

## **To what extent will the COP26 agreements and policies be successful in fulfilling the conference goals and solving the climate emergency?**

“Conference of the Parties” climate summit which is implemented by United Nations to bring almost all countries of the world together in order to escalate the goals of the Paris Agreement (2015) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1994). The 26<sup>th</sup> annual summit was held in Glasgow, United Kingdom in partnership with Italy to address their improvements in mitigation, adaptations and finance on the behalf of a legally binding international treaty on climate change.

The Paris Agreement was taken up by 196 parties at COP21 where countries put forward plans on increasingly ambitious climate actions through mandatory NDCs and LT-LEDS. The main purpose of the agreement was to restrict global warming to below 2°C. In COP26, the ‘Climate Pact’ involved 200 countries, directly referring to the Paris Agreement rulebook and keeping the objectives of the treaty upheld.

In order to measure the success of the symposium, it comes down to how much progress was verily being made. Article 6 of the Paris Agreement was approved with impressive pledges on deforestation, declaration on zero-emission vehicles to foster greener transport and cutting down on carbon emissions. On the other hand, targets yet have not been achieved and the set of protocols remain ambiguous because signatories have not been unified against the environmental nuance, just like the nations have failed to show cooperation in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic.

The four major goals of COP26 are: secure global net-zero by mid 21<sup>st</sup> century and keep 1.5°C within reach; adapt to protect communities and natural habitats; mobilise finance and work together to deliver. Therefore, this involves curtailing deforestation, stunting finance on coal-fired power plants and encourage greater investments in renewables.

According to a study by Climate Action tracker, even if the pledges announced at COP26 are enforced, temperatures are still predicted to rise by 2.4°C up to 2100. This is much higher than the target detailed on the Paris Agreement. In addition, a report from IPCC, which has been classified as a 'code red for humanity', highlighted the planet will witness unrepairable reforms in our environment already in 2030. The question arises thoughts on whether the progress made in the conference was even enough to limit the emissions. A global climate report, published by Climate, asserted that regardless of a low emission pathway, global sea levels will rise to 12 inches by 2100. The vital significance of limiting acidification of oceans from over exploitation of resources and global warming remains in 'air' during negotiations to combat climate change, hindering our potential for a more sustainable world.

In order to halt the financing or providing subsidies to new coal-fired power plants, 40 countries agreed to quit coal for power generation and 23 countries signed the "COP26 Coal to Clean Power transition Agreement". On the other hand, largest fossil fuel backers were missing on the list. The countries include Australia, India, China and the United States. Therefore 'phasing out' was really inferring to a 'phasing down'. Indeed, without commitments from India and other countries, catastrophic disasters will not be precluded. Many of the large developed country

governments financially support projects abroad that they expect to benefit their own economies through export credit guarantees. According to a research conducted by Oil Change International, Canada was the biggest financier of foreign fossil fuels in G20, following on with United States and United Kingdom. In addition, with China and India together accounting 36% of the total world population and 67% of Asia population, improving standards of living is already challenging especially when many of whom are living in low-income households. Therefore, international support is essential.

On a similar note, deforestation creates an environmental, human and sociopolitical impact, making it a major discussion subject in climate change negotiations even though previous agreements have failed to mitigate the loss of forest cover.

According to WRI, if tropical deforestation were a country, it would be the third largest emitter of carbon dioxide on Earth. Progress indeed was made when more than 100 leaders (including Brazil, Russia, Canada and Indonesia) representing 85% of the world's forests will commit to reversing deforestation by 2030, making the deal a 'significant milestone'. However, the signatories, did not detail how the implementation of the agreement would be tracked, or what might happen if nations reneged on the promise. Before, there has been declarations to halt and halve deforestation, but these have not been met. This again leads to great ambiguity. In addition, much of the scepticism over this pledge was centred on Russia and Brazil with an increasing number of fires in Siberia and a sharp rise in deforestation in the Amazon rainforest under President Jair Bolsonaro.

The conservation and restoration of ecosystems predominantly relies on providing funds to less developed countries under the 'Glasgow Loss and Damage Facility'. There is clearly an underlying notion that climate change has a central injustice; areas of the world that contribute the least to carbon emissions suffer the most as temperatures extrapolate: Bahamas, Madagascar, Haiti, Myanmar, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Therefore, the most appropriate manner to compensate this disaster is through wealthier countries having the responsibility to pay for it. Even though several governments including the United States and the United Kingdom have increased their funding capacity to aid low-income countries in driving greener technology and to cope with extreme losses from climate change, the quantitative increase is far yet to be classified as sufficient. Developed countries are failing to meet their past commitments since 2009. The failure from these targets questions the credibility and reliability of all COP26 pledges; the rich countries are clearly prepared to talk about today and tomorrow but what lacks is talking about yesterday. The underlying issue of COP26 is how near-term goals are not as clear as long-term goals. The set long-term agreements can be easily adjusted by many countries; purposely done to find a way out of a situation that will damage their heavy-fuelled economy. Also, the climate crisis is clearly an urgent situation. As a result, the sooner the actions, the better the outcome from this conference leading to fewer destabilising influences on global society endured. Clearly, the COP26 has made progress and has been successful in some manner but the progress was not enough just like with the funding to vulnerable communities. The lack of an accountability mechanism for national emissions, a lack of placing moratoriums on coal plants by 2030, a lack of support to the global south suggests there are still yet improvements and that the 1.5°C target is unachievable. It is extremely vital to comprehend the fact

that climate change is not a binary system, it is a domino system; the akin nature is like an evolving form of cancer which if ignored long enough, will result in irrevocable damage. Every improvement contributes to combating the problem, but if these improvements do not come in faster, the future is in danger.