

COP23 opens, plots to fast forward Paris Pact



UN Volunteers set for busy two weeks

The 2017 UN Climate Change Conference opens on Monday, with the aim of launching nations towards the next level of ambition needed to

tackle global warming and put the world on a safer and more prosperous development path.

The Conference, coming just two years after the landmark adoption of the Paris Climate Change Agreement, will also further fuel momentum among cities, states, regions, territories, business and civil society in support of national climate action plans, the internationally-agreed temperature goal and the wider objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Presided over by Frank Bainimarama, the Prime Minister of Fiji

and the first small island developing state to hold this role, the conference comes against a backdrop of extreme weather events that have devastated the lives of millions of people in places like Asia, the Americas and the Caribbean.

“The human suffering caused by intensifying hurricanes, wildfires, droughts, floods and threats to food security caused by climate change means there is no time to waste,” said Frank Bainimarama, the Prime Minister of Fiji, who takes over as President of the COP23 conference.

Key issues to watch @ Bonn's COP 23

The 2015 Paris accord set a target of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) — or 2 degrees at the most — by the end of the century.

The Bonn talks will flesh out the rule book that countries have to abide by on this ambitions.

This includes coming up with

international standards for how to measure carbon emissions, to make sure that one nation's efforts can be compare to another's. A second debate centers around how countries take stock of what's been achieved and set new, more ambitious goals for curbing carbon emissions after 2020.

The third big issue concerns money. Experts agree that shifting economies away from fossil fuels and preparing countries for some of the inevitable consequences of climate change will require vast financial resources — including some from the U.S. administration of President Donald Trump.

Trump killing climate research



Climate change activists in Bonn accuse US President Donald Trump (photo) for deliberately obstructing research on global warming.

The activists allege that the Trump administration is trying to block studies of global warming for ideological reasons.

“Research has been informing the world what is happening around our earth. But with Trump's stance, we are being taken along the path of ignorance, hence getting

incapacitated to act to save our planet,” said Mr Mithika Mwenda, the Secretary General, Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, a coalition of several CSOs in Africa. The crisis has been worsened because the US Congress this year insisted it did not want to provide funds to climate research. Congress is currently under the control of Republicans, who are antagonistic to climate science and the study of global warming.

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Africa's Road to COP 23

As climate leaders prepare for COP23 in Bonn, Germany, next week, a new UN assessment shows that national pledges will deliver only a third of the carbon emissions reduction needed to meet 2030 climate targets.

That means that even under the best of circumstances – for example, the United States honoring the Paris Agreement rather than pulling out – global warming to at least 3 degrees Celsius is likely by 2100. Five countries, including South Africa, will likely require further action or offsets to achieve their goals.

“South Africa is a good example of how the politics of a country may make incentivizing a transition away from coal substantially more difficult,” the report says, noting state-owned Eskom’s monopoly in a power sector that is 90 percent reliant on coal-fired plants.

Governments need to step up their commitments and their sense of urgency, the report says, but so does the private sector, civil society and other actors working in cities and in the regional context.

“One year after the Paris Agreement entered into force, we still find ourselves in a situation where we are not doing nearly enough to save hundreds of millions of people from a miserable future,” said Erik Solheim, head of UN Environment, as “The Emissions Gap Report 2017” was released Tuesday.

“This is unacceptable. If we invest in the right technologies, ensuring that the private sector is involved, we can still meet the promise we made to our children to protect their future. But we have to get on the case now.”

CO2 emissions have remained stable since 2014, driven in part by renewable energy, notably in China and India, the UN said. Yet the report warns that methane and other greenhouse gases are still rising, and combined with global economic growth could easily put CO2 emissions back on the upswing.

The culmination of these consultations is what led the Civil Society Organisations from Africa, under the Auspices of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance,



to come up with the common African position that are to be presented to the 23rd session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 23) to the UN Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The CSOs plan to speak with one loud voice to agitate for the speedy design and development of the Paris Rule Book to accelerate the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

“We hereby emphasize that there is a need for equal treatment of pre-2020 and post-2020 ambition and action to achieve pre-2020 targets,” reads their position paper in part.

Under PACJA, the CSOs have come up with eight demands for negotiation during COP23 as follows:

Demand 1: Global warming must be limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius this century.

Demand 2: Adaptation is crucial to protecting and promoting development gains, especially in Africa

Demand 3: Climate Financing should be long-term

Demand 4: Capacity building should be enhanced under the Paris Agreement

Demand 5: Loss and damage: Parties must commit to full implementation of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage

Demand 6: Technology development and transfer should be

African CSOs at a session in Bonn for COP23

supported to enhance resilience and low carbon development

Demand 7: The gender agenda should be enhanced in the implementation of the Paris Agreement

Demand 8: Paris Rulebook: Design of a robust framework that takes note of transparency and accountability

The Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, will in collaboration with Oxfam and Cuts International, CSDDevNet, CECOEDCON and WACSO, organize a side event on the 8th of November, 2017 at Meeting Room 7, Bula Zone in Bonn, Germany to discuss how to make the Paris Agreement work for Africa with particular emphasis on enhancing transparency and defining the place of climate finance.

This will be preceded by a Pre COP23 CSO Consultative Forum on the 5th of November in Bonn, Germany.

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