

POLICY PAPER

Climate policy in a polarised world

Expectations for COP28 outcomes in Dubai

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List of Abbreviations

ADNOC	Abu Dhabi National Oil Company
AF	Adaptation Fund
CCS	Carbon Capture and Storage
CBDR-RC	Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities
CMA	Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement
GLASS	Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh Work Programme
GGA	Global Goal on Adaptation
GST	Global Stocktake
GCF	Green Climate Fund
HAC	High Ambition Coalition
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IEA	International Energy Agency
IFA	International financial architecture
L&D	Loss and Damage
MWP	Mitigation Work Programme
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
NAPs	National Adaptation Plans
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NCQG	New Collective Quantified Goal
OBNEs	Organisations, Bodies, Networks and Experts
SNLD	Santiago Network for Loss and Damage
UNDRR	UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNOPS	UN Office for Project Services
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UAE	United Arab Emirates

Executive Summary

For the second year in a row, the *UN Climate Talks* are overshadowed by violent conflict. In 2022 world affairs were dominated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This year, it is the conflict in Israel and Gaza that threatens to influence the proceedings at COP. Beyond concerns regarding safety at the conference – which the organisers have sought to eliminate – the political exploitation of COP28 is a clear risk. It could exacerbate the growing polarisation between signatory states. To be sure, there are already major tensions between Western nations and some Middle Eastern actors, particularly Iran. As the fighting in Gaza is likely to be ongoing at the start of the conference, this could well impact negotiations in Dubai.

Fossil fuel companies and states saw record profits in 2022 and they continue to rake in billions from the extraction and sale of fossil fuels, despite their central role in contributing to the climate crisis. Rather than funnel these record revenues into sustainable transitions, fossil fuel companies and states are also using them to develop new oil and gas fields while engaging in lobbying efforts to protect their economic interests. Furthermore, some fossil fuel states – including Iran, Russia, and Saudi Arabia – have been using these revenues to finance armed conflict and/or the violation of human rights. The fossil fuel lobby exerted a significant impact on the deliberations at COP27, and there are fears its influence will be even stronger this year under the presidency of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Hopefully, this conference will represent the last attempt by the oil, gas, and coal lobby to keep the fossil-fuel economic model alive. Renewable energy, batteries, heat pumps, and electric vehicles are achieving ever greater adoption; the end of the fossil fuel era draws closer with each passing year. The energy policy debate at COP28 will be marked by the negotiation of targets for expanding renewable energy, enhancing energy efficiency, and phasing out coal, oil, and natural gas.

The world is increasingly characterised by *growing polarisation between the US and China*. This is sure to influence events at COP28. Both China and the US are trying to draw countries into their respective spheres of geopolitical influence. The US, for example, is hoping to draw India away from China; a new trade initiative announced by the G20 will develop a network of shipping and rail lines to connect India with the Gulf States, Middle East, and EU. China, by contrast, has been moving to expand the BRICS group (including so far Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). Egypt, Argentina, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE have all been invited to join. At the end of this year's G20 summit in India, the G20 managed to adopt a final communiqué and also a communiqué of the G20 finance ministers – despite obstructionism by Russia and China. This was a success over last year's G20 in Indonesia, when no final communiqué was adopted. This year's G20 summit thus sent an important signal for multilateralism – and also for the coming World Climate Summit.

The success of the summit in Dubai will depend in no small part on whether a broad-based *High Ambition Coalition (HAC)* emerges that can exert the necessary pressure on major emitters with regard to climate protection, adaptation, and financing. The major emitters are predominantly the G20 countries, especially the US and China, which together account for 81% of global emissions and relatively equal shares of global wealth. It is disappointing that Germany did not sign the statement issued by the emerging HAC, neither at the UN General Assembly summit in New York, nor at the pre-COP at the end of October.

The *UAE presidency* hopes to organise the largest COP ever, and is highly determined to make the conference an international media success. Accordingly, in addition to successful negotiations, the UAE is planning to launch several political initiatives of its own. Nevertheless, the UAE has come under criticism. The country's per capita GHG emissions and wealth are among the highest in the world, and its climate targets remain weak. The UAE sits atop some of the largest oil and gas reserves in the world, and these reserves have made the country incredibly wealthy. The UAE continues to develop and finance new oil and gas fields at home and abroad. The human rights situation in the UAE remains dire, as there are numerous cases of arbitrary detention, and significant restrictions on freedom of expression.

Points of political impasse

The first global stocktake (GST) – which began at COP26 in Glasgow – will end at COP28 in Dubai. Every five years, the GST reviews the progress made by signatory states in implementing the Paris agreement. Specifically, the GST examines collective progress achieved, long-term goals, and the core elements: climate mitigation and adaptation measures, associated funding requirements and finance flows. A key aim of the GST is to make countries submit more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) before COP30. The influence that the GST will exert on climate ambition in the coming years will crucially depend on the ambition and strength of the political messaging. This first GST will set the benchmark for future stocktakes, which will recur every five years. In this way, it will play an important role for the achievement of targets set by various nations for 2030. The first GST should not culminate in a mere exchange of information. Rather, it should be harnessed to encourage ambitious and transformative climate policy.

1. **A commitment to the fossil fuel phase-out:** A rapid, fair, and complete phase-out of coal, oil, and natural gas across all sectors, including the elimination of fossil fuel subsidies. If the 1.5°C limit is to remain within reach, fossil fuel use will need to be cut in almost half by 2030.
2. **A commitment to the massive expansion of renewable energy:** The international community should set a target for the socially equitable tripling of clean and reliable RES capacity to over 11,000 gigawatts by 2030, and to set a target for doubling the annual rate of improvement in energy efficiency by 2030.
3. **A commitment to climate finance:** The annual rate of investment in sustainable energy must quadruple by 2050. Rich countries with high emissions should take particularly strong action to assist poorer developing countries, e.g. through furnishing financial resources, technology transfer, and capacity building.

The intensification of the climate crisis is making adaptation measures increasingly important, as evident once again in 2023, an El Niño year. Adaptation measures are crucial for building resilience and coping with negative impacts, both now and in the future. Increasing the ability of counties to adapt to climate change is one of the three long-term goals of the Paris agreement. The Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) seeks to:

- **enhance the world's adaptive capacity,**
- **strengthen resilience, and**
- **reduce vulnerability to climate change.**

The extent to which a consensus can be reached on these issues will be seen at the first days of COP28. In the view of Germanwatch, targets, sub-targets, and performance indicators need to be specific enough to guide adaptation measures. At the same time, it should be possible to evaluate these targets and indicators as climate change progresses, and to flexibly adjust them depending on the severity of climate change impacts.

Yet adaptation will not be possible for all impacts. Indeed, climate change is already causing unavoidable loss and damage. Accordingly, a decision should be taken at COP28 to operationalise the new Loss & Damage Fund (L&D Fund), and to launch the necessary steps for its funding so that it can support affected countries and people as quickly as possible. Progress in this regard will be essential for rebuilding trust. Important aspects of the L&D Fund negotiations at COP include:

- **Who will contribute to the fund?** In the view of Germanwatch, the industrialised countries must take the lead in capitalising the fund. Due to their historical emissions, industrialised countries still bear primary responsibility for the climate crisis. In accordance with the dynamic interpretation of the polluter-pays principle in combination with the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC), rich emerging economies should also contribute to L&D financing and to the fund. This includes oil and gas exporting countries and China. (China is by far the largest absolute emitter, but has historically contributed less per capita to the climate crisis than industrialised countries.)
- **Who can access the L&D Fund?** In the view of Germanwatch, L&D funding should be provided first and foremost to vulnerable countries, communities, and people.
- **How big should the fund be?** While a decision has been made to launch an L&D Fund, this decision does not identify the scope of the financial resources required to deal with loss and damage. Certainly, hundreds of billions will be required. Some researchers estimate that \$580 billion will be needed to cover loss and damage in developing countries from 2030 onward.
- **How should the fund be managed organisationally?** The Board of the L&D Fund should operate in line with the Paris agreement and UNFCCC principles. This includes equal representation of the Global North and South. According to the agreement reached at COP27, the Board is to consist of 14 members from developing countries and 12 members from developed countries. The agreement also foresees the participation of civil society representatives at Board meetings (a minimum requirement in the view of Germanwatch).

Clarification of the above issues is essential for the fund to begin operation. If it is not possible to reach a decision on all points at COP28, then the Board should be established and empowered to clarify any remaining unresolved issues. At COP28 it will also be important to obtain sufficient funding commitments. However, an important prerequisite in this regard is to clarify which countries are to contribute to the fund.

Negotiations are also sure to be challenging with regard to financing for mitigation and adaptation. The industrialised countries previously agreed to provide \$100 billion per annum in public and private funding from 2020 onward to support climate protection and adaptation in poorer countries. However, only \$83.3 billion was mobilised in 2020. To build confidence among participants at COP28, it will be important to present credible evidence that the \$100 billion climate finance target was achieved in 2023 (despite the fact that relevant data will not be available until 2025, due to data requirements and reporting procedures).

COP26 marked the start of negotiations on the new climate finance target for the period after 2025. This target is referred to as the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG). A final decision on the NCQG will not be made until 2024. However, this decision already looms large on the horizon. In their ‘high-level dialogues’, the ministers at COP28 will at a minimum need to indicate where they see potential for consensus on the NCQG, including the path to a successful agreement in 2024. In this way, COP28 will play an important role in preparing for the decisions taken next year. If the Paris targets are to remain within reach, it is necessary at a technical level to lay the groundwork for a massive increase in funding. This includes the need to extend the list of revenue sources.

It is clear that the total funding requirements cannot be covered by public funds alone. The reform of the international financial architecture (IFA) is being discussed intensively in various multilateral bodies in order to tap new sources of climate finance. As decision-making authority for IFA reform does not lie with the UNFCCC, this issue will not be formally addressed at COP. However, various topics of relevance to reform deliberations could be influenced by the proceedings at COP. In this way, COP represents an opportunity for decision-makers to send a political signal in favour of IFA reform.

The annual report on the global dialogue that has taken place as part of the Sharm el-Sheikh mitigation ambition and implementation work programme (MWP) will be presented at a Ministerial Meeting at COP28. On the basis of this report, the MWP will seek to influence decision-making during COP28. Although the MWP has no formal mandate to make recommendations, it can nevertheless exert an influence on climate policy ambition by identifying gaps, barriers, and possible solutions.

One issue high on the agenda of the COP28 presidency is food and agriculture. Globally, a third of human-caused GHG emissions come from the food system. Nevertheless, food and agriculture have garnered little attention at COP thus far. We call on the Parties to commit themselves to taking measures across the entire food system that not only promote climate change mitigation and adaptation but also ensure food security and sustainable nutrition. In addition, the provisioning of finance for a just transition to sustainable agricultural and food systems must be discussed, especially with regard to global support for small-scale producers.

At COP28, the Forest & Climate Leaders’ Partnership, which was launched at COP27, will present progress towards ending deforestation by 2030 and its vision for 2024. To make real progress, we do not need additional non-binding declarations on forest protection, but rather certainty that protection targets will be implemented rapidly, ambitiously, and equitably.

Imprint

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Published by:

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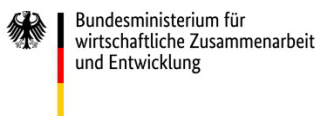
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November 2023

This publication can be downloaded at:

https://www.germanwatch.org/en/expectations_cop28

Supported by ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL with
funding assistance from



With financial support from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and Bread for the World.

The positions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the funding partners. Germanwatch is solely responsible for content.

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1 Climate policy at the crossroads

1.1 A tense geopolitical moment

For the second year in a row, the UN Climate Talks are overshadowed by war and the risk of widening hostilities. In 2022 the Russian invasion of Ukraine dominated the headlines. This year, conflict in the Middle East threatens to influence the conference proceedings. While the organisers have sought to eliminate fears concerning security in Dubai, the current geopolitical tensions have also triggered worries that the conference might be exploited to political ends, leading to the further polarisation of signatory states. While the implications of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine were addressed at COP27 in 2022, the conflict had little impact on the formal proceedings. The current conflict in Israel and Gaza could have a major impact on COP28, however, given the level of tensions between the West and some actors in the region, such as Iran. The United Arab Emirates (UAE), the organiser of COP28, has so far remained neutral in relation to the conflict.

1.1.1 The polarisation of energy policy

Fossil fuel companies and states posted record profits in 2022, and continue to rake in billions from the extraction and sale of fossil fuels while bearing considerable responsibility for the climate crisis. Instead of flowing into sustainable energy systems, these revenues are being used in part to develop new oil and gas fields as well as to finance the lobbying efforts of the oil and gas industry. Furthermore, various fossil fuel states – including Iran, Russia, and Saudi Arabia – rely on fossil fuel revenues to finance armed conflict and/or the violation of human rights. The fossil fuel lobby exerted a significant impact on the deliberations at COP27, and there are fears its influence will be even stronger this year under the presidency of the UAE. Hopefully, this conference will represent the last attempt by the oil, gas, and coal lobby to keep the fossil-fuel economic model alive.

Yet there are growing signs that the curtains are closing on the fossil fuel era. Various organisations, including the International Energy Agency (IEA), predict that fossil fuel use will soon peak.¹ The adoption of numerous green technologies – including solar panels, wind turbines, power storage, heat pumps, and electric vehicles – has been increasing at an exponential rate. The energy policy debate at COP28 will be marked by the negotiation of targets for expanding renewable energy, enhancing energy efficiency, and phasing out coal, oil, and natural gas. Petroleum and gas extracting countries hope to maintain their profitable business model for as long as possible. In this connection, Saudi Arabia and Russia are particularly vocal defenders of fossil fuels. Yet countries around the world that are heavily dependent on fossil imports have a growing interest in rapidly phasing out fossil fuels, not only due to climate concerns, but also due to high and volatile import prices.

1.1.2 Polarisation between the US and China

World events are increasingly marked by the growing polarisation between the US and China. The rift between these two nations is sure to shape events at COP28. This raises various questions: For example, will the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change furnish the basis for negotiations on the design of the L&D Fund? The UNFCCC divides the world into industrialised and developing countries (according to criteria established in 1992) and only industrialised countries assume binding obligations. Alternatively, will the Paris agreement serve as the basis for negotiations? The

¹ IEA, 2023, [World Energy Outlook 2023](#) (accessed: 20.11.2023).

Paris agreement distinguishes between rich and poor countries, but allows them to be categorised according to current circumstances (with a view to capacities and responsibilities). If the standard set by the Paris agreement is used, there would be very strong pressure on the oil and gas countries and possibly on China to contribute to the L&D Fund and to make other financial commitments. By contrast, various countries – particularly the US (the largest historical emitter) – have for years undermined efforts to ensure that industrialised countries mobilise \$100 billion annually from 2020 onward to support poor developing countries. Despite this breach of trust, will the most vulnerable countries, together with progressive industrialised and emerging economy countries, exert pressure on both the US and China to contribute sufficiently to reducing emissions and to increased finance? Or will the poorest and most vulnerable countries come under the protective umbrella of China and other BRICS states (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) to exert pressure on industrialised countries to finally fulfil their promises?

We encounter a similar debate with regard to national targets for emissions reductions. A pressing question here is whether China will ramp up its climate ambition in the wake of the global stocktake. After all, China now emits more than the US, EU, and Japan combined (although it does have a larger total population).

Both the US and China are seeking to draw countries into their respective spheres of geopolitical influence. The US, for example, is hoping to pull India away from China and Russia. One testament to this effort is the new trade initiative announced by the G20, which will develop a network of shipping and rail lines to connect India with the Gulf States, Middle East, and EU. This stands in contrast to China's move to expand BRICS to six new members: Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. At the end of this year's G20 summit in India, the G20 managed to adopt a final communiqué and also a communiqué of the G20 finance ministers – despite obstructionism from Russia and China. This was a success over last year's G20 in Indonesia, when no final communiqué was adopted. This year's G20 summit thus sent an important signal for multilateralism – and also for COP28. Another positive indicator is that the US and China are continuing their climate policy dialogue formats, despite the current state of tensions. US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping recently met in San Francisco, and on 14 November the two countries published the Sunnylands statement on enhancing cooperation to address the climate crisis. These developments send some positive signals in the run up to COP28. Accordingly, the conditions are better this year than they were prior to COP27.

The success of the summit in Dubai will largely depend on whether a broad-based High Ambition Coalition (HAC) emerges that can exert the necessary pressure on all major emitters with regard to mitigation, adaptation, and finance. The major emitters are predominantly the G20 countries, especially the US and China, which together account for 81% of global emissions and for a similar share of global wealth. It is disappointing that Germany did not sign the statements issued by the emerging HAC, neither at the UN General Assembly summit in New York, nor at the pre-COP at the end of October. Chancellor Scholz and his State Secretary Jörg Kukies do not appear to see the geopolitical relevance of assembling a High Ambition Coalition.

1.1.3 A year of climate records emphasises the urgent need for action

The need for robust action to slash emissions is more pressing than ever before. The climate crisis is now the largest security risk for a growing number of countries, and experts have been observing recent trends in the climate system with considerable alarm. Record temperatures were registered in the world's oceans and atmosphere in 2023, and global sea ice extent hit a new low. Indeed, the records were smashed in all three cases. While natural variation in the climate system is a contributing

factor (as 2023 is an El Niño year),² anthropogenic climate change is the primary driver of these unsettling trends. This year has seen a high number of extreme weather events, including severe loss and damage in numerous places. Thanks to advances in attribution science, it is now increasingly possible to demonstrate the central role played by climate change in extreme weather events, with climatologists drawing a clear link between climate change and flooding for example in the Mediterranean region,³ heat waves in South Asia⁴ and South America,⁵ and wildfires in Canada this year.⁶

Against the backdrop of growing energy-policy tensions, increasing geopolitical polarisation, and the pressing need to avert catastrophic climate impacts, the world community must come together at COP28 under the UAE presidency and:

1. demonstrate that neither wars nor fossil fuel interests can slow down the momentum for robust action to tackle climate change and increase climate resilience, given the urgency of transformation and opportunities of new technology;
2. show that sufficiently strong progressive alliances from the Global North and South can come together to make COP28 a success;
3. adopt clear targets for the massive expansion of renewable energy, for robust increases in energy efficiency, and for the phase-out of coal, oil, and natural gas;
4. confirm that the stocktaking process foreseen under the Paris agreement works by triggering the closing of the gap between global and national targets for mitigation, adaptation, and the redirection of financial flows, despite the blocking efforts of some important countries; and
5. confirm that the drastically intensifying climate crisis is being taken seriously by means of strengthening reduction targets, funding adaptation, and taking steps to improve the resilience of the most vulnerable people and countries.

1.2 COP28

The 28th UN Climate Talks (COP28) will serve numerous important functions. It is the first test of the stocktaking mechanism for raising climate ambition that was established by the Paris agreement. With the conclusion of the global stocktake at COP28, the global community will need to identify where progress in climate action has been lacking and also propose accelerated measures for fulfilling the three goals of the Paris agreement.

As a political meeting of world leaders, COP28 is an opportunity to demonstrate political will and cooperation on climate action, despite the challenges of the current geopolitical moment. COP28 should adopt formal resolutions to triple global renewable energy capacity and double the energy efficiency improvement rate, both by 2030. In addition, binding and verifiable commitments and milestones are needed for the phase-out of fossil fuels, the reform of the international financial architecture, and funding for climate loss and damage. German Chancellor Scholz, who will be among the attendees in Dubai, must rise to meet these expectations.

² El Niño is a climate pattern that describes the unusual warming of surface waters in the eastern Pacific Ocean. El Niño influences the global mean temperature and makes extreme weather events more likely. See: DWD, 2023, [DWD zu Auswirkungen des aktuellen El Niño-Ereignisses auf Deutschland und weltweit](#) (accessed: 10.11.2023).

³ Zachariah et al., 2023, [Interplay of climate change-exacerbated rainfall, exposure and vulnerability led to widespread impacts in the Mediterranean region](#) (last impact: 20.11.2023).

⁴ Zachariah et al., 2023, [Extreme humid heat in South Asia in April 2023, largely driven by climate change, detrimental to vulnerable and disadvantaged communities](#) (accessed: 20.11.2023).

⁵ Kew et al., 2023, [Strong influence of climate change in uncharacteristic early spring heat in South America](#) (accessed: 20.11.2023).

⁶ Barnes et al., 2023, [Climate change more than doubled the likelihood of extreme fire weather conditions in Eastern Canada](#) (accessed: 20.11.2023).

As the host of COP28 the UAE has an obligation to ensure the conference can fulfil its purpose. Specifically, the UAE has a responsibility:

- to serve the UNFCCC process with integrity as a facilitator that enables ambitious outcomes, without being beholden to the interests of the fossil fuel industry. It would be highly problematic if the conference were to assume the character of an ‘international trade fair’ with participants eschewing any binding commitments; and
- to furnish a space for open dialogue, for participating delegates to show courage and commit to ambitious action and for attending civil society actors to exert a guiding function, thus ensuring transformative 1.5°C-compatible and resilience-enhancing climate action, while also setting necessary public and private financial flows in motion.

1.3 The UAE Presidency

The UAE hopes to organise the largest COP ever and is highly motivated to make the event an international media success. Accordingly, in addition to facilitating successful negotiations, the UAE is planning to launch several political initiatives of its own. Nevertheless, the UAE has come under criticism. The UAE’s per capita emissions and wealth are among the highest in the world, yet its national climate targets remain weak. The UAE sits atop some of the largest oil and gas reserves in the world, and these reserves have made the country incredibly wealthy. The UAE continues to develop and finance new oil and gas fields at home and abroad. For years, the country has failed to report domestic methane emissions to the United Nations. Perhaps not surprisingly, the UAE has not yet voiced support for a rapid phase-out of fossil fuels – a key issue at this year’s COP. While the UAE has gradually adopted more ambitious language over the course of this year, there are considerable doubts as to the seriousness with which the UAE will commit to phasing out fossil fuels.

Controversy has also surrounded the COP President-Designate Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber. Al Jaber is the Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and also CEO of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC). As CEO of ADNOC, Al Jaber has been seeking to increase crude oil production to 5 million barrels a day by 2030, up from 3 million barrels in 2016. In 2023, the *Financial Times* noted that ADNOC was investing \$150 billion in the expansion of oil and gas production, while only \$15 billion was earmarked for the expansion of low-carbon products (over an extended time frame).⁷ However, Al Jaber is also Chairman of Masdar, the ‘Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company,’ which he founded. Masdar is investing in renewables expansion in numerous countries. Nevertheless, Al Jaber describes fossil fuels as ‘part of the solution’. More than 130 policymakers from Europe and the US signed an open letter calling for Al Jaber to be removed as president of COP28. A large number of fossil fuel lobbyists attended COP27, and an even greater number are expected to attend COP28. This conflict of interest must be defined and addressed by the UNFCCC in order to ensure the integrity of the process.

The hosting of the conference in Dubai has also raised numerous human rights concerns, as the human rights situation in the UAE is considered precarious. There are numerous reported cases of arbitrary detention, in addition to restrictions on freedom of expression. Swedish civil society groups have refused to attend COP28, partly due to the difficult human rights situation. We at Germanwatch have decided to attend because we are convinced that it will be more impactful to participate in the deliberations and engage with negotiators on site. This ‘distribution of civil society roles’ – that is, the important signal by Swedish civil society, in combination with attendance by Germanwatch and other organisations – seems like the most effective approach. We call on policymakers who attend the event not to allow human rights concerns to fall to the wayside during the conference.

⁷ Ivan Levingston, Andrew England, David Sheppard, *Financial Times*, 9.8.2023, [Abu Dhabi oil giant builds internal ‘investment bank’ to chase \\$50bn in global deals](#) (accessed: 20.11.2023)

2 Points of political impasse

2.1 The Global Stocktake

The first global stocktake (GST), which began at COP26 in Glasgow, will conclude at COP28 in Dubai. Every five years, the GST reviews the progress made by the signatory states in implementing the Paris agreement. Specifically, the GST examines collective progress achieved, long-term goals, and the core elements: mitigation and adaptation measures, associated funding requirements and finance flows. The evaluation process is also supposed to take social justice aspects into account on the basis of the best available evidence.

The GST process takes two years, and goes through three phases. Following the data collection and technical assessment phases, it culminates with a high-level political phase. With conclusion of the technical assessment phase in June of this year, the GST is now entering the decisive political phase. This phase will determine whether the GST can fulfil its role as a key part of the ‘ratcheting-up’ mechanism – that is, as the mechanism for augmenting action commitments under the Paris agreement – in order to close the gap between ambition and implementation.

In preparation for the political phase, a synthesis report was published to summarise the insights generated during the first two phases.⁸ This report highlights the numerous measures that have been taken to fulfil the Paris agreement, which have led to a significant change in emissions pathways. However, the report also shows that the measures implemented thus far are insufficient. An additional feature of the report is its identification of necessary future measures and strategies.

While the synthesis report reveals clear gaps in the implementation of the Paris agreement, the political implications of this finding remain unclear. At COP28, this will take centre stage in the negotiations. In this connection, there is a need to address three key questions:

- 1) What political conclusions do the signatory states draw from the technical assessment phase?
- 2) What will happen with the results of the first GST?
- 3) In what form will the results of the GST be decided?

As foreseen by the Paris agreement, the GST should formulate key political messages, including recommendations for strengthening action and enhancing support. Specifically, this means that the GST should lead to more ambitious targets and concrete measures as the next round of NDCs are submitted following COP28. The influence that the GST will exert on climate ambition in the coming years will crucially depend on the ambition and strength of the political messaging.

The signatory states should use the GST to send a strong political signal. On the one hand, this requires looking backward: Where do we stand in terms of achieving the Paris goals? What progress has been achieved in relation to all three goals? Yet most importantly, the GST must spotlight how countries can step up their efforts moving forward. A central task is to ensure that the GST’s findings and recommendations are incorporated into the next round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). This includes, among other things, initiating comprehensive transformation processes in all sectors; harmonising the 2030 targets with the 1.5°C target; and closing the identified gap between ambition and implementation. China is currently the largest emitter by far, as it releases more greenhouse gases than the US, EU, and Japan combined. In view of this fact, a key question will now be whether China and other rich emerging economies, especially the oil and gas countries, will

⁸ UNFCCC, 2023, [Technical dialogue of the first global stocktake. Synthesis report by the co-facilitators on the technical dialogue](#) (accessed: 20.11.2023)

adopt more ambitious targets. The GST should treat loss and damage as a topic of its own, rather than linking it to adaptation, as was done in the technical assessment. As part of a substantive discussion on loss and damage, a focus should be placed on how goals are to be achieved. In this connection, attention must be devoted to the importance of fundamental principles such as global justice and international cooperation.

At the interim negotiations in Bonn, the signatory states were only able to agree on a rough structure for a CMA decision (CMA = Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement). This rough structure is by no means set in stone. A key sticking point relates to negotiations for climate finance, including the financial assistance to be provided to the Global South. In the meantime, meetings at ministerial level and further workshops have taken place to address structural and substantive issues. In addition to an ambitious CMA decision, agreement on a technical annex is still possible. In our view, the existing synthesis report of the first two phases is suitable for this purpose because it comprehensively presents the views of the signatory states and non-state actors in the process. Among other things, the technical annex can be used to comprehensively present information that is relevant for the new round of NDCs. This first global stocktake must send a strong signal if the GST is to fulfil its role under the Paris agreement. The first GST will set the benchmark for future stocktakes, which will recur every five years. It can also make decisive contribution to achieving the targets set for 2030. The first GST should not culminate in a mere exchange of information. Rather, it should be harnessed to catalyse ambitious and transformative climate policy.

The GST decision may play a special role at COP28. The last three climate conferences ended with the adoption of a cover decision that set the political agenda moving forward. However, the president of this year's COP is considering foregoing a cover decision. In the absence of such a decision, the section of the GST devoted to forward-looking action will play an extremely important signalling role. This section will need to contain clear key messages.

2.2 Phasing out fossil fuels

The science is clear: every scientific report on climate change in recent years, from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to the IEA, concludes that there can be no decarbonisation without 'de-fossilisation'. Emissions would have to be almost halved by 2030 if the 1.5°C limit is to be adhered to. Neither nuclear power nor CCS (see section 2.2.1) could play a significant role in reducing emissions in this timeframe. However, despite countries' promises to phase down coal and transform their domestic energy systems, current production trends for coal, oil and gas remain completely at odds with the goals of the Paris Agreement. This is reflected in the political headwinds in many countries, particularly strong internationally from oil and gas producing countries, as well as in the record profits of – often state-owned – oil and gas companies.

At the same time, the expansion of renewable energies, batteries, electro mobility and heat pumps has increased exponentially in recent years. However, it is still far too slow to replace all fossil fuels with 100% renewable solutions in a fair way by 2050 at the latest. The current rate of expansion is also insufficient to overcome energy poverty in the Global South in line with the agreed Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The recently published update of the IEA's 'Net Zero Emissions by 2050' scenario shows that at least a tripling of renewables and a doubling of energy efficiency by 2030 will be needed to keep the 1.5°C target within reach.⁹ Encouragingly, the trajectories of scaling up key technologies such as solar, wind, batteries, and electric vehicles are already crossing tipping points, or could do so in the near future. Further acceleration is needed in the richer countries. This

⁹ IEA, 2023, [Net Zero Roadmap: A Global Pathway to Keep the 1.5°C Goal in Reach](#) (accessed: 20.11.2023).

trend has largely gone past the 100 or so poorest countries. The rich countries should support poorer countries so that they can keep pace and take advantage of a ‘right to leapfrog’. Achieving acceleration everywhere, but fundamentally in the poorer countries, requires a change in global policy and support for the enormous investment required.

It is therefore important that the international community takes a decision at COP28 on a comprehensive energy package including social and environmental guidelines for the energy sector. Such a decision could, for example, be part of a possible framework decision or the global stocktake. This energy package includes:

- **A decision to phase out fossil fuels**, including the full, fair, and fast phase-out of coal, oil, and gas across all sectors as well as the phase-out of all fossil fuel subsidies; by 2030, fossil fuel consumption must be cut by almost half if the Paris climate targets are to be achieved.
- **A decision to massively expand renewable energy**, through global target for the tripling of renewable energy in a just manner to over 11,000 gigawatts by 2030 and a global target for doubling energy efficiency by 2030.
- **A decision for increased finance**: Annual investment must quadruple by 2050.¹⁰ Rich countries with high emissions should support poorer developing countries, e.g. through finance, technology transfer, and capacity building. A financial support package for the energy transition should be part of the COP package.

2.2.1 Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)

Global emissions must be roughly halved by 2030, according to the IPCC by at least 43% compared to 2019. In this timeframe, carbon capture and storage (CCS) – as the IEA has shown – cannot make a relevant contribution simply because of the long timeframes required to develop the technology. Emissions must be reduced primarily by reducing the use of coal, oil and gas. It will therefore be crucial for players such as the EU to ensure that CCS is only supported for residual emissions that are difficult to avoid and in conjunction with a phase-out of fossil fuels. Indeed, CCS should be relied on as little as possible, and only when necessary, while simultaneously promoting all other options for rapid decarbonisation and ‘de-fossilisation’. Whenever there are expedient greenhouse gas-neutral alternatives to CCS, these should be used. Accordingly, CCS should only be supported in combination with a commitment to fossil-fuel phase-out. Furthermore, policymakers must avoid the strategic exploitation of CCS to delay the necessary phase-out of fossil coal, oil, and natural gas.

After all, the following applies: as little carbon capture and storage as possible, as much as necessary. The use of CCS should be reduced to the bare minimum by advancing all other options for rapid decarbonisation and ‘de-fossilisation’ as quickly as possible (e.g. expansion of renewable energies or energy efficiency). We need feasible carbon-neutral alternatives to CCS wherever possible. Therefore, CCS should only be supported in combination with the phase-out of fossil fuels. CCS must not delay the necessary phase-out of fossil coal, oil and gas.

None of the various technical CCS approaches are carbon-neutral. Depending on the technology, around 5 to 20% of emissions are emitted. It must be ensured that only the most climate-friendly technologies are used here. An extremely relevant IPCC footnote sets out important minimum conditions for a reasonably responsible use of CCS. It is essential that possible decisions take these minimum conditions into account. The designated COP28 presidency and other countries such as the US – where significant funds for CCS have been earmarked in the Inflation Reduction Act – have made a strong case for the technology in various international forums. There is general talk

¹⁰ IRENA, 2023, [World Energy Transition Outlook 2023](#) (accessed: 20.11.2023).

of ‘carbon management’ and maintain that a fossil fuel phase-out is only necessary where emissions cannot be reduced by CCS. The use of CCS is thus also envisaged in the electricity sector or in the production of hydrogen.

CCS has the potential to reduce emissions in some sectors and should therefore not be ruled out from the outset. However, CCS cannot lead to climate neutrality as long as there is a fossil share in the energy mix. The technology itself is energy-intensive, and the disposal of CO₂ can have negative environmental impacts and cause conflicts of use. There are also reservations as to whether sufficient storage sites are in fact available for the large-scale use of CCS.

The use of CCS should therefore focus on process emissions and hard-to-avoid residual emissions from industries. The industrial sector and waste incineration in particular generate unavoidable process emissions. These are the largest CO₂ point sources, some of which would continue to produce high CO₂ emissions for many years without CCS. Carbon capture applications should therefore be prioritised in areas such as lime and cement production, waste incineration, and certain basic chemical processes. The quantities of CO₂ generated in this context must also be further reduced through other measures (sufficiency, efficiency) so that the need for industrial CCS continues to decrease.

2.3 Operationalising the Global Goal on Adaptation

The progression of the climate crisis is making adaptation measures increasingly important, as unfortunately 2023 has proven, an El Niño year. Adaptation is crucial in order to respond to the effects of the climate crisis that have already occurred, to prepare for the future and promote resilience. As one of the three long-term goals, increasing the ability to adapt to climate adaptation to climate change is a core element of the Paris Climate Agreement. The so-called global Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) is intended to help 1) improve adaptive capacity 2) strengthen resilience and 3) reduce vulnerability to climate change.

Similar to the temperature limit of 1.5°C, it is intended to provide countries with orientation for their adaptation measures and also promote an expansion of adaptation financing, which has been insufficient to date. However, the target set in principle in 2015 has not yet been operationalised to date. The title of this year’s Adaptation Gap Report¹¹ is ‘Underfunded. Underprepared.’ and thus states that the planning and implementation of adaptation plans as well as the investments are insufficient to protect the world from the consequences of the climate crisis. The operationalisation of the GGA at COP28 is – in addition to the upgrading of adaptation itself – also an important step towards equal treatment of climate mitigation and adaptation in the UNFCCC process.

Accordingly, it is necessary to specify the GGA, to operationalise it, and to make it measurable. However, it is challenging to formulate a global goal for adaptation, as adaptation measures must be geared towards the local or regional context where adaptation primarily takes place. In addition to technical solutions, adaptation also involves building social resilience. Accordingly, affected communities and ecosystems, but also traditional and indigenous knowledge and local knowledge knowledge and local knowledge systems play an important role. Adaptation is part of socio-economic and environmental policy strategies and is closely linked to development plans in many countries. To address the challenges surrounding adaptation, the Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh Work

¹¹ UNEP, 2023, [Adaptation Gap Report 2023](#) (accessed: 20.11.2023).

Programme (GLASS) was established at COP26 to operationalise the GGA. Since COP26, eight GLASS workshops have been held to prepare a COP decision on the operationalisation of the GGA. The two-year GLASS work programme ends at COP28. At the interim negotiations in Bonn in June 2023, little more than an outline for the COP28 decision on the GGA was prepared. Greater progress was prevented by the fact that GLASS was repeatedly used to slow down other strands of the negotiations, including in particular discussions regarding the Mitigation Work Programme (MWP), as the operationalisation of the GGA is closely linked to the necessary and provided funding.

After the interim negotiations, the dimensions and subtargets of the framework for operationalising the GGA were further discussed at the two final workshops on goal setting. The last workshop was particularly successful in clarifying various outstanding points.¹² Important draft proposals were made for global targets that can be used to concretise the adaptation goal. In terms of a global target, the eighth GGA workshop proposed: ‘Enhance the adaptive capacity and resilience of the global population, including the reduction of climate impacts by at least 50 percent by 2030 and by at least 90 percent by 2050 compared to the ‘business as usual’ scenario and expected impacts identified by scientific reports.’ In addition, very specific proposals exist for the establishment of early warning systems for all people by 2027. Further proposals for targets relate to impacts; vulnerability and risk analysis; adaptation planning; and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL). If these targets were adopted in their entirety at COP28, the conference could indeed provide a comprehensive framework for adaptation. One particularly important theme in this regard is ensuring efficacious enabling conditions for adaptation measures, including international support for financing, technology transfer, and capacity building. The Parties also identified the need to tackle the dimensions of health, water, food security, and ecosystems. In the opinion of Germanwatch, these proposals should be strengthened to include specific references to human rights, including the human right to food, health, and education. This would ensure that the most vulnerable people and groups are identified and involved in the development of implementation strategies. In this connection, it would be advantageous for each region to provide key performance indicators that capture acute human rights risks attributable to the climate crisis.

The first few days of COP28 will reveal whether these proposals can be quickly and comprehensively formulated as concrete negotiating text. In the view of Germanwatch, it is necessary to ensure that the formulated targets, dimensions, and indicators are specific enough to guide adaptation measures. At the same time, the targets should have measurable outcomes that can be evaluated in coming years. Given the rapid pace of climate change, the adaptation measures will probably have to be adapted in a few years’ time. The GGA framework should therefore flexibly rely on metrics that can be responsively adjusted to changing conditions. Targets should be formulated in a manner that provides a common basis for all countries, including richer nations. The GGA framework should also be linked to the GST process to enable a review of progress achieved in adapting to climate change. To be sure, the success of the GGA framework will depend largely on the formulation of effective targets, dimensions and indicators. However, the framework’s success will also hinge on the provisioning of adequate financial support, technical assistance, capacity building. The adoption of the GGA framework should also serve as a basis for identifying adaptation finance needs and securing associated funding commitments. Developing countries have rightly underscored that without funding commitments, their National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) cannot be effectively implemented.

¹² UNFCCC, 2023, [Summary of the eighth workshop under the Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the global goal on adaptation](#) (accessed: 20.11.2023).

2.4 Loss and damage

Negotiations on the issue of funding for climate-related loss and damage (L&D) have been protracted and highly politicised. At the same time, the international financial architecture for dealing with climate risks and impacts remains highly fragmented and inadequately equipped.

2.4.1 The L&D Fund and the L&D funding arrangements

At COP27, after years of impasse, agreement was reached among the Parties to establish new funding arrangements for assisting developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, including a new fund focused on loss and damage.¹³ This decision to establish an L&D Fund was an historic milestone, as numerous countries in the Global North blocked negotiations on this topic for many years. Based on the agreement reached at COP27, a transitional committee was tasked with studying the issue of L&D and with making recommendations to the COP and CMA for the operationalisation of an L&D Fund.

At COP28 the signatory states should agree to operationalise the fund so that it can provide support to impacted countries and people as soon as possible. Securing commitments to capitalise the fund represents an important aspect of the task facing the COP delegates. Progress on this issue will be decisive for rebuilding trust. Trust in the developing world has been negatively impacted first and foremost by the multi-year failure of countries of the Global North to meet the \$100 billion goal for climate finance. The Transitional Committee had to convene an additional fifth meeting due to the politicisation of various details and the difficulty in reaching agreement. At this fifth meeting, the countries agreed on a draft text for the operationalisation of the fund at COP28. While the US initially rejected the draft text at the meeting, it assented to the text a few days later. This agreement represents an important breakthrough. The delegates at COP now face the task of negotiating a decision that will ensure adequate support is granted to the most vulnerable for dealing with climate-related L&D. The draft text nevertheless has key weaknesses in relation to climate justice and human rights. Important aspects that must be considered in negotiations at COP include:

- **Who will contribute to the fund:** In the view of Germanwatch, the countries of the Global North must take the lead in capitalising the fund. Due to their historical emissions, they still bear primary responsibility for the climate crisis, despite significantly elevated emissions levels in some emerging countries, particularly China. The Parties to the Paris agreement and the UNFCCC have agreed to establish an L&D Fund, and the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) and the Polluter-Pays Principle apply. According to the dynamic interpretation of these principles, rich emerging economies should also contribute to L&D financing and to the L&D Fund. This includes oil and gas exporting countries and China (China is by far the largest absolute emitter, but has historically contributed less per capita to the climate crisis than countries of the Global North).

The UAE could cut the Gordian knot by making a substantial contribution to the L&D Fund in collaboration with vanguard countries of the Global North. This would provide a basis

¹³ UNFCCC, 2022, [Report of the Conference of the Parties on its twenty-seventh session held in Sharm el-Sheikh from 6 to 20 November 2022](#) (accessed: 20.11.2023), [Addendum - decision 2 CP 27](#) (accessed: 20.11.2023) and UNFCCC, 2022, [Report of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties of the Paris Agreement on its fourth session held in Sharm el-Sheikh from 6 to 20 November 2022 - decision 2 CMA 4](#) (accessed: 20.11.2023).

for negotiations concerning how the group of contributing countries can be gradually expanded. Notably, this issue is also relevant to negotiations on a new climate finance goal (the New Collective Quantified Goal, or NCQG).

- **Ensuring legally binding commitments:** The agreement that emerged from the fifth meeting of the Transitional Committee does not foresee a binding legal obligation to contribute to the fund. In addition, as there was no agreement on a dynamic interpretation of the CBDR-CR, no reference was made to this principle. However, it was further emphasised that industrialised countries should take the lead in making financial contributions. However, for the time being, financing has only been requested for the fund’s operationalisation, and not for its capitalisation.
- **The volume of financing required for the L&D fund:** The agreement reached to operationalise fund does not make any assertions regarding the scope of financing necessary to cope L&D. The overall scope of funding required – which is an important criterion for assessing contribution levels – must be negotiated politically. It is clear that billions of euros will be needed to address L&D. Some research has suggested that L&D could reach \$580 billion annually from 2030 onward in developing countries alone.¹⁴
- **Innovative sources of financing:** The L&D Fund should be designed to take advantage of innovative sources of financing, including levies on international air traffic and maritime shipping, and on the Carbon Majors – that is, largest coal, oil, and gas companies which are collectively responsible for 70% of global emissions. Forcing polluters to contribute to the fund is of key importance. It is beneficial that the L&D Fund will be open to innovative sources of financing. However, the Governing Instrument should be designed to ensure that these innovative sources of financing are equitable (e.g. without negative consequences for the poorest countries). An additional need is to define procedures and a concrete time frame for innovative sources to contribute to the L&D fund.
- **Rules regarding who can access funding:** In the opinion of Germanwatch, the fund should primarily serve the most vulnerable countries, people, and communities. The fund aims ‘to support developing countries that are particularly vulnerable.’ Accordingly, these countries should be entitled to access the fund’s resources. This objective must be taken into account as the Board develops the funding allocation system. However, the Board must also ensure funding is available for particularly affected people in countries that do not formally belong to the group of least developed countries (such as Libya and Pakistan).
- **The institutional setting for the fund:** While many countries of the Global South wish to see the fund set up as an independent fund under the aegis of the UNFCCC, many countries in the Global North prefer placing the fund under the World Bank (this was in fact a condition for US assent). The agreement proposed by the EU, among others, now stipulates that the World Bank be appointed as interim trustee and as the interim seat of the fund’s Secretariat – provided, however, that the World Bank accepts a number of conditions. Fortunately, these conditions include: (1) permitting developing countries to directly access resources from the fund (including through subnational, national, and regional entities), (2) extension of access to countries that are not World Bank members, and (3) granting of authority for the Governing Instrument to supersede the policies of the World Bank in instances where they differ. However, a clear exit strategy for the fund to become an institution separate from the World Bank after the four-year interim period has not yet been defined. Germanwatch additionally views it as problematic that the fund will not be clearly set up as an independent institution under the Paris agreement or UNFCCC – a key demand of countries of the Global South – but only as an ‘entity entrusted with the operation of the financial mechanism of the Convention that also serves the Paris Agreement.’ While the World Bank can serve as an interim trustee, to have the World Bank serve as permanent

¹⁴Markandya, González-Eguino, 2018, [Integrated Assessment for Identifying Climate Finance Needs for Loss and Damage: A Critical Review](#) (accessed: 20.11.2023).

host would be problematic, in part due to the World Bank's high fees and focus on loans rather than grants.

- **The design of the Board:** The Board of the L&D Fund should work in accordance with the principles of the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC – which requires, among other things, the fair representation on the Board of countries from the Global South and North. Fortunately, the agreement includes specifications for the composition of the Board, which is to consist of 14 members from countries of the Global South and 12 members from countries of the Global North. The agreement also foresees the participation of civil society representatives at Board meetings (the minimum acceptable level of participation by civil society, in the view of Germanwatch).
- **The necessary scope of financing for the L&D Fund:** Despite the varied patchwork of international support mechanisms currently in place – including various humanitarian aid programmes, and the Global Climate Risk Shield – the financial gaps in L&D coverage are large and growing. The new L&D Fund must provide for comprehensive solutions that are managed as rapidly as possible by the countries affected by L&D, including the granting of responsibility to local decision-makers to prioritise spending. As called for by the G7 and China, the agreement foresees the provisioning of funding for both economic and non-economic L&D that result from gradual change and extreme weather events. In the latter case, financing should also be obtainable for reconstruction.
- **Provisions to support human rights:** The fund's Governance Instrument makes no reference to human rights. This is extremely problematic. Although many members of the Transitional Committee requested explicit reference to human rights, this was not reintroduced to the text. Human rights principles and standards should underpin all measures for dealing with loss and damage.

The decisions rendered at COP28 concerning the above issues will lay the foundation for next steps and for the commencement of work by the L&D Fund. A special role will be played by the Board, which will be responsible for a number of other details, including the development of a system for allocating resources.

Now that this preparatory work has been completed, for a successful COP28 it is crucial that the fund is appropriately endowed so that it can quickly support the most vulnerable. The signatory countries must now make appropriate commitments. UN Secretary-General António Guterres expressed his expectation that heads of state and government will come to COP28 with commitments and pledges to support the L&D Fund.

Germany should develop an implementation strategy that sets forth how it can raise money for L&D finance on the order of 1 billion euros annually as part of a massive increase in international climate finance to be decided next year.

2.4.2 Operationalising the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage

The Santiago Network for Loss and Damage (SNLD) was founded at COP25 in Madrid. It is tasked with providing technical support to relevant organisations, bodies, networks, and experts (OBNEs) as they strive to implement effective loss and damage prevention, minimisation, and management strategies. The SNLD is primarily focused on local, national, and regional initiatives in countries of the Global South that are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts.

During COP27, significant progress was made in establishing the institutional framework for the SNLD. However, the Parties were unable to agree on an SNLD host organisation. This decision was postponed until the interim negotiations that took place in Bonn in June 2023. Two potential

hosts are currently being considered: the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) or, alternatively, the Caribbean Development Bank. Both candidates fulfil the formal criteria. Nevertheless, the signatory countries have identified various weaknesses exhibited by these potential hosts, including in relation to their office locations, regional coverage, and financial management systems. At the interim negotiations, the states only agreed on a draft text that will serve as the basis for the COP28 negotiations. The failure to select a host is already leading to considerable delays in the implementation of the SNLD. Even if a host is chosen at COP28, the SNLD Secretariat will probably not be established until early 2025, due to bureaucratic processes. Given the urgent need for technical support, this delay is far from ideal. It would be beneficial for a SNLD host organisation to be selected at COP28 in order to prevent further delays to full operationalisation.

Another important agenda item for COP28 is the operationalisation of the SNLD Advisory Board. The appointment of Advisory Board members should take place at COP28 in order to ensure that aspects important for an effective SNLD are adequately considered, including gender equality and fair regional representation.

3 Other areas of negotiation

3.1 Climate financing

Traditionally, the provisioning of financial support for the countries of the Global South to enable their implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures has been one of the most important aspects of climate negotiations, and is often a key to successful COP outcomes. For one, financing is the basis for implementing many resolutions with positive optics, especially in poorer countries. For another, climate finance is an important element for building mutual trust between the negotiating Parties. A number of important decisions in this regard will have to be made in Dubai. Industrialised countries must show that they will adhere to the climate pledges they have already made. The provisional agenda suggests that climate finance issues are going to be a source of tension even before COP begins. More specifically, the provisional agenda contains two items on which no agreement could be reached either in the run-up to COP27 or at the interim negotiations in Bonn: (1) doubling adaptation finance and (2) increasing finance to raise climate ambition.

3.1.1 The \$100 billion climate pledge and the doubling of adaptation finance

In 2009, countries of the Global North committed to providing \$100 billion a year in public and private funding by 2020 to support climate change mitigation and adaptation in countries of the Global South. In 2020, however, the mobilised funds amounted only to \$83.3 billion. By 2021, it rose to USD 89.6 billion, which was still short of the original target. According to OECD estimates based on preliminary figures, countries of the Global North are confident that the target will be reached in 2022. At the moment, however, there is no real verification of the total amount, only indicators. Much of the necessary trust-building at COP28 will depend on the reliability of the calculations, even if the final data on climate finance in 2022 will not be available until 2024 at the earliest due to data requirements and reporting procedures.

Two scenarios for reaching the \$100 billion goal

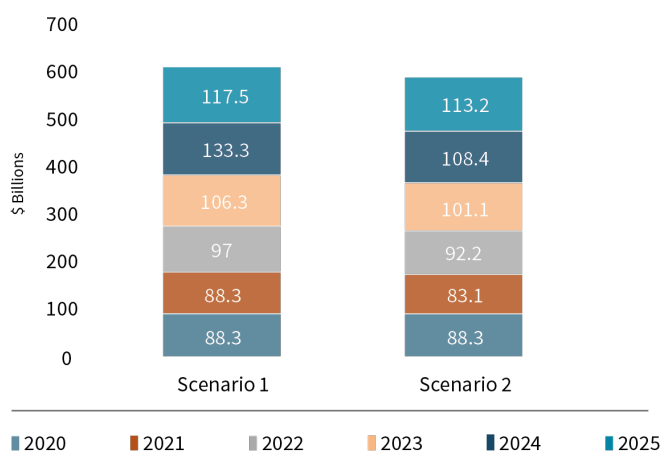
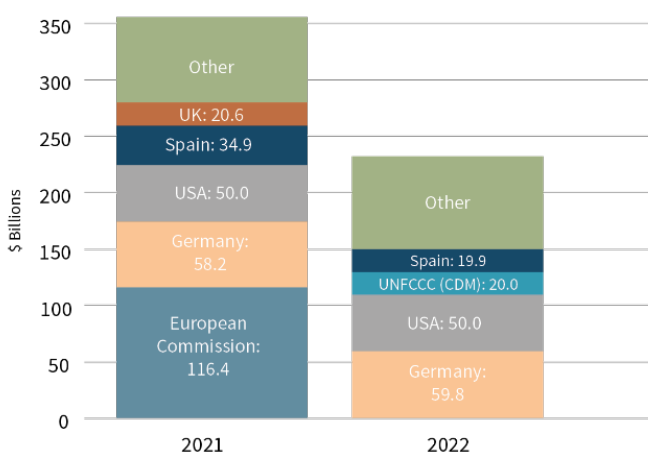


Fig. 1 Two scenarios for reaching the \$100 billion climate funding goal. Both scenarios show cumulative annual prognoses. Based on the Finance Delivery Plan and the OECD report Forward-looking Scenarios of Climate Finance Provided and Mobilised by Developed Countries in 2021–2025.

Countries of the Global North – the US in particular – have squandered a great deal of goodwill, especially when it comes to honouring the \$100 billion climate pledge. The \$83.3 billion calculated

in the prior year should also be regarded with a certain degree of scepticism. According to a report by Oxfam,¹⁵ projects and loans assumed to be relevant for the climate have been generously credited at their nominal value. This significantly reduces the actual financial support provided. The money spent on adaptation is much less than the money spent on mitigation, although this gap varies greatly depending on the donor. Today it is important that industrialised countries provide credible evidence that they will meet their targets in 2023. Moreover, they need to show how increased pledges in 2024 and 2025 can offset the gap from previous years and mobilise \$600 billion for the 2020–2025 period.

Funding pledges for the Adaptation Fund (2021 and 2022)



Other: 2021		Other: 2022	
Sweden: 15.1	Brussels: 2.6	Sweden: 16.4	Wallonia: 5.2
Québec: 8.1	Switzerland: 10.9	Japan: 12.0	Austria: 4.9
Norway: 8.4	Finland: 8.1	France: 9.9	Switzerland: 3.0
Ireland: 5.8	Canada: 8.1	New Zealand: 8.7	Korea: 0.8
Wallonia: 4.4	Qatar:	Québec: 7.3	Portugal: 1.9
Flanders: 3.5		Norway: 7.2	Iceland: 0.4
		Ireland: 5.4	

Fig. 2: Funding pledges for the Adaptation Fund. Based on data from the *Adaptation Fund*.

At COP26 in Glasgow, countries of the Global North committed to at least doubling their adaptation finance by 2025 relative to 2019. This would represent an increase to at least \$40 billion annually for adaptation finance in 2025 – and an important step towards balancing funding for mitigation and adaptation. The next move, however, is to cover the actual need for adaptation in poorer countries of the Global South. The United Nations Environment Programme has calculated an annual need of \$127 billion for 2030.¹⁶ At present, there is also a lack of clarity as to how countries of the Global North will double their financing as promised.

¹⁵ Oxfam, 2023, *Climate Finance Shadow Report 2023* (accessed: 20.11.2023).

¹⁶ UNEP, 2023, *Adaptation Gap Report 2023* (accessed: 20.11.2023).

The Adaptation Fund (AF) supports small-scale local adaptation projects with a focus on vulnerable population groups in countries of the Global South. It is of particular importance for countries of the Global South and is therefore an ever-present issue at climate negotiations. This is due not least to the fact that national institutions in countries of the Global South have direct access to AF resources. What distinguishes the AF from other funds is that the majority of countries of the Global South are represented in its decision-making body. Its composition will be negotiated again at COP28. It is crucial that developing countries retain this majority.

AF resources are limited and uncertain because, unlike other climate funds (e.g. the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility), the AF does not have a regular replenishment process. Originally, the AF was funded with two per cent of the proceeds from the sale of certified emission reductions under the Kyoto Protocol, but the revenues proved too low. Now, the AF serves the Paris Agreement, and is financed by five per cent of the proceeds from the market mechanism for emission reductions under Article 6.4, as well as voluntary pledges. The timeframe and generated funding of the new market mechanism are complex and uncertain, however. In the short term, the AF will remain heavily dependent on pledges from contributor countries. Even if the fund reaches its annual mobilisation target of \$300 million for 2023, uncertainty about future resources will remain. At COP28, many countries of the Global North, including Germany, should thus announce multi-year pledges for the AF in line with their promise to double adaptation financing.

The Green Climate Fund is the cornerstone of international climate finance architecture and the most important multilateral financial instrument for implementing the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Climate Agreement. After the fund had approved over 200 projects with a total value of over \$12 billion, the process for the second replenishment of the GCF was launched in 2022. This culminated in the third donor conference in the fund's history, which took place in October 2023.

At the meeting in Bonn, 25 countries announced contributions totalling \$9.3 billion for the next four years. So far, the announced contributions are lower than four years ago – in 2019 it was just under \$10 billion. This is disappointing in view of the ever-worsening climate crisis. One reason for the decline is that Japan, Norway, and other countries have reduced their contributions relative to the previous period. The replenishment process is not yet complete, however. Additional pledges are possible until the end of 2027. The US, Sweden, Italy, Australia, and Switzerland have already announced their intention to make a contribution at a later date. It is important that the total amount is significantly higher than the 2019 level. As usual, Congress is blocking progress in the US. However, Switzerland, Sweden, and Italy must make their announcements before the upcoming COP if they are to send the right signal.

The 28th climate summit under the presidency of the UAE is the next opportunity for countries to increase their contributions or to make an initial announcement regarding the second replenishment of the GCF. Though industrialised countries must take the lead here, other wealthy countries with significant greenhouse gas emissions such as the UAE are also invited to make an appropriate contribution in accordance with responsibility and capability criteria (see section 2.4.1).

3.1.2 Negotiations on the new climate financing goal (NCQG)

At COP26, the CMA started negotiations on the new climate finance target for the period after 2025 (New Collective Quantified Goal, NCQG). Even though a final decision is not due until 2024, the NCQG is already looming large. The fundamental questions are: How to mobilise funding at an order of magnitude above \$100 billion? And what sub-targets are there for specific areas? The most controversial question will probably be: Which countries will contribute what share? Will the distinction between countries of the Global South and North established in 1990 be done away with? Which qualitative aspects should be considered? How can reporting be further improved for the purposes, say, of creating visibility for climate finance flows from emerging and developing countries and of ensuring the greatest possible degree of transparency?

These questions are in contrast to the much-discussed issue of how climate finance (Art. 9) relates to general financial flows (Art. 2.1c). Clear regulation is needed to ensure the massive financial flows required for transformation are not used to circumvent the obligation to pay public funds, which are essential for climate protection and resilience measures. Moreover, the financing of L&D must be added as a third pillar in addition to the financing of climate protection and adaptation.

The CMA defined an ad-hoc work programme for the 2022–2024 period, which consists of four technical expert dialogues per year and an annual dialogue at the ministerial level. By COP28, a total of eight technical expert dialogues will have taken place, with stakeholders discussing various aspects of the NCQG, including quality, scope, qualitative elements, and transparency. In order to prepare ground-breaking decisions on the NCQG at COP28, ministers must signal where they see agreement, what decisions may be taken during the COP, and what the path to a successful conclusion in 2024 could look like. Clear guidance and provisional decisions on certain aspects of the goal (such as scope and targets) would avoid a last-minute decision at COP29 in 2024, which could have a negative impact on ambition and level of detail, affecting the quantity and quality of the new goal.

3.1.3 Article 2.1.c of the Paris Agreement

COP27 in Egypt launched the Sharm el-Sheikh dialogue on Article 2.1.c of the Paris Agreement, which requires signatory states to redirect global financial flows so as to achieve the climate targets for mitigation (2.1.a) and resilience (2.1.b) and ensure their complementarity with the obligation to support poorer countries required by Article 9. The dialogue seeks the fundamental restructuring of enormous financial flows totalling in the trillions, not billions. It is important that the restructuring does not eclipse the public climate financing needed by industrialised countries and, if they take on financial obligations in the near future, by wealthy emerging countries. The Global South in particular fears that restructuring financial flows will weaken financial commitments for industrialised countries under Article 9 of the Paris Agreement and place too much reliance on the private sector. Industrialised countries could exploit the restructuring to shirk their responsibility. This is especially true of the US, where for years Congress has held up the \$100 billion climate pledge. But public funds are urgently needed to protect public goods (e.g., in the face of loss, damage, and the need to introduce adaptation measures), to cover systemic costs, and to leverage the necessary private funds.

Two workshops were held in 2023 as part of the Sharm el-Sheikh dialogue to discuss the scope of Article 2.1.c. The deliberations at these workshops were summarised in a report to the Parties. Additional steps following from this report will be discussed at COP28. Some Parties have already called for discussions regarding the scope and implementation of Article 2.1.c to be continued under a separate agenda item.

Article 9 of the Paris Agreement stipulates that developed countries, in accordance with their existing commitments under the Agreement, must provide financial resources to support countries of the Global South both in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and in adapting to the impacts of the climate crisis.

In Article 2.1.c of the Paris Agreement, the Parties have committed to the long-term goal of aligning financial flows with low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.

3.2 Mitigation and a Just Transition

According to the IEA's updated 'net zero emissions by 2050' scenario, global emissions must fall by 35% by 2030 compared to 2022.¹⁷ Even though there are increasingly signs that we could soon see a peak in emissions from the use of coal, oil and gas, they have so far continued to rise.

3.2.1 Mitigation Work Programme (MWP)

With the current ambition mechanism, which stipulates that new, more ambitious NDCs are only submitted every five years, the challenge of very rapid emission reductions can no longer be met. For this reason, the Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme (MWP) was adopted at COP26, which is intended to help close the existing ambition and implementation gap by 2030. It is positive that the decision on the MWP provides for a sectoral approach, which is based, among other things, on the comparatively detailed sectors of Working Group III of the sixth IPCC Assessment Report (AR6). This has created the formal basis to accelerate implementation in the current decade. However, the programme will initially only run until 2026, with the possibility of extending it in 2026 through a political decision.

Every year the MWP's thematic focus is defined anew. This year, it is the question of how the just energy transition can be accelerated worldwide. During two global dialogues and investment-focused events, participants discussed (a) the necessary policies and framework conditions; (b) financial resources, technology and capacities; and (c) the link to sustainable development and the socio-economic impacts of the just energy transition. Participants in the dialogue formats jointly identified opportunities and feasible solutions as well as obstacles and challenges for the just energy transition.

The annual report, which summarises the results of the various dialogue formats, will now be presented during a ministerial meeting at COP28. On the basis of this report, the MWP will take its own decisions at the conference. Although the MWP was not given a mandate to make recommendations, it can still have an important signalling effect for climate policy ambition by identifying proposed solutions, gaps and barriers. However, it remains to be seen how strong the signals sent out by the MWP decision will be. Some states, including China, Saudi Arabia and Russia, are against the MWP prescribing measures to the signatory states and duplicating the function of global stocktaking. This blockade would significantly weaken the intended effect, namely closing the ambition and implementation gap by 2030. It would be a success if the MWP were to identify a package of measures with specific investment and financing requirements for binding targets defined in the GST decision or in a cover decision (e.g. target for the expansion of renewable energies and for increasing energy efficiency, complete phase-out of fossil fuels and subsidies).

¹⁷ IEA, 2023, [Net Zero Roadmap: A Global Pathway to Keep the 1.5 °C Goal in Reach](#) (accessed: 20.11.2023).

3.2.2 Work programme on Just Transition Pathways (JTWP)

In order to tackle the climate crisis effectively and in a socially just manner while ensuring the well-being of millions of people, mitigation and adaptation measures must be embedded in the justice debate. The Work Programme on Just Transition Pathways (JTWP) established at COP27 is still in the process of defining itself within the framework of international negotiations and examining the extent to which there could be synergies with other, already established topics (e.g. MWP or response measures). The industrialised countries involved in the JTWP discussion (e.g. the US) tend to promote a just transition for all workers. The success of the JTWP also depends on whether it is possible to broaden this understanding and focus on societal change as a whole. In the energy sector, this includes, for example, the just transition of the labour force from the fossil fuel industry, consideration of health impacts, environmental impacts, the secondary and tertiary circle of affected people and the impacts of the expansion of renewable energies themselves (displacement of people, overexploitation of nature, etc.). Another important question is whether universal access to energy and the necessary social and environmental safeguards can be successfully established.

However, other sectors, such as the agricultural sector, are also important components of a transition for society as a whole. The JTWP should consider all sectors in which a just transition is necessary. It is also important that a just transition is understood not only from the perspective focused on mitigation, but also from the perspective of adaptation to climate change. Adaptation has been neglected in the international climate discourse for decades (see section 3.1.1). Adaptation measures are often fragmented and inadequate. Yet a just transition can make a massive contribution to the adaptive capacity and resilience of communities. To ensure that these synergies are not lost, the JTWP should endeavour to give equal status to mitigation and adaptation.

In order to operationalise just transition, the JTWP must first achieve a coherent definition of just transition itself, or at least a convergence on its essential components. It should also identify areas where international co-operation could accelerate the just transition. The JTWP should also serve as a space for peer-to-peer evaluation of Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETPs). Furthermore, the work programme should provide space for accountability and the JTWP should involve communities and civil society as well as rights holders in a broader sense, i.e. outside of workers' groups (trade unions).

4 Other important areas yet to be negotiated

4.1 Reform of the international financial architecture

The reform of the international financial architecture (IFA) has long been discussed by several multilateral fora and institutions. This is clear evidence of the important role that structures outside the climate conferences play in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. In view of the multiple crises the world faces today – including the impact of COVID-19, the consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the negative effects of climate change – this initiative has taken particular importance at the multilateral level. The aim is to agree on ways to close the gap between the enormous financing needs and the limited funds available. Reforms to the IFA as such will not be formally discussed at the COP; the authority to enact them does not lie with the UNFCCC. But some aspects of the reforms could be indirectly affected by decisions taken during COP negotiations. COP is also an opportunity for decision-makers to send political signals for the IFA reform agenda. At COP27, for example, the French President Emmanuel Macron and the Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley mentioned the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact for the first time, which took place in June this year. In that regard, the following issues are especially relevant:

1. IFA reform should play a relevant role in the discussions on Article 2.1c of the Paris Agreement and the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance for the post-2025 period (NCQG) (see section 3.1.2.). The IFA reform could help raise more funding for the future goals of the NCQG and contribute to the implementation of Article 2.1c. Reforms to multilateral development banks, including their alignment with the Paris Agreement, the stronger integration of climate instruments at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and international levies on emissions, could also provide assistance.
2. Concerning Loss and Damage finance, the reissuance or transfer of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) from the IMF could serve to maintain liquidity in events of disasters. New international taxes – or at least a percentage of them – could be used to support the Loss and Damage Fund.
3. The forward-looking part of the GST should refer to the role of IFA reforms. The signatory parties could demand that work on the reform agenda be accelerated. The phase-out of fossil fuels should also be explicitly related to development banks finance, building on the Glasgow Statement from COP26.

In addition, heads of state and government in the high-level segment at COP can signal their support for the IFA reform agenda. The Roadmap that emerged from the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact highlighted several opportunities for leaders at COP28 to support the reforms. These include:

1. innovative financial instruments such as the taxation of high greenhouse-gas emitting sectors,
2. the launch of the Expert Group on Debt, Climate, and Nature, led by Colombia, Kenya, France, and Germany and
3. further progress on loan deferral clauses in the event of disasters, as well as additional support and initial implementation steps for the Global Shield of G7 and V20.

4.2 Food security

Food systems and agriculture are high on the agenda of the COP28 Presidency. The globally dominant food systems are responsible for one third¹⁸ of all anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. However, food and agriculture have hardly been a topic of negotiation at previous UN Climate Talks. Moreover, there is still no global agreement on financing for a climate-friendly transformation of food systems. In 2023, the UAE is particularly emphasising the importance of agriculture and food systems for the global goal of adaptation.

At the last COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, it was widely recognised that agriculture and food systems today are both a cause and a very relevant solution for the climate crisis. For the first time, the Parties mentioned food security risks in the ‘cover decision’. The Parties also agreed to extend the mandate of the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA) by four years. This is the only working forum within the UNFCCC that brings together the issues of agriculture, food security, and climate change. In addition, the Parties agreed to set up the Sharm-el-Sheikh online portal to facilitate the exchange of information and experiences in the implementation of measures for climate protection in agriculture and to ensure food security. Nevertheless, COP27 did not end with a clear mandate for the transformation of food systems. At the interim conference (SB58) in June 2023, a new work programme – the Sharm el-Sheik Joint Work on Agriculture and Food Security (SSJW) – was launched to implement climate action in agriculture and to ensure food security.

During the Food Systems Summit in Rome in July 2023, the COP28 Presidency announced its agenda on food systems and agriculture. The UAE called on Parties to support the ‘Emirates Declaration on Resilient Food Systems, Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Action’ and to align their national food systems and agriculture strategies with their NDCs, NAPs, and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). Discussions on elements of the SSJW and its implementation must be continued at COP28. At the end of COP28, it is expected that the Parties will have agreed on a three-year roadmap accompanied by workshops possibly on agroecology and food systems.

Germanwatch will follow up on the publication process of the ‘Declaration on Resilient Food Systems, Sustainable Agriculture, and Climate Action’; the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)’s ‘Global Roadmap: Achieving SDG2 without breaching the 1.5C threshold’; the Emirates Food System Accord and the High Ambition Coalition as well as the developments of international initiatives such as demands for sustainable food systems and climate justice of rural people’s movements and the thematic days on land use and food. We will critically examine advances in this regard.

We expect the Parties to commit to take measures for the entire global food system that contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation and guarantee food security and sustainable nutrition. In addition, financing a fair transition to sustainable agriculture and food systems must be discussed, especially when it comes to global support for small-scale farmers.

4.2.1 Deforestation

Global deforestation is an ongoing and pressing issue at the UN Climate Talks. However, while there is already a growing political and public awareness of the problem and high-profile (unfortunately non-binding) announcements for curbing deforestation have been made, there is still a lack of actual implementation.

¹⁸ Crippa et al., 2021, [Food systems are responsible for a third of global anthropogenic GHG emissions](#) (accessed: 20.11.2023).

At COP26 in Glasgow, more than 140 countries pledged to end deforestation worldwide by 2030, after the New York Declaration on Forests from 2014 failed to achieve its goal of halving deforestation by 2020. Nevertheless, deforestation even increased by four per cent in 2022 compared to the previous year. The lack of progress towards ending global forest loss underlines the need to move beyond declarations of intent and voluntary commitments and enact binding legislation.

At COP28, the Forest & Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP) which was launched at COP27, will present progress on ending deforestation by 2030 and present its visions and outcomes for 2024. To make real progress, we do not need more non-binding declarations on forest protection. What we need instead is that the protection goals will be implemented fairly, ambitiously, and swiftly.

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