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A glimpse of hope in worsening climate times



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In this crucial year, the 27th Conference of Parties climate conference (COP27) presented a historic opportunity to raise climate ambition, kick-start climate action, and restore the hope of getting us on track to reaching the 1.5°C temperature goal above pre-industrial levels. The UN Secretary General António Guterres warned that *"we are on a highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator"*. If governments stick to paving the way for a future with good intentions and aspirational declarations while widening the gap with the implementation and follow-up needed, they will indeed lock us up on pathways to disaster. Ambitious acts are needed if we aim to stay below a 1.5°C increase of temperature. In view of the depth of damages a 1.1°C increase has already brought on us; this is more urgent than ever.

It has been 30 years since the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and almost a decade since the Paris agreement was adopted but parties have still not fulfilled their commitments required to avoid continued dangerous climate change effects. Some progress was however achieved at this COP: after 30 years in the making, this year's decision to create the Loss and Damage Fund is a real breakthrough. This is a very important first step in recognising historically unfair differences between those who have caused the climate crisis and those who have been paying for it. *"Unfortunately, this beacon of hope risks being the tree that hides the forest as this COP, which was supposed to be an "implementation COP" didn't deliver meaningful action and the required level of*

ambition and urgency.” said Lydia Machaka, CIDSE Climate Justice and Energy Officer. This year, despite the talks taking place in a loss and damage era, a time of aggravated food, energy and health crises that are directly connected to the climate crisis, leaders seemed unable to close this critical gap. Not only have parties failed to deliver on fossil fuel phase-out, but they have also failed in credibility by making very little progress on the implementation of the Paris Agreement, which we so urgently need if we are to care for all of creation and our common home. A Loss and Damage Fund without a commitment to mitigate and phasing out all fossil fuels is just not enough.

Although the COP27 adopted a multi-annual mitigation work program, this is the bare minimum needed to keep the 1.5°C objective alive. It now depends on countries translating their commitments into real and implemented climate action. For this to happen, rich countries must scale up their climate finance, while keeping their financial promises as this impacts directly on the survival of many who live in most climate-vulnerable countries. *“African voices from church and civil society have been demanding climate justice consistently, namely in the African Climate Dialogues [communiqué](#)’. But at this COP, the hope of the Catholic Church in Africa, that wealthy nations would take the lead in raising climate ambition and action has unfortunately not been met. It’s time to stand up and act with courage and in solidarity with each other, as one human family across continents, and showing this through concrete measures.”* said Josianne Gauthier, CIDSE Secretary General.

Overall, for CIDSE the collective journey towards reaching the 1.5°C temperature goal under the Paris Agreement to keep ecosystems and people alive remains an uphill battle as we are heading to a 2.7°C rise. The struggle becomes ever more critical as we still have a long way to go and time is not in our favour. Overall, the COP27 decision outcomes are still far from bold and transformative enough even when we recognize a good step in the right direction concerning loss and damage. We also need to underline that loss and damage is not a charitable act, it is a plain and simple issue of justice. We, as CIDSE, along with our members, partners and allies from civil society and Church are part of the wider community who will continue to fight for climate justice inside and outside of the COP 27 and in every space where we can be heard. So much more can and still needs to be done.

List of quotes from CIDSE members:

“This is a landmark moment that has been achieved after years of demands from affected communities who have been suffering the damaging impacts of the climate crisis, and the injustice of being pushed into debt to pay for a crisis not of their making. Finally, after years of delay we are seeing some commitment by richer countries to pay our ecological debt.” Siobhán Curran, Trocaire

“COP27 has reached a historic agreement in establishing a fund for Loss & Damage - payment for climate impacts often incurred by communities least responsible for this crisis. This would have been unthinkable just a few months ago, and finally achieves what was first proposed by small island states 30 years ago. The success on this issue is thanks to the hard work and unity of global south negotiators and civil society all over the world. Of course, the work now needs to be done to ensure the fund is effective and can deliver for communities. That work will go on. But today we can celebrate a major victory for climate justice”. Ben Willson, SCIAF

“Adopting a multi-annual mitigation work program was a minimum goal of this conference to keep the 1.5-degrees objective alive. It is now important to also increase funding for emissions reductions in developing countries, otherwise, the objectives cannot be met.” David Knecht, Fastenaktion

“With no strong leadership from the COP presidency, backed up by fossil fuel interests and countries profiting from oil, nothing more could have been achieved than keeping the Glasgow Pact and

its goals alive. It could present a huge risk as they could fight for their own profits rather than humanity and creation". Anika Schroeder, MISEREOR.

To achieve transformative change and climate justice in line with the principle of equity and “*common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities*” CIDSE expected real progress and action on key policy issues such as Loss and Damage, Mitigation, Climate finance as well as Climate, agriculture and food systems. The following are some key points that were analysed in the final decision:

On Loss and Damage

- For the first time, a new proposal relating to funding arrangements responding to loss and damage associated with the adverse climate change impacts is considered. Parties also agreed to establish the institutional arrangements of the Santiago network so that it may be fully operationalized to prevent, minimize, and address loss and damage associated with the adverse climate change impacts, including supporting its role to facilitate technical support for the relevant approaches at the local, national and regional in developing countries, especially those who are most vulnerable.
- However, this outcome lacks the intention for parties to deliver new and additional financial support and the urgency to operationalize it. Including Loss & Damage impacts in global stocktake assessments as well as its incorporation into the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) would have been a bold move to accelerate climate action and to better understand our collective progress toward achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.

On Mitigation

- Parties agreed to accelerate their efforts toward phasing-down of unabated coal power and phasing-out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies to achieve low-emission energy systems while providing targeted assistance to the poorest and most vulnerable according to national circumstances and the needed for support towards a just transition. This includes rapid scaling up the deployment of clean power generation and energy efficiency measures. The mitigation work programme which aims to urgently scale up mitigation ambition and implementation was adopted and will input to the COP on a yearly basis till at least 2026. Parties who have not yet communicated new and updated NDCs are expected to do so as soon as possible ahead of the next COP. Those who have not yet strengthened their 2030 targets in their NDCs to align with the PA temperature goal must do so by the end of 2023 according to different national circumstances.
- The goal to accelerate efforts toward phasing-down unabated coal power and phasing-out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies to achieve low-emission energy systems is a repetition of COP26 outcomes. This is not ambitious enough and it creates the opportunity for parties to continue emitting and investing in more fossil fuels as it does not aim at phasing out all fossil fuels within a specified period. Nonetheless, it also does not lay out a timeline and supervision mechanism for phasing-out fossil fuels and fossil fuel subsidies, nor does it offer an accountability process of Parties’ sectoral pledges.

On Climate finance

- Parties are concerned by the developed countries’ failure to meet the USD 100 billion per annum goal by 2020 and challenges faced by many developing countries in accessing climate finance were emphasized. A decision to adopt a new quantified goal on climate finance was taken and parties were encouraged efforts to simplify access to the operating financial mechanisms. Also, shareholders of Multilateral Development banks and international financial

institutions were called to reform their practices and priorities to align and scale up funding including using a wide variety of instruments from grants to guarantees and non-debt instruments. The developed country parties were urged provide resources for the second replenishment of the Green Climate Fund while also showing progress over time depending on the Fund's programming capacity.

- Developed countries had the opportunity to respond to the cries of those suffering the irreparable impacts of climate change, but at COP27, they failed to agree on a clear timeline USD 100 billion per annum goal including the expected investments in the 2020-2025 period. They also failed to pledge a substantial amount of new global flows of climate finance which remain small relative to their overall needs. Also, the much-needed roadmap for developed countries to fulfil their commitment from Glasgow, to double Adaptation Finance till 2025, was not established.

On Climate, agriculture and food systems

- A four-year Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on the implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security and an online portal under the joint work has been established.
- Unfortunately, there was no recognition of, and support for agroecology as an appropriate framework to adapt to climate change and transform the food system towards a more sustainable, just, and resilient one; and there was no detail offered to ensure that resources are oriented towards supporting smallholder farmers, including subsistence farmers and indigenous people, and providing extension services, training, and research and development based on agroecological methods.

Notes to the Editors:

1. CIDSE COP27 Policy brief [here](#).
2. The COP27 decision released today can be found [here](#).
3. A summary of CIDSE' activities at COP27 can be found [here](#).