

Climate talks draft agreement expresses 'alarm and concern'

November 10 2021, by Seth Borenstein and Frank Jordans



Little Amal, a 3.5m puppet of a 10-year-old Syrian refugee, crosses the Millennium Bridge near the venue of the COP26 U.N. Climate Summit in Glasgow, Scotland, Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2021. The U.N. climate summit in Glasgow has entered its second week as leaders from around the world, are gathering in Scotland's biggest city, to lay out their vision for addressing the common challenge of global warming. Credit: AP Photo/Alberto Pezzali

Negotiators at the United Nations climate talks are considering a draft decision that highlights "alarm and concern" about global warming the planet already is experiencing and continues to call on the world to cut about half of its emissions of heat-trapping gases by 2030.

The early version of the cover decision released Wednesday at the climate talks in Glasgow, Scotland, doesn't provide specific agreements on the three major goals that the U.N. set going into the negotiations.

The draft mentions the need to cut emissions by 45% by 2030 from 2010 levels and achieve "net-zero" by mid-century. Doing so requires countries to pump only as much greenhouse gas into the atmosphere as can be absorbed again through natural or artificial means.

It urges countries to "accelerate the phasing out of coal and subsidies for fossil fuels," but makes no explicit reference to ending the use of oil and gas.

The draft also acknowledges "with regret" that rich nations have failed to live up to their pledge of providing \$100 billion a year in financial help by 2020 to help poor nations deal with global warming.

The draft reaffirms the goals set in Paris in 2015 of limiting warming to 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times, with a more stringent target of trying to keep warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) preferred.



John Kerry, United States Special Presidential Envoy for Climate looks at his watch during the COP26 U.N. Climate Summit in Glasgow, Scotland, Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2021. The U.N. climate summit in Glasgow has entered its second week as leaders from around the world, are gathering in Scotland's biggest city, to lay out their vision for addressing the common challenge of global warming. Credit: AP Photo/Alberto Pezzali

Highlighting the challenge of meeting those goals, the document "expresses alarm and concern that human activities have caused around 1.1 C (2 F) of global warming to date and that impacts are already being felt in every region."

Separate draft proposals were also released on other issues being debated at the talks, including rules for international carbon markets and the frequency by which countries have to report on their efforts.

The draft calls on nations that don't have national goals that would fit with the 1.5 or 2 degree temperature rise limits to come back with stronger targets next year. Depending on the language is interpreted, the provision could apply to most countries. Analysts at the World Resources Institute counted this element of the draft as a win for vulnerable countries.

"This is crucial language," WRI International Climate Initiative Director David Waskow said Wednesday. "Countries really are expected and are on the hook to do something in that timeframe to adjust."



Former U.S. President Barack Obama and John Kerry, United States Special Presidential Envoy for Climate applaud members of the US delegation at the US Center at the COP26 U.N. Climate Summit in Glasgow, Scotland, Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2021. The U.N. climate summit in Glasgow has entered it's second week as leaders from around the world, are gathering in Scotland's biggest city, to lay out their vision for addressing the common challenge of global warming. Credit: AP Photo/Alberto Pezzali

In a nod to one of the big issues for poorer countries, the draft vaguely "urges" developed nations to compensate developing countries for "loss and damage," a phrase that some rich nations don't like.

Whatever comes out of the meeting in Glasgow has to be unanimously approved by nearly 200 nations attending the negotiations.

A lot of negotiating and decision-making is to come in the next three or possibly four days. The deadline for the talks is Friday, but climate talks often go past planned end dates. The cover decisions provide more than anything the parameters for the issues that need to be resolved in the last few days of the annual U.N. conference, Waskow said.

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