**Highlights**

# COP26 Glasgow

## Nature, Markets and a Sense of Urgency

- **In 2021, concern about climate change is globally mainstream.** An unprecedented number of activists, journalists and observers put pressure on climate negotiators. The calls from the streets were not left unheard in the negotiation chambers of Glasgow. Whether they also resonate in the capitals of this world remains to be seen over the next months and years.
- **The Glasgow Climate Pact put new energy behind the commitment to limit global warming to 1.5°C**, even though current Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) fall short of even 2°C. The Glasgow Climate Pact calls on governments to revisit their pledges, in particular their short-term climate goals, and submitted updated NDCs by COP27.
- **Glasgow saw more announcements on forests and nature than any of its predecessor conferences.** Governments, corporates, and investors made complementary high-level announcements committing to conserve and restore forests and remove deforestation from supply chains and investment portfolios. A pledge is a pledge, and action is action. It remains to be seen how much action follows the encouraging number of nature-related pledges.
- **Six years after the adoption of the Paris Agreement, negotiators finally completed the "Article 6 rulebook" and enabled carbon markets under the Agreement.** Operationalization of Paris-sanctioned carbon markets now depend on countries putting in place the necessary institutions and regulations. In the meantime, voluntary carbon markets are expected to continue to generate emission reductions and removals.
- **Expectations of developing countries with respect to accessing sustainable and predictable finance for adaptation and loss & damage were once more defeated**. There was an unsurprising recognition that developed countries have failed to meet climate finance commitments, followed by calls for increased finance from countries, development banks, and other financial institutions to be in alignment with the goals of Paris Agreement.
- **Gender, human rights, and inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and local communities were given increasing** attention in the negotiations, although the COP remains, overall, an affair of well-situated men.

# A Pandemic COP

The 26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26) was a COP marked by the special circumstances of the pandemic. Over the course of 2021, worries lingered that COP26 would have to be postponed due to the pandemic, become a super-spreading event, or see limited attendance as key people would not feel comfortable or not be permitted to travel. For the UK presidency, this was a worrisome prospect: after two years of preparation for the first post-Brexit mega-event, the UK government was highly invested in a successful conference.

With more than 40,000 participants, the Glasgow COP proved to be the largest climate conference ever, dwarfing even the Paris COP in 2015. These large numbers included an unprecedented number of journalists, students and youth activists, representatives of businesses and financial actors. Daily self-testing helped to contain coronavirus infections, even though social distancing was impossible in crowded conference corridors.

The first success of the COP was therefore the COP itself. Beyond this, negotiators managed to find agreement on a number of open work packages carried over from COP-25, most notably on the implementation guidance of Article 6 Paris Agreement. The COP also provided the stage for a flurry of announcements and mitigation pledges. However, when the dust settles, the picture hasn't changed too much: global climate ambition remains mediocre at best.

# Glasgow Climate Pact

With the Glasgow Climate Pact, the British Presidency managed to put political weight behind the science that demands urgent and decisive climate action. The Pact is the main – and somewhat unexpected – political outcome of COP26. The Pact covers climate change mitigation and adaption, finance, implementation and collaboration across three documents—-/CP.26 by Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP), -/CMP.16 by the COP serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP), and -/CMA.3 by the COP serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA). It is longer and broader than the typical political reaffirmations accompanying COP business. Political statements adopted at the occasion of a COP reflect as much the ambition of the country holding the presidency over the conference as well as the sentiment of the moment.

In its first section on science and urgency, the Pact "welcomes" the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), expresses alarm at the current 1.1°C of global warming, and stresses the urgency of climate action. It recalibrated the balance of the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement by stressing that "the impacts of climate change will be much lower at the temperature increase of 1.5°C compared with 2°C," and that accelerated action is necessary in "this critical decade, on the basis of the best available scientific knowledge and equity." To close the gaping shortfall in ambition between the temperature goal and current NDCs, the Pact requests Parties to revisit and strengthen the 2030 targets in their NDCs by the end of 2022.

As part of increased ambition for climate action, the Pact specifies the need for significantly more funding—particularly for adaptation action in developing countries—and calls upon parties to accelerate low-emission energy, including "phasedown of unabated coal power and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies." This line was hotly debated. An earlier draft had called for the phasing-out of coal and fossil fuel subsidies. This draft did not survive the negotiations and, consequently, we are left wondering which fossil fuel subsidies are "efficient," and how long we have to continue to live with "abated" coal power, not to speak of fossil fuel power more generally. Even so, observers and commentators pointed to the mentioning of fossil fuel subsidies as a turning point for reducing extraction and consumption of coal.

The Glasgow Climate Pact is hopeful in its specificity and strong language. Yet, there is a risk that the language will remain just that, with no policies, plans, and actions from Parties to meet their commitments.

# Updates on NDCs and Overall Ambition

So far, Parties successfully resist their own adjurations. NDCs continue to fall short of the Paris Agreement target to limit warming to 1.5°C above industrial levels, even as climate change impacts are devastating people, ecosystems, and economies at 1.1°C of warming. 151 countries submitted enhanced or updated NDCs ahead of COP26. If all NDCs and pledges are fully implemented, emissions under conditional NDCs are estimated to be 48 gigatons of carbon dioxide equivalents ($GtCO_2e$) in 2030 and emissions under unconditional NDCs are estimated to be 51.5 $GtCO_2e$ in 2030. To meet the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, emissions in 2030 would need to be 24-29 GtCO2e lower than the unconditional scenario and around 23.5 $GtCO_2e$ lower than the conditional scenario. In other words, annual global emissions need to be halved by 2030 to be on a 1.5°C pathway and 9-15 GtCO2e lower for limiting warming to 2°C.

Yet, governments have not made NDCs progressively more ambitious. With new pledges made at Glasgow, the world is on track to emit twice as much in 2030 as what would be required for the 1.5°C target. If countries meet all current conditional and unconditional NDCs, the commitments made at COP26 could reduce warming by 2100 by 0.1°C and by 0.2°C if all NDCs and net-zero commitments are fulfilled. The most optimistic scenario—assuming full implementation of commitments and announced targets, including net-zero, long-term strategies and NDCs—with current commitments and pledges is global warming of 1.8°C at the end of the century, with warming peaking at 1.9°C in mid-century (see Climate Resource). Limiting warming to 1.5°C will depend on whether countries comply with the request of the Glasgow Climate Pack to offer new and better commitments by COP27.These commitments will have to formulate time-bound and prompt reduction and net-zero targets backed by tangible, near-term actions.

Despite these disappointing and alarming failures in ambition, the CMA did succeed in establishing common time frames for NDCs. Parties are encouraged to communicate NDCs with 10-year time horizons in 2025 and to update NDCs every five years after that. While this agreement seemed reasonable a few years ago, it now seems out of sync with the alarming language of the Glasgow Climate Pact and its request to the secretariat to annually update the NDC synthesis report.

# Non-NDC Announcements and Pledges

In recent years, international climate conferences – once the exclusive territory of multilateral diplomacy – have become a stage for a flurry of announcements and pledges by a multitude of actors. In Glasgow, the most tangible excitement was triggered by off-negotiation events: commitments by groups of countries, corporate actors, and non-governmental organizations. Countries pledged action around deforestation, coal phase-down, fossil fuel finance, and zero emission cars. The following are the main pledges, the corresponding commitments, and country signatories:

| Deforestation pledge | Commodity pledges | Methane pledge | Coal phase-out | Fossil-fuel financing | Zero-emissions transport |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| • 142 Governments commit to the goal to halt deforestation and land degradation by 2030.<br><br>• 12 donor countries commit USD12 billion to support tropical forest conservation between 2021-25.<br><br>• Donors commit USD 1.7 from 2021-25 to advance Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' forest tenure rights and support their role as guardians of forests and nature.<br><br>• LEAF reached its target of mobilizing USD 1bn in private finance for REDD+, and the Natural Capital Investment Alliance committed to mobilize another USD 10bn in private investments by the end of 2022. | • Forest, agriculture and commodity trade (FACT) roadmap designed to reduce pressure from forests, increase transparency of supply chains, and support smallholder farmers.<br><br>• 12 of the largest traders in agricultural commodities announced that they will work on a roadmap for how to align their operations with the 1.5 C temperature goal.<br><br>• CEOs from 30 financial institutions committed to eliminate commodity-driven deforestation from their investment portfolios. | • 105 countries signed onto the Global Methane Pledge, a U.S. and EU joint initiative to cut methane emissions by 30% by 2030.<br><br>• Global philanthropies have committed USD328 million in funding to support implementation. | • 23 countries committed for the first time to phase out and not build or invest in new coal power, including Indonesia, South Korea, Poland, Vietnam, and Chile.<br><br>• Major international banks committed to effetively end all international public financing of new unabated coal power by the end of 2021.<br><br>• At least 25 countries and public finance institutions committed to ending international public support for the unabated fossil fuel energy sector by the end of 2022. | • 25 new countries support a coalitoin that aims to end public financing of overseas oil, gas and coal projects by the end of 2022. Signatories include the U.S., U.K., Denmark, Canada, Italy and the European Investment Bank.<br><br>• The High Ambition Coalition announced its resolve to deliver on mid-century net zero GHG emissions goals, including by phasing out unabated coal-fired power plants and halting inefficient fossil fuel subsidies as soon as possible. | • 30 countries have agreed to work together to make zero emission vehicles the new normal by making them accessible, affordable, and sustainable in all regions by 2030 or sooner.<br><br>• 19 governments have also stated their intent to support the establishment of 'green shipping corridors' – zero-emission shipping routes between two ports. |

The Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use was signed by over 140 countries accounting for more than 90 percent of the world´s forests. Signatories committed to work collectively to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030, while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation. Through this Declaration there will be support in developing countries for restoring degraded land, controlling wildfires, and advancing the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. In terms of commitments, the Glasgow Declaration does not offer much more than the 2014 New York Declaration on Forests (NYDF), whose ten goals remain largely unmet. The Glasgow Declaration includes more countries than the NYDF (Brazil, China, and Russia, among others) and forest-related commitments are now also backed by important financial sector actors. However, it is unclear how these commitments will be implemented and monitored. Civil society efforts to hold governments and corporation accountable for their commitments remain essential.

The Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade (FACT) statement aims to support sustainable trade between commodity producing and consuming countries. It was signed by 28 countries representing 75percent of global trade in commodities that pose risks to forests. While it falls short of producing the aspired agreement between key players, the FACT statement includes a roadmap of actions to promote sustainable development and trade while protecting forests and other critical ecosystems.

Another important non-NDC commitment is the Global Methane Pledge, launched jointly by the US and the European Union. The pledge aims to reduce 30 percent of methane emissions from over 100 countries representing 70 percent of the global economy and half of anthropogenic methane emissions between 2020 and 2030. However, it is unclear how progress will be measured and quantified. Further, major methane emitters China, Russia and Australia did not sign the pledge, and the pledge remains noticeably weak around measures for emissions from livestock, food systems and diets – the largest contributors to methane emissions.

Twenty-three countries pledged to phase-out coal power and end support for new coal power plants. Major international finance institutions have committed to end funding of unabated coal including international lenders such as HSBC, Fidelity International and Ethos. The pledge could shift around USD17.8 billion a year in public support away of fossil fuels and into clean energy. Furthermore, more than 30 countries and financial institutions issued a statement committing to stop all financial flow towards fossil fuel development. The signatories commit to a clean energy transition by enhancing the support from the private sector that does "no significant harm" to the Paris Agreement, local communities, and local environment. Signatories further commit to "end new direct public support for the international unabated fossil fuel energy sector by the end of 2022, except in limited and clearly defined circumstances that are consistent with a 1.5°C warming limit and the goals of the Paris Agreement."

Another milestone for COP26 was the declaration on accelerating the transition to 100 percent zero-emissions cars and vans. This declaration aims to have only sales of zero-emission cars and vans by 2040 and no later than 2035 for leading markets. The coalition includes signatory countries, automotive manufacturers, business fleet owners, investors with interest in the automotive market and financial institutions. Amongst the signatories are the government of UK, Ford, Volvo, Mercedes-Benz, and Siemens. Despite this being an important pledge, it left many disappointed as the top automakers and major markets, China, Germany, and the US were not among the endorser countries.

Even though these pledges are non-binding, they may point to rising ambition among public and private stakeholders. Nevertheless, these voluntary pledges must be followed by action. The achievement of these pledges will depend on the vigilance of civil society to hold signatories to account.

# Finalizing the Article 6 Rulebook

Probably the most eagerly awaited Glasgow decisions were those that formulated implementation guidance for Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, the article that anchors carbon markets in the Agreement. The Article 6 rulebook defines how countries can cooperate in the implementation of their NDCs to allow for higher ambition in their climate actions and to promote sustainable development and environmental integrity. The decisions on "cooperative approaches" referred to in Article 6.2 and the market mechanism under Article 6.4 define new rules of the game for those that want to engage in Paris-sanctioned carbon market transactions. A third sub-paragraph (Article 6.8) establishes a framework for non-market-based approaches through which countries can enhance their cooperation. At COP28, Parties agreed on a work programme for non-market approaches under Article 6.8.

The new guidance for Article 6.2 clarifies that cooperation may involve the generation and use of "internationally transferred mitigation outcomes" (ITMOs) to achieve countries' NDCs. The decision gives participating countries wide leverage on the design of cooperative approaches. It defines certain parameters for environmental integrity and otherwise focusses on ensuring clear, transparent, and robust accounting of greenhouse gas emissions and removals. The decision establishes a number of reporting obligations for the Party involved, which should follow established reporting formats and undergo review by an Article 6 technical expert review team. It also links Article 6.2 to the transparency framework established in Article 13.1 of the Paris Agreement. Most importantly, the Article 6.2 decision regulates the use of "corresponding adjustments" to avoid double counting of emission reductions and removals generated by cooperative approaches.

The rules, procedures and modalities for Article 6.4, in contrast to Article 6.2, leave little room for participants to define their engagement with the new market mechanism. Closely modelled after the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), the new Article 6.4 mechanism is centrally governed by the UNFCCC. It also follows the same project cycle as the CDM (design, validation, and registration of an activity; monitoring, certification, issuance of credits) and is based on similar institutions: a Supervisory Board, Designated Operational Entities (DOEs), registries and the UNFCCC secretariat. It also defines a share of proceeds to cover both administrative costs of the mechanism and the adaptation needs for countries most vulnerable to climate change. Those familiar with the CDM will have no problems understanding how the Art. 6.4 mechanism will work.

One of the main points of contention in the negotiations of Article 6 was whether and when 'corresponding adjustments' would have to back the transfer of 'mitigation outcomes' (in the case of Article 6.2) and Article 6.4 emission reductions (A6.4ERs, in the case of Article 6.4). Corresponding adjustments are a tool designed to promote the integrity of emissions accounting under the Paris Agreement by preventing countries from counting any given emission reduction more than once towards NDCs. While the need to avoid of 'double counting' towards more than one NDC is uncontested, controversy reigned with respect to emission reductions generated outside of the scope of host country NDCs and the necessity for corresponding adjustments when emission reductions are used toward voluntary climate commitments or carbon neutrality pledges.

**Box 1: CDM Transition**

With regard to the CDM, the new Article 6.4 rules allow CDM activities to transition under the Paris Agreement subject to the following conditions:

- ✓ Request to transition is made to the secretariat and the host country by no later than the 31st of December 2023.
- ✓ Approval for transition is provided by the host country to the Supervisory Body by no later than the 31st of December 2025.
- ✓ The CDM activity's methodology is in compliance with the rules, modalities and procedures—including corresponding adjustments—established in this and future decisions. After 2025, the activity must apply a new approved methodology.

Negotiators found a Solomonic solution to this problem: They decided to let host countries to determine the authorized use of Article 6 units. If those acquiring mitigation outcomes or A6.4ERs want to use them against NDCs or other international mitigation purposes (read: CORSIA), then host countries must authorize such uses and back them with corresponding adjustments. Countries may also authorize uses "for other purposes" with corresponding adjustments. However, countries can support cooperative approaches and Article 6.4 activities without any further authorization that would trigger a corresponding adjustment. In short, host countries can decide which activities and emission reductions/removals they:

- support as 'mere' VCM activities (i.e., without corresponding adjustments)
- approve under the Art. 6.4. mechanism but not authorize for "other purposes" (i.e., without corresponding adjustments)
- approve and authorize under the Art. 6.4 mechanism (i.e., with corresponding adjustments)
- approve and authorize under an Art. 6.2 cooperative approach (i.e., with corresponding adjustments)

Companies may wish to engage with one or more of these different alternatives. Their choice will depend on their risk appetite, the availability and costs of corresponding adjustments, the level of transparency and international endorsement pursued, and the final claim corporates wish to make upon acquiring these assets – to achieve or supplement their voluntary greenhouse gas reduction targets or, instead, to generate climate impact and support countries in achieving Paris goals.

The future of international and voluntary carbon markets depends on the interpretations and decisions of countries as well as regulations and scrutiny over corporate claims. Corporate demand for carbon credits is likely to remain strong, and as government regulations will not become prohibitive in time or costs, corporates may also develop an appetite for corresponding adjustments. Since it will take a while for countries to develop strategic approaches towards carbon markets and build the required institutions, demand for voluntary carbon units is likely to remain strong in the short-term, as no practical alternative exists for those types of credits.

**Box 2: Corresponding adjustments and the VCM**

The question on corresponding adjustments is particularly relevant for voluntary carbon markets. Glasgow clarifies that for a voluntary carbon market credit to be backed by corresponding adjustment the following conditions must be met:

- ✓ the acquiring private or public entity wants to use a voluntary carbon credit against a climate target
- ✓ the private or public entity wants to make an offsetting claim
- ✓ the voluntary carbon market activity is approved under Art. 6.4 or integrated into an Art. 6.2 cooperative approach of the host country
- ✓ the host country is willing to authorize the use of mitigation outcomes/Art.6.4ERs for “other purposes”
- ✓ the host country has the technical capacities to make corresponding adjustments (and, in the case of Art. 6.2, timely and adequately comply with the Party’s reporting obligations)

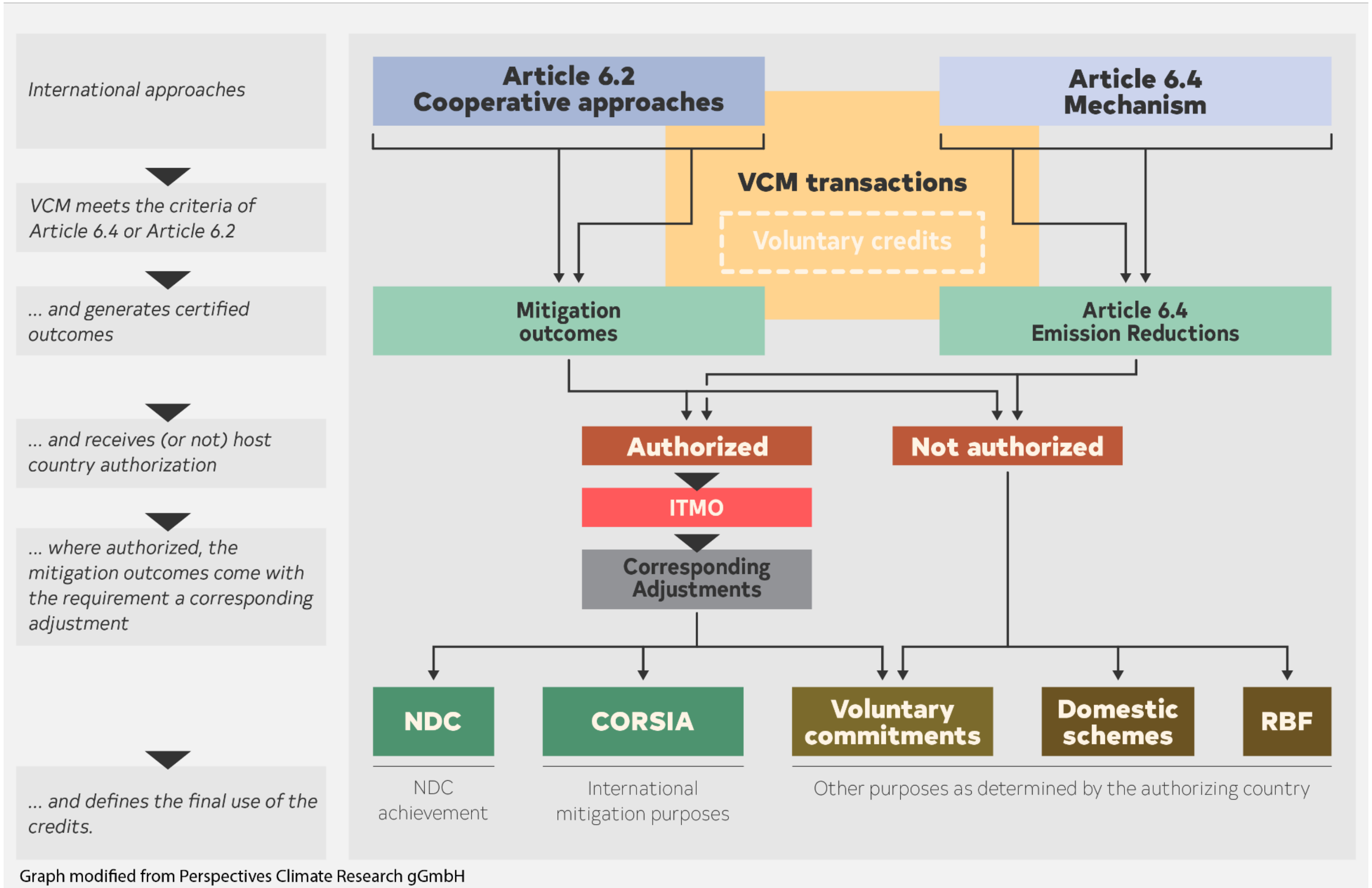


*Figure 1: Carbon credits generated under the voluntary carbon market and traded internationally may be authorized for use towards NDCs, CORSIA and voluntary commitments and backed by corresponding adjustments or not authorized and used for "other purposes," including results-based finance (RBF) and domestic schemes, as well as some voluntary commitments. The graph is a modified version of an original graph by Perspectives Climate Research gGmbH in: Kessler et al (2021) Key aspects of the Article 6 rulebook adopted at COP26.*

# Updates on the Enhanced Transparency Framework and Progress Towards the Global Stocktake

Transparency is the essential tool to enable accountability under the Paris Agreement. Article 13 of the Paris Agreement established the enhanced transparency framework under which all countries are required to report their emissions, progress toward NDCs, and contributions to climate finance. Countries identified as developed countries in 1992 when the UNFCCC was established have additional requirements, as shown in the graphic below.

During COP24 in Katowice in 2018, CMA adopted the modalities, procedures and guidelines for the enhanced transparency framework. It remained for the negotiators in Glasgow to define the technical details for GHG reporting, reporting of financial information, development and transfer of technology, capacity-building, and the flexibility and technical support for developing countries. In the negotiations, developing countries expressed frustration with the failures of developed countries to make good on financial pledges and a political package biased towards developed countries' priorities (see Carbon Brief for details.) However, negotiators managed to formulate guidance for operationalizing the modalities, procedures and guidelines for the enhanced transparency framework Proposal by the President, which includes common formats for electronic reporting with a number of flexibility options for developing countries. Negotiators also agreed on the creation of an interactive web portal to compile biannual reports and other relevant information reported by parties. Additionally, the CMA approved a prototype for an online, searchable, public registry of NDCs and adaptation communications that will be available starting June 10, 2022. This registry will be essential for transparency, enabling parties and outside observers to know where countries stand and where pressure is needed to increase and meet commitments.

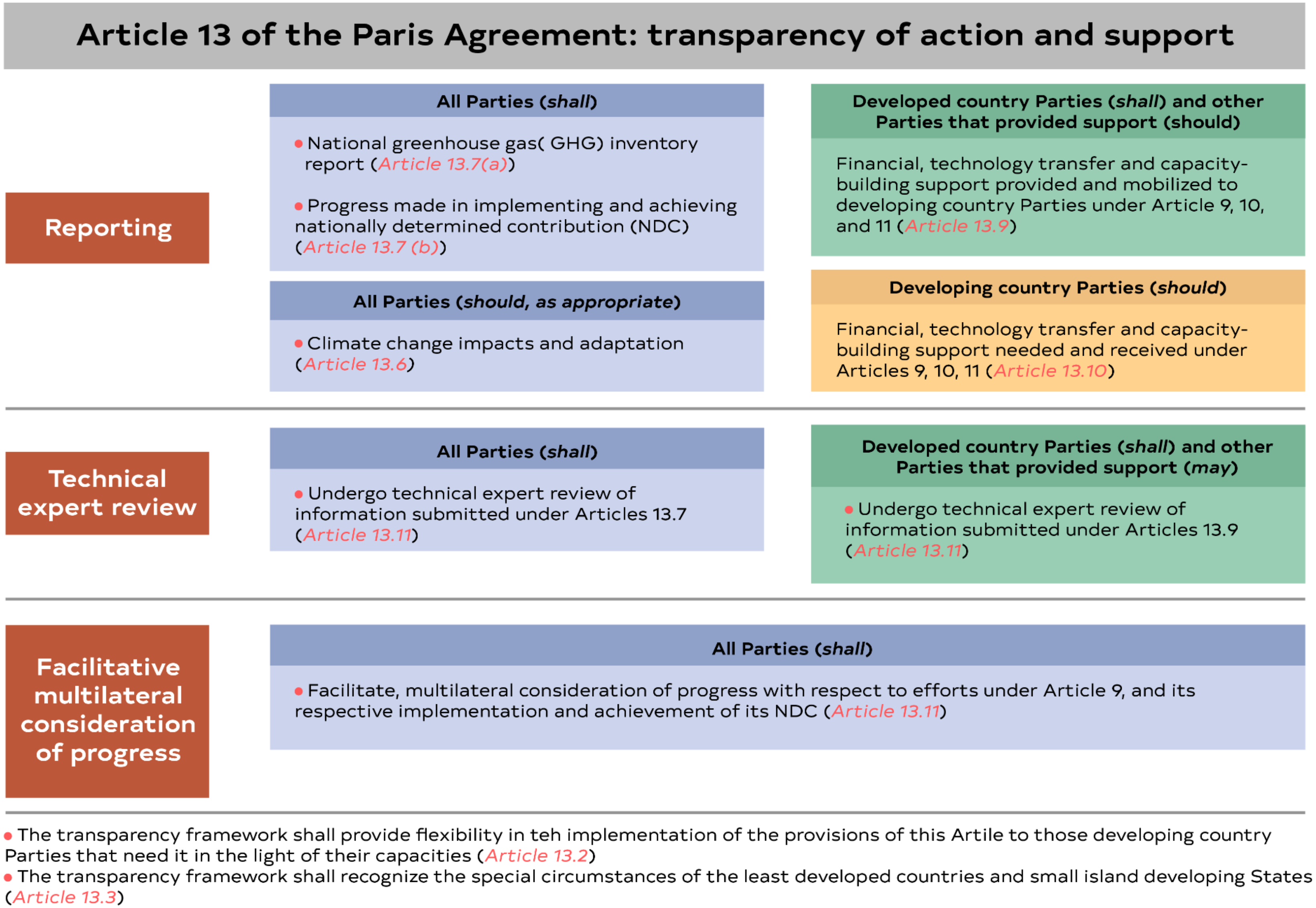


*Figure 2: All Parties to the Paris Agreement are required to engage in reporting and review. Developed country Parties have additional requirements. Source: UNFCCC*

The Global Stocktake (GST) is the process to assess progress toward the Paris Agreement goals and long-term plans. Glasgow kicked off the first GST, which will conclude in 2023 at CMA5 (COP28). At COP26, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) agreed on the sources and types of information for the GST, based on previous CMA decisions. COP28 – to be hosted by the United Arab Emirates- will see the full assessment of the effectiveness of climate action under the Paris Agreement. An effective GST should assess not only progress towards long-term goals, but also the enabling conditions for short-term commitments that enable countries to meet long-term goals, including support for domestic policies and removing barriers to raising ambition.

# Climate Finance

The UK Presidency made mobilizing finance one of the priorities of the COP and expectations were high. The Climate Finance Delivery Plan released in July 2021 acknowledged that wealthy countries failed to meet the goal to provide USD100 billion per year by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries. This failure set the tone for COP26 (see Carbon Brief for details). The Glasgow Climate Pact urges countries to meet financing pledges but fails to include any details on delivery.

The decision on long-term finance noted the finance gap, and requested increased provision of finance, including doubling adaptation finance to be on par with finance for mitigation. The decision considers the Climate Finance Delivery Plan and requests that the Standing Committee on Finance prepare a progress report in advance of COP27 (in November 2022). In doing so, the Standing Committee on Finance is asked to develop common definitions and methodologies for tracking and reporting climate finance. The parties further decided to have ministerial dialogues on climate finance in 2022, 2024, and 2026, with discussions on long-term climate finance concluded in 2027.

While the long-term climate finance decision addressed how to meet existing climate finance targets, the New collective quantified goal on climate finance sought to raise climate finance ambition with new targets that accelerate the Paris Agreement goals of holding warming below 2°C and 1.5°C and increase adaptation ability and resilience. The new goal will be determined by 2024, with ministerial dialogues and an ad hoc work programme to take place in 2022-2024. The goal must account for the needs and priorities of developing countries, findings of the IPCC, and information from Parties and other relevant government entities.

Overall, it is interesting to note that developed countries that are so eager to see full transparency around GHG accounting are much less interested in full transparency around climate finance. Countries that are crying foul over potential double counting about emissions, silently double count, rehash and recycle their climate finance contributions towards multiple timeframes and goals.

# Updates on Loss and Damage

COP19, held in November 2013 in Warsaw, Poland, established the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts. “Losses and damages” are unavoidable economic, social, and ecological impacts of climate change that cannot be adapted to or mitigated. The main purpose of WIM is to address losses and damages caused by extreme events in developing countries. Loss and Damage is sometimes framed as “climate reparations” since the idea is to push finance from wealthy countries that have contributed disproportionately to climate change to vulnerable developing countries that need support to address the effects of extreme weather.

Loss and damage is considered the third pillar of international climate policy, but unlike the pillars of mitigation and adaptation, loss and damage does not have agreed-upon financing mechanisms. One of the disappointments of COP26 was the lack of agreement in setting up the Glasgow Loss and Damage Facility, aimed at supporting and financing loss and damage activities, despite wide support by the G77+ China and a group of developing countries. In an attempt to kick-start the Facility, a group of philanthropic organizations offered to contribute USD3 million if the Facility was created, but this failed as an incentive for wealthier countries that, in the end, blocked the decision.

For COP26, the key agenda item for loss and damage was the Santiago Network. This Network was a result of COP25 negotiations and aims at connecting vulnerable developing countries with technical assistance providers, knowledge and resources needed to address climate risks. Currently, the Santiago Network is a website set up by the UNFCCC. The operationalization of the Santiago Network was a top priority for some development countries, who lamented the limited outcomes at COP26. In the end, the Glasgow Climate Pact final text “welcomes” the further operationalization of the Santiago Network and “decides” to provide funds to support technical assistance. The final text also sets-up a two-year Glasgow Dialogue to discuss the arrangement for the funding of activities to advert, minimize and address loss and damage.

# The Global Goal on Adaptation

The agenda for COP26 only included adaptation in the discussions for the Reports of the Adaptation Committee for 2019, 2020 and 2021. However, thankfully, adaptation was brought to the table as a major concern for all Parties, and especially for developing countries that are more vulnerable to climate risks. The Glasgow Climate Pact expressed concern about the lack of current provision of climate finance for adaptation and urged developed countries to “at least double their collective provision of climate finance for adaptation to developing country Parties from 2019 levels by 2025.”

The Conference established and launched the two-year Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the global goal on adaptation, which will begin implementation immediately after COP26. Among the objectives of this programme is to support countries in measuring and monitoring adaptation activities and to contribute to the overall review of the progress made in achieving the adaptation goal.

A small victory for adaptation finance was the USD356 million in new support for the Adaptation Fund from national and regional governments. Sixteen new donors announced pledges to the Adaptation Fund, including the United States, Canada and Qatar. Funding will be provided exclusively to adaptation projects and will be grant-based rather than in the form of loans to developing countries.

# Climate empowerment (CMA), IPLCs (COP) and the Gender and Climate Pact

COPs have become more sensitive to the uneven impacts of climate change. The burden of climate change is disproportionally placed on the poor, women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples. While COPs remain an affair of (still mostly male) bureaucrats, official texts have started to mention human rights, the rights of Indigenous Peoples, gender equality, and the need for social and environmental safeguards.

For instance, the Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the global goal on adaptation recalls that adaptation action should be country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and based, as appropriate, in traditional knowledge. The Glasgow Climate Pact refers to “climate justice” and highlights the importance of the concept of “Mother Earth” for some cultures.

The Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP) was established at COP21 with the purpose of strengthening the knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and Indigenous Peoples related to actions to address climate change. COP26 welcomed progress in the implementation of the LCIPP's initial two-year workplan. COP26 also decided to continue with the mandate of the Facilitative Group and the development of a second three-year LCIPP workplan for 2021-2024.

*Figure 3: Little Amal a 3.5-meter-tall living artwork representing a young Syrian refugee child. Photo from: United Nations www.un.org/es/node/158697*

During COP25, the Parties agreed on a five-year enhanced Lima work programme on gender and its Gender Action Plan (GAP). Two years later, COP26 recognized that the effects of COVID-19 deepened existing inequalities, including gender inequalities, and limited progress on gender and climate change. Additionally, the Conference highlighted the ongoing underrepresentation of and lack of leadership by women in all participatory instances under the UNFCCC and welcomed reporting on women's participation in delegations, based on gender-disaggregated data. According to a UNFCCC report, women government delegates to COP26 occupied 33 percent of all positions in bodies established under the Framework.

Furthermore, the UK government will be providing GBP165 million in funding for two programmes aimed at advancing gender equality while tackling climate change. One programme will be supporting the empowerment of local communities and grassroot women's groups in the Asia Pacific region. The other will aim to build resilience, prevent pollution, protect biodiversity, strengthen renewable energy and better manage waste, while also supporting women's leadership, access to finance, education and skills in Bangladesh.

The Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) is a framework under the UNFCCC to empower all members of society to engage in climate action through six elements: education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information and international cooperation. During COP26, the Parties agreed upon the Glasgow work programme on Action for Climate Empowerment, which adopted a ten-year workplan prioritizing four thematic areas (policy coherence, coordinated action, tools and support, monitoring evaluation and reporting) to address challenges in implementing the six ACE elements. The decision on the ACE work programme also encourages Parties to strengthen the integration of ACE into national climate policies, plans and strategies. Finally, and most importantly, the decision acknowledges "the growing interest and engagement of youth in climate action and the critical role of youth as agents of change" and calls for further support of youth participation in climate change processes.

# Interpretation and concluding thoughts

The UK government celebrated an unprecedent number of announcements and mitigation pledges outside of the conference halls, and celebrated the Glasgow Climate Pact inside the blue-zone negotiation area. It was a great COP for forests, a good COP for carbon markets, an average COP for ambition, and a mediocre COP for finance:

Glasgow saw more announcements on forests and nature than any of its predecessors. Nature may still be a step-child of climate policies, but it is not any longer a 'forgotten solution.' Glasgow remembered it. The COP also led to the conclusion of the Article 6 rulebook for markets, which opens a pathway to internationally regulated carbon markets. When it comes to climate ambition, the COP carries on its tradition of calling for robust commitments without showing decisive action. The Glasgow Climate Pact leaves no doubt that governments understand that they need to do more to ramp up ambition. But the current NDCs makes one wonder what more is needed to overcome the intention-action deficit. Perhaps the answer is partly given in the frustration of developing countries facing unmet financing pledges that remains a constant undertone of COPs.

So, was it overall a good COP or a bad COP? It was a solid COP, that delivered on many fronts; essential, what could be expected. To make COPs truly ground-breaking, not only more ambition would be required, but most importantly more action.

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