



2022 UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

What is COP?

The COP is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention. All States that are Parties to the Convention are represented at the COP, at which they review the implementation of the Convention and any other legal instruments that the COP adopts and take decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention, including institutional and administrative arrangements.

Commonly referred to as the Conference of the Parties (COP) or United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is being held from November 6-18, 2022 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt

History of COP

The Convention was adopted in 1992 during the 'Earth Summit' in Rio de Janeiro, with the treaty entering into force in 1994 and 196 countries ratifying it. The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the supreme decision-making body of the UNFCCC and is made up of representatives from all parties.

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) established an international environmental treaty to combat “dangerous human interference”. The treaty was signed in 1992. The context of the treaty seeks to focus on environmentalism. There were 198 parties to the treaty which has grown tremendously over the three decades of its existence.

The UNFCCC objectives to the Paris Agreement include:

- Commits all nations to take steps to mitigate greenhouse gas emission;
- Establishes the principles of “common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDRRC) climate change and capacities to address it, so their obligations will likewise vary; and
- Commit developed countries to assist developing countries in reducing emissions and coping with climate change

The COP meets every year, unless the Parties decide otherwise. The first COP meeting was held in Berlin, Germany in March, 1995. The COP meets in Bonn, the seat of the secretariat, unless a Party offers to host the session. Just as the COP Presidency rotates among the five recognized UN regions - that is, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and Eastern Europe and Western Europe and Others – there is a tendency for the venue of the COP to also shift among these groups

(<https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/supreme-bodies/conference-of-the-parties-cop>)

Four Goals of COP

- The expansion of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets;
- Financing the energy transition of the poorest countries;
- The reduction of methane emissions; and
- The organisation of the carbon market

Purpose of United Nations Climate Change Conference (UNCCC)

These conferences are the foremost global forums for multilateral discussion of climate change matters, and have an incredibly busy schedule.

The Paris Agreement

During the COP21 meeting in Paris, 2015, a momentous situation occurred, every country agreed to work together to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees and aim for 1.5 degrees, to adapt to the impacts of a changing climate and to make money available to deliver on these aims (<https://ukcop26.org/uk-presidency/what-is-a-cop/>).

The Paris Agreement was born. The commitment to aim for 1.5 degrees is important because every fraction of a degree of warming will result in the loss of many more lives lost and livelihoods damaged (<https://ukcop26.org/uk-presidency/what-is-a-cop/>).

Under the Paris Agreement, countries committed to bring forward national plans setting out how much they would reduce their emissions – known as Nationally Determined Contributions, or ‘NDCs’ <https://ukcop26.org/uk-presidency/what-is-a-cop/>).

They agreed that every five years they would come back with an updated plan that would reflect their highest possible ambition at that time (<https://ukcop26.org/uk-presidency/what-is-a-cop/>).

However, with the delay of the conference by a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic when countries were expected to update their plans for reducing emissions, COP26, Glasgow, summit in 2021 was the opportune occasion.

More bad news were to follow. The commitments laid out in Paris were not achieved and did not come close to limiting global warming, rising temperatures, greenhouse gas emissions to 1.5 degrees, and the window of opportunity was closing fast.

Jamaica and the UN Climate Change SDG #13

The UNFCCC is the largest climate change annual meeting that seeks to bring together key actors in search of greater ambition to end climate change ills.

Based on decisions to provide update on reduction initiative plans Jamaica was the first Caribbean nation to submit a tougher climate action plan under the Paris Agreement by adding targets for forestry and stepping up curbs on greenhouse gas emissions from energy (Doyle, 2020).

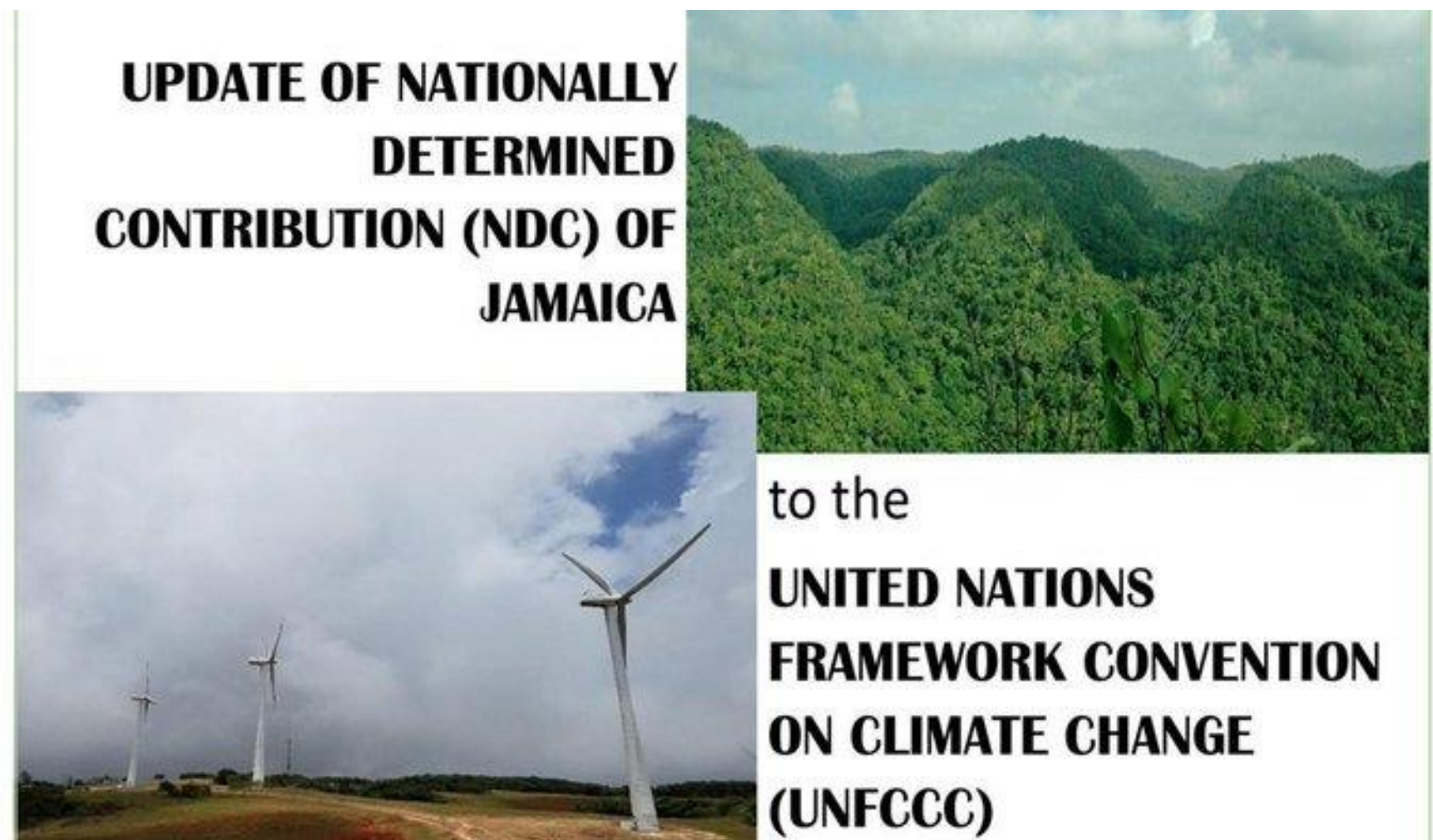
Worldwide, Jamaica is the 11th nation to submit an updated plan, or nationally determined contribution (NDC), at the five-year milestone of the 2015 Paris Agreement (Doyle, 2020).

Also stated in the updated plan is that **“the nation was at risk from more intense hurricanes, sea level rise and a drying trend across much of the island”**.

The new goal addressed land use change and forestry emissions, and committing to deeper emission reductions in the energy sector.

By 2030, it promised to reduce emissions in the two sectors by 25.4% below “business as usual” (BAU) levels, and by a deeper 28.5% if the country gets international support (Doyle, 2020).

By 2030, emissions covered by the plan would fall by between 1.8 and 2.0 million tonnes of carbon dioxide relative to the projected BAU levels of 7.2 million tonnes according to the plan. That was considered more ambitious than a decline of 1.1 to 1.5 million tonnes under the original plan (Doyle, 2020).



The updated NDC plan did not project Jamaica's total emissions for 2030. The first NDC in 2015 projected that the nation's emissions would rise to 14.5 million tonnes by 2030 under business as usual, from 13.4 million in 2025.

The NDC plan indicated that Jamaica would work in future to widen the NDC to include all sectors in the economy. It was reiterated that forests covered more than half of the island (Doyle, 2020).

The plan outlined the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on Jamaica's tourism sector, which has a ripple effect on rural livelihoods which relied predominantly on the climate sensitive fisheries and agriculture sectors. (Doyle, 2020).

The World Resources Institute think-tank reported that the 11 NDCs submitted so far accounted for 2.9% of global emissions

Countries are invited to submit long-term climate and development strategies that would provide a visionary roadmap to achieving complete decarbonization by mid-century and to ensure prosperity for all.

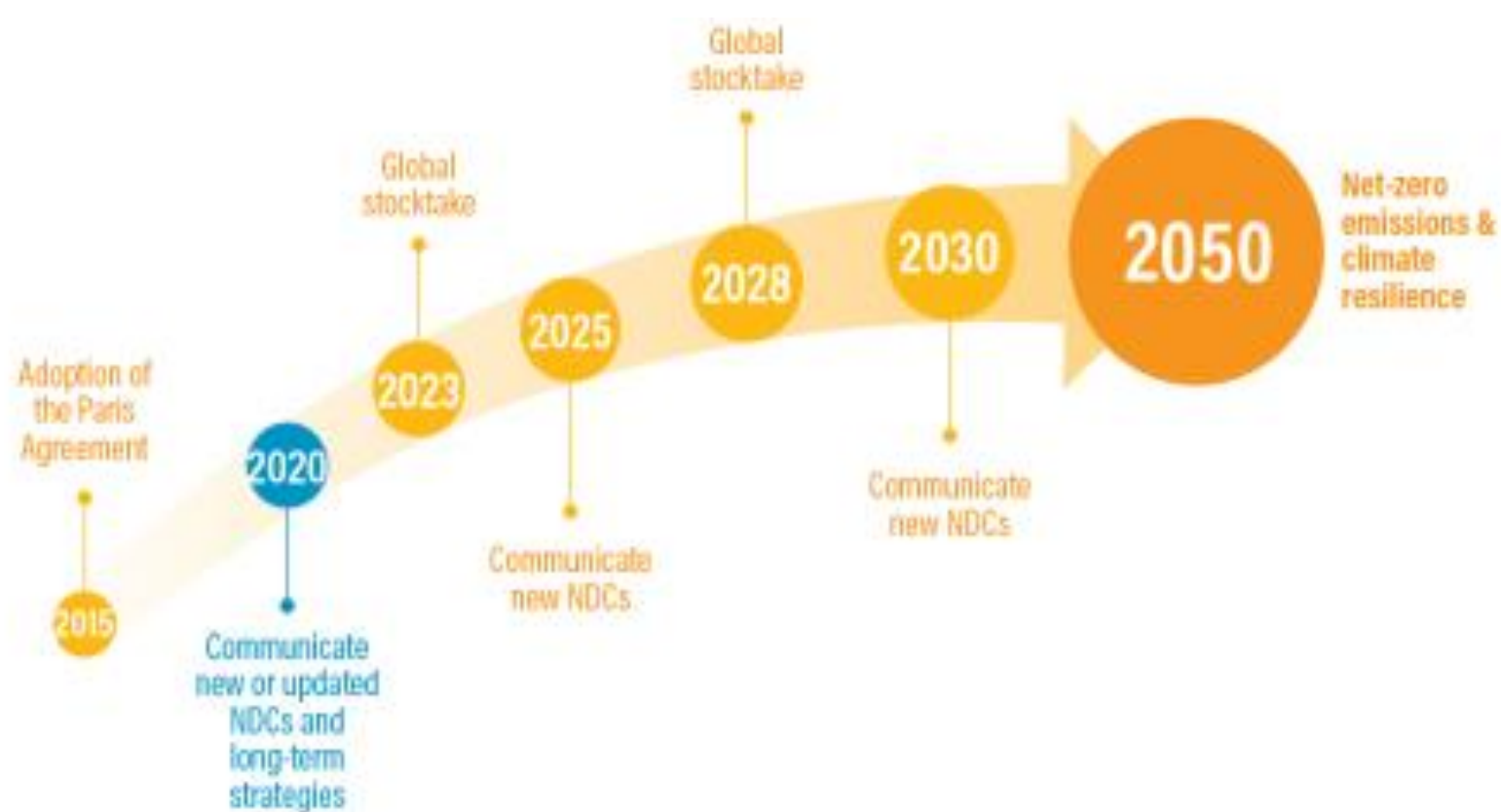


Image source: World Resources Institute

Reports recently revealed that countries initial commitments in Paris are not enough to prevent crossing over the dangerous temperature threshold, and the world is fast approaching 3 degrees C of warming or more.

The Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degrees C found that even a half-degree of difference in global temperature rise will have profound impacts on sea level rise, biodiversity and extreme weather events (Levin, 2018). Even with mitigation strategies greenhouse gas emission continue to at an all-time high (Levin and Lebling, 2019).

Further scientific researchers have postulated that it is proving impossible to achieve the Paris Agreement's temperatures goal of 1.5 degree.

Hence, it is for this reason that the current NDC enhancement process delivers faster, deeper greenhouse gas emission reductions and prepare for global warming's impacts.



Image Source: World Resources Institute

Countries are set to benefit from addressing climate crisis which may include the following:

-  Taking advantage of major shifts in technology and costs
-  Seizing opportunities for economic growth and development
-  Avoiding lock-in effects and increased transition costs
-  Sending signals to attract climate finance and investment
-  Building on action by non-state actors, including cities and business
-  Achieving synergies with the SDGs (health, jobs, food, etc.)
-  Building broader buy-in from ministries and stakeholders
-  Bolstering implementation of commitments in existing NDCs
-  Aligning with carbon neutrality and long-term strategies

The Small Islands Developing States are making their contribution to the conversations on climate change at #ClimateAction at COP27:

UWI Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, Michelle Mycoo, represented the Caribbean in a conversation themed, Small Islands: Staying Afloat and Alive @ 1.5 °C. Professor Mycoo delivered the introductory remarks and was featured on a panel discussion on Monday, November 14, 2022, Egypt.



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SCIENCE FOR CLIMATE ACTION PAVILION

14 November 2022

18:00 GMT+2 | 16:00 GMT

Adaptation, Loss and damage funds: A Call for Action

According to Ralph Regenvanu, Vanuatu was the first nation to introduce the term "loss and damage" at the U.N. climate negotiations in 1991 (Rowling, 2022).

Today large parts of the world are suffering from the accelerating impact of climate change - and poorer countries on the frontlines are seeking help to cope and recover.

Loss and damage" refers to the physical and mental harm that happens when people and places are not prepared for climate disasters, or cannot adapt how they live to protect themselves from slower impacts such as coastal erosion or creeping deserts (Rowling, 2022).

But there are other non-economic losses that are harder to quantify, such as graveyards and family photos being washed away, or indigenous cultures that could disappear if a whole community must move because their land is no longer habitable.



© UNICEF/Josh Estey Farming communities in the Pacific Ocean archipelago, Vanuatu, are adapting to drier weather patterns

Developing countries at COP27 call for ‘climate justice’ in the form of adaptation and loss and damage funds

The COP27 Presidency launched the Sharm el-Sheikh adaptation agenda, to garner global activities surrounding 30 outcomes that are necessary to address what has been described by the UN Environment Programme as the climate ‘adaptation gap.’

The agenda would improve resilience for four billion people living in the most climate vulnerable communities by 2030. The effort has been labelled the first

comprehensive global adaptation-focused plan to rally both governments and non-State actors behind a shared set of actions.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), nearly half the world's population will be at severe risk of climate change impacts by 2030, even with global warming of just 1.5-degrees (UN News, 2022).

The plan covers points of action on issues related to food security and agriculture, water and nature, human settlements, oceans, and cities, among others (UN, 2022).

COP27 President Sameh Shoukry implored Governments and non-State actors to join the agenda during the conference beyond (UN News, 2022).

Jamaica on Adaptation and Loss and Damage Fund

Minister without Portfolio with Responsibility for Water, Environment, and Climate Change in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Matthew Samuda joined the call for “world leaders to do more to provide financial support to developing countries to combat climate change” during his speech at the High-Level Segment of the 27th COP (The Gleaner, 2022).

He went on to state that “small island states have added their voice regarding the growing dissonance in establishing a loss and damage funding arrangement.

That Jamaica unreservedly join with other developing countries in calling for a loss and damage fund to help countries address the inevitable impact of climate change (The Gleaner, 2022).

The literature revealed that Caribbean regions are facing similar challenges in regards to climate change. Most recently, the devastation seen in Caribbean islands such as Belize and Saint Lucia which were impacted by weather systems (The Gleaner, 2022).

On the other hand, UN climate change chief Simon Stiell reiterated that “This agenda brings together all parts of society” while reminding delegates that COP27 is all about turning ambitions into results. He also state that humanitarianism should be reflected in what we do (UN News, 2022).

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Several countries made new commitments to aid the efforts of dealing with disaster due to climate change (UN News, 2022):

- The UK will triple its adaptation finance by 2025, going even beyond the promise last year in Glasgow
- Germany announced \$170 million for loss and damage
- Belgium € 2.5 million, specifically to Mozambique, which suffered terrible losses last year due to extreme rains
- Austria also announced \$50 million for loss and damage, and
- Scotland, which had previously pledged £2 million, announced an additional £5 million

Five European countries – Austria, Scotland, Belgium, Denmark and Germany – have committed to address loss and damage

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission encouraged leader to follow her region's example of committing to climate financing to the developing world. As those in the developing world need the most support in adapting to harsher climate (UN News, 2022).

Europe was leading the change and standing by their climate finance commitments ... despite COVID, and the Russian war”

Despite Europe's stepping up small island developing states continued denouncing developed countries for not delivering their finance promises.

Nana Akufo-Addo, the President of Ghana, reiterated that while Africa has done the least to cause climate change, the continent's people, especially the youth, are suffering the worst impacts.

Another view of the spectrum was brought to the forefront as Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda, argued that during the COVID-19 pandemic, external financing hadn't worked for vulnerable nations.

Kagame postulated that most valuable contribution that developed countries can make is to reduce their emissions faster while investing in Africa to build sustainable, green power. Questioning whether Africa is ready to make use of climate finance should not be used as an excuse to justify inaction (UN News, 2022).

Theresa Anderson, Climate Policy Coordinator from NGO Action Aid during a press conference reiterated the point that we cannot leave vulnerable communities who have

done little for this crisis to deal with these global crises on their own. She along with other leaders Recognizing that there is a dire need to establish a funding facility to help devastated countries to pick up the pieces and recover in the aftermath of climate disasters”, the activist underscored (UN News, 2022).

If steps are not taken drastically to mitigate the effects of climate change urgently the generation to come will suffer the consequences of today leader’s inaction.

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