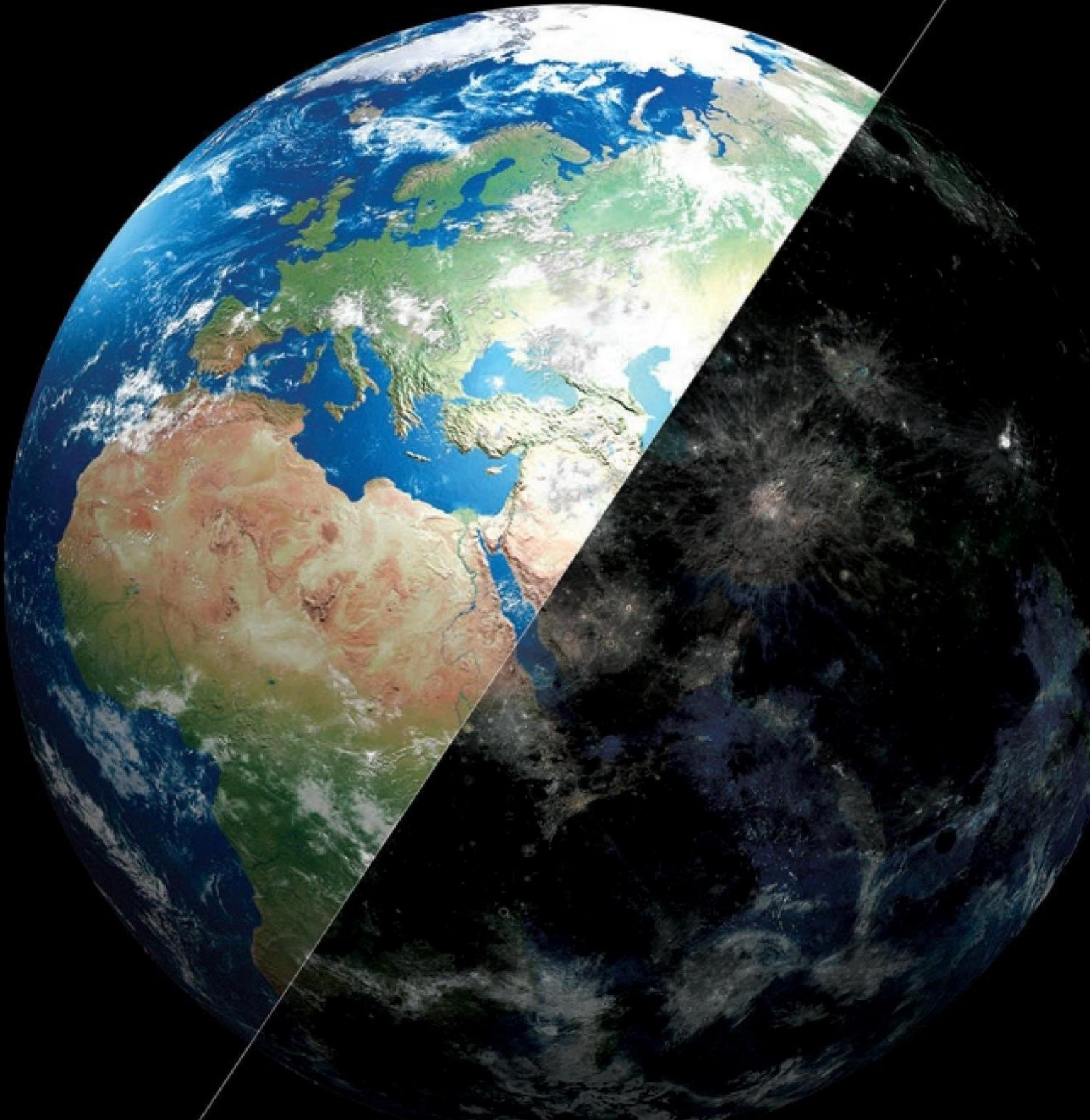


# COP26



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# Climate Change and Climate Justice – community work issues

It is now largely accepted that climate change is having and will continue to have a profound effect on all aspects of human life. What is also now accepted is that these effects will be felt most deeply by those who are living in poverty and with social exclusion and inequality. These are the people and communities that are traditionally least responsible for climate change, but they are also the people and communities with the least ability to adapt and respond to the effects of climate change.

The community sector has a unique contribution to make in relation to climate justice in Ireland in terms of raising awareness within communities, up-skilling of the communities with which it works and ensuring that policy development in this area takes account of the fact that climate change policies are likely to have a disproportionate impact on those already struggling with poverty and disadvantage.

One of the values underpinning community work as outlined in *The All-Ireland Standards for Community Work* is Social Justice and Sustainable Development. Understanding climate justice and the impact that climate change is having and will continue to have on the most marginalised communities here and across the globe is critical. To do this, community workers need to engage with policy in relation to climate change.

A concern with climate justice suggests we should be concerned with:

- how marginalised communities are already being impacted by issues such as fuel poverty, poorly insulated dwellings, air pollution and living in areas prone to flooding
- the impact that mitigation efforts, such as carbon taxes, will have on these communities
- adaptation associated displacement and migration, urban resilience and planning for internal rural-to-urban migration.
- Issues concerning the global south such as issues affecting rural communities, including those resulting from climate-change related loss of livelihood, which are increasingly being compounded when enough people move away that there are also labour shortages. People left may be predominantly very young and old, plus women who may have to take up the slack for male household members who have migrated e.g., in agricultural production on top of sometimes additional care responsibilities.
- The needs of "trapped populations" who are voluntarily or involuntarily immobile – people who cannot move because they lack resources, have disabilities, are expected to remain to care for others.

These and other issues need to be examined in the context of "social tipping points", where the viability of communities is disrupted not due to climate change per se but to the effects climate change and the adaptation/coping strategies of some have had on social structure, demographics, local economy and markets.

Community Work now needs put climate change firmly and clearly alongside our central and well-articulated local, national and global concern with poverty, discrimination against minorities and marginalised peoples and the intersections of both with women's and children's rights, gender discrimination and the rights of disabled people. This in effect means a paradigm shift so that all Community Work practice, policy, advocacy and education incorporates this dimension not as an add, on but as a core and key foundation of the discipline.

# COP26

COP stands for **Conference of the Parties**. COP26 is the next annual UN climate change conference, and the summit will be attended by the countries that signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – a treaty that came into force in 1994.

The COP 26 UN Climate Change Conference, hosted by the UK in partnership with Italy, will take place from 31 October to 12 November 2021 in the Scottish Event Campus (SEC) in Glasgow, UK.

The conferences are attended by world leaders, ministers, and negotiators but also by representatives from civil society, business, international organizations, and the media. There have been calls for [COP26 to be postponed](#) given that some of the countries most affected are also those with lowest vaccination levels against COVID19, which essentially means that their voice will not be heard. The UK Government have made it clear that the COP will be totally in person or postponed, and as of now maintains this position. However, if Scottish and UK COVID numbers rise considerably that might force a change. This arrangement also makes participation by civil society from the global south, including potential participants from places most likely to and already experiencing the immediate brunt of climate change, very difficult.

You can read the official guide to COP26 [here](#) and an overview of the schedule [here](#)

## The Paris Agreement

Climate change is a global emergency that goes beyond national borders. It is an issue that requires international cooperation and coordinated solutions at all levels.

To tackle climate change and its negative impacts, world leaders at the [UN Climate Change Conference \(COP21\) in Paris](#) reached a breakthrough on 12 December 2015, referred to as the [Paris Agreement](#).

The Agreement sets long-term goals to guide all nations to:

- substantially reduce global greenhouse gas emissions to limit the global temperature increase in this century to 2 degrees Celsius while pursuing efforts to limit the increase even further to 1.5 degrees
- review countries' commitments every five years
- provide financing to developing countries to mitigate climate change, strengthen resilience and enhance abilities to adapt to climate impacts.

The Agreement is a legally binding international treaty. It entered into force on 4 November 2016. Today, [191 Parties](#) (190 countries plus the European Union), including Ireland, have joined the Paris Agreement.



The Agreement includes commitments from all countries to reduce their emissions and work together to adapt to the impacts of climate change and calls on countries to strengthen their commitments over time. The Agreement provides a pathway for developed nations to assist developing nations in their climate mitigation and adaptation efforts while creating a framework for the transparent monitoring and reporting of countries' climate goals.

The Paris Agreement provides a durable framework guiding the global effort for decades to come. It marks the beginning of a shift towards a [net-zero](#) emissions world. Implementation of the Agreement is also essential for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

## What does COP26 aim to achieve and why is it important?

[Read more here](#)

COP26 is a critical summit for global climate action. To have a chance of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees, global emissions must halve by 2030 and reach 'net-zero' by 2050.

The 2021 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report underscores it is still possible to achieve the 1.5-degree-target but only if unprecedented action is taken now.

The NDCs submitted in 2015 were collectively not ambitious enough to limit global warming to 'well below' 2 degrees, never mind 1.5 degrees. The signatories of the Paris Agreement are, however, expected to submit new – and more ambitious – NDCs every five years, known as the 'ratchet mechanism'.

COP26 is the first test of this ambition-raising function. One of the main 'benchmarks for success' in Glasgow is that as many governments as possible submit new NDCs and, when put together, these are ambitious enough to put the world on track for 'well below' 2 degrees, preferably 1.5.

The difference between 1.5 and 2 degrees is substantial: every increment of a degree translates into increased risks for people, communities, and ecosystems. The overarching aim for the Glasgow summit is to 'keep 1.5 degrees alive'.

A successful outcome in Glasgow also requires developed countries to honour a promise they made back in 2009 of mobilizing \$100 billion per year by 2020 to support climate action in developing countries. The official figures for 2020 will not be available until 2022, but it is clear the goal was not met last year.

Recent announcements, including President Joe Biden's pledge to double US climate finance, have brought developed countries closer to honouring the pledge, but more will need to be done to restore credibility and strengthen trust between developing and developed nations.

Strengthening the ability to adapt to climate change impacts is another important element of COP26, as is the question of how to deal with economic and non-economic harms caused by climate change impacts which cannot be avoided through adaptation or mitigation, known as ‘loss and damage’.

Discussions on these issues often focus on mobilizing finance but it is also important that parties make progress on other issues such as further operationalizing the Paris Agreement’s ‘global goal on adaptation’ which, at present, is vaguely formulated.

At COP26, parties also need to try and finalize the Paris Agreement’s ‘implementation guide’ – the Paris Rulebook. Agreeing on what rules should govern international carbon markets – the ‘Article 6 negotiations’ – is expected to be particularly difficult.

## What to demand

### **No More Cooking The Books: No To Fossil Fuels, Net-zero And False Solutions**

- Fight For 1.5
- We Need Real Zero, Not Net Zero
- Keep It In The Ground: No New Fossil Fuel Investments Or Infrastructure
- Reject False Solutions: No To Carbon Markets And Risky And Unproven Technologies

### **Rewire The System: Start the Justice Transition Now**

- Start The Justice Transition

### **Global Climate Justice: Reparations and Redistribution To Indigenous Communities and The Global South**

- Fair share of effort from all rich countries
- Cancel the debts of Global South by all creditors
- Grant-based climate finance for the Global South
- Reparations for the loss and damage already happening in the Global South

[Read more here](#)

# Quick guide to some of the terms & acronyms

Friends of the Earth Scotland rundown from a CS climate action perspective,

<https://foe.scot/campaign/climate-action/un-climate-summit-glasgow-2020-cop26/key-issues/> may be useful in preparing for COP26.

In addition to carbon pricing/trading under Paris Agreement (Paris Agreement text [here](#)) Article 6 (which governments were supposed to have worked out back in 2018, two COPs ago, see

<https://www.climatechangenews.com/2019/12/02/article-6-issue-climate-negotiators-cannot-agree/>), major issues include:

## Finance--

- **Amount of finance--** Paris Agreement reiterated developed country commitment to "provide and mobilize" USD 100B per year to developing countries, to be "balanced" between **mitigation** (reducing carbon/GHGs) and **adaptation** (to CC impacts, essential for developing countries). This hasn't been reached, but additionally, there is no agreed framework for accounting.
- **Type of finance-- loans v. grants**, and amount going to adaptation. Much of it is market-rate loans; some of it is concessional loans and too little is grants. Lending for mitigation, mainly for transition to renewable energy, is a viable private investment. The investments needed for adaptation, in contrast, provide public goods rather than private returns in general (at least in the short- and medium-term).
- **Amount going to adaptation--** only about 20% goes to adaptation, though if you reduce the loan finance "mobilized" to its grant equivalent, it's less unbalanced... but it's also much, much less...
- **Amount going to LDCs and SIDS--**not enough is going to the countries that need it most, especially when it comes to grants. Some of the Lower-Middle Income SIDS are really highly indebted, and COVID has exacerbated this situation.
- The USD 100B/year commitment goes through 2025 and a new commitment for the post-2025 period needs to be negotiated (though that's going to be a years-long process but it's on people's minds)
- Civil society and climate vulnerable countries, including the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) continue to argue very strongly for a **separate stream of finance dedicated to CC loss and damage**. While the inclusion of Article 8 on Loss and Damage in the Paris Agreement was considered a victory, in the COP21 decision Parties agreed "that Article 8 of the Agreement does not involve or provide a basis for any liability or compensation" (para. 51), which was a loss. The relationship between **adaptation** and climate change **loss and damage** as that which cannot be adapted to, as well as the real question of developed countries' (historical emitters') obligations in terms of liability or compensation is still a hot topic.
- Transparency framework-- a framework for evaluating countries' NDCs (Nationally-determined contributions to emissions reduction-- so mainly mitigation, but there are also adaptation and support and aspects), and their progress on meeting them, including in regard to providing support to other countries.

**UNFCCC--** 1992, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, "UNFCCC" has its Secretariat in Bonn. It has a huge number of committees and bodies and its website isn't all that easy to navigate. But see <https://unfccc.int/>. The relationship between bodies set up under the UNFCCC process-- which usually meets yearly (at the COP)-- and those related specifically to the Paris Agreement (also at the COP but

officially the CMA, see <https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/supreme-bodies/conference-of-the-parties-serving-as-the-meeting-of-the-parties-to-the-paris-agreement-cma> although it doesn't tell you that much) is complicated.

**WIM-- Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage.** When people talk about the WIM, they are often talking about the [WIM ExCom](#). I mention the WIM because that's where human mobility is-- the [Task Force on Displacement](#) (TFD), mandated in the Paris Agreement (or the COP21 that outlined the operationalization of the Paris Agreement) is an expert body under the WIM. **The WIM already existed** prior to the Paris Agreement, although it was only in the Paris Agreement Article 8 that governments explicitly acknowledged **loss and damage as something beyond adaptation**.

The COP established the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts (Loss and Damage Mechanism), to address loss and damage associated with impacts of climate change, including extreme events and slow onset events, in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change at [COP19](#) (November 2013) in Warsaw, Poland. <https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/workstreams/loss-and-damage-ld/warsaw-international-mechanism-for-loss-and-damage-associated-with-climate-change-impacts-wim>.

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