
LKI *Explainers* examine an agreement or another aspect of Sri Lanka's international relations.

Global Climate Change and COP27 Implementation Summit

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COP27 climate summit came to an end on 20th November 2022 in Egypt with a breakthrough agreement to establish a fund for loss and damage, and this LKI Explainer highlights the key achievements, challenges and setbacks of the COP27 climate summit.

1. Introduction

- The 27th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP27) was held from 6th to 20th November 2022 in Sharm El-Sheikh Egypt under the presidency of Sameh Shoukry. State parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)) gathered for the 27th time to evaluate progress of climate actions and commitments. Since the launch of COP27, the international community recognised it as ‘the implementation summit’ or ‘the African COP’.

2. Why was COP27 significant?

- COP27 was called the implementation summit as it was held under the theme “Together for implementation” with the aim of advancing and achieving climate targets and commitments under the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC. COP27 took place amidst increasing climate impacts, geopolitical tensions, food insecurity and global fuel crisis due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.
- More importantly, COP27 was held under pressure from climate activists and the youth, with focus directed towards global leaders, and climate polluting companies for their lack of climate commitment, empty promises and greenwashing.
- COP27 brought in new hope of focusing on special needs, circumstances and investment opportunities in Africa for addressing climate issues and implementing climate actions. Africa is particularly a vulnerable region for the climate crisis and is subject to frequent floods, sea level rise and constant droughts.

3. What did COP27 entail?

- COP27 also served as the [17th session](#) of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, and as the 4th session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the parties to the [Paris Agreement](#) (CMA) and the 56th session of the subsidiary bodies.¹
- [112 heads](#) of state including Joe Biden, President of the United States of America; Rishi Sunak, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom; Emmanuel Macron, President of France; and over [46,000 delegates](#) including ministers; policy makers; climate activists, scientists, and members of United Nations Secretariat units and bodies; specialised agencies and related organisations; intergovernmental organisations; and non-governmental organisations attended COP27.²
- COP27 had [thematic days](#) on the topics of finance, science, youth and future generations, decarbonisation, water, ace and civil society, energy, biodiversity and solutions. Roundtable discussions focused on specific issues such as just transition, food security, innovative finance for

climate and development, investing in the future of energy, water security, and climate change and the sustainability of vulnerable communities. The first week of COP27 was allocated for technical discussions on climate matters while the second week focused on reaching agreements through negotiations.³

- At the opening ceremony of COP27, the [UNFCCC Executive Secretary](#) Simon Stiell highlighted three key areas on which the climate summit should focus, and they were
 - implementation of commitments to the Paris Agreement and the global climate finance architecture;
 - making progress in adaptation, mitigation finance, especially loss and damage,
 - establishing transparency and accountability in delivering what the parties have promised.⁴

4. State of the Climate

- Since the end of the COP26 climate summit the impacts of climate impacts have deepened including: catastrophic floods in Pakistan and Nigeria, extreme heat waves all around the world, severe droughts in Europe and China.
- The [Climate Change Report](#) 2022 of the IPCC affirmed with greater magnitude that increasing extreme weather patterns, and their extent and their magnitude of impact have reduced food security and water security around the world.⁵
- According to the [Emissions Gap Report 2022](#), the updated NDCs (at COP26) will only reduce GHG [emissions](#) climate actions based on the current state commitments and policies will only reduce warming to a temperature of 2.4 - 2.6 °C [by 7%](#) from 2019 levels, despite the recommendation that GHG emissions be reduced to 43% from 2019 levels to reach the 1.5°C target.⁷
- The [WMO Report](#) on the State of the Climate, indicates that in 2021, the global temperature has reached 1.1°C above pre-industrial levels.⁸

5. Key Outcomes of COP27

- The key outcomes of COP27 were centred on the [Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#). It focuses on seventeen areas: i) Science and Urgency; ii) Enhancing ambition and implementation; iii) Energy; iv) Mitigation; v) Adaptation; vi) Loss and damage; vii) early warning and systematic observation; viii) Implementation - pathways to just transition; ix) Finance; x) Technology transfer and deployment; xi) Capacity building; xii) Transparency; xiii) Taking stock; xiv) Article 6 of the Paris Agreement; xv) Ocean; xvi) Forest; and xvii) Enhancing implementation: action by non-party stakeholders.⁹
- Among notable outcomes in Sharm el-Sheikh are: the Standing Committee on Finance agreed to produce a report on doubling adaptation finance; progress in agriculture and food security through a new four-year work programme; a joint work programme of the [UNFCCC Technology Mechanism](#) 2023-2027 focusing on technology transfer;¹⁰ adoption of a mitigation

work programme; adoption of an action plan to provide early warnings systems within the next five years and decision for adoption of funding arrangements for loss and damage.

5.1 Loss and Damage Finance

- Loss and damage finance addresses unavoidable losses incurred from adverse climate impacts and the discussion on loss and damage finance continued on the side-lines of the main climate concerns at previous COPs. For the first time at COP27, the loss and damage finance was listed as a standing agenda item in the [adopted agenda](#) triggering formal negotiations on the subject.¹¹
- Loss and damage is a demand for climate justice by the most climate vulnerable countries among the developing nations, in order to hold the developed nations accountable for the irreversible damage caused by devastating climate impacts. After intense discussions, the developed nations including the United States (US), United Kingdom and the European Union (EU) agreed to set up a Loss and Damage fund to support the developing and the most climate-vulnerable nations.
- The most significant achievement of the COP27 climate summit is the agreement to set up a loss and damage finance as a part of [Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#) adopted at COP27.¹² A transitional committee will provide recommendations for operationalisation of the fund in COP28.

5.2 Focus on the 1.5°C Climate Target

- There was much debate among state parties on which climate target that their climate actions should be centred upon as the Paris agreement suggests keeping global temperature below 1.5°C or 2°C above pre-industrial levels. The EU fought strongly to not allow backtracking from the 1.5°C goal, but there was no new collective agreement to accelerate [emission reduction](#).¹³ As agreed in COP26, state parties reaffirmed their decision to keep alive the target of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, and the [Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#) establishes the importance of keeping the 1.5°C global temperature goal within reach.¹⁴
- To achieve the 1.5°C target, significant commitments from states are required especially in emission reduction. However, only [29 state parties](#) have submitted an update on their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, and 163 countries have not updated their NDCs in 2022.¹⁵ The [Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#) recognises the existing emission gap to achieve the 1.5°C target even though no further NDCs were submitted by state parties to reduce the gap.¹⁶
- The commitment for implementation of climate actions by the biggest greenhouse gas (GHG) emitters is significant for reaching this target. Especially, the role assumed by the US and China, would affect the progress on climate action. Although the US and China announced their commitment to make joint efforts on climate action at COP26, climate talks between the two countries were suspended by China in August 2022 due to US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan. Although there were [informal negotiations](#) between the two countries as a result of President Biden and President Xi Jinping's meeting at the [G20 summit](#), no formal negotiations for climate action were made between the two countries at COP27.¹⁷

5.3 Mitigation Efforts

- Heads of states and state representatives at the COP27 plenary session indicated their key climate issues and their interest to work on advancing climate actions. The United States [President Joe Biden](#) acknowledged the significance of achieving a low carbon future through investments in technology, establishment of energy infrastructure, reduction of emissions (especially cutting down methane), creation of green jobs and through forests and climate partnerships. The US President also emphasised that “good climate policy is a good economic policy”.¹⁸
- [Barbados Prime Minister](#), Mia Mottley clearly voiced at COP27 that the developing nations are victims of the devastating climate impacts caused by the developed industrialised nations’ inaction to mitigate GHG emissions, and their failure to maintain climate finance pledges for helping poor nations.¹⁹
- A four-year mitigation work programme (until 2026) was agreed upon ‘to scale up mitigation ambition and implementation’ as a part of the [Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#).²⁰
- In an effort to reduce global heating to the 1.5°C target, it is important to consider other mechanisms for reducing GHGs in the atmosphere. Reducing human induced methane emissions is one such measure which took a special focus at COP27 as the [Global Methane Pledge](#) (a COP26 initiative) is now supported by 150 countries which was initially backed by just over 100 countries last year.²¹ The pledge indicates a promise to collectively reduce GHG emission by [30% from 2020 levels](#) by 2030.²²
- Progress was also made at COP27 on conservation of forests and ecosystems. The UK Prime Minister launched the [Forests and Climate Leaders’ Partnership](#) where the EU and 26 countries come together to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030.²³ Moreover, the EU launched [Forest Partnerships](#) with five countries: the Republic of Congo, Guyana, Mongolia, Uganda and Zambia, which signifies long term commitment for cooperation with regard to forest management and governance, reduction of deforestation and forest degradation, and promotion of bio-economy ensuring trade of sustainable bio-products.²⁴

5.4 Energy & Investments

- The challenges faced by states due to the global energy crisis presented an opportunity to facilitate the discussion on sustainable transition to renewable energy. The [Glasgow Climate Pact](#) at COP26 set in motion phasing down of unabated coal, but further steps are still necessary to phase down all fossil fuels.²⁵ At COP27, Norway, Tuvalu, Colombia, France, Denmark, Spain, Ireland and other countries [supported phasing down](#) of all fossil fuels.²⁶ However, no collective decision was reached by the end of the summit. It was observed by many that the presence of a significant number of fossil fuel lobbyists ([more than 600](#) estimated) at COP27 hindered any progress towards phasing down all fossil fuels.²⁷
- [Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance](#) (BOGA) created by Costa Rica and Denmark to further the cause of phasing out oil and gas production, announced that Portugal and Washington state in the US

were to join alongside Costa Rica, Denmark, France, Greenland, Ireland and Quebec as core members of BOGA.²⁸

- To advance just energy transition in Africa, the South African President Ramaphosa unveiled an [investment plan](#) under the South African Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) which elaborates how USD 8 billion from developed nations would be used for reducing reliance on coal and decarbonising energy.²⁹
- Article 6 of the Paris Agreement is an important provision which establishes and governs voluntary [carbon markets](#) which will aid states and other stakeholders in making a low-carbon transition. Technical discussions on how to set up carbon markets continued on at COP27 which resulted in the inclusion of a confidentiality clause on carbon trading to the draft text. However, the draft text was not adopted and the discussion on setting up carbon markets will come about prior to the next COP.³⁰

5.5 Adaptation Finance

- In 2009, developed nations pledged to provide [USD 100 billion](#) by 2020 under the Adaptation Fund to help developing countries deal with climate change impacts.³¹ However, the pledge of USD 100 billion has not been met by the developed countries to secure adaptation costs of the most vulnerable nations of developing countries. The developing nations demanded for the promises to be kept and to make new allocations to meet [adaptation costs](#) which will be between \$140-300 billion by 2030.³²
- [Rishi Sunak](#), the newly elected Prime Minister of the United Kingdom stated at the COP27 Plenary Session that it is morally right to adhere to climate finance promises made especially with regard to adaptation, and that the dependence on fossil fuels in the current global energy crisis, has shown the need to diversify energy supply by investing in renewable energy.³³
- In 2022, new pledges and contributions received to the Adaptation Fund amounted to [USD 232 million](#) for providing financial assistance to achieve adaptation needs of the climate vulnerable nation.³⁴ The [Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#) recognises the adaptation gap and raises concern over the lack of global adaptation finance flows. The Standing Committee on Finance agreed to produce a report on doubling adaptation finance.³⁵

5.6 Agriculture & Food Security

- COP27 gave prominence to discuss concerns on food security. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World [2022 report](#), states that 828 million people are affected by hunger in 2021.³⁶
- The [Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#) establishes a [joint work programme](#) for implementation of climate action addressing agriculture and food security which is a four-year programme implementing the outcomes of the Koronivia Joint work on Agriculture (KWJA) adopted by the COP and other prior activities addressing food security.³⁷

6. Sri Lanka at COP27

- The President of Sri Lanka, [Ranil Wickremesinghe](#) stated that when implementing climate actions in developing countries like Sri Lanka, the main barrier is lack of capacity. The Sri Lankan President also highlighted the need to address issues relating to food security and urged like-minded nations to have a discussion on it at the ministerial level.³⁸
- At COP27, Sri Lanka made promises to not to increase coal power; to phase out fossil fuel subsidies; to aim for 70% renewable energy use for electricity generation by 2030; and to join the Global Methane pledge. Moreover, the [Sri Lankan President](#) proposed to establish an International Climate Change University in Sri Lanka with an ancillary institution in Maldives, for the purpose of capacity building as a transdisciplinary global centre.³⁹
- Initiation of Marine Spatial planning, establishment of a Climate Office, implementation of national policy for conservation and sustainable utilisation of mangrove ecosystems, implementation of Commonwealth Pilot Project for Climate and Ocean Risk Vulnerability and leading Commonwealth Blue Charter Action Group on Mangrove Ecosystems and Livelihoods, are among climate actions currently undertaken by Sri Lanka.⁴⁰

COP27 KEY OUTCOMES

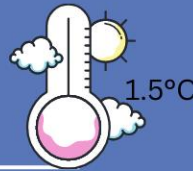


LOSS AND DAMAGE FUND

A transition committee established to make recommendations in the next COP for establishing the loss and damage fund.

1.5°C TARGET

The Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan reaffirmed the necessity to keep the rising of global temperature well below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

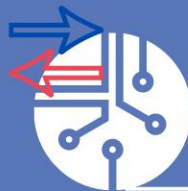


EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

An action plan to provide early warning systems within the next five years: 2023–2027, was unveiled at COP27.

ADAPTATION FINANCE

The Standing Committee on Finance agreed to produce a report on doubling adaptation finance.



TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

The joint work programme of the UNFCCC Technology Mechanism for 2023 - 2027 was launched for supporting countries to achieve climate goals through transformative technologies.

AGRICULTURE & FOOD SECURITY

A four-year joint work programme to implement the outcomes of Koronivia Joint work on Agriculture (KWJA) and prior activities addressing food security.



MITIGATION

As a part of Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan, a mitigation work programme was launched to scale up mitigation ambition and implementation, and it is aimed to continue until 2026.

ENERGY & INVESTMENTS

President Ramaphosa of South Africa introduced an investment plan under the South African Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP).



FOREST CONSERVATION

The Forests and Climate Leaders' Partnership was launched by the UK to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030. The EU launched Forests Partnerships with five countries.



7. What's Next?

- Although setting new targets for climate action was not the primary focus of COP27, it was evident that significant progress on commitments was required by state parties and other stakeholders to keep the 1.5°C target alive in accordance with the commitments and provisions of UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. The next [UNFCCC climate summit](#) COP28 will be held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from 30th November to 12th December 2023, and the expectation is high for progress and implementation of climate action.⁴¹

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