



Hydro Politics

Newsletter

by Hydropolitics Association

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At COP 26, what about water?



COP26
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Finally, the human population is alarmed by the catastrophic weather shifts caused by global warming. A recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report reinforced the idea that it presents a threat to the planet, with the United Nations calling the document a “code red for humanity.” But while world leaders focus on reducing carbon emissions, a crucial element is mostly missing from the conversation.

Due to climate change, three main problems will arise with water. First, polluted water will increase due to runoff from more intense rain. Second, some regions will have too little water because of increased temperatures and reduced rainfall. And third, other places will have too much water, with increased flooding, high tides, and storms damaging infrastructure. Millions of people’s livelihoods are projected to be detrimentally affected worldwide.

These experiences are new to many in the global north, but people in the global south have struggled with such dangers for decades. In high-income nations with strong infrastructure, systems can start functioning again soon after a weather catastrophe — something that is impossible in countries with very weak systems that are already barely functioning. The necessities that are easily taken for granted in high-income nations just aren’t available in many parts of the world.

It is completely unjust that 3 in 10 people globally lack access to safely managed water at home. Sanitation and hygiene are also important, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the ne-

cessity of frequent hand-washing and social distancing during the health crisis, millions of people must still resort to using shared latrines and communal water pumps, often without a ready supply of soap or sanitizer. So far, the focus has been on climate change mitigation and reducing carbon emissions. While these are important, they only address part of the issue.



Currently, 6 in 10 people live without safely managed sanitation. Governments need to focus on strengthening systems so that services are sustainable for future generations.

There is no excuse for this inequity. If climate change is everyone's challenge, we need to recognize that a collective responsibility in tackling it must include providing resilient and safe water and sanitation for the majority of the people on the planet who do not have it.



Countries officially adopt Glasgow Climate Pact

Deep divisions still remained about the future of fossil fuels.

Leaders from nearly every country in the world have converged upon Glasgow, Scotland, for COP26, the United Nations Climate Change Conference that experts are touting as the most important environmental summit in history.

The conference, delayed by a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was designed as the check-in for the progress countries are making after entering the Paris Agreement, which aims to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius, a value that would be disastrous to exceed, according to climate scientists. More ambitious efforts aim to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Not one country is going into COP26 on track to meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement, according to experts. They will need to work together to find collective solutions that will drastically cut down on greenhouse gas emissions.

"We need to move from commitments into action," Jim Harmon, chairman of the World Resources Institute, told ABC News. "The path to a better future is still possible, but time is running out."

All eyes will be on the biggest emitters: China, the U.S. and India. While China is responsible for about 26% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, more than all other developed countries combined, the cumulative emissions from the U.S. over the past century are likely twice that of China's, David Sandalow, a senior research scholar at Columbia University's Center on Global Energy Policy, told ABC News.

By Julia Jacobo, Ayushi Agarwal, and Meredith Deliso

November 13, 2021,



COP26 adopts Glasgow Climate Pact

COP26 has officially adopted the Glasgow Climate Pact, a 10-page document that lays out the groundwork for how the world will attempt to prevent the worst impacts of climate change.



Nearly 200 countries agreed on the importance of addressing climate change but deep divisions still remained about the future of fossil fuels and rich countries' reluctance to provide full-fledged financial support to countries more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Representatives from several countries said the pact did not go far enough to address the climate crisis but they could not justify leaving Glasgow without any progress on the issue.





What does the COP26 Glasgow Pact mean for climate action

By Gregor Young

THE gavel has finally come down on the COP26 climate talks in Glasgow. Here are some of the key questions about the summit answered.

What has been agreed?

The deal requests countries revisit and strengthen their 2030 national climate action targets so they are in line with the Paris Agreement goal of keeping warming to “well below” 2C and pursuing efforts to limit temperature rise to 1.5C, by the end of 2022.

It calls on countries to move to shift to clean energy and accelerate efforts to phase down unabated coal power and inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.

And it has measures on finance for poorer and more vulnerable countries to develop cleanly, cope with climate impacts and address the loss and damage they face from climate-related storms, floods, droughts and rising seas.

There is also action on setting up carbon markets, and transparency on how countries report on their climate action.



Why do we need this?

When the Paris Agreement was negotiated in 2015, it was clear the national action plans, or nationally determined contributions (NDCs), that countries had submitted for emissions cuts up to 2030 left the world way off track to meet the temperature goals in the accord.

So the agreement built in a ratchet mechanism that would see countries return with updated plans up to 2030 by COP26 – which was meant to take place in 2020, but was delayed by the pandemic.

But the latest set of plans countries submitted in the run-up to Glasgow still leave the world far off track for the 45% emissions cuts needed by 2030 to meet the 1.5C goal, instead heading for 2.4C of warming.

Therefore, countries were under pressure to come up with a deal in Glasgow to take steps to rapidly increase their ambition for emission cuts in the 2020s to stop the 1.5C goal slipping out of reach.

And with the impacts of 1.1C of warming already biting, there was also pressure to provide the finance for developing countries to cope with the crisis, and to address the loss and damage they are facing.



Will it succeed?

That remains to be seen. Action and pledges since the Paris climate summit have been bending the curve down towards less dangerous temperatures, but there is still a long way to go, and a very short time to do it.

There is hope from the agreement that countries will come back with stronger action in the next year, and a signal that coal in particular is facing a bleak future.

And a series of deals announced at Cop26 alongside the main negotiations - on cutting methane, switching to electric cars, protecting forests, driving finance towards green tech and actions and shifting from coal to clean energy - may drive momentum, if not deliver the scale of cuts needed on their own.

Hydrogen can help decarbonize the economy

04 November 2021



The shift to a decarbonized Hydrogen-based economy that can achieve Carbon Neutrality by 2050 in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement, requires swift and extensive expansion of renewable and low-carbon hydrogen production. This will require massive investments and appropriate policy support, according to a new UN Policy Brief released today.

The potential of H2 to decarbonize the economy

Hydrogen (H2) is a bulk chemical that is used primarily today in petroleum refining and in the production of ammonia (for fertilisers) and methanol. When used as a fuel, it does not generate direct emissions of pollutants or greenhouse gases.

Because of its potential as a feedstock, energy carrier and storage medium, hydrogen offers the prospect to decarbonize the energy sector and large sectors of the economy, such as transport, industry, power generation and municipal heating. It also opens interesting perspectives in hard-to-abate sectors, such as energy intensive industries or long-haul transport, where electrification is only partially possible.

The European Union published a wide-ranging Hydrogen Strategy in mid-2020. It aims at delivering 1 million tonnes of renewable hydrogen by 2024 and 10 million tonnes by 2030.

Europe's mature and regulated network of gas infrastructure (the European transmission grid for natural gas is approximately 200,000 km long and the distribution grid is double that size) is a key enabler for the deployment of a hydrogen economy.

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Water and the global climate crisis

Climate change is disrupting weather patterns, leading to extreme weather events, unpredictable water availability, exacerbating water scarcity and contaminating water supplies. Such impacts can drastically affect the quantity and quality of water that children need to survive.

Today, a change in climate is felt primarily through a change in water. Millions of children are at risk.

Extreme weather events and changes in water cycle patterns are making it more difficult to access safe drinking water, especially for the most vulnerable children.

Around 74 per cent of natural disasters between 2001 and 2018 were water-related, including droughts and floods. The frequency and intensity of such events are only expected to increase with climate change.

Around 450 million children live in areas of high or extremely high water vulnerability. This means they do not have enough water to meet their everyday needs.

When disasters hit, they can destroy or contaminate entire water supplies, increasing the risk of diseases like cholera and typhoid to which children are particularly vulnerable.

Climate change is happening now. We must act, and water is part of the solution.

We need to build a future,
Where people live in harmony with nature

HPA

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