

A *Monthly* from the East African Sustainability Watch Network and INFORSE East Africa

Uganda to Host the Third South Summit on “Leaving No One Behind” in January 2024



In January 2024, Government of Uganda will host the third South Summit - the supreme decision-making body of the Group of 77 (G-77), centred on the impactful theme of "Leaving no one behind." The G-77 established on 15th June 1964 by seventy-seven developing countries, provides the means for the South to

articulate and promote its collective economic interests and enhance its joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic issues in the United Nations system, including climate change and South-South cooperation. Although the members of the G-77 have increased to 135 countries, the original name was retained due to its historic significance. The third South Summit's theme of 'Leaving no one behind' resonates

well with the issues that the UN Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted in a hard-hitting speech on the occasion of the 2020 Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture. Mr. Guterres began by noting that the COVID-19 pandemic had played an important role in highlighting growing inequalities, and exposing the myth that everyone is in the same boat, because “while we are all floating on the same sea, it's clear that some are in super yachts, while others are clinging to the drifting debris.” Colonialism, a historic aspect of inequality, was evoked by the Secretary-General. Today's anti-racist movement, he said, points to this historic source of inequality: “The Global North, specifically my own continent of Europe, imposed colonial rule on much of the Global South for centuries, through violence and coercion.” “This led to huge inequalities within and between countries, including the transatlantic slave trade and the apartheid regime in South Africa”, argued Mr. Guterres, adding that ‘this left a legacy of economic and social injustice, hate crimes and xenophobia, the persistence of institutionalized racism, and white supremacy’.

Although climate change is a global problem, the effects are felt most keenly by those countries which are least to blame. The issue is likely to become more pronounced in the coming years, and millions risk malnutrition, malaria and other diseases; forced migration, and extreme weather events. The only way towards a fair and sustainable future for all, Mr. Guterres suggested, involves what he called a “New Social Contract”, which allows young people to live in dignity; women to have the same prospects and opportunities as men; and protects the vulnerable, and a “New Global Deal”, which ensures that power, wealth and opportunities are shared more broadly and fairly at the international level.

Building on this, the third South Summit around the impactful theme of "Leaving no one behind" ought to take into account varied viewpoints and opinions on potential solutions to overcome the current global challenges. In the same way, the forthcoming third South Summit ought to reflect on the current (dire) achievement of crucial Global Goals, within the context of the years remaining on the SDG agenda and pronounce itself on real actions to accelerate implementation of the same. While multilateralism still remains relevant to overcome global challenges, the Summit should single out the Global South's preferred policy responses from the national to global levels to address global inequality and the associated challenges.

The First and the second south summits of the Group of 77 were held in Havana, Cuba, on 10 – 14th April 2000 and in Doha, Qatar, on 12th – 16th June 2005, respectively. In accordance with the principle of geographical rotation, the Third South Summit will be held in Africa, in Kampala, Uganda, on 21-22 January 2024.

More about the Third Summit: <http://3southsummit.ug/about-g77/>

World Pledges Tripling of Renewable Energy by 2030 at the Dubai Climate Negotiations



Sultan Al Jaber, COP28 President declared COP 28 adjourned at 5:11 pm Photo: IISD

The UN Climate Conference (COP28) held in Dubai, November 30 to December 12 was important for several reasons, not least because it marked the conclusion of the first Global Stocktake (GST), the main mechanism through which progress under the Paris Agreement is assessed. The Outcome (UAE Consensus) called for the world to “transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade, so as to achieve net zero by 2050.” This signifies both a rapid near-term shift away from fossil fuels and a long-term direction of travel to a zero-carbon future.

The outcome also included agreement to triple the world’s renewable energy capacity and double its energy efficiency by 2030, goals also reflecting a pledge made by 130 countries at the start of COP. In addition, the COP decision called on countries to accelerate emissions reductions from road transport through a variety of pathways — not only zero-emissions vehicles, but also shifts to public transport and safe cycling infrastructure.

The outcome calls for this transition to be just and equitable, and states that differing national circumstances must be taken into account. ‘This recognition serves as an essential foundation for national policymaking as countries determine how they will contribute to the global energy transition and ensure no one in their country is left behind. But the overarching message is that every nation must be part of the transition’, according to the World Resources Institute.

While renewables are the cheapest energy option for most people, they require more investment at the beginning of the project than other technologies, and are impacted by interest rates and misaligned policies that often put wind and solar out of reach for developing countries

According to Gunnar Olesen, (International Network for Sustainable Energy secretariat), ‘this outcome has a double-edged sword as it includes a call on each Party to accelerate, inter alia, renewables but at the same time nuclear, abatement and removal technologies such as carbon capture and utilization and storage (CCUS), and low-carbon hydrogen production’. Gunnar points out that more nuclear power will increase nuclear waste and increase risks of radioactive pollution from the nuclear fuel chain, from accidents, from terrorist attacks etc. ‘CCUS is also expensive and has its own set of risks with CO2 spills etc,’ he asserts.

Gunnar further argues that the UAE Consensus from the UNFCCC COP28 did not provide larger financial climate support, with support for the new loss & damage fund (US\$ 792 million) and the Adaptation Fund (US\$ 188 million) that is well below expectations and no promises of substantial increase in financial climate support (as the new target for climate finance is only set to be agreed next year).

As such, next year’s climate summit in Azerbaijan (COP29) needs to offer breakthroughs on the thorny and fundamental questions of climate finance. But it is not clear how the world will pay for the massive clean energy transition it’s now committed to.

John Kioli, Chairperson of ACCESS Coalition notes that, “Africa has huge potentials of solar and wind, however, that potential is on un-bankable projects. We need to fast track the funding of those un-bankable projects by calling on the developed countries to honor their Paris Agreement commitments to fund developing countries. This will facilitate in connecting the last mile communities.”

As a way forward, the World Resources Institute proposes that countries now need to incorporate strong targets into their next round of their National Climate Plans (NDCs), due in 2025. Another critical test is whether far more finance is mobilized for developing countries to help make the energy transition possible.

Way forward for the ‘UAE Consensus’ from COP28 in Dubai



At the conclusion of COP28 in Dubai, countries delivered the ‘UAE Consensus’. As we reflect on this outcome, it is evident that the global community is in for more work in some areas through continued dialogue and collaboration in a multilateral setting (speed and ambition notwithstanding). A key component of the UAE Consensus is the decision on the Global Stocktake (GST) to assess progress on how countries can accelerate action to meet the goals of the landmark Paris Agreement, and put forward a plan to close implementation gaps to 2030.

In a landmark agreement to bring a sectoral approach to the COP process, this decision calls on Parties to transition away from fossil fuels and to triple renewables and double energy efficiency globally by 2030.

The decision also recognises the need to peak global emissions by 2025, taking into account different national starting points, and encourages countries to submit economy-wide Nationally Determined Contributions (National Climate Plans). It also includes recognition of the crucial need to significantly scale up adaptation finance beyond doubling to meet urgent and evolving needs, and a clear call for countries to deliver National Adaptation Plans by 2025 and implement them by 2030. Finally, recognising the crucial role finance has to play in delivering ambition, the GST decision builds momentum behind a new global climate finance architecture in support of the post-2025 climate goal to be delivered at COP29

Nevertheless, there were setbacks. One of these is Article 6, as negotiations on carbon crediting methodologies and international trade were postponed until COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan. Furthermore, according to *CarbonBrief*, ‘many countries walked away from the talks frustrated at the lack of a clear call for a fossil-fuel “phase-out” this decade – and at a “litany of loopholes” in the text that might enable the production and consumption of coal, oil and gas to continue.’

‘Despite an early breakthrough on launching a fund to pay for “loss and damage” from climate change, developing countries were left disappointed by a lack of new financial commitments for transitioning away from fossil fuels and adapting to climate impacts’, *CarbonBrief* adds.

However, according to the host (UAE), as a way forward the UAE Consensus includes multiple actions that will be taken forward throughout the COP28 Presidency. These include the First annual GST dialogue to be convened at the next UNFCCC meeting in June 2024, where countries will share best practice on using the GST outcome to inform their next NDCs. "Road map to Mission 1.5oC" is to be taken forward by the UAE, Azerbaijan and Brazil Presidencies to help ensure that international cooperation stimulates ambition in NDCs.

In addition, the *Emirates Framework for Global Climate Resilience* - A work programme to further strengthen the indicators at the heart of the new framework will kick off in 2024. Countries will need to provide written inputs to help inform this by March 2024.

On the *Just Transition Work Programme* - At least two dialogues to be convened before COP29 in a hybrid format to ensure inclusivity, and countries to provide further written evidence and inputs for the work programme by March 2024. On the *Mitigation Work Programme* - Two global dialogues to be held through 2024, with countries submitting proposals for the topics they address by February 2024. On the *Presidency Youth Climate Champion*, COP28 and COP29 Presidencies will appoint the first official Youth Climate Champions after the role was institutionalized at COP28.

Read *CarbonBrief’s* analysis of the Key outcomes agreed at the UN climate talks in Dubai: <https://www.carbonbrief.org/cop28-key-outcomes-agreed-at-the-un-climate-talks-in-dubai/>