

COP26 agreement fails key climate tests but there is hope to salvage summit's legacy, says Green Party



13 November 2021

COP26 has failed to deliver action either at the scale, or with the urgency needed to curb the worst impacts of climate change, the Green Party has said.

As the final agreement was passed this evening the Green Party expressed deep regret that the conference had failed in its primary objective of getting the world on track to limit temperature rise to 1.5C. In spite of the huge energy from activists in Glasgow and appetite for change from communities worldwide, the final agreement clearly fails to meet the five tests the Green Party had set. [1]

Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“This agreement has failed to get us on track to 1.5C, the primary aim of this summit, and is woefully short on providing support to the Global South, protecting future generations or safeguarding the natural world.

“While the deal for the first time acknowledges the central role of fossil fuels as causing the climate crisis, and the loss and damage agenda is finally being taken seriously, like so many others who have campaigned so long for climate justice, we are left with a sense of grief and anxiety about what has been agreed overall.

“Our five tests were designed to highlight the absolute essentials we needed to see from this agreement and unfortunately they have simply not been delivered: every test has been failed.”

How has the COP26 agreement failed the Green Party's five tests?

1 It is unacceptable that the agreement has failed to outlaw offsetting as

part of the measurement of carbon reporting from governments and industries. We deplore the fact that it is now possible for countries to offload the heavy lifting of CO2 reductions onto other countries or to gain 'carbon credit' via initiatives like tree planting as an alternative to real cuts in emissions. This could lead to high-emitting countries, companies and individuals exploiting the environments of low-income countries in a way that is the precise opposite of climate justice.

2 While the deal recognises the importance of loss and damage, negotiators have only taken the first steps towards an agreement at a time when countries are already being devastated and lives being lost because of the impact of the climate crisis. There is still no money on the table and no clarity around the need for countries to pay reparations for past damage. It is deeply unfair that money will be transferred in the form of loans rather than grants for countries that are already over-burdened with debt.

3 While the core demand to reduce the global use of fossil fuels has been kept in the text, a last minute change to 'phase down' rather than phase out coal is a dangerous dilution that puts 1.5 further beyond reach. There is no such thing as an efficient fossil fuel subsidy and abatement for coal is a loophole that only serves to extend the life of this most polluting form of energy.

4 The agreement fails to compel countries to introduce carbon pricing to make polluters pay for the impact of their emissions. Yet again we see an agreement strong on pledges and promises but vacuous when it comes to policy tools.

5 Given the weakness of this agreement, an annual check in on nationally determined contributions is essential. Our test required annual checks based on scientifically verifiable evidence. This agreement lacks the sense of urgency around action this decade and without scientific monitoring or enforcement could become as worthless as the paper it is written on.

Ramsay went on to say: "Although this is a colossal disappointment and a wasted opportunity, we're adamant that the legacy of this COP doesn't need to be failure.

"This generation of politicians is failing us, but we are determined that the amazing energy shown by youth activists, indigenous people and citizens from around the world will not be betrayed.

"As Greens we have been at the forefront of the struggle for climate justice for decades, and we will continue to be the political voice in that struggle as it continues."

ENDS

Notes

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<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/11/12/green-party-sets-out-five-tests>

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