

Media Update

15 November 2021

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL STATEMENT

Secretary-General's statement on the conclusion of the UN Climate Change Conference COP26

Let me begin by thanking our hosts —the UK government and the people of Glasgow — for their tremendous hospitality.

I salute Alok Sharma and his team. This was an extremely challenging conference. They have shown remarkable expertise in reaching consensus among parties.

I am grateful to Patricia Espinosa and all my colleagues of the United Nations Climate Change team.

And I express my gratitude to all delegates — and all those on the outside who have put pressure on this COP to deliver.

The approved texts are a compromise. They reflect the interests, the conditions, the contradictions and the state of political will in the world today.

They take important steps, but unfortunately the collective political will was not enough to overcome some deep contradictions.

As I said at the opening, we must accelerate action to keep the 1.5 degree goal alive.

Our fragile planet is hanging by a thread.

We are still knocking on the door of climate catastrophe.

It is time to go into emergency mode — or our chance of reaching net zero will itself be zero.

I reaffirm my conviction that we must end fossil fuels subsidies.
Phase out coal.

Put a price on carbon.

Build resilience of vulnerable communities against the here and now impacts of climate change.

And make good on the \$100 billion climate finance commitment to support developing countries.

We did not achieve these goals at this conference. But we have some building blocks for progress.

Commitments to end deforestation. To drastically reduce methane emissions. To mobilize private finance around net zero.

And the texts today reaffirm resolve towards the 1.5 degree goal. Boost climate finance for adaptation. Recognize the need to strengthen support for vulnerable countries suffering from irreparable climate damage.

And for the first time they encourage International Financial Institutions to consider climate vulnerabilities in concessional financial and other forms of support, including Special Drawing Rights.

And finally close the Paris rule book with agreement on carbon markets and transparency.

These are welcome steps, but they are not enough.

Science tells us that the absolute priority must be rapid, deep and sustained emissions reductions in this decade.

Specifically — a 45% cut by 2030 compared to 2010 levels.

But the present set of Nationally Determined Contributions -- even if fully implemented -- will still increase emissions this decade on a pathway that will clearly lead us to well above 2 degrees by the end of the century compared to pre-industrial levels.

I welcome the agreement between US and China here in Glasgow that — like the text today — pledges to accelerate action to reduce emissions in the 2020s.

To help lower emissions in many other emerging economies, we need to build coalitions of support including developed countries, financial institutions, those with the technical know-how.

This is crucial to help each of those emerging countries speed the transition from coal and accelerate the greening of their economies.

The partnership with South Africa announced a few days ago is a model for doing just that.

I want to make a particular appeal for our future work in relation to adaptation and the issue of loss and damage.

Adaptation isn't a technocratic issue, it is life or death.

I was once Prime Minister of my country. And I imagine myself today in the shoes of a leader from a vulnerable country.

COVID-19 vaccines are scarce. My economy is sinking. Debt is mounting. International resources for recovery are completely insufficient.

Meanwhile, although we contributed least to the climate crisis, we suffer most.

And when yet another hurricane devastates my country, the treasury is empty.

Protecting countries from climate disaster is not charity. It is solidarity and enlightened self-interest.

We have another climate crisis today. A climate of mistrust is enveloping our globe. Climate action can help rebuild trust and restore credibility.

That means finally delivering on the \$100 billion climate finance commitment to developing countries.

No more IOUs.

It means measuring progress, updating climate plans every year and raising ambition. I will convene a global stock-taking summit at the heads of state level in 2023.

And it means – beyond the mechanisms already set out in the Paris Agreement – establishing clear standards to measure and analyze net zero commitments from non-state actors.

I will create a High-Level Expert Group with that objective.

Finally, I want to close with a message of hope and resolve to young people, indigenous communities, women leaders, all those leading the climate action

army.

I know many of you are disappointed.

Success or failure is not an act of nature. It's in our hands.

The path of progress is not always a straight line. Sometimes there are detours. Sometimes there are ditches.

As the great Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson said: "Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds that you plant."

We have many more seeds to plant along the path.

We won't reach our destination in one day or one conference.

But I know we can get there.

We are in the fight of our lives.

Never give up. Never retreat. Keep pushing forward.

I will be with you all the way.

COP 27 starts now.

UNICEF

PRESS RELEASE

More than 45,000 children released from detention during COVID-19 pandemic; evidence that child-friendly justice solutions are possible – UNICEF

Ahead of the World Congress on Justice with Children, a new UNICEF analysis estimates more than 261,000 children are held in detention globally; calls for juvenile justice reform to end detention of all children

Multimedia content available to download [here](#)

NEW YORK, 15 November 2021 – More than 45,000 children have been released from detention and safely returned to family or an appropriate alternative since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to new data released by UNICEF today.

[*Detention of children in the time of COVID*](#) reveals that governments and detaining authorities in at least 84 countries have released thousands of children since April 2020 when [UNICEF drew attention](#) to their increased risk of contracting COVID-19 in confined and overcrowded spaces, and called for their immediate release. The study is one of two analyses that illustrate the situation for hundreds of thousands of children deprived of their liberty every year. Both reports are released ahead of the [*World Congress on Justice with Children*](#).

“We have long known that justice systems are ill-equipped to handle the specific needs of children – a situation further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic,” said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore. “We commend countries which heeded our call and released children from detention. By protecting children from conditions that could have exposed them to grave illness, these countries were able to overcome public resistance and spur innovative, age-appropriate justice solutions. This has proved something we already knew – child friendly justice solutions are more than possible.”

Children in detention – including in pre- and post-trial custody, immigration detention, held in relation to armed conflict or national security, or living with parents in detention – are often held in confined and overcrowded spaces. They lack adequate access to nutrition, healthcare and hygiene services, and are vulnerable to neglect, physical and psychological abuse, and gender-based violence. Many are denied access to lawyers and family care, and unable to challenge the legality of their detention.

COVID-19 has profoundly affected justice for children, shuttering courts and restricting access to essential social and justice services. Evidence shows that many children, including children in street situations, have been detained for violating pandemic curfew orders and movement restrictions.

Worldwide, an estimated 261,000 children in conflict with the law – those who have been alleged, accused or recognized as having committed an offence – are held in detention, according to the second UNICEF analysis. [*Estimating the number of children deprived of their liberty in the administration of justice*](#) – the first such analysis since 2007 – warns that incomplete record-keeping

and undeveloped administrative data systems in many countries mean the number is likely to be much higher.

To reimagine justice for children and safely end detention of all children, UNICEF is calling on governments and civil society to:

- Invest in legal rights awareness for children in justice and welfare systems, especially for the most marginalized children.
- Expand free legal aid, representation, and services for all children.
- Prioritise prevention and early intervention in child offending and diversion to appropriate alternatives.
- End the detention of children, including through legal reforms to raise the age of criminal responsibility.
- Ensure justice for child survivors of sexual violence, abuse or exploitation, including investing in child and gender-sensitive justice processes.
- Establish specialised child-friendly courts, and virtual and mobile courts.

“Any child detained is evidence of failed systems, but that failure is then compounded further. Justice systems meant to protect and support children often add to their suffering,” said Fore. “As policymakers, legal practitioners, academics, civil society, and children and young people convene at the World Congress this week, we must work together to end the detention of children.”

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Notes to editors:

Download the two reports here:

[*Detention of children in the time of COVID*](#)

[*Estimating the number of children deprived of their liberty in the administration of justice*](#)

Data for *Detention of children in the time of COVID* were derived from a UNICEF survey among its network of 157 country offices. These programme countries – including all 138 low- and middle-income countries plus 19 high-

income countries – are home to 90 per cent of the world's population of children.

Data for *Estimating the number of children deprived of their liberty in the administration of justice* were compiled from January 2017 to October 2021 through both web research and country-level solicitation. The sources of data include administrative records from government ministries mandated to oversee justice systems, such as ministries of justice, home affairs or social affairs; websites maintained or national statistical reports distributed by national statistical offices; centralized databases such as EuroStat, TransMonEE.

About UNICEF

UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places, to reach the world's most disadvantaged children. Across more than 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone.

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