COP26 closing press release

Acting
- Side event: “Transforming climate finance to radically transform societies: the case of Green Climate Fund funding”
- Side event: “Indigenous peoples of the Amazon and climate change: threats and new energy solutions in indigenous territories”. Co-sponsored by Fastenopfer
- Catholics at COP26

Influencing
- The courage to act by Josianne Gauthier
- Catholic groups continue climate advocacy after COP26 delivers little action. Article by Rome Reports
- CIDSE COP26 briefing: Climate Justice in the context of COVID-19

Interviews
- Inside COP26: climate finance with Lydia Machaka
- Inside COP26: climate ambition with Anika Schroeder
- Inside COP26: nature-based solutions with Myrto Tilianaki

Storytelling
- Gender blog: Grassroots women and their communities at the center of climate solutions
- Documentary: Future lies with youth: stories from young climate activists
- Our common journey to COP26 (and Beyond)
- Climate talks with Maryuri Mosquera, defender of the Atrato river in Colombia
- Climate talks with Yeb Saño: “Love should be at the center of our advocacy”

Extra resources
- Infographic: Transforming climate finance to radically transform societies
- COP26 in pictures
After 25 years of climate negotiations, the 26th Conference of Parties' decision, according to CIDSE and many other civil society organisations, recognises the climate emergency to stay below 1.5°C, but still fails to address it, and with it the needs of the most vulnerable. This outcome reflects the lack of fair access and participation of many civil society organisations -especially from the Global South- whose role as observers is essential for climate justice in their regions.

By not addressing the climate crisis properly, nations also avoided challenging historic power imbalances or old colonisation patterns and, in this way, did not practice real solidarity, for instance by allocating sorely needed money for loss and damage. “Loss and damage is about addressing climate change here and now. In the present as in the future, nobody seems to be willing to fully take their responsibilities. What’s left are promises for a better future, future money, future technologies but how much can we trust that if in the here and now governments cannot show the required ambition?” Said François Delvaux, CIDSE Senior Advisor on Climate Justice.

Despite this outcome, we draw courage to continue this fight, so long as our brothers and sisters around the world, the Indigenous communities, the human rights defenders, the climate vulnerable, keep fighting. Furthermore, we are in the middle of the climate crisis and we don't actually have a choice. We can’t give up and we can only hope that the tide will change when enough people stand together in solidarity and put their personal interests behind the greater good of the planet and of those who call it home. We also find a lot of hope in the youth’s commitment and leadership on climate. We will keep holding national governments accountable for their promises and remind each other of our responsibilities to care for the earth and inspire collective climate action because it is for our common good and a matter of justice. Our attention is now towards COP 27 in Africa and we hope that this will be an important opportunity to bring about the real transformation that is deeply needed.
THE PEOPLE WILL NEVER BE ACTING
The GCF has committed to becoming a paradigm-shifting and transformative fund for low-emission and climate-resilient development, dedicated solely to climate financing in developing countries, with a focus on both mitigation and adaptation. However, our studies have shown that barriers for CSOs to access GCF funds exist and are systemic, massive.

Our studies also show that agroecology receives minimal support from the fund while it is now recognized to be key to the food system transformation we dramatically need and to cope with the multiple crises we face. Addressing, reducing, and overcoming these barriers as well as increasing the quality of funding for agriculture will be essential for the Fund to fulfill its mission of transformative change-making.

The online seminar was organised to present the findings of the CIDSE study and to receive feedback from the GCF Secretariat.
Classified as "clean energy", large hydropower plants located in tropical forested regions may lead to significant carbon dioxide and methane. Running over human rights, profound impacts on biodiversity and traditional communities, violation of international laws and agreements and allegations of widespread corruption are some of the examples that have been observed about the construction of hydroelectric plants in the region.

In addition to all these problems, Hydroelectric power plants installed in tropical forest areas emit considerable amounts of greenhouse gases as a result of the degradation of flooded vegetation and soil. With all these impacts on the scale, it is impossible to classify hydroelectric as clean energy. The Brazilian Indigenous people have denounced the impacts and risks in their areas, yet these same communities are often generating innovative, just, and scalable clean energy solutions.

This session was an invitation to hear from the front lines about the social, environmental and economic impacts of hydropower dams, that are being falsely portrayed as “clean and renewable” energy and a solution to the climate crisis. Indigenous leaders whose ancestral lands and lifeways are impacted by hydropower development in Brazil will tell their stories.
The COP26 climate negotiations are a crucial moment for humanity and our common home. Pope Francis has asked us to take “decisive, urgent action to transform this crisis into an opportunity.” This panel event explored:

- What is happening to the climate and why is COP26 so important?
- What has happened at COP26 so far and what are the Church’s key demands?
- How can we root care for creation in our Catholic faith?
- What’s next for Catholic engagement and action?

Watch the recording to engage with climate science, explore insights from theology, and discuss the church’s role in communication and action around the climate crisis.
We are finally getting ready for COP26, after many postponements and uncertainties. We will go there with our allies and friends as part of a global community to fight for climate justice. But most of our real leaders won’t be there. For our real leaders in this struggle are the people whose lives have been upended by typhoons, droughts, rising waters that took away their land and their traditions.

They may not be with us in Glasgow, but these are the people already showing us real alternative ways of living. They are the guardians of the forests, rivers, mountains and oceans. Many who would otherwise have come to the conference have been unable to do so because of Covid restrictions. The unequal distribution of vaccines across the world has highlighted that, even when it comes to protection against a deadly virus, it is the poorest communities who come last. People are impacted differently by climate change, but so often it is the ones who are the least responsible for it who feel it the most: the very people unable to travel to Glasgow.
The COP26 UN Climate Summit closed in Glasgow with 197 countries agreeing to accelerate action in addressing climate change within the decade. Leading up to the summit, Catholic organizations such as the International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity, known as CIDSE, pushed developed nations to declare an end to the use of fossil fuels.

LYDIA MACHAKA
“For CIDSE, one of our key demands was calling the ending of all fossil fuels including gas and oil, but it seemed like before COP26, developed nations, particularly G20 countries did not show leadership by decisively indicating when and how soon they will end fossil fuel use.”
CIDSE comprises a family of Catholic development organizations who were present among the voices in Glasgow. They said they traveled to the Climate Summit to advocate for the developing nations.

LYDIA MACHAKA
CIDSE
“What we would like to try to do now is to try to ensure the EU to make sure it increases its ambition on reducing its emissions, because it has committed to cutting its emissions by 55% by 2030, and would like to make sure this number is as high as possible and also to ensure its successful implementation.”
Climate activists have another year to push governments to seek more concrete measures to address climate change before the COP27 climate summit, which will be held in Egypt.
This policy briefing presents a brief synthesis of CIDSE’s key messages and policy demands for COP26. It is based on the latest climate science and Catholic Social Teaching and CIDSE’s previous analysis on achieving the 1.5°C target and transitioning to agroecology and renewable energy systems.

Recommendations are organised around the following key topics:

- A just recovery and systems change post-COVID-19
- Raising ambition and emergency within the Nationally-Determined Contributions and beyond
- Loss & Damage
- Just energy transition
- Climate finance
- Carbon markets
- Climate and Agriculture
- Geo-engineering and Nature-based Solutions
- The Paris Rulebook

Available in EN - ES - FR
In your experience, did you already come across climate impacts?

There are enormous experiences I can share, but I would like to focus on a few striking ones more recently. In 2016 and 2017 I visited Uganda, Zimbabwe and Malawi and saw devastating droughts and floods. Farmers in Uganda are finding it harder to farm as a result of climate change. It takes years to raise cattle, and some of them suffer tremendous psychological distress which at times result in others taking their lives because they struggle to find enough water for their crops and livestock. 2018-2019 was the worst drought ever in South Africa where some cities almost ran out of water. Water is life and the lack of it or too much of it thereof is a direct consequence of climate change and failed mitigation action!

What particularly stroke you about this COP?

What’s less appealing is that this COP26 is very exclusive compared to previous climate conferences. Access and participation at the venue and online have been extremely ineffective. COVID makes it far too easy to justify everything but many civil society organizations warned against this problem ahead of COP26 even when the UK COP presidency insisted on being confident about delivering an inclusive COP26. While COVID is definitely an issue, more could have been done to improve the situation especially when there was more than 1 year to prepare better.
What does climate ambition mean and why is it relevant in this year’s negotiations?

That means the commitment to action in all the three pillars of the Paris Agreement: Mitigation, Adaptation, and dealing with Loss and Damage. It also refers to the level of commitment to take over financial responsibility for the climate crisis and contribute to reducing emissions, adapting to climate change, and supporting countries to deal with Loss and Damage in other countries. Most people also mean climate mitigation policies when they talk about ambition.

What could we expect for the next COP if parties do not conclude their work in Glasgow?

The most important is -and will remain- the homework in each and every country: Phasing out of fossil fuels by shifting towards renewable energies, stopping destructive land-use practices, stopping destructive economy and lifestyles where the protection of human rights and care for creation are red lines in all decisions; and of course, supporting countries and people to prepare and deal with the impacts of the climate crisis.
Myrto Tilianaki, Food Sovereignty and Climate Officer at CCFD-Terre Solidaire – CIDSE’s French member organisation – attended COP26 in November to follow the negotiations on Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. In this interview, Tilianaki reflects on nature-based solutions and the controversy surrounding their implications for the preservation of biodiversity and the rights of indigenous communities.

- What is considered nature-based solutions?

The concept of nature-based solutions (NbS) was developed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in 2015-2016. It is supposed to entail “solutions” linking climate and biodiversity. Although it may sound good on paper, NbS is an extremely vague concept that includes many different practices.

- What is the main problem with NbS?

The unclear definition of NbS is the main problem of this concept, as it allows to promote false and dangerous solutions. There are a few “good” practices that are considered to be NbS such as agroecology. However, most of these solutions, such as climate-smart agriculture, GMOs, among others, have already been called out by organisations, including CIDSE. The word “nature” is used here to justify harmful practices and that is at the core of the problem.
This year’s international climate negotiations (also referred to as COP 26) have been criticized by many for being the most exclusive and inaccessible negotiations ever. Many voices, including those of youth, grassroots women, indigenous peoples, and vulnerable communities, have gone unheard. As a result, the outcomes of COP 26 “reflect the lack of fair access and participation of many civil society organizations, especially from the Global South whose role as observers (in these international processes) is essential for climate justice in their regions”.

In this blog post, Ndivile Mokoena shares her views and thoughts on the importance of putting grassroots women and their communities at the center of combating climate change and reflects on what this means for national and international climate governance and decision-making. Ndivile is a South African climate activist and feminist campaigning for gender justice in climate policy. She is working with GenderCC Southern Africa as a Project Coordinator.
Ordinary youth from Germany, Switzerland, Kenya, Italy, Spain, and Portugal open up about their engagement for climate justice, concretely showing activism in all its facets. From working with local schools, to leading land conservation actions, to participating in demonstrations, to looking inwards and going through an ecological conversion; they are doing all they can to care for the planet earth. Their belief and enthusiasm are contagious and represent a sheer of hope in a time of climate crisis.

This new documentary by CIDSE showcases its network’s young volunteers’ commitment towards climate justice. It shows local projects in which youngsters (connected in most cases to the CIDSE “Change for the Planet-Care for the People” initiative) are involved. In addition, the documentary shows the strict interconnection between actions at a local level and the global protection of our common home.

Date of release: 6 November 2021
Language: protagonists speak in their native language and are subtitled in English.
Following the successful experiences at COP21 and at COP24, the CIDSE initiative “Change for the Planet – Care for the People” aims to mobilize young people around the upcoming UN climate negotiations conference of parties (COP26). Due to the pandemic and the measures in place, the young supporters will mobilize nationally but at the same time, their initiatives will be virtually connected.

The CIDSE network of young supporters will be supporting the CIDSE alliance advocacy strategy, mainly by promoting and amplifying the messages shared among other development and climate organizations, actively involved in the protection of “our common home”.

In the past months, dozens of young people part of the CIDSE network took part in a virtual journey in order to be better equipped in view of the national mobilizations during the UN Climate negotiations taking place in Glasgow (Scotland/UK). CIDSE allies and young partners are invited to join this journey virtually or in local/national actions too, bringing their voices, their experiences, and their ideas.
Maryuri Mosquera Palacios shows me a photograph of a sunset with the most incredible colors, reflected in the waters of the Atrato River, in Colombia. “I love taking pictures of the river when I visit my neighboring communities,” she excitedly told me during our interview, one rainy afternoon in Glasgow, where COP26 was taking place.

“The river has always represented an important part of all the communities that live settled there. It is a source of transport, of production, of food, of knowledge exchange, and of interrelation with people”, adds Maryuri, who is part of the Guardians of the Atrato River team representing her community Cocomopoca. The Guardians of the Atrato River was born after the Colombian Government recognised the river as a subject of the right to protection, conservation, maintenance, and restoration.

Despite the enormous challenge, Maryuri remains hopeful by thinking of her community and the river, and perhaps the photographs that she keeps on her cell phone are part of her daily motivation: “I think a lot about the rest of the communities and the rest of the people who are there, in the most remote communities, and who have great hope in what we can do through our advocacy. So, before I pass away or get bored, or get tired of what we’re doing, I always think of them. I think they have a lot of hope, it is impossible to betray the trust that the community has placed in us”.

Read more
After the challenging couple of years we experienced due to the COVID 19 pandemic, we can still hear stories of loss and frustration related to the pandemic and climate events around the world. Yeb Saño however, has lived many challenging moments in his life before the pandemic as well, some of which pushed him to engage more for climate justice.

Advocating for climate justice in a country that faces many disparities is already a challenge, but it can also be an act of major empowerment, as described by Yeb, “sometimes we do it because we’re angry, sometimes we do it because we’re frustrated or disappointed. But for me -and I like to share this especially with young people- we should do it out of love. Love should be at the center of our advocacy; love should be at the center of our desire to see the change in this world, we stand up to advocate to avert the biggest ecological crisis that we’ve ever faced as a human family, the climate crisis can only be overcome when we do things out of love”.

When asked about the connection between his advocacy work and spiritual recognition, Yeb Saño, who despite all the things he has seen and experienced due to the impact of the climate crisis and inequity in the world, responds without a place to doubts: “Of course. There is a problem in the environment, but the biggest problem we have is in our hearts. This is a spiritual crisis, there’s a lot of work that needs to be done there because this spiritual acknowledgment will only be meaningful if it happens at a scale that affects more people more than ever and people translate that acknowledgment into actual actions and, and real-world change.”
The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is considered as the flagship fund for climate finance. However, local non-state actors in many developing countries, such as civil society organisations (CSOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs), that can truly make a difference in addressing both adaptation and mitigation efforts in climate vulnerable populations, continue to have very limited direct access to the GCF.

Addressing, reducing and overcoming barriers of direct access will be essential for the Fund to fulfil its mission of transformative change-making. A shift towards local and community level organisations of the Green Climate Fund is key in delivering on the Paris Agreement.

IMPROVING CIVIL SOCIETY’S LIMITED ACCESS TO THE GREEN CLIMATE FUND

BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF GCF POLICIES AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM FIVE CASE STUDIES

BARRIERS FOR CSOs TO ACCESS GCF FUNDS ARE SYSTEMIC, WIDESPREAD AND EVIDENT IN REALITY:

1. Complex CSO accreditation
2. Limited direct access
3. Complicated project approval processes
4. Lack of local rootedness
5. Weak national consultation processes
6. Lack of all-of-society country ownership

SPECIFIC POLICY DEMANDS TO THE GCF:

1. Develop a more enabling framework that removes all barriers and provide simplified access to funding to benefit CSOs, CBOs and vulnerable people
2. Put in place appropriate measures to ensure full participation and consultation of CSOs in country programming
3. Respond more favourably to CSO expectations on options to receive GCF support for their climate actions
4. Simplify accreditation processes for CSOs as implementing entities, especially local CSOs from developing countries

CIDSE

Together for Global Justice

CIDSE study: “Improving access to the green climate fund”

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#CIDSEinCOP26

Download here
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