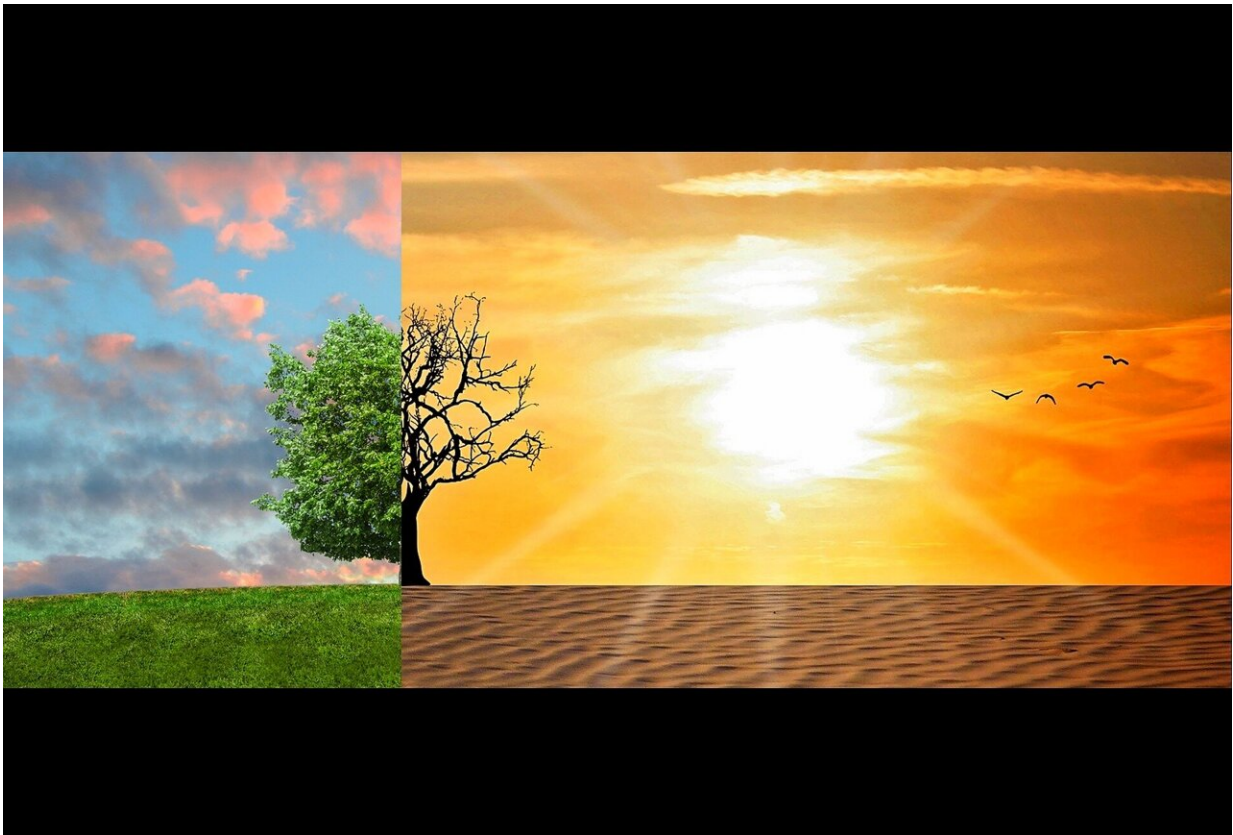


# Global South farmers desperate for COP27 adaptation action

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Rabie Abu Hashem had high hopes for his August olive harvest. He was counting on making enough money to pay off some debt and go into the next season in a strong financial position. But, the harvest was a

disappointment.

Abu Hashem says that changes in the [climate](#) in Egypt's South Sinai have caused unprecedented productivity losses of up to 60% at his olive grove.

Abu Hashem and other farmers across the Middle East and Africa do not have the resources to face these changes. They are pinning their hopes on this year's COP27 [climate summit](#)—hosted by Egypt and dubbed the "Africa COP"—to secure financial support from wealthy countries that will enable agricultural sectors to continue producing food on a hotter planet.

Climate leaders from the global South say they desperately need support to implement climate adaptation and mitigation measures. Top of their priority list are new crop varieties and livestock species that are heat- and drought-tolerant, as well as defense strategies and early warning systems for floods, hurricanes and other extreme weather events.

## **Adapt, mitigate, compensate**

Under the 2015 Paris Agreement, the world's richest countries pledged US\$100 billion a year in international climate finance, with at least half of this amount allocated to climate adaptation programs. But these pledges are not turning into action, say global South leaders.

Low- and [middle-income countries](#) in the Middle East are working on a common agenda to secure this much-needed climate finance.

Hassan Aboelnaga, executive manager of the Arab Network for Sustainable Development, says that with the exception of wealthy fossil fuel-producing Gulf states, the priorities of communities in the Middle East align with the Group of 77 (G77), a coalition of 134 developing

countries plus China, focused on promoting members' collective economic interests and bolstering their negotiating capacity at the United Nations.

Pakistan, which was recently hit by devastating floods, has chaired the G77 + China since January, and will be keener than ever to raise the voice of developing countries in demanding climate finance and compensation for the irreversible damages caused by climate change—known as loss and damage.

The African Union has released its first Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan for the next decade. The African Union's 55 [member countries](#) represent more than 1.2 billion people, and form the eleventh largest economy in the world.

The action plan aims to strengthen the adaptive capacity of climate-affected communities and pursue low-emission development.

Meeting in September ahead of the twenty-seventh conference of the parties to the UN climate convention—COP27—African Union members said they needed up to US\$50 billion per year to mitigate against temperature increases of 1.5 degrees, and up to US\$60 billion per year under 2 degrees of warming.

Egypt's finance minister Mohamed Maait said that between three and nine percent of the countries' budgets were being spent on climate mitigation—a massive burden in the face of COVID-19 recovery and the ongoing food price crisis.

## **Walking the walk**

While these countries base their demands on research from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—scientific

evidence that already shows that the Middle East and North Africa has warmed twice as fast as the global rate—the Gulf states' positions are more closely aligned with those of the Group of Twenty (G20), an intergovernmental forum of 19 of the world's largest national economies and the European Union.

"The Gulf states will be careful not to make any commitments that harm their oil and gas production," Ahmed Kandil, head of the energy security program at Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, tells SciDev.Net.

"They will present their programs to achieve carbon neutrality by encouraging the use of new technologies."

Kandil says that he is skeptical about the viability of the proposed technologies, such as carbon capture and storage and so-called "green" hydrogen.

At the World Economic Forum's September [sustainable development](#) impact meeting, which looked forward to COP27, Egypt's international cooperation minister Rania Al-Mashat called for wealthy countries' climate commitments to be turned into action.

"There is a gap in funding, when we look into the overall climate scene we can see it inclines towards the developed world, although the developing countries are in dire need," Al-Mashat said.

"Egypt has tried over the past several months to pave the way to figure out how different countries can actually move to executable projects."

Magdy Allam takes a more pessimistic view of the chances of success at COP27. Allam, the secretary-general of the Union of Arab Environmental Experts, tells SciDev.Net that the Russian invasion of

Ukraine will impede [developing countries](#)' efforts to secure funding for climate adaptation projects and commitments from [wealthy countries](#) to phase out fossil fuels.

"The war caused a devastating economic crisis and created [fossil fuel] energy supply problems," Allam says. "I do not expect the COP27 to succeed in either endorsing a trend of phasing out coal or raising huge funds for climate mitigation that are capable of moving from commitments to implementation."

Aboelnaga agrees, saying that the expected absence of the United Kingdom's new king, who is seen as a climate champion, has been met with disappointment, while the US president Joe Biden has been pushing for increased oil production from the petroleum exporting countries, known as OPEC+, to keep supply high and prices low.

Aboelnaga says, "OPEC+ announced on 5 October that it would cut oil production by two million barrels per day, or two percent of global oil supplies. Nevertheless, the American insistence reveals that the energy crisis may not make room for environmental issues at COP27."

Provided by SciDev.Net

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