

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

1

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/11/12/green-party-sets-out-five-tests-for-cop26-agreement/>

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Green Party sets out five tests for COP26 agreement



12 November 2021

The Green Party has highlighted five key tests the COP26 agreement must pass to be considered a success, as the global climate conference nears its close.

Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“The latest draft of the agreement we’ve seen just doesn’t match up with the level of ambition needed to tackle the climate crisis. [1]

“Our five tests are in the spirit of the global communities that are in Glasgow to demand that leaders protect our future, and that’s why we’ve laid out these tests – so that we can clearly see whether the final version goes far enough.

“There is still time and we’re urging negotiators to use the final hours to push for the necessary action the world is crying out for.”

The Green Party’s 5 tests for the COP26 agreement are:

1. **Offsetting** should be outlawed as part of the measurement of net zero reporting from governments and industries. It should not be possible 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. [2]
2. **Loss and damage** must be front and centre of any agreement with increases in aid to countries on the frontline of climate crisis impact, and cash transfers in the form of grants rather than loans for countries that are already over-burdened with debt.
3. The core demand to accelerate the **phase out of fossil fuels** must remain in the agreement and the language around this must be clear and unambiguous, relating to all forms of fossil fuel, not just coal. Vague text around abatement and efficiency must be replaced with clear commitments to rapidly eliminate fossil fuels.
4. Each country should commit to a system of **carbon pricing** to ensure the most polluting industries not only pay for the impact of their emissions, but are also incentivised to find efficient means of reducing them. [3]
5. The weak progress achieved at this COP means that we must intensify future progress checking on **nationally determined contributions**. All countries must produce scientifically verifiable plans every year in order to show their progress in reaching the targets they have set themselves to achieve the global aim of keeping warming to 1.5 degrees.

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://unfccc.int/documents/310983>

2

<https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/opinion/emissions-net-zero-cop26-climate-crisis-b1955749.html>

3

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/10/13/greens-call-on-government-to-bring-in-carbon-tax-at-cop26/>

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COP26 floundering as UK government distracted by Brexit and sleaze, Greens warn



10 November 2021

- **Carla Denyer:** “During the months when the climate deal should have been the top priority the Conservative government was distracted by Brexit wrangling and more recently they have lost focus due to sleaze within their own party”

The Green party has expressed alarm that the draft agreement shows the climate talks in Glasgow are wildly off track. [1]

Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer said:

“It’s clear from the draft final agreement that world leaders are failing to achieve the diplomatic breakthrough we need to prevent catastrophic climate change.

“The draft agreement clearly fails to keep 1.5 alive – it has the world on track for warming well above 2 degrees and instead of making essential commitments now, it proposes kicking the can down the road with more discussions through the 2020s.

“During the months when the climate deal should have been the top priority the Conservative government was distracted by Brexit wrangling and more recently they have lost focus due to sleaze within their own party.

“But as WWF said today [2], three days is a long time in climate diplomacy. The people who share this planet demand that in these last few days the UK presidency moves heaven and earth to keep 1.5 alive.

“The UK government could show leadership on both fossil fuels and climate finance that could help take us towards the stronger agreement the climate needs. We need action now and time is short to avoid COP26 turning into a historic failure.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://unfccc.int/documents/309006>

2

<https://twitter.com/natalieben/status/1458394862970101761>

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Climate Action Tracker a wake up call for global leaders



9 November 2021

Responding to today's Climate Action Tracker (CAT) report which warns the world is heading for a 2.4C temperature rise by the end of this century, with devastating impacts across the globe [1], Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“Today was the day the sugar coating fell off the COP26 talks to reveal the bitter pill that world leaders are going to force us to swallow if they don't take much stronger action.

“This report shows that action in the next ten years is vital. Long term targets, promises and non-existent technofixes, with no actual policies to get us there, are worth nothing. It shows that most global leaders have been

asleep at the wheel. This is their wake-up call.

“We need a carbon tax, a Green New Deal and billions transferred from the world’s richest countries to the world’s poorest to help them adapt to the impacts of the climate crisis and build a clean green economy for the future.”

[1]

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/09/cop26-sets-course-for-disastrous-heating-of-more-than-24c-says-key-report>

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