



COP 28: A New Hope for African Countries in the Global Climate Struggle

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Introduction:

The recently concluded Conference of Parties, COP 28, held in the United Arab Emirates from November 30th to December 12th, 2023, served as a pivotal gathering that convened global leaders, climate activists, and representatives from NGOs and National Farmer Organizations (NFOs) from across the continent. The conference, held under the theme "**Unite, Act, and Deliver**," provided a crucial platform for collaborative dialogue and action. Building on the resolutions of COP 27 in Egypt, COP 28 addressed pressing issues central to global climate efforts, including the 1.5°C target, coal phase-down, food security risks, climate tipping points, and financial system reform. This assembly of diverse stakeholders underscored the urgency and shared responsibility in confronting the challenges posed by climate change.

Are We on the Right Track? Reflecting on Past COP Resolutions:

In the face of escalating climate consequences, COP 28 emerged as a pivotal platform for critical reflection. The unresolved issue of funding for countries affected by climate change—an enduring concern since the COP 15 Copenhagen climate agreement, where nations globally committed to an annual fund of 100 billion US dollars (equivalent to about 252 trillion Tanzanian shillings) for climate actions—continues to leave African nations grappling with the impacts, devoid of adequate support. Presently, African leaders are vehemently advocating for tangible actions, urging a reconsideration of the commitment to fund affected nations and demanding accountability for the persisting lack of progress.



President Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan at the COP 28, U.A.E

During COP 28, U.A.E. President Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan delivered a compelling message, urging global leaders to fulfill unmet promises, notably emphasizing the realization of adequate financing for climate restoration. This call to action comes at a critical juncture as global temperatures continue to rise due to delayed interventions. ***Dr. Samia made this impactful statement while addressing heads of state and leaders of international institutions at the recently concluded Conference of the Parties (COP 28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE).***

The Paris Agreement, aimed at limiting global carbon emissions to below 1.5 degrees Celsius, demands an urgent commitment to counteract the alarming warming of the Earth, stemming from the insufficient execution of agreed-upon interventions. This accord underscores the critical imperative for immediate and concerted efforts in addressing climate change on a global scale. The enduring impacts of climate change have particularly adverse effects on developing countries, exemplified by Tanzania, where it has resulted in a two to three per cent reduction in Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

African Nations' Aspirations: Moving from Observers to Decision-Makers:

COP 28 marked a turning point as African nations expressed a resolute desire to shift from passive observers to active decision-makers in the global climate discourse. This shift reflects a collective commitment to shaping climate policies that directly address the unique challenges faced by the continent. African leaders stressed the need for genuine representation in international decision-making bodies to ensure their concerns are not only heard but actively integrated into global climate strategies.

Location Dilemma: A Call for Environmental Accountability

Environmental activists have consistently voiced concerns regarding the selection of nations with substantial greenhouse gas emissions as hosts for COP events. The choice of conference locations has come under scrutiny, prompting activists to call for a more environmentally responsible approach in deciding where these critical gatherings take place. This ongoing debate not only highlights the immediate environmental impact of such events but also raises broader questions about the sustainability and responsibility of hosting conferences focused on mitigating climate change.

COP 28: Charting a Course to Net Zero

Amid growing concerns over the environmental impact of COP events, COP 28 has become a focal point in the quest for sustainability. The discourse has evolved to explore the feasibility of crafting a roadmap leading to net-zero emissions. While COP events are driven by noble intentions to combat climate change, the imperative to scrutinize and mitigate their overall carbon footprint has taken center stage.

Environmental activists and stakeholders are actively engaged in contemplating the development of a comprehensive roadmap aimed at achieving net-zero emissions for future COP gatherings. This forward-looking initiative goes beyond mere acknowledgment of emissions produced during the events; it seeks to implement strategies to offset and minimize the environmental footprint associated with these significant international conferences.

This pursuit of a net-zero approach aligns seamlessly with broader global efforts to combat climate change. It signifies a commitment to sustainable practices at every stage of COP events, acknowledging the responsibility to not only address the urgent climate challenges discussed during these conferences but also to embody environmental stewardship in the very execution of such vital gatherings.

As COP 28 unfolds, the spotlight on a roadmap to net zero not only reflects a conscientious response to environmental concerns but also underscores a collective determination to lead by example in the global fight against climate change. The outcomes and strategies developed during this conference have the potential to shape the trajectory of future COP events and contribute significantly to a more sustainable and responsible approach to addressing the world's pressing environmental issues.

Addressing Climate Change: Immediate Action Plan for African Nations

i. Food Systems Transformation:

African nations stand at a critical juncture where prioritizing the transformation of food systems is imperative for enhancing sustainability. This involves not only championing agroecological practices but also making strategic investments in local and resilient crop varieties. Fostering agricultural systems designed to mitigate climate-related risks becomes paramount to ensuring food security in the face of evolving environmental challenges.

ii. Climate Financing:

Establishing robust mechanisms for climate financing emerges as a cornerstone in the battle against climate change. This strategic initiative involves harnessing damage and loss funds to assist nations severely affected by climate change, thereby guaranteeing that financial support swiftly reaches those in urgent need. By fortifying climate financing structures, African nations can fortify their resilience against the adverse impacts of climate change.

iii. Soil Analysis and Resilient Crops:

At the heart of climate resilience is a thorough understanding of the changing landscape. Conducting comprehensive soil analyses is essential for equipping African nations with the knowledge needed to navigate evolving environmental conditions. Concurrently, the promotion of resilient crops, including drought-resistant varieties, empowers farmers to adapt and thrive amidst climatic uncertainties, ensuring sustainable agricultural practices.

iv. Renewable Energy Transition:

Catalyzing the transition to renewable energy sources stands as a paramount commitment for African nations. To reduce reliance on fossil fuels and align with global emissions reduction targets, substantial investments in renewable technologies are crucial. By embracing and adopting sustainable energy solutions, African nations can play a pivotal role in shaping a cleaner and greener future.

V. Community Engagement and Education:

Vital to the success of any climate action plan is the active involvement of communities and the promotion of climate literacy. Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should collaborate to instigate comprehensive education initiatives. These endeavors not only inform communities about sustainable practices but also underscore the importance of building resilience and preserving ecosystems. Through collective efforts, African nations can foster a sense of environmental stewardship and amplify the impact of their climate change mitigation strategies.

Conclusion:

COP 28 ended; a palpable sense of renewed hope permeates the atmosphere. Yet, the true litmus test doesn't rest solely in the declarations made but hinges on the resolute implementation of the agreed-upon resolutions and an unwavering commitment to transformative actions. As African nations increasingly assume an active role in shaping global climate policies, the world stands poised with anticipation. The collaborative efforts and partnerships forged during COP 28 offer glimpses of a potential future—a future where cooperative endeavors pave the way for substantive and enduring change in the relentless battle against the looming climate crisis. At this crucial juncture, the world awaits the tangible outcomes and impact destined to emanate from the promises made and resolutions adopted during this pivotal conference.