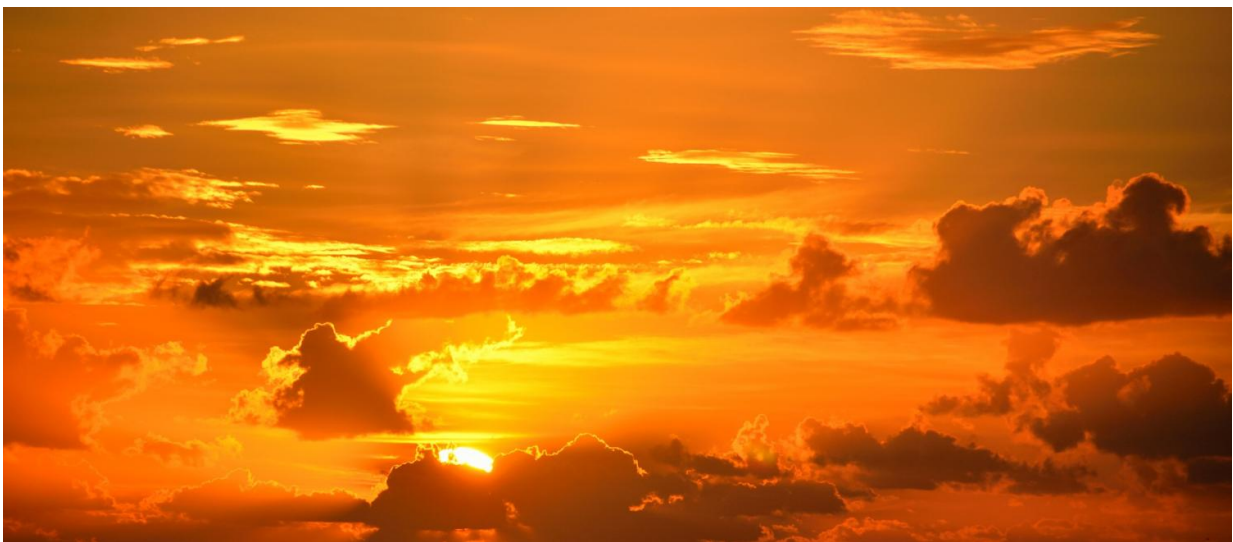


Climate negotiators reach framework to aid vulnerable countries

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Global climate negotiators reached a framework for a fund to help vulnerable nations deal with loss and damage from increasingly extreme weather, though the breakthrough was marred by sparring over exactly how the program would be funded.

Delegates meeting in Abu Dhabi agreed late Saturday that the World Bank will host a new Loss and Damage Fund on an interim basis for four years—breaking an impasse after months of negotiations. They also set

basic guideposts for funding, with developed countries urged to provide support. The discussion next heads to the United Nations climate change summit known as COP28, which starts in Dubai later this month.

"Billions of people, lives and livelihoods who are vulnerable to the effects of climate change depend upon the adoption of this recommended approach," said Sultan Al Jaber, the president-designate of COP28. The document is "clear and strong" and "paves the way for agreement," he said.

Human rights activists and representatives from poorer nations said they were disappointed to leave without a commitment for an immediate and significant infusion of money, and tensions now threaten to spill over into the broader climate talks. Even as the pact was reached, the lead U.S. representative objected it didn't reflect consensus.

Poor nations had sought specific language making clear the burden for funding falls on [wealthy nations](#) that built their economies by burning fossil fuels—and have released the bulk of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere today. Vulnerable nations had been reluctant to situate the fund within the World Bank amid concerns it will sufficiently prioritize climate action.

The committee "delivered on its mandate, but it was the furthest thing imaginable from a success," said Brandon Wu, director of policy and campaigns at ActionAid U.S.. "Developing countries showed massive flexibility, giving concessions from the very beginning," but developed nations "simply dug in their heels."

The final language doesn't demand immediate capitalization of the fund and doesn't indicate the intended scale of those contributions, said Harjeet Singh, head of global political strategy at Climate Action Network-International.

"We are only looking at an empty bank account," Singh said in an interview. "It doesn't go far enough to support communities who are facing climate emergencies now" and address needs that "are already running into hundreds of billions of dollars."

Human rights activists blamed the U.S. and other developed nations for fighting language that would specify rich, historic polluters have an obligation to pay into the fund.

Sparring over where to house the fund "distracted from the actual task at hand" and ensuring a fund "that would provide effective remedy for communities suffering harms from the climate crisis," said Lien Vandamme, a senior campaigner for the Center for Environmental Law.

China and Saudi Arabia had also been loathe to pay into such a fund, contending they were still developing and that countries responsible for the bulk of historical emissions should finance the initiative.

Avinash Persaud, the [climate](#) envoy to Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley, said the island [nation](#) has reservations about the agreement he said posed "mutual discomfort" and was a "difficult and challenging outcome." But he stressed it nevertheless represents "a positive step forward."

"Failure would definitely have cast a long shadow over COP," Persaud said in a phone interview.

The U.S. successfully pushed for language making clear the fund can receive money from a wide variety of sources—keeping the door open to revenue from carbon pricing mechanisms and philanthropic donations—after arguing no single government has enough resources to deliver what's needed. But the U.S. lost its bid for language that would have made clear contributions are purely voluntary.

The text doesn't reflect consensus concerning the need for clarity on the voluntary nature of contributions, a U.S. State Department official said.

The fund is one of the most politically divisive issues facing the COP28 summit, and countries may adopt the framework or push to reopen the text for further changes. Developing nations were initially opposed to the World Bank hosting the facility amid a lack of confidence that the institution had shifted sufficiently to spur [climate action](#).

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