



CJID
CENTRE FOR JOURNALISM INNOVATION & DEVELOPMENT

COP Reporting Handbook **for Journalists**



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COP Reporting Handbook for Journalists

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About CJID

The Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID), formerly the Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism (PTCIJ), is a West African media innovation and development think (and do) tank. Founded in 2014 as a non-governmental organisation in Nigeria. The Centre has been a leader in investigative journalism, civic technology, open data, verification, safety of journalists, elections and freedom of information and expression. It has a presence in Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia and The Gambia.

with the support of:



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Introduction to the COP Reporting Handbook

Climate change is one of the defining issues of this century. Despite being one of the least contributors to global carbon emissions, Africa is arguably the worst impacted by climate change¹. Most African countries still rely heavily on rain-fed agriculture. Therefore, African nations are extremely vulnerable to climate change due to their sensitivity to climate shocks and their inability to adapt, with effects ranging from health to the economy². Across Africa, many countries are battling a significant rise in sea levels which threatens their coastal regions, a key source of revenue³. Although coastal areas in West Africa account for nearly one-third of the region's population and produce 56% of its GDP, this region loses about \$3.8 billion annually due to the degradation of coastal zones⁴. Variable rainfall patterns in a number of other nations negatively impact agricultural production and crop yield, causing drought and the subsequent strife brought on by conflicts for scarce resources.⁵

1. <https://www.afdb.org/en/cop25/climate-change-africa>

2. <https://unfccc.int/news/climate-change-is-an-increasing-threat-to-africa>

3. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/publication/west-africas-coast-losing-over-38-billion-a-year-to-erosion-flooding-and-pollution>

4. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/493862-cop26-african-activists-seek-actions-not-words-from-global-leaders.html>

5. <https://unfccc.int/news/climate-change-is-an-increasing-threat-to-africa>

While the Greater Horn of Africa and the Sahel, both dry regions, suffered flooding in 2019, Southern Africa faced widespread drought⁶. The first famine brought on by climate change occurred in Madagascar in 2021, and according to accounts, people affected say it was a tedious struggle to survive⁷. As a recent IPCC report has warned, this trend will only continue if proper and urgent measures are not taken⁸.

The environmental issues are numerous and demand CSO engagement and media amplification to ignite policy responses from the government. Lack of capacity, technicality, the opacity of deals, and government processes in the ecological space mean climate change issues are under-discussed and under-reported. That said, the annual convening of governments around the world, representatives from various non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and nearly thousands of journalists to discuss climate change issues are referred to as the Conference of the Parties (COP), with “parties” referring to the 197 nations that agreed to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992. In June 1992, representatives from 172 countries gathered in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the United Nations

6. <https://unfccc.int/news/climate-change-is-an-increasing-threat-to-africa>

7. <https://www.ft.com/content/8fa3596e-9c6a-4e49-871a-86c20e0d170c>

8. <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/>

Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), commonly called the Earth Summit⁹. The Earth Summit was an unprecedented meeting of representatives, including 108 heads of state, 2,400 representatives from various non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and nearly 10,000 journalists. An additional 17,000 NGO representatives attended a parallel NGO forum that provided recommendations to the Earth Summit. At the summit, the countries signed a treaty promising to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere and prevent dangerous changes to the climate. Almost every year since then, the parties to this agreement have met to talk about what still needs to be done.

For 2022, it will be COP27, and it will be held from 6 to 18 November 2022 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. CJID believes that the role of journalists is central in reporting activities at COP, and therefore a reporting handbook is a necessary intervention to guide journalists. The goal of this handbook is to develop effective material that helps to drive reporting on climate change and environmental sustainability in Africa. It will introduce journalists to the mandate of COPs, the African agenda and the important topics to cover during COPs.

9. <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/environment/rio1992>

The awareness of climate change issues in Africa is considered low, and studies have indicated that the media has not paid sufficient attention to climate change issues. The Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID) expects this handbook to fill the gap in knowledge and capacity for reporting COP. We hope to continue to equip journalists, media professionals, and civil society actors to hold the government accountable for its sustainable and green climate commitments. We also hope to increase citizens' awareness about climate change issues.

Akintunde Babatunde

Deputy Director (Development)

Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development

What is COP?

[Read more](#)

- 1992 was a remarkable year for global environmental policy
- In that year, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, known as the **Rio Earth Summit** was held to discuss how the world can respond to environmental issues
- The Rio summit resulted in **3 environmental conventions on:**
 - **Climate**
 - **Biodiversity**
 - **Desertification**

The Conference of the Parties (COP)

COP is the meeting in which governments that are parties to a convention meet to negotiate and agree on the details to achieve the convention's objectives

What is COP?

Rio Earth Summit - 1992



Climate



Biodiversity



Desertification

UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

CBD: Convention on Biodiversity

UNCCD: United Nation Framework Convention on Desertification

UNFCCC History (brief)

[Read more](#)

1992



The UNFCCC
was born

1997



Kyoto Protocol
1st Milestone

Kyoto Protocol was named after the
Japanese city in which the COP
meeting was held that year

Meaning of "Enter Force"

An agreement can only enter force
(become active) after it has been
ratified by at least 55 countries
representing at least 55% of global
greenhouse emissions

2005



Kyoto Protocol
enters force

2008-2012



Kyoto Protocol 1st
commitment period



KYOTO PROTOCOL IN A NUTSHELL

- Mandated developed countries to decrease emissions to 5.2% below 1990 levels by 2012
- Established 3 carbon market mechanisms
- The U.S never ratified it & Canada Withdrew in 2011
- First peirod failed so it was extended for a 2nd commitment period

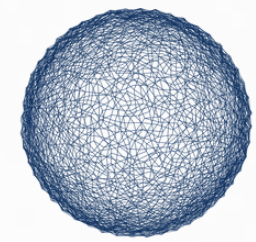
[Read more](#)

UNFCCC History (brief)

[Read more](#)

2009

2013 – 2020



COP15
COPENHAGEN
UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE 2009

"Spectacular failure"

Failed attempt to
have a global
agreement



DOHA 2012
UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE
COP18-CMP8

Doha Amendment
Kyoto Protocol 2nd
commitment

New climate policy era

After it became apparent that
Kyoto's targets will not be
achieved, the COP negotiations
worked on setting up a new global
agreement to replace the protocol
(Paris Agreement)

2015

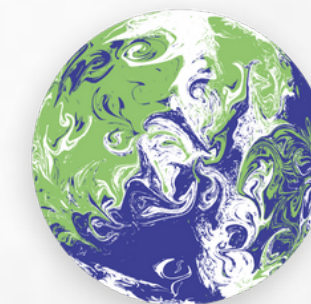
2021

2022



Paris Agreement

2nd Milestone



Finalization of
Paris Rulebook



The
Implementation of
Paris Agreement

Page 8

Negotiation Groups

[Read more](#)

- The UNFCCC divided countries (parties) into two groups:
 - Annex: refers to industrial countries that hold historical responsibility to climate change
 - Non-Annex: refers to all other developing countries
- The UNFCCC operate on a principle called Common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR)

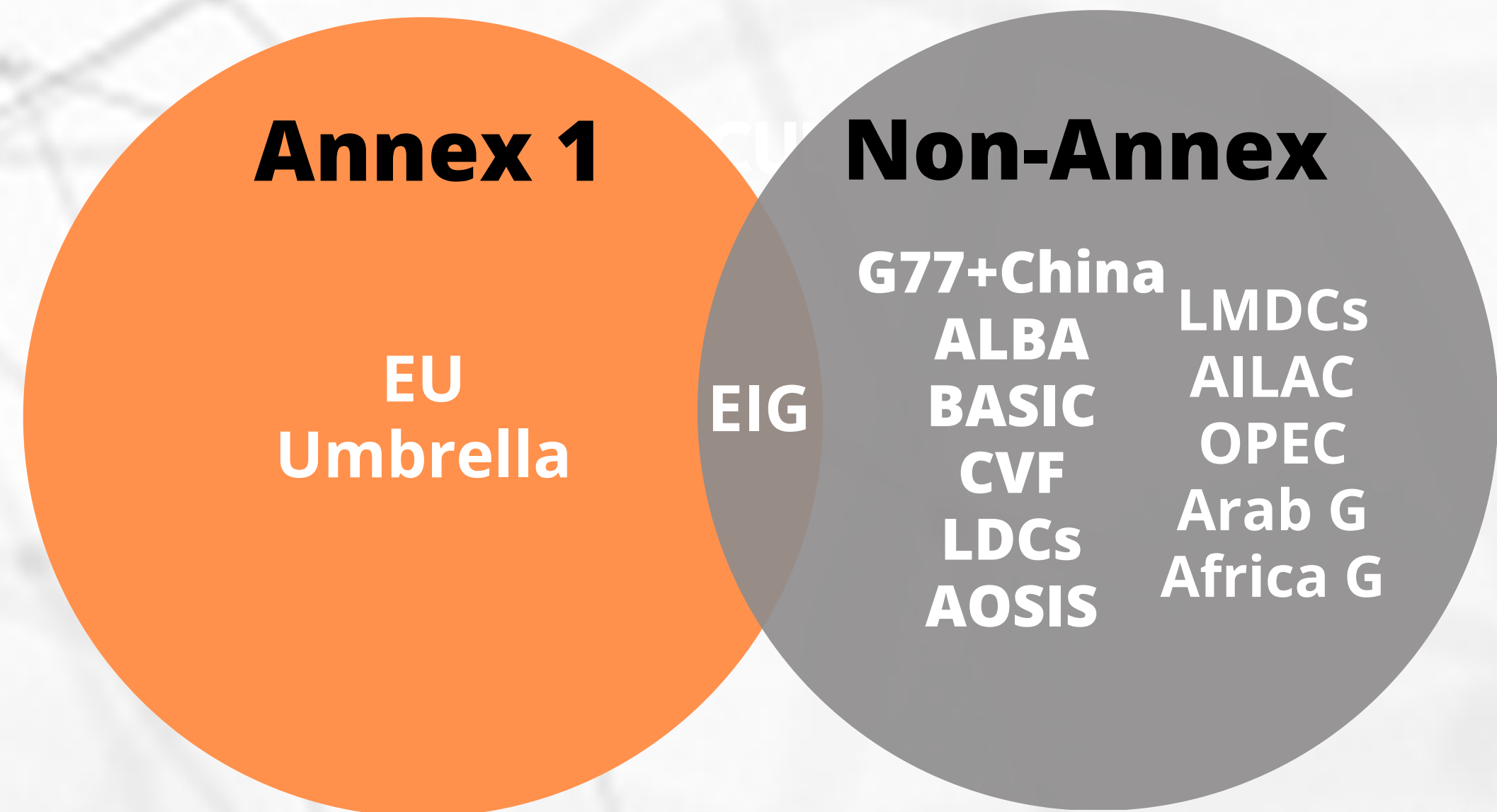
CBDR

**principle of international environmental law
establishing that all states are responsible for
addressing global environmental destruction yet
not equally responsible**

Negotiation Groups

- Countries negotiate in groups because with more numbers they can push their demands and influence the negotiations outcomes. There are five regional groups and other formed alliances

LMDC: Like-Minded Developing Countries
LDC: Least Developed Countries
AOSIS: Alliance of Small Island States
LMDC: Like Minded Developing Countries



angements C

COP21/CMP11

aris, France



PARIS AGREEMENT

- The Paris Agreement has three objectives:
 - Limit warming below 2 degrees & aim for 1.5 degrees of warming
 - Increase adaptation ability, lower emissions
 - Making finance flows consistent
- The Paris Agreement has three pillars:
 - Adaptation
 - Mitigation
 - Loss & Damage

[Read more](#)

Paris Agreement

The Agreement has 3 key pillars:

Adaptation

Anticipating the effects of climate change and taking appropriate action to prevent or minimise the damage, or taking advantage of opportunities that may arise

Mitigation

Making the impacts of climate change less severe by preventing or reducing the emission of greenhouse gases (GHG) into the atmosphere

Loss & Damage

Climate impacts exceeding the adaptive capacity of countries, communities and ecosystems

PROGRESS SINCE PARIS AGREEMENT

- Since the signing of the agreement in 2015, parties have spent the subsequent COPs clarifying the details of the agreement.
- After 6 years of negotiations, the Paris Agreement Rulebook was finalized at COP 26 in Glasgow.
- This year, COP27's primary focus will be to agree on the implementation process of the rulebook.



AFRICA AT COP27

"COP 27 should be about advancing the implementation of the **National Determined Contributions (NDCs)**, including **adaptation** and **mitigation** efforts and delivery of **finance** to enhance implementation."

- Africa's chief climate negotiator

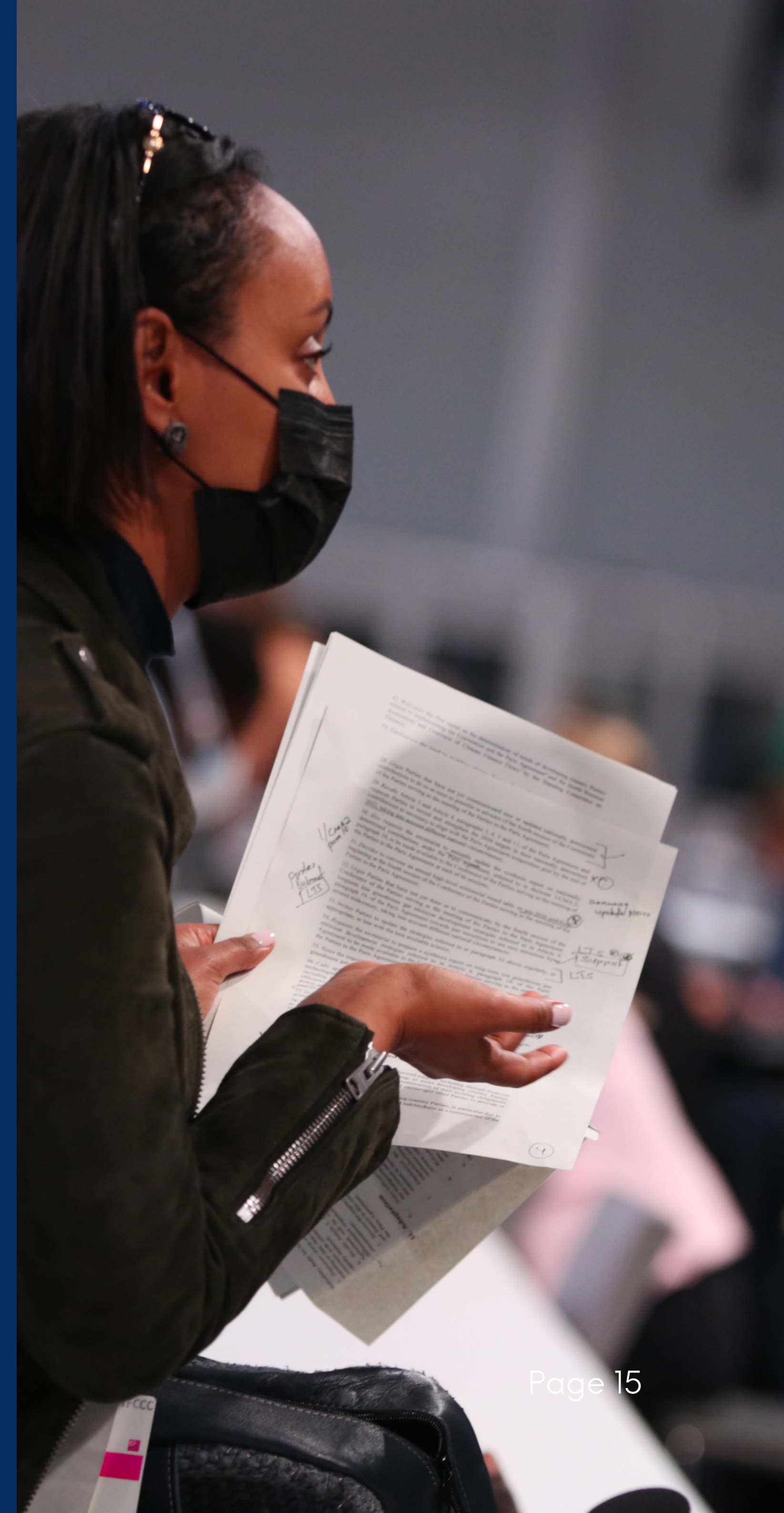
[Read more](#)



ADAPTATION

[Read more](#)

- Adaptation has historically received less attention in the negotiations as developed countries usually push for mitigation topics. At COP27, the Africa group will push for more advancement in the adaptation agenda
- One of the main topics on adaptation at COP 27 will be clarifying the details of the Global Goal on Adaptation
- The Africa group will also demand that developed countries show how they will deliver their promise to double adaptation finance by 2025 as the current studies show that just half of the goal will be met by 2025.



Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA)

The Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) was established under the Paris Agreement to enhance work on adaptation with the aim of building adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience, and reducing vulnerability to climate change



Adaptation finance

Any financial support that is dedicated to adaptation projects and initiative can generally be referred to as adaptation finance. The main financial entity for adaptation finance is the Adaption Fund (AF)

LOSS AND DAMAGE

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- Loss and damage (L&D) have always been a contentious topic. This is mainly because developing countries want to establish a financial facility dedicated just to L&D while developed countries do not want this because it will allow countries to demand more funding from them.
- Since the establishment of the Paris Agreement. Discussions on L&D have not resulted in any tangible outcomes. At COP 27 the African Group will demand new and additional finance to address L&D through a financial facility.
- The group will also push for The operationalization of the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage



Santiago Network on Loss and Damage (SNDL)

The SNDL was established in COP 26 as a way to facilitate technical assistance to developing countries on aspects related to Loss and Damage (L&D) from climate change.



Why is loss and damage contentious?

Developed countries do not want a dedicated financial facility for loss and damage because this will require more financial obligations from them

MITIGATION

[Read more](#)

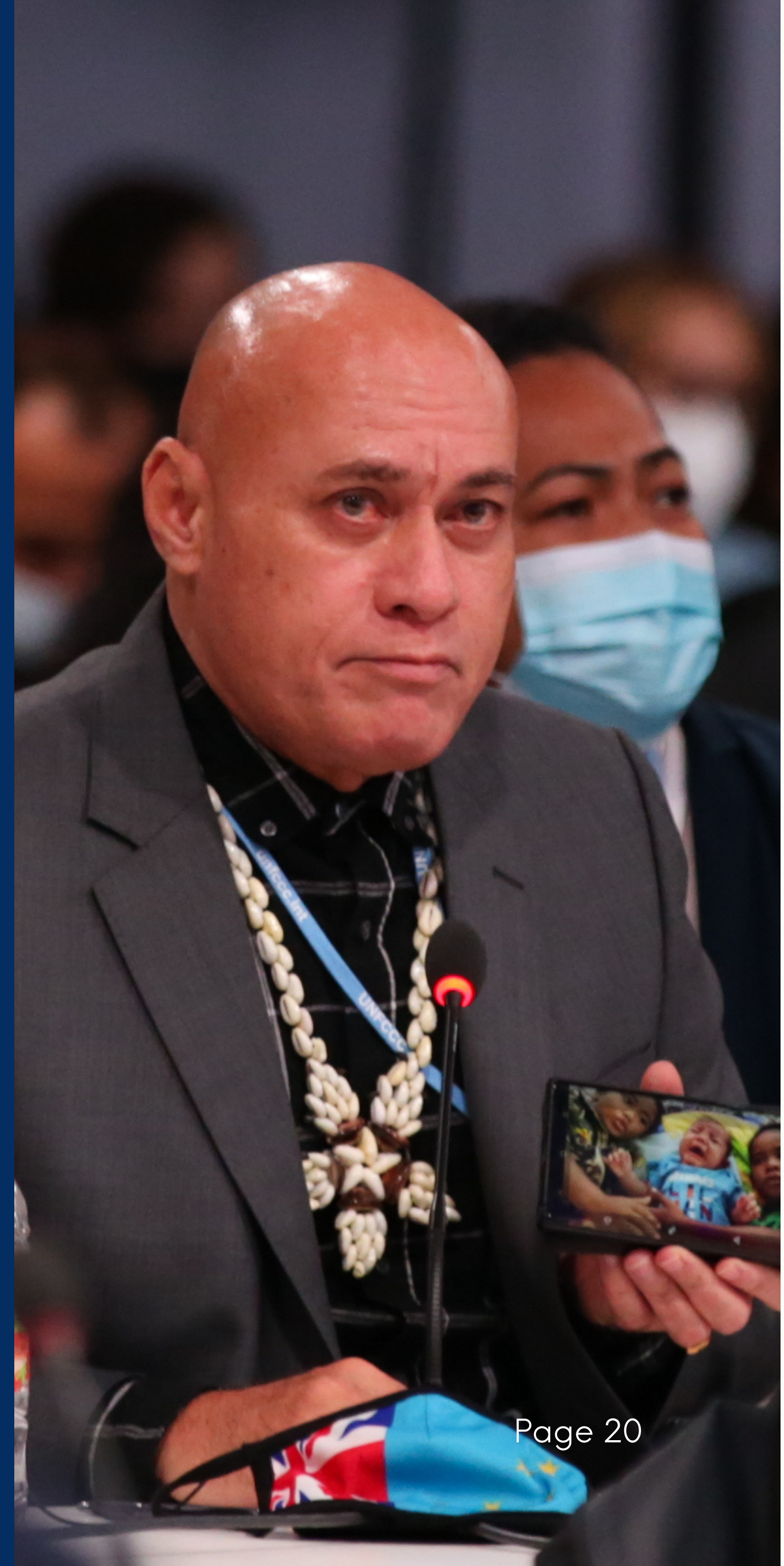
- Recent studies and reports have shown that the world is not on track to meet the Paris Agreement temperature goals. In order to remain within the 1.5 degrees warming limit, emissions must be cut by %45 by 2030.
- To meet this target, countries - specially developed countries- were asked to submit updated, more ambitious, NDCs by the end of 2022. So far, only 18 countries have done so.
- At COP27 the Africa group will be demanding more ambitious targets from developed countries to align with the urgency of the climate crisis. This ambition should be reflected in updated NDCs and long term strategies from developed countries



FINANCE

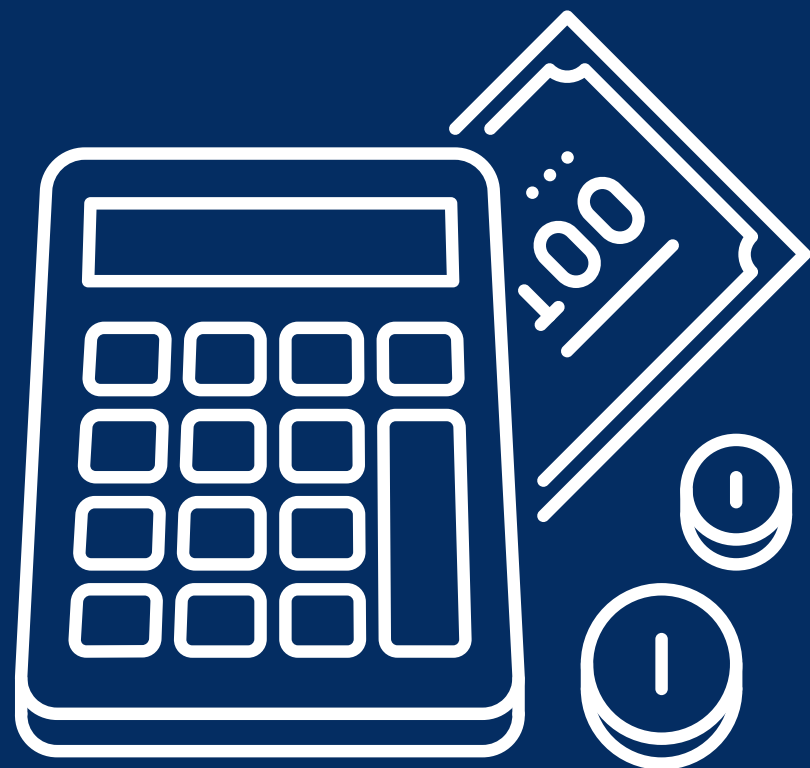
[Read more](#)

- In 2012, during COP 15, developed countries promised to deliver \$100 billion/year for climate finance by 2020. At COP26, developed countries confirmed that this goal will not be met until 2025.
- At COP27, the Africa group will demand that developed countries show how they will deliver the \$100 billion goal by 2025 and how they will make up the shortfall.
- COP27 must also advance the discussion to agree on a new finance goal known as the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for climate finance. Unlike the \$100 billion goal, the Africa group is demanding that the new goal must be based on the science and reflective of developing countries needs to address climate impacts.



The \$100 Billion promise

This was a pledge made by developed countries at COP15 to mobilizing jointly USD 100 billion per year by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries. There was no rationale for choosing the target and it was meant at the time as a big political statement from developed countries



New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG)

A new goal to be agreed for the period post 2025. It is an important topic for developing countries because they want to ensure that the agreed target is reflective of the real needs of countries to address climate change

Covering COP 27



Do not cover everything

- **Alot of events and news come out during COP which can be overwhleming**
- **To best prepare for COP, work on developing a workplan with the topics you are most interested in covering**
- **Once you decide on your main topics, start doing background reading and resarch ASAP.**
- **This will allow you to choose an angle, work our potential interviewees and pitch the article to your editors in advance**



Know where to get information

- **To best cover COP, you need to identify trusted source of information**
- **This can be news websites, live coverage from journalists on social media, the UNFCCC official website, press release**
- **Having trusted sources is important because it helps you filter out information especially if you will be covering COP virtually**



Sort out contacts and potential interviews in advance

- **Pinning down people during COP is difficult as a lot is happening and thus people are busy. This is why you need to plan in advance contacts for quotes, comments, or insights**
- **These can be official delegates from your country or negotiation Group**
- **Reaching out to your delegation now and establishing contacts will help you get faster comments or quotes for your pieces**
- **It is also useful to search for experts on your topics of interest so you know who to reach out to**



Start reading on your topics of interest early

- **One of the best ways to prepare for COP after deciding what you are going to cover is to start the background reading early**
- **You do not need to become an expert on the history of the topic.**
- **You should make sure you understand the current debates and what is expected to happen at the COP**
- **This is linked to knowing where to find information so you do not get overwhelmed with the options you find online**



Keep it simple

- **COP negotiations can be complex, full of jargons and thus difficult to understand for the general public**
- **As a journalist, try to avoid using complicated language.**
- **You should aim to simplify the information and relate to your audiences' interest**

Useful Links

Live Coverage

<https://www.climatechangenews.com/>
<https://www.carbonbrief.org/>
<https://climatetracker.org/>
https://climatenetwork.org/resource_type/eo-newsletter/
<https://enb.iisd.org/>
<https://twm.my/climate.htm>

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/i/lists/1419097454302085120>
<https://twitter.com/i/lists/1455643637656739844>

Background Information

<https://www.carbonbrief.org/policy/un-climate-talks/>
<https://pubs.iied.org/>
<https://unfccc.int/>

Negotiation Groups

<https://africangroupofnegotiators.org/>
<https://www ldc-climate.org/>