



Taking Stock of the Conference of Parties (COP): Empty Promises or Actionable Goals?

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The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the primary decision-making body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This annual gathering of member states focuses on addressing global climate change. In the lead up to COP28, amid the rising urgency felt amongst climate activists to take actions proportional to the absolute havoc climate change is now causing all over the world, there is hope that this year's conference will make up the difference. The 2023 UN Climate Change Conference is scheduled to take place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) from November 30 to December 12, featuring the 28th meeting of the COP 28 and the fifth meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement.

But do these meetings yield any actionable goals, or are they political facades put up to make empty promises with no real intent behind them? COP27, for example, ambitiously set up a Loss and Damage Fund to compensate poorer countries for the climate change related destruction they had little part in causing. While this act was greatly lauded, the fund was not immediately established. In fact, the United States and United Kingdom both said reparations were off the table entirely. Nations only agreed to form a transitional committee to define the structure and financial obligations for a loss and damage fund. The committee will present its findings at COP 28 in November 2023. Of late, the race against climate change has become a race against time itself. These conferences do take steps, but they are so small and so carefully taken that they may make no difference at all in the burgeoning storm that is climate change.

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