

COP26 Outcomes: Our reflections

Report of the 26th climate change conference from the standpoint of Women Environmental Programme (WEP)



As it has become a ritual for us to observe proceedings of the annual climate change conference, our team was in Glasgow from 30th October 2021 to 12th November 2021 for the 26th session of the Conference of Parties (COP 26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Led by our Global President, our team had specific expectations from the climate change conference, which were in line with those of the Women and Gender Constituency and our target groups in Nigeria. The Women and Gender Constituency of UNFCCC which we are part of, expected from the conference: a full commitment to human rights, delivering on financial commitments, ensuring ecosystem integrity, advancing the Gender Action Plan, rejection of false solutions and investment in gender-just climate solutions, ensuring right to water and sanitation in all climate actions, and ensuring women's land rights among others.

In addition to the above demands, Women Environmental Programme (WEP), prior to the climate change conference, held a consultative meeting among women's groups, civil society organizations and persons with disabilities in Nigeria and agreed on what they expected from Parties at the climate change conference and what the Federal Government of Nigeria and other stakeholders should do to address

climate change impacts on vulnerable populations. WEP also expected to see ambitious actions by countries to cut down greenhouse gases emissions, especially from coal, as recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCCC) in its 2021 report.

The above were what WEP expected to be considered in the Paris Rule Book that was to be finalized at the climate change conference in Glasgow. The Paris Rule Book provides details on how the Paris Agreement will be implemented. Several issues in the Paris Rule Book were agreed in previous climate change conferences, but other issues proved difficult to agree on. Pending issues that were discussed at COP 26 were: carbon markets, length of timeframe for NDCs, global stocktake, adaptation, climate finance plans among other issues.

It was interesting that at the beginning of the climate change conference at the World Leaders Summit, many countries announced increased ambition to cutting down emissions or committing more resources to the climate fund. We hope to see these commitments translate into actions that will help the planet.

The World Leaders Summit gave way to 2 weeks of negotiations on the core COP26 agenda items and other parallel meetings and events.

Some of the outcomes produced after the climate change conference are:

- A decision to phase-down unabated coal power.
- A call for developed country “Parties to urgently and significantly scale up their provision of climate finance, technology transfer and capacity-building for adaptation so as to respond to the needs of developing country Parties as part of a global effort, including for the formulation and implementation of national adaptation plans and adaptation communications.”
- After four years of negotiations, countries meeting at COP26 finally reached a deal on Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which covers international cooperation including carbon markets. Parties agreed to the “carryover” of carbon credits generated under the Kyoto Protocol since 2013, bringing up to 320m tonnes of CO2 equivalent (MtCO2e) into the Paris mechanism.
- A new fund dedicated for loss and damage could not be set up as pushed for by vulnerable countries. Parties agreed that the [Santiago Network](#), a new body created at COP25 in 2019 should further the work of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage Associated with Climate Change Impacts (WIM). The Santiago Network will provide a platform for countries and organizations to identify and catalyze opportunities to mobilize technical assistance to address loss and damage resulting from climate change.
- Parties also agreed on a common timeframes for Nationally Determined Contributions: “Encourages Parties to communicate in 2025 a nationally determined contribution with an end date of 2035, in 2030 a nationally determined contribution with an end date of 2040, and so forth every five years thereafter.”
- There was increased momentum to put gender at the forefront of climate actions. UK announced a commitment of £165m of funding for two programmes to advance gender equality while talking climate change. US announced \$14m towards the Gender Equity and Equality Action Fund while Canada committed to ensure that 80% of climate finance pledges over the next five years would target gender equality. Nigeria pledged to expand on its implementation strategy for its National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change. These were among [other announcements](#) committing to gender equality in climate actions.

Other key outcomes of COP26 are:

- A pledge by over 100 countries to [cut back planet-heating methane](#)
- Commitment to [phase out coal power](#)
- Commitment to [halting all financing for fossil fuel development overseas](#) and diverting the spending to green energy.
- The COP26 presidency team announced a new [declaration](#) on “accelerating the transition to 100% zero-emission cars and vans.”
- The launch of the [Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net-Zero](#) (GFANZ), which said its members – some 450 firms in 45 countries – had committed \$130tn towards the net-zero transition.

COP26 did not achieve all expectations regarding cutting down greenhouse gas emissions and supporting vulnerable countries that have suffered loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change. We hope that the Santiago Network that is furthering the work of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) will be funded to support vulnerable communities suffering loss and damage from climate change impacts.

It is debatable if the carbon markets agreed on by the Parties will be able to effectively achieve emission reduction, just like there are doubts about climate solutions peddled by some countries and corporations, which are considered to be [false solutions](#) and opposed by Women and Gender Constituency and other civil society groups.

Judging from experience of failing to implement commitments to climate action by developed countries, we cannot applaud now, commitments made at COP26 until they are fully fulfilled.

If the Parties do not act fast on their commitments, the world will be heading towards “...an increase of about 16% in global GHG emissions in 2030 compared to 2010 ...” as projected in the NDCs Synthesis Report, 2021. “Such an increase in emissions translates to a global average temperature rise of about 2.7°C by the end of the century.”

While we are happy that there was a momentum to put gender at the forefront of climate actions and commitments made by some countries, it is left to be seen how the commitments will translate to actions. We recommend that countries should consider gender issues in all their climate actions and not make it a stand-alone programme. We recommend gender-just climate solutions, that are beneficial to all, and to the environment.

Like a coin that must have two sides, COP26 has presented its two sides – positive and negative. On whatever side you are, you have the opportunity to engage, the positive to make it better and the negative to change it to positive.