fuels

- Concrete plans are needed to phase out fossil fuel subsidies by 2025 or sooner, and reinvest this funding in clean, just, and sustainable energy systems, and green recoveries.
- COP27 needs to signal the end to fossil fuels, including gas. In addition, governments must commit to a full coal phase-out by 2030, as a major step toward net zero.
- Countries must enhance their climate action plans (known as NDCs) to achieve a global 45% reduction in emissions by 2030 with net zero emissions by 2050.

5. Progress on COP26 Pledges

An update is required at COP27 on the pledges and commitments made at COP26 including:

- Deforestation and land use;
- Methane reductions;
- Mobilisation of private finance to fund renewable energy projects;
- Progress on nature restoration and enhancing biodiversity is likely to be deferred to COP15 which will be held in Montreal during December [3].

What is at stake?

COP27 is taking place against extremely challenging circumstances globally and, with the increasing impact of climate change, the stakes could not be higher. The viability of life on earth is under threat with a rapidly closing window of opportunity for action. If we fail to act now it will be too late.

What can we do?

It really is time to act for everyone who cares about the future of our common home. Suggestions for action include:

- Engaging with your MP and local politicians about the climate crisis and the need to act;
- Examine the COP27 resources produced by CAFOD including prayers, actions and events [4];
- Join the Global Day of Action planned for November 12 including in Newcastle [5];
- Watch the powerful, recently released film based on Laudato Si' The Letter [6];
- Calculate your own carbon footprint and identify actions to reduce your footprint – the aim should be to reduce it by at least 50% by 2030 [7,8].;
- Hold a conversation within your family, friends, school, parish about the climate crisis.

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References

- [1] [Emissions Gap Report 2022 \(unep.org\)](https://unep.org/emissions-gap-report-2022)
- [2] [After the floods, Pakistan needs reparations, not charity](#)
- [3] [UN Biodiversity Conference \(COP 15\)](#)
- [4] [COP27: Take action on the climate crisis | CAFOD](#)
- [5] [Day of Action Nov 12 including Newcastle](#)
- [6] [The Letter: Laudato Si Film - YouTube](#)
- [7] [Carbon Calculators - Climate Stewards](#)
- [8] [CALCULATOR - Carbon Savvy](#)