

News

COP28 Accelerates Action But Long Road to Paris Goals Remains

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The flurry of new commitments at COP28 suggests growing momentum for collective action. Nevertheless, they are not enough to accelerate the progress needed to meet the 1.5C target

78 national governments and 40 organizations, representing a diverse range of stakeholders, came together to endorse the COP28 UAE Declaration on Climate Relief, Recovery and Peace, according to the UNFCCC.

The annual conference saw a flurry of activity from governments and organisations looking to increase climate ambition in key areas like energy, finance, resilience and inclusion. However, it failed to include a clear commitment to phase out fossil fuels in the summit's final agreement.

The draft agreement has been described as "grossly insufficient" and "incoherent" by the EU's delegation and the alliance of small island states and it has been accused of moving backwards from the original language offering a phaseout of fossil fuels.

The hosting of the summit in the oil-producing UAE and the appointment of the CEO of a state oil firm as COP28 president have also drawn criticism, with concerns raised about the influence of the fossil fuel industry on the negotiations.

According to the UNFCCC secretariat's summary, over 170 climate pledges and initiatives were announced - more than double the number at the previous year's talks.

High-profile commitments included 130 nations signing up to triple renewable energy capacity through the Global Renewables Pledge.

The Oil and Gas Decarbonization Charter also gained 52 signatories.

New alliances were struck focusing on industries from shipping to cooling systems. Leaders also endorsed aims to strengthen health systems and food security against climate impacts.

Commitments include the increase of financial support for climate adaptation and resilience, improving programming and best practices, and strengthening coordination and partnerships.

The key outcomes of COP28 include:

Global Stocktake: Countries agreed to increase the ambition of their decarbonization plans by 2030.

Fossil fuel phase-out and global targets on renewables and energy efficiency: The parties reached an agreement on the phase-out of unabated fossil fuels by a specific date and developed nations supported new global targets on renewables and energy efficiency with real financial commitments.

Adaptation goals: Governments started aligning their agriculture policies with their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to start decarbonising the long-neglected sector.

Financial support: The United States, the European Union, and many climate-vulnerable countries insisted on a final COP28 deal with a clear framework for financing the energy transition in developing countries.

Accelerating the energy transition: A key objective of COP28 was to fast-track the energy transition, putting economies on the path toward a new low-carbon, high-growth future.

Technologies to tackle emissions: The UAE and other countries discussed the role of technologies in reducing emissions and promoting sustainable development.

Among the attendees were government representatives, scientists, international organizations, businesses, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, youth activists, media members, civil society leaders, and influential figures like Pope Francis, Shamma Al Mazrui, and King Charles III.

The UN cautioned that success now relies on following through on commitments made in Dubai. Accountability will be needed to track the actions launched, it said. The surge in announcements demonstrates growing collaboration towards Paris's goals. But addressing climate change requires turning pledges into concrete reality this critical decade, according to observers. The flurry of new commitments will face scrutiny

when countries reconvene for the crucial global stocktake at the close of COP28 talks next month.
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