

COP27 will turn attention to climate justice for poor nations

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If COP26 was about countries making promises to avoid catastrophic climate change, COP27 will be about raising money so developing nations can do their part.

Alok Sharma, who presided over the last United Nations [climate](#) summit hosted by the U.K. in Glasgow, in the past week visited Vietnam and Indonesia—two [middle-income countries](#) that have said they could strengthen their climate pledges under the Paris Agreement. Both are seeking financial packages from [rich countries](#) that will allow them to transition away from coal.

As he prepares to hand over the COP presidency, Sharma isn't taking his foot off the gas. Neither is John Kerry, the U.S. climate envoy, who visited Cairo on Monday to launch the U.S.-Egypt Climate Working Group, which will seek to advance goals ahead of COP27 hosted by Egypt. This year's meeting will focus less on raising targets to cut emissions and more on getting climate funding to developing countries—both to decarbonize and deal with the impacts of a warmer planet.

"This is not the big bang kind of COP where you're laying out a bold new set of commitments," said Alden Meyer, a veteran of the climate meetings who's a senior associate with research group E3G. "This is really 'roll up your sleeves and get down to business' and start to implement some of the things you've already committed to."

The Glasgow Pact created new deadlines that will have to be met, he said. There will be a ministerial roundtable on cutting emissions, and countries will have to set a post-2025 goal for financial contributions from rich countries. Making progress on the contentious issue of loss and damage, what poor nations say is owed to them for damage already baked in, is another task that remains unresolved after years of talks.

The sense of frustration was palpable as the meeting drew to a close in Glasgow. A global commitment to end the use of coal was watered down and developed countries failed to deliver on their promise to raise \$100 billion a year in climate finance by 2020. In the end, a series of pledges

just kept alive the chance of holding warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels. Without a significant increase in action, the target will "wither on the vine," Sharma said at the World Sustainable Development Summit on Thursday.

Sharma also visited Indonesia because it is this year's president of the Group of 20 countries, which is responsible for 80% of global emissions. Last year, these countries failed to agree Sharma's lofty goal of "consigning coal to history" and instead only settled on a more modest plan to end financing of foreign coal fired power plants.

So far, the only other country that publicly promised to update its pledge under the Paris Agreement is Egypt. It's expected to turn the spotlight on to African nations that make the smallest contribution to global warming, yet feel its consequences acutely. The Horn of Africa, which includes Ethiopia, Kenya and parts of Somalia, is currently experiencing its most severe drought for 40 years, that has killed more than 1.5 million livestock.

"This transition cannot be achieved without meaningful progress on securing more direct climate finance, including for adaptation," Kerry said in Cairo on Monday, "or without aligning the trillions of dollars for both mitigation and adaptation through stronger national policies."

Work on that is likely to be shaped by a major report on adaptation that's currently being finalized by a group of United Nations-backed scientists and due to be published on Feb. 28. It will put more pressure on countries to shore up their defenses against rising temperatures, more intense rainfall and water stress.

Leena Nandan, India's environment minister, also spoke at the World Sustainable Development Summit on Thursday. She said the focus on helping developing nations adapt to the impacts of climate change is

more important than pressuring them to cut emissions faster.

"Climate justice has to be a part of it," she told the conference. Where is the equity otherwise?"

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