

# COP26 REPORT



MERCY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION



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## Part 1: Overview of COP26: What was it, and why was it important?

The 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) took place in Glasgow, Scotland from 31 October to 12 November. Usually an annual conference, it's been two years since COP25, due to delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It has also been six years since world leaders agreed upon [the Paris Agreement](#), the international treaty signed by almost all countries in the world at COP21 in Paris in 2015. Since then, there has been a greater need for concrete climate change policy, and world leaders have not delivered on many of their promises. Climate inequalities have not only increased but have also been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This year's COP was a time for leaders to gather and commit to implementing policy changes that can have a positive impact on Earth.

The Paris Agreement aims to keep the rise in the global average temperature to “well below” 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels, ideally 1.5 degrees; strengthen the ability to adapt to climate change and build resilience; and align all finance flows with “a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.” The Paris Agreement has a bottom-up approach where countries themselves decide by how much they will reduce their emissions by a certain year. They communicate these targets to the UNFCCC in the form of “nationally determined contributions” (NDCs).

COP26 was labeled as a critical summit for global climate action. The [2021 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\) report](#) underscored it is still possible to achieve the 1.5-degree-target, but only if unprecedented action is taken now. The NDCs submitted in 2015 were collectively not ambitious enough, but signatories of the Paris Agreement are, however, expected to submit new – and more ambitious – NDCs every five years, known as the ‘ratchet mechanism.’ COP26 was the first test of this ambition-raising function. One of the main benchmarks for success in Glasgow was that as many governments as possible submit new NDCs and, when put together, these are ambitious enough to put the world on track for “well below” 2 degrees, preferably 1.5.

Attention in Glasgow was also on developed countries, who made a commitment in 2009 to mobilize \$100 billion per year by 2020 to support climate action in developing countries. The official figures for 2020 will not be available until 2022, but it is clear the goal was not met last year. COP26 was an important opportunity to restore credibility and strengthen trust between developing and developed nations.

Strengthening the ability to adapt to climate change impacts was another important element of COP26, as well as the question of how to deal with economic and non-economic harms caused by climate change impacts which cannot be avoided through adaptation or mitigation, known as ‘loss and damage’.

Finally, at COP26, parties also worked to finalize the Paris Agreement’s ‘implementation guide’ – the Paris Rulebook. Agreeing on what rules should govern international carbon markets – the ‘Article 6 negotiations’ – was a particularly difficult negotiation.

## Part 2: Mercy International Association and Civil Society Goals for COP26

Ahead of COP26, Mercy International Association established a Climate and Water Task Force, which brought together people all throughout the Mercy world. With members from the US, Argentina, Ireland, Kenya, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand, the Climate and Water Task force produced a [COP26 Position Statement](#) that urged world leaders to not only make concrete policy changes but also to place people over profit and listen to the needs of women, girls, and indigenous peoples.

Mercy's position is rooted in a human-rights approach to climate change and understanding the importance of including the voices and stories from those who are deeply affected by climate change. In that spirit, the [Mercy Experience Spotlight Flyers](#) were key to our COP 26 advocacy, and enabled us to share the experiences and expertise that have been collected throughout the Mercy World on issues of climate change and water. They contain grassroots experiences, theological reflection, advocacy recommendations and further resources.

Mercy also prepared a social media campaign, which took place on the [Mercy Global Action Twitter account](#). The images from these posts can be found with the daily summaries of COP26 activities, in Annex 1 of this report.



*The Mercy International Association delegation included (L to R) Siobhán Golden, Cecilie Kern, and Leah Schiffman*

Mercy International Association aligned itself with other civil society organizations and especially with other Catholic organizations to amplify common priorities throughout COP26. Some of the most important themes this year include the following:



## Loss and Damage & Finance

Loss and Damage from the adverse effects of climate change was a critical issue in the lead up to and at COP26. Loss and Damage has evolved over the past decade to become what many call a third pillar of the UNFCCC, alongside mitigation and adaptation. However, this evolution has not been without controversy. At the center of that controversy has been finance for addressing loss and damage, which has experienced significant pushback from industrialized countries with high historic levels of carbon pollution at the possibility of compensating others for the damage caused. While countries of the global North are years ahead in economic development, those in the global South are often far behind due to the consequences of colonialism and extractive development. Furthermore, the global South is already facing the consequences of climate change, increasing economic devastation. Mercy International Association supports the [No Climate Justice without Debt Justice](#) statement by over 200 civil society organizations, which highlights how the climate emergency is fueling the accumulation of debt in countries in the global South.



*The art collective Still/Moving created a series of illuminated text sculptures, installed in different locations around Glasgow for the duration of COP26. The works were made with community groups around the UK during 2021, indigenous representatives and leaders and with delegates at COP itself. ([Click for more information about Still/Moving's COP Interventions](#))*

In advance of the COP [over 300 CSOs](#) called for COP26 to provide finance for climate loss and damage at the scale of the needs and additional to the \$100 billion annually committed (but not yet delivered) by developed countries to developing countries to support adaptation and mitigation. This needs-based finance should be mobilized on principles of global solidarity and historical responsibility, as loss and damage disproportionately affect highly-indebted small island developing states (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCs) which have contributed the least to the climate crisis and which are in most urgent need of support.

Research projects the economic cost of loss and damage in developing countries to add up to [US\\$290 to 580 billion a year by 2030](#) alone. This research was done before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and is likely now a vast underestimate given the way in which the pandemic has eroded the resilience of vulnerable households, communities and countries. Moreover, it does not include the spectrum of non-economic loss and damage such as culture or heritage that are already being incurred as a result of climate change.

While the outcome in the [Glasgow Climate Pact](#) was underwhelming, and a push by developing countries to establish a Glasgow Loss and Damage Facility could not overcome developed countries' strong resistance, the momentum gained on this issue, if not derailed, can lead to more success at COP27 in Egypt.

## Just Transition

The need for an equitable, just transition in our global economy and for people and communities was a hot topic at COP26. As governments, private sector and other stakeholders implement policies to eliminate carbon emissions to combat climate change, there is a need to ensure that no one is left behind in the transition to net zero economies – particularly those working in sectors, cities and regions reliant on carbon-intensive industries and production. A just energy transition involves not only well-managed environmentally sustainable economies and societies, but also decent work for all, social inclusion and the eradication of poverty.



*The phrase “net zero” is being used by many polluting governments and corporations to evade responsibility, shift burdens, disguise climate inaction, and in some cases even to scale up fossil fuel extraction, burning and emissions.*

The topic even made it into the official outcomes of the conference. While the Paris Agreement noted only “the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs”, the Glasgow Climate Pact mentions “just transition” twice. Far from a just transition for the existing workforce alone, the need for a just transition to promote sustainable development and eradication of poverty was also recognized.

Another aspect of “just transition” which received pushback from countries of the global North was the fact that the global transition towards a more sustainable and equitable economy will not be possible without sustainable, responsible, sufficient, fair and non-debt creating climate finance, as well as finance for transition that does not exacerbate debt vulnerabilities in the global South.

The [Healthy Planet, Healthy People Petition](#), supported by Mercy International Association and other Catholic congregations and organizations, called on world leaders to act according to the scientific and moral urgency of the climate crisis, which is devastating the lives of our poorest sisters and brothers. One of its calls highlights that just transition means recognizing the climate debt that the global North owes to the global South, and providing sufficient and quality debt-free climate finance as partial restitution for that climate debt. Climate debt reparations also mean that global North countries must contribute to ecological restoration, end extractivism and the use of fossil fuels, and shift to low and zero carbon modes of production, distribution and consumption.

Debt cancellation is also necessary, recognizing the role that it has historically played in promoting and imposing a “development” model that is unjust and unsustainable, and the obstacle it represents today for a fair, equitable and sustainable recovery.

## Gender



*Cecilie Kern and Leah Schiffman from Mercy Global Action at the Global Day of Action for Climate Justice*

For Mercy International Association, and for many other civil society organizations and governments, the specific needs and contributions of girls and women in the context of climate change were a key priority during COP26. As former Irish President, Mary Robinson, notoriously said, “Climate change is a manmade problem, that requires a feminist solution.”

Climate change deepens already-existing inequalities. The poorest and most vulnerable people in the world are the hardest hit by the impacts of climate change. Food and water insecurity – and extreme weather events such as droughts, heat waves and floods – have a greater

impact on the most vulnerable, including those living in poverty, 70% of whom are women. It is essential to assess, disseminate, and raise awareness about the impacts of environmental policies on women, both by public policies, and public and private industries.

The climate crisis and environmental degradation are also increasing violence against women and girls. Gender-based exploitation is hampering our ability to tackle the crisis. According to a [study conducted by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#), there is clear evidence to suggest that climate change is increasing gender-based violence. Our Mercy Global Action [parallel event during the Commission on the Status of Women](#) also highlighted the connection between gender-based violence and violence against Earth. As our environment degrades and stress is put on our ecosystems, this creates scarcity and stress for people as well. The evidence shows that where environmental pressures increase, so do acts of gender-based violence.

Girls and women are on the front line combatting the climate crisis in our communities. We need to ensure that their voices are heard and their needs addressed in the climate context. Women and girls need to be included throughout the whole decision-making process and at the negotiating table. The wisdom, leadership and experiences of indigenous people, people from the Global South, and people already suffering from the climate crises must be seen as agents of change, and be at the center of climate policy negotiations. Recognizing the important contributions of women and girls as decision-makers, stakeholders, educators, and experts across sectors and at all levels is the only way to achieve successful, long-term solutions to climate change. Fighting climate change must mean fighting for gender equality.

Ultimately, efforts towards gender justice in climate policy need to address the root causes of the high carbon emissions of our societies, as well as gender inequality. To do this, we will need to



challenge our society's own deeply embedded gender norms and power relations that influence perceptions and attitudes. More attention and recognition must be given to dismantling the harmful, outdated norms around masculinities, which force men into a very limiting role. This can have severe consequences, such as triggering [violence and assault against women](#), and steering away from sustainable choices in their everyday lives.

## Accessibility & Participation

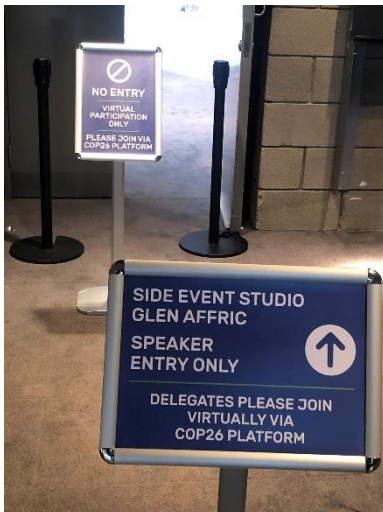
Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and repeated calls for postponement due to cost and travel barriers that would make COP26 inaccessible for many people who are the most vulnerable and affected by climate impacts, the UK government decided to push forward with this year's conference in Glasgow with aims to make it the "most inclusive COP ever." It was evident that lack of equitable access to vaccines, specifically for those in the global South, would make it hard for the UK to accomplish this task. However, the government and its partners forged ahead deciding to give all delegates --vaccinated and unvaccinated--access to COP. Nevertheless, this decision still posed problems for those living in the global South with attendees from "red list" countries having to quarantine anywhere from 5-10 days after arrival, which only increased the cost of participation.



*Mercy International Association was incredibly privileged to attend COP26, and to have access to the Blue Zone. Mercy delegates used their access to promote a rights-based and justice-oriented approach to climate policy, and to the voices of those with grassroots expertise, who are often most vulnerable to climate impacts, especially girls and women and indigenous peoples.*

As we got closer to COP, the inequalities became more apparent. From the ever-changing COVID-19 restrictions in the UK to the expensive flights, many of those from the global South were unable to attend, which made the event ["one of the whitest"](#) COPs ever. Landlords in Scotland increased rent in anticipation of COP, resulting in accommodations costing as high as £39,000 a fortnight, and making it almost impossible for those from lower-income countries to attend. All of this meant that some of the most climate vulnerable and at-risk nations were not represented at COP, which impeded important voices and solutions for transformative policies.





*Even many side events, advertised to be open to delegates, were only accessible via the online COP26 platform.*

The UK government and its partners struggled to address all of the logistics that come with hosting an “inclusive” event during the pandemic. One of the most striking issues with COP was the hours-long lines in the first week and, [on some days](#), attendees waiting in line were told that the event had reached capacity and that they should participate online. With [only one](#) entrance for thousands of people, it is not surprising that lines were hours long. Furthermore, entering the conference was even harder for those with physical disabilities. On the first day of the COP, the [Israeli Energy Minister](#) was unable to get into the event because there was no wheelchair accessible entrance. Additionally, there were not only no sign language interpreters at any of the events and speeches at COP but also no language interpreters at some side events.

Finally, the negotiation spaces at COP were exclusive and nearly impossible to gain access to. Many civil society organizations and environmental NGOs could not access the negotiation spaces. Without these organizations, the negotiations rooms excluded

voices and stories from groups that could aid and promote climate justice.

## Part 3: Outcomes of COP26

For many, COP26 was seen as the defining moment to set us on track to stay below the 1.5°C temperature goal of avoiding the worst climate changes in the next decade. Real ambitious action and transformation are really the only option in order to stay alive, especially for communities in poor and vulnerable countries. After two weeks of negotiations, governments at COP26 agreed on the [Glasgow Climate Pact](#), which states that carbon emissions will have to fall by 45 percent by 2030 to keep alive the 1.5°C goal. While this agreement will not put the world on track to avoid catastrophic warming beyond 1.5°C, officials said it represents a significant step on a path to a safer future. With each year of delay in actually reducing global emissions, this task will get more difficult and more costly.

This COP could have been the place for countries of the global North to step up and make bold decisions towards climate justice, which is inextricably linked to the colonizing and extractive economic model that has been fueling the climate crisis, but instead it failed to deliver real ambitious action and transformation. It was a missed opportunity to change course and reach an inclusive economic system that supports healthy and thriving ecosystems and protects human rights and dignity for all. The most vulnerable, such as indigenous peoples and women, will keep suffering from this. To attempt to close the ambition gap that remains after COP26, the Glasgow Climate Pact includes a faster ratchet, and requests all countries revisit and strengthen their 2030 targets by the end of 2022, but it is up to governments to have the political will to do what is right for people and planet.

The Glasgow Climate Pact does include a “dialogue” on finance for [loss and damage](#) caused by climate impacts, a key demand of developing countries like the small island states. In addition, six years after the Paris Agreement was adopted in 2015, the Paris Rulebook was finally completed at COP26, including some language on human rights. A point of controversy during the negotiations was language on the need to [“phase down” coal](#). Although there was a lot of news coverage on how the phrasing was changed from “phase out” to “phase down”, it is significant that for the first time ever, there is language in a COP agreement explicitly targeting fossil fuels. COP decisions are made by consensus, with the agreement of all or almost all of the parties involved, so we understand that this type of decision making requires compromise, and no country would be able to achieve all of its negotiation goals.

By the end of COP26, [151 countries](#) had submitted new climate plans (NDCs) to cut their emissions by 2030. To keep the goal of limiting temperature rise to 1.5°C within reach, we need to cut global emissions in half by the end of this decade. In contrast, the United Nations calculates that these plans, as they stand, put the world on track for [2.5°C](#) of warming by the end of the century. That is better than the 4°C trajectory the world was on before the Paris Agreement was struck, but still not enough. Collectively, the updated NDCs and new pledges add up to 15–20 percent of the gap between the current emissions trajectory and the trajectory needed to keep global average temperature from rising more than 1.5°C. The ultimate success of COP26 depends on the political will of governments to implement what they have promised. The fact that success relies on pledges for future action poses a risk of failure. So, in the end, diplomats managed to keep hopes of limiting temperature rise to 1.5°C alive, but just barely. Once we see major emitters’ new climate targets by the end of 2022, we will have a much better idea of whether we will be able to avoid breaching that temperature threshold — and if we do breach it, by how much.

COP26 did not manage to secure the \$100 billion per year in climate finance by 2020 as promised at COP15 (2009) in Copenhagen, instead [delaying the finance to 2023](#). This not only fails to urgently provide resources to countries most vulnerable to climate change, but also logically raises the question as to whether similar long-term commitments made at COP26 will be delivered on time.

At COP26, we also saw several sectoral initiatives and multilateral announcements. Countries including Indonesia, Vietnam, and Poland [recognized the need to phase down coal](#), although some countries set long timelines. In the [Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use](#), countries committed to ending deforestation by 2030. The declaration was backed by \$17 billion of investments. The [Forests, Agriculture and Commodity Trade \(FACT\) Dialogue](#), a road map for the sustainable development and trade of agricultural commodities, was launched. More than 100 countries signed the [Global Methane Pledge](#), committing to cut their collective methane emissions by 30 percent by 2030. The governments of Denmark and Costa Rica established the [Beyond Oil & Gas Alliance \(BOGA\)](#), which is committed to ending all oil and gas expansion and to phasing-out all existing extraction equitably. More information about some of these pledges and announcements can be found in the Daily Summaries section in Annex 1 of this report.

Despite some of the disappointing outcomes inside of the COP space, we were inspired by the actions being taken outside, in the streets of Glasgow and around the world. We draw courage and hope to continue this fight, in solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world, the Indigenous communities, the human rights defenders, the youth leaders, and those most

vulnerable to climate impacts. The highlight of our time at COP was the Day of Action, where we marched with 100,000 other climate activists through the streets of Glasgow. We hope that the tide will change when enough people stand together in solidarity and put their personal interests behind the greater good of the planet and of those who call it home.

## Part 4: Conclusion & Next Steps

Although COP26 was unsatisfactory in delivering the action and commitments needed to reach the targets from the Paris Agreement, there were some positive outcomes, as governments raised the global ambition on climate action in the face of urgent climate crises. It is important to note that there are limits to what a COP can actually achieve legally and politically. COP decisions can establish collective goals and rules to enable more effective action and cooperation among governments, but it is the governments and private-sector stakeholders that have to take action to limit emissions. The COP itself could never save the world, only domestic implementation can. This is where Mercy Sisters, Associates and Partners have an important role to play.

In her speech at the Global Conference on Health and Climate Change, Mary Robinson discussed the importance of governments and legislators to listen to their constituents who are begging for climate justice. She notes that it's imperative that "elected representatives take the time to engage meaningfully with these constituencies, understand both their concerns and their ambitions, and reflect them in their legislative work." People around the Mercy World have to keep holding national governments accountable for their promises and remind each other of our responsibilities to care for Earth and inspire collective climate action because it is for our common good and a matter of justice.

The period leading up to COP27 has to be about meeting promises. It is up to governments and stakeholders to deliver and build on the commitments made at COP26, and it is our role as members of civil society to ensure that as the spotlight shifts away from COP, the pledges are not forgotten. Governments are not limited to making commitments or implementing policies that advance climate justice during international climate conferences – they can create those policies today. It is up to us to pressure our governments outside of COP, at the national level, to ensure our priorities remain on the agenda. Finance, especially loss and damage and aid to developing countries, must take center stage in the year ahead. Countries with weak 2030 emission targets must be pushed to revisit these by COP27 in 2022. Countries must also follow through with side-declarations like the ones on methane, deforestation, and fossil fuel financing. People around the Mercy World are encouraged to follow up with their governments about the commitments (or lack thereof) made during COP26, and urge them to deliver on their promises.

As we shift focus our attention towards COP 27 in Egypt, we hope that this will be an important opportunity to bring about the real transformation that is deeply needed. It is up to all of us to call on our governments to establish even more ambitious targets at COP27 and each subsequent year. Despite the significant challenges we face, and the technicalities of climate justice, we remain people of hope. We have a moral imperative to care for the most vulnerable and marginalized and future generations, and this remains central to our work for climate justice.



## Annex 1: Daily Summaries

### 31 October – Opening of Negotiations

The ceremonial opening of COP26 took place on Sunday, 31 October, ahead of the World Leader's Summit. Speakers included the presidents of COP 25 (Chile) and COP 26 (United Kingdom), the leader of Glasgow City Council, the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, the Chair of the IPCC, the President of the UN General Assembly, and indigenous leader India Logan-Riley, Ngāti Kahungunu, Aotearoa New Zealand. Member States and observers also provided opening statements that shared their expectations for the work ahead.



### 1 November – World Leaders' Summit

1 November was the first day of the World Leaders' Summit, where 120 world leaders came to launch two weeks of global negotiations to help determine whether humanity can drive forward the urgent action needed to avoid catastrophic climate change. There were various speeches during the World Leaders' Summit but the speeches given by [UN Secretary General António Guterres](#) and [Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley](#) were especially significant.



In his opening address at COP, UN Secretary General António Guterres reaffirmed that we all must “keep the goal of 1.5 degrees Celsius alive.” In order to achieve this goal, we have to say enough is enough and come together to foster real changes that protect the Earth and nature. Mr. Guterres summarizes the dire reality in front of us in one chilling sentence, “either we stop it --- or it stops us.”

Prime Minister Mia Mottley had similar calls for world leaders to make meaningful changes at COP, but emphasized aiding lower-income countries with climate finance. In fact, “climate finance to frontline small island developing states declined by 25% in 2019” meaning that low-income countries could not accomplish many climate justice goals. She stated that failure to provide adequate and equitable climate finance is measured “in lives and livelihoods” of communities,

specifically communities in the Pacific and global South, and that inadequate climate finance is unequivocally “immoral and unjust.”

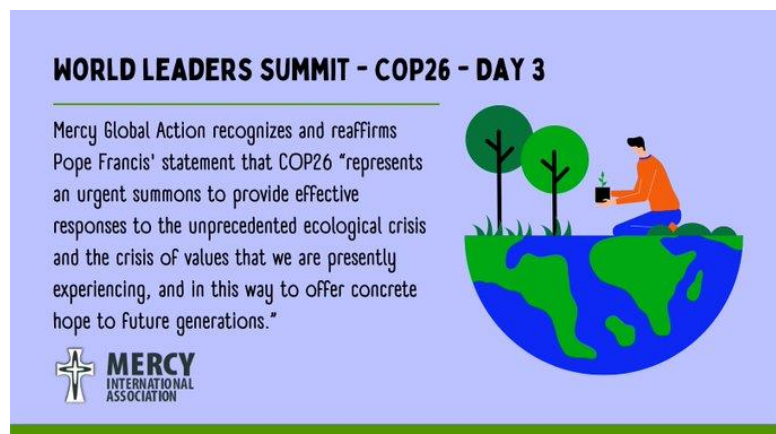
Outside of the World Leaders’ Summit, civil society organizations continued to emphasize the need to phase out fossil fuels as soon as possible. Despite the call on governments to halt the use of fossil fuels, and the call on all governments to come to COP26 with new and increasingly ambitious policy targets (NDCs), some countries failed to contribute updated NDCs, and refused to phase out or decrease use of fossil fuels.

Furthermore, there was a lot of emphasis this year on funding to address loss and damage caused by climate change. In order to initiate this change, [Scotland pledged to donate one million pounds towards loss and damage](#). This increased the focus on this important topic and put pressure on other developed countries to follow Scotland’s precedent as the first developed country to set aside funding specifically for that purpose. Subsequently, developing countries collectively called for the establishment of the Glasgow Loss and Damage Facility to mobilize and channel finance to vulnerable developing countries to support their efforts to address loss and damage.

In Mercy Global Action’s position statement, we urged world leaders to reject false climate solutions and commit to real, significant solutions that are human rights-based and gender-just. It is disappointing that countries with a vast amount of wealth and influence not only continue to use fossil fuels but don’t commit to policies that would advance climate justice. We are proud that Scotland has taken the initiative to contribute to loss and damage finance and we urge other countries to do the same.

## 2 November – World Leaders’ Summit

The third day of COP26 brought global leaders together to agree on a series of pledges. First was the [agreement from more than 40 nations](#) to accelerate the uptake of clean technologies by imposing worldwide standards and policies. Five high-carbon sectors are to be targeted first – steel, road transport, agriculture, hydrogen and electricity – with the hope of attracting significant private investment.



Another major commitment made at COP was a [pledge by more than 140 world leaders](#) to end and reverse deforestation by 2030. The signatories together make up [85% of the world’s forests](#). The pledge includes £14bn, which will go towards indigenous communities, combating wildfires, and restoring land. Ending and reversing deforestation is key to keeping the planet within 1.5°C and is a step towards altering the climate damage we already see.

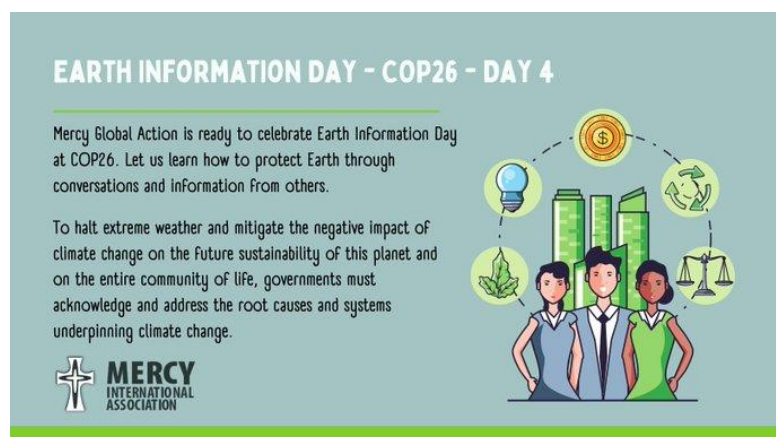
There was also a change in Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on the second day of COP. [Article 6](#) outlines ways that “countries can voluntarily cooperate to fight climate change, generate investment, and achieve sustainable development.” It establishes “rocket boosters” that aid states in accomplishing the goals of the Paris Agreement. The effectiveness of Article 6 depends on its structure and language, which makes any changes significant. Fortunately, “Human Rights” and “Rights of Indigenous Peoples” were finally added to the Article 6 text. Although both words should have appeared in Article 6 since its inception, this change finally acknowledges the relationship between climate change and human and indigenous rights.

These adjustments to Article 6 align with our demand for “fair and cohesive set of implementation guidelines to solidify the Paris Agreement and a roadmap to finalize outstanding issues that contain solutions that are human rights-based and gender-just.” In order to effectuate real change, all voices, especially those who are deeply affected by climate change, must be included and protected. The addition of “Human Rights” and “Rights of Indigenous Peoples” is a step toward a more people-centered and climate-just framework for implementation of the Paris Agreement.

However, by this stage of COP, there were a lot of concerns about the transparency of the negotiations. The [enhanced transparency framework](#) is an essential part of the Paris Agreement and ensures that all countries are contributing to the goals under the Paris Agreement and doing their part to prevent climate change. However, it was unclear whether or not world leaders have upheld their promises.

### 3 November – Earth Information Day

The Leaders’ Summit now concluded, day four of COP26 turned its focus to implementation and accountability of the commitments made by governments. In the Paris Agreement, governments agreed that the Global Stocktake would monitor the collective progress of countries over time. This provides a periodic check-in and indication on whether, how and where ambition needs to be adjusted in order to make sure that we meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. This review also helps to establish a baseline to measure what is supposed to be an annual rise in national ambition targets and an immediate acceleration of climate action. Since this review was originally due to happen in 2020, five years after the adoption of the Paris Agreement, this review, and the acceleration of policies that follows, are even more urgent.



It is especially necessary for major emitters to commit to phasing out the major source of the climate problem, namely, fossil fuels production and related finance, and to recognize the crucial role of nature, including the oceans, in keeping 1.5°C within reach. Both of these need to happen at





once - the end of the fossil fuel era, and the transition to green economies. This was an important opportunity for governments to send a clear signal that they would urgently and decisively address the current mitigation ambition gap and move from plans on paper to actual implementation. This discussion then led into issues of finance, to ensure that all countries are able to fund and implement policies that would advance the transition to green economies, and result in action related to mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage.

## 4 November - Energy Day

On Energy Day of COP, civil society organizations continued to encourage world leaders and governments to make full transitions from fossil fuels to renewable energy. While renewable energy is better for the planet, it is important to acknowledge that clean energy is largely inaccessible to lower-income countries due to cost. Thus, many lower-income countries still rely on coal because it's a cheaper energy source. To aid countries in their transitions from fossil fuels to clean energy, countries in the global North need to lead and lend assistance, as they have greater resources and have contributed disproportionately to carbon emissions.

### ENERGY - COP26 - DAY 5



Mercy Global Action calls on governments to address the urgency and deliver on the ambition to answer to the 1.5°C Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, enhancing their Nationally Determined Contributions (climate plans for greenhouse gas emissions reductions) by 2020, in line with climate science.



### ENERGY - COP26 - DAY 5

Mercy Global Action calls on all government to minimize carbon emissions by increasing energy efficiency and adopting renewable energy sources.

A Mercy Sister from Australia reflects: "To save energy I turn off power points for appliances not in use."



Another obstacle to ambitious commitments to eliminate the use of fossil fuels was the large presence of fossil fuel interests at COP. According to a [report](#) by Global Witness, there were at least 503 fossil fuel lobbyists that were given access to COP. Furthermore, if these lobbyists were a nation, they would have been the largest country delegation. This access enabled fossil fuel companies and lobbyists to influence the negotiations, while other parts of civil society, including some of the most vulnerable communities and groups, were left out due to cost and travel limitations.

This is discouraging and disheartening not only because our reliance on fossil fuels continues to contribute to climate change but also because the negotiators and world leaders are not hearing the experiences and solutions of important communities. [The Mercy Justice Advocacy Approach](#) begins with listening to the needs and experiences of People and Planet. By listening to the expertise of those most affected by climate change, policymakers can fully understand what is going on and how to develop solutions that are just and people-centered. Collaboration and communication with the communities on the ground is necessary for concrete change and justice work.

## 5 November – Youth and Public Empowerment Day

### YOUTH & PUBLIC EMPOWERMENT DAY - COP26 - DAY 6

Mercy Global Action calls on governments to ensure that young people, particularly girls and young women, are meaningfully included in the development, review, implementation and monitoring of all climate policies.



Youth activists were at the heart of this year's COP. They arrived in Glasgow to hold politicians accountable for their previous commitments by marching in the streets to raise a voice of resilience, and pressuring governments to commit to achieving ambitious change. On this day the youth-led movement [Fridays for Future](#) held a protest, attended by [25,000 people](#).

While it stressed civil society's frustration with world leaders, it also demonstrated the influence and power of young activists.

Despite youth's growing involvement and leadership in climate justice, and the strength of their voices outside UN spaces, they were not adequately represented in Youth and Public Empowerment Day inside the halls of COP. When looking back at COP's event schedule on Youth and Public Empowerment Day, there were not enough youth voices, speaking about their own lived experiences. [According to NPR](#), in a news conference where officials talked about youth, there were no panelists under thirty years of age. Other events throughout the day featured Al Gore and John Kerry, both in their seventies. Although youth weren't adequately represented inside COP, youth activists made important points, getting attention and putting pressure on leaders, demonstrating a hope in the future of climate change justice.

### MERCY YOUTH INSIGHT ON CLIMATE - COP26 - DAY 6

"Despite the past actions of generations, their current attitudes and the ongoing pandemic, the lessons from the global response to it can and must be applied to the climate crisis... As young people, we are asking older generations to begin to step up as we are now stepping up for you. Take the initiative, spare lives and act for the wellbeing of our shared planet. In order to fight coronavirus, we all have to be as healthy as possible. In order to fight the climate crisis, our Earth must be similarly healthy, and its inhabitants prepared to cultivate a united front against environmental injustice and exploitation."

Mercy Student, USA, *Hope In A Time of Pandemic*

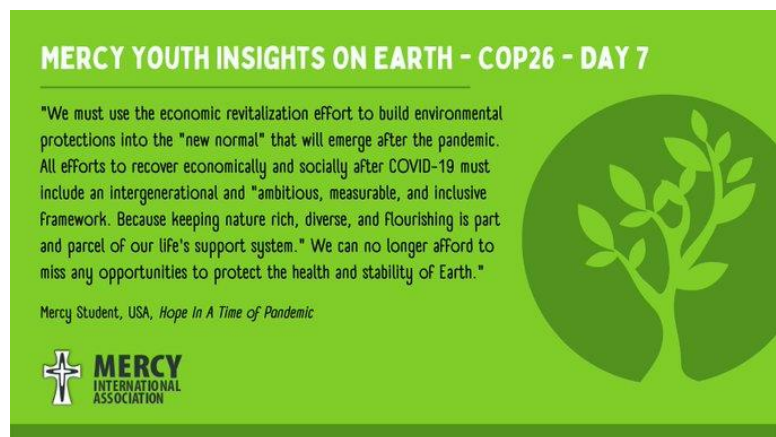
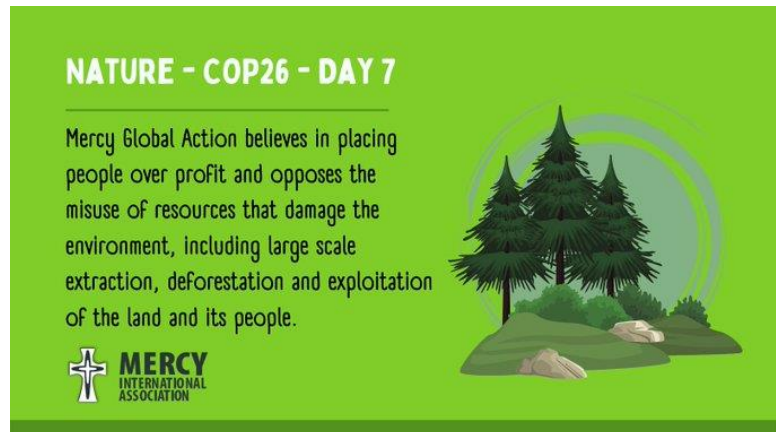


Ensuring that youth are not only present but able to actively and meaningfully participate in all climate talks was part of Mercy Global Action's call in our position statement. The voices of the youth are vital. As current leaders and the leaders of future generations, youth activists' voices must be heard and uplifted. It would appear, COP26 failed to do this, even on a day that was dedicated to youth.

## 6 November – Nature Day & the Global Day of Action for Climate Justice

Nature Day provided world leaders and delegates opportunities to discuss the ways in which we can protect and restore nature, which is critical to ensuring the world remains within the 1.5°C goal. In order to restore nature, we have to phase out fossil fuels. Civil society organizations, like ours, continued to stress this point. However, world leaders are giving more attention to mitigation practices that address the preservation of nature and not enough to phasing out fossil fuels.

Nature is sacred and we have to protect it at all costs. In '[Hope in A Time of Pandemic](#),' the Mercy World reflected that the COVID-19 pandemic "reminded [us] of traditional knowledge and wisdom about the land and water, and our relationship with them." For us, taking care of nature means ensuring the end of fossil fuels and extraction of natural resources. We must step back and remember our relationship with Earth and how significant it is.



Although we were in Glasgow on Saturday, 6 November, we did not attend any official COP events. Instead, we took part in the Global Day of Action for Climate Justice, which included a march through the streets of Glasgow. We found it crucial to be present and march with other civil society organizations, indigenous groups, and climate activists, in an effort to gain the attention of world leaders and pressure them to make meaningful decisions. Attended by over [100,000 people](#), the march was inspiring and

gave us a glimpse of hope about the future. There was an overwhelming sense of unity and togetherness as we all chanted for justice and accountability in the pouring rain.



## 7 November – Mass with Catholic Organizations at COP26



There were no official COP events on Sunday, 7 November. However, we were privileged to attend [Mass at St. Aloysius Church](#) in Glasgow with other Catholic organizations, including the Laudato Si Movement and CIDSE.

It was energizing and enlightening to be surrounded by other Catholic organizations in Glasgow. Knowing that other Catholics were fighting for climate justice and human rights was comforting and inspiring. We were all living by and demonstrating [Pope Francis'](#) call to “protect our common home” by bringing the “whole human family together to seek sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change.”

This Mass demonstrated that things can and will change. We have hope in our Catholic communities and in our human communities that we will continue to be in solidarity with those most marginalized and vulnerable, fight climate change and, eventually, end it.

## 8 November – Adaptation, Loss & Damage Day

Loss and damage was one of the most significant and anticipated topics to be discussed at this year's COP26. Adequate financial resources are needed in order to compensate and address losses in biodiversity, economic activity, and cultural heritage. Although loss and damage finance was a chief priority for civil society, it was not reflected much in the COP outcomes. The lack of action

on loss and damage finance is disappointing because financial accountability can provide distributive justice for those disproportionately affected by climate change. In fact, in the Mercy Global Action Position statement, we address this issue directly by urging governments to “actualize climate finance commitments” and create commitments that aid lower income nations with actualizing climate justice and minimizing climate justice debt. Without proper climate finance, lower income countries are not only left unsupported but also left accumulating massive amounts of debt whilst trying to keep climate change under control.

### ADAPTATION, LOSS, AND DAMAGE - COP26 - DAY 8

Mercy Global Action urges governments to support efforts, including finance, technology and capacity-building, in order to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change, at all levels, and to address loss of traditional ways of living and cultural heritage.



## ADAPTATION, LOSS, AND DAMAGE - COP26 - DAY 8

Mercy Global Action encourages governments to work towards ecosystem-based approaches and systems to aid waste reduction, address loss and damage of biodiversity, sea level rise, and promote sustainable consumption and production.



Former U.S. president Barack Obama was present at COP on this day, and spoke about critical next steps and hopes in climate justice, often noting that we are nowhere close to where we need to be. As one of the prominent supporters of the Paris Agreement, the former President was honest with world leaders, including those in the U.S., who have failed to keep their promises. Obama

was also strong in his call to young people to keep fighting, urging them to not only continue protesting but to also get involved in politics, which is something that they can't ignore if they want to make substantial change. Mercy reaffirms Obama's inclusion and emphasis on young people's influence on climate justice. Young people represent the generation most affected by climate change and are essential to the development, implementation and monitoring of all climate policies. We see so much hope in how youth-led movements have reinvigorated the climate movement.

The 8 of November was our first official day at COP. With delegates in both the Blue and Green Zone, we were privileged and lucky to attend events organized and led by women, people of the global South, and Indigenous communities. Among the multitude of events happening at COP each day, we as Mercy delegates were drawn to events which featured and uplifted the voices of those who are marginalized and underrepresented. We understand that listening to the daily struggles and solutions of those with lived experience of climate impacts only strengthens our knowledge and our work. For a more detailed look at some of our favorite events, please see Annex 2 of this report.

## 9 November - Gender Day

Gender Day at COP served as a reminder that all decisions at the conference must be centered around the knowledge and experiences of girls and women. The stories of women and girls impacted by climate events are very powerful testimonies. Addressing the issue of climate change would be significantly diminished without the input and voices of those who are affected by it most. In order to make real change, leaders must utilize rights-based safeguards in Article 6 so that implementation of the Paris Agreement addresses the challenges and experiences of marginalized groups.

## GENDER - COP26 - DAY 9

Mercy Global Action encourages governments to incorporate local and Indigenous knowledge, in particular the expertise of women and girls, taking into account their human rights, responsibilities, and ensuring conservation benefits are just and inclusive.



## NGO MINING WORKING GROUP ON GENDER & WATER

"Women and girls, especially rural and indigenous women, have knowledge and experience that is critical for the achievement of SDG 6, and as such need to play a central role in the provision, management, and safeguarding of water. A gender-sensitive approach to SDG 6 would not only contribute to women's and girls' enjoyment of their human rights to water and sanitation, but also contribute to their economic and political empowerment, improve opportunities for girls to go to school, and reduce gender-based violence and the gendered impacts of illnesses and food insecurity."



Mercy is one of the many civil society organizations that promotes a rights-based approach to climate justice. In our position statement we emphasized that all solutions generated at COP must be "human-rights based and gender-just." Women and girls, especially those from impacted communities, are important leaders, contribute valuable insight to decision-making

spaces, and make climate-just policies more achievable.

A new alliance was established on this day, co-chaired by the governments of Denmark and Costa Rica, called the [Beyond Oil & Gas Alliance \(BOGA\)](#). This international alliance of governments and stakeholders is committed to ending all oil and gas expansion and committed to phasing-out all existing extraction equitably. Members of the alliance have made a commitment to prioritizing people and planet over profit, which is essential and one of Mercy's core appeals to world leaders. Members of BOGA must "have already ended new licensing, concessions or leasing rounds for oil and gas production." BOGA represents climate justice leadership and significant collaboration of countries. Mercy International Association encourages more alliances like BOGA as ways for countries to work together to combat climate change.

We continued to attend events on our second and last day of COP that featured the stories of the marginalized and most climate-affected communities. More details about the most memorable events we attended can be found in Annex 2 of this report.

## 10 November – Transport Day

Transport Day gave world leaders another opportunity to discuss fossil fuels, which are the biggest contributors to climate change. We know that eliminating fossil fuels will put the world in the best possible position to reach 1.5°C, yet there has never been a COP outcome document that explicitly states that fossil fuels are one of the causes of climate change. This fact is not surprising because all countries continue to use, invest in, and/or extract fossil fuels.

### TRANSPORT - COP26 - DAY 10

"Reducing our reliance on individualised transport is another way to improve our impact on Earth. Walking is always the best option, as is riding a bike to reduce our need for single use fossil fuels. If this is not an option for any reason, try using public transport or carpooling to help reduce the need for fuel."

*Simple, Daily Gestures* - Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea





## TRANSPORT - COP26 - DAY 10

Featuring a Mercy Ministry: Mercy Circle, a 110-unit retirement community outside Chicago, was built with sustainability in mind, earning LEED "green building" certification.

The facility has bike racks and showers for employees, to encourage cycling to work, and preferred parking spaces for low-emitting and fuel-efficient cars.



Despite the promises of many countries at COP that suggest that they are raising their ambitions to mitigate climate impacts, sadly, many of these are examples of "greenwashing." According to [Global Citizen](#), greenwashing is when governments, companies or other organizations "mislead their consumers or audiences by making them believe that a product, service

they provide, or the organization itself is environmentally friendly or sustainable, when it is not." While many governments and private sector entities have boasted about their achievements and actions towards climate justice, we must hold them accountable for their commitments, and ensure they are following through with their promises.

In our position statement, Mercy is clear that we are not only against the extraction and commodification of common goods, but also false promises. It is on world leaders, especially those from countries that have built wealth through the extraction, use and export of fossil fuels, to not only end fossil fuel extraction but help lower-income countries diversify their economies and energy infrastructure.

## 11 November – Cities, Regions, and Built Environment Day

As the conference came to an end, civil society organizations closely examined the draft of the outcome document and noticed that many topics, including loss and damage, adaptation, adaptation finance, and mitigation were either absent, or framed with language that was too weak to achieve the transformative change needed to address the urgent climate crisis. Mercy delegates heard this repeatedly when attending various side-events, where many of the speakers lamented the unambitious language of the text. This is one of the reasons civil society advocacy is so important in the negotiation spaces - to ensure that policymakers are challenged to be more ambitious and people-centered in their approach to climate solutions, and not to avoid or sideline topics that are essential to climate justice.

### CITIES, REGIONS, AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT - COP26 - DAY 11

Marginally-housed people are at risk of becoming homeless due to climate-related factors, including rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and economic strain due to energy, water, and food insecurity. People experiencing homelessness are exposed to climate-related risks, including air pollution, extreme heat and cold, and food-borne, waterborne, and vector-borne diseases. Mercy Global Action calls for policies to make cities sustainable that do not deepen existing inequities (eg. green infrastructure that drives up urban housing costs).



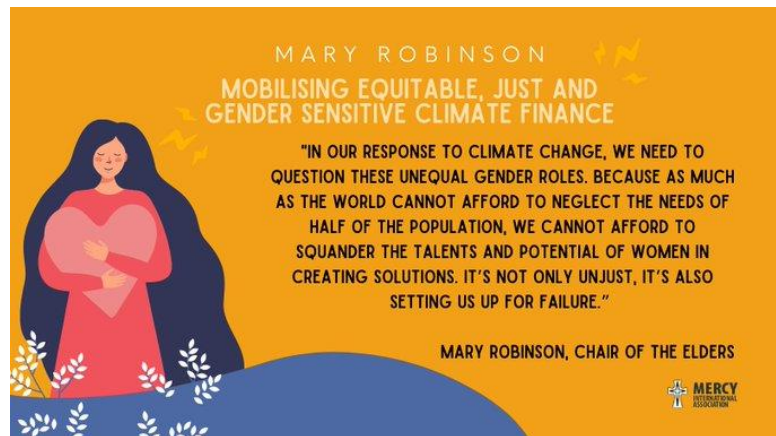
## 12 & 13 November – Conclusion of the Negotiations

After a series of contentious negotiations, which overran into the weekend, COP26 ended on Saturday 13 November. For more details on the outcomes of COP26, please see Part 3 of this report.

## Annex 2: Memorable Events Attended by Mercy Delegates

### Mobilising Equitable, Just and Gender Sensitive Climate Finance - 3 November

Mary Robinson, Chair of the Elders, former President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, delivered the keynote address at this event, which highlighted the connection between gender and climate change. She stated that “in our response to climate change, we need to question these unequal gender roles. Because as much as the world cannot afford to neglect the needs of half the population, we cannot afford to squander the talents and potential of women in creating solutions. It’s not only unjust, it’s also setting us up for failure.”

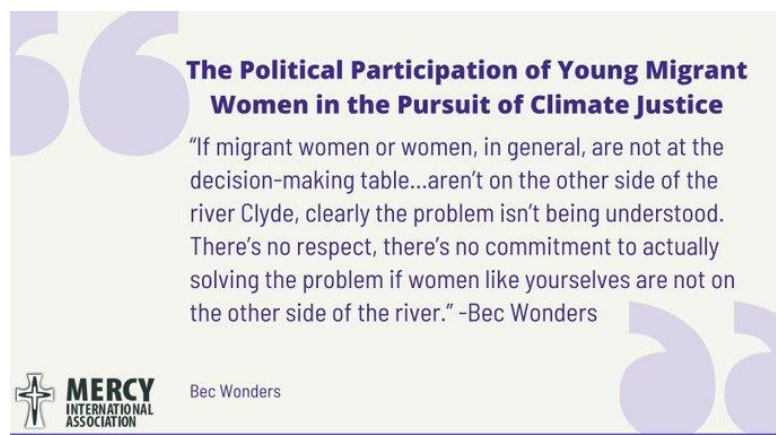


Mercy International Association reaffirms the statement made by Mary Robinson. We urge governments to ensure that girls and young women “are meaningfully included in the development, review, implementation, and monitoring of all climate policies.” The knowledge and experiences of women and girls are essential to understanding and implementing just climate policy.

[Watch the entire event here.](#)

### The Political Participation of Young Migrant Women in the Pursuit of Climate Justice - 8 November

This event was organized by [Radical Girlss](#), a movement created by the European Network of Migrant Women (ENOMW) which gives young migrant, refugee, and ethnic minority women and girls the ability to come together and work collaboratively. Radical Girlss serves as a space where young women can “come to heal, exchange, learn, and co-create their own lives and stories.”



This Green Zone event was facilitated by Bec Wonders and featured the voices and stories of Natasha Noreen, Azura Farrell-Mcleod, and Alyssa Ahrabare, all of whom are part of Radical

Girlss. As the title suggests, the key theme was the impact of climate change on migrant women and girls, specifically the unique and disproportionate affects female climate induced refugees and migrants face.

Alyssa Ahrabare, an activist from Brussels, stated that throughout women's migration journeys, they “face multiple specific violence that migrant men don't experience.” This makes it even more prevalent and important to include the voices of migrant women “in the discussion for climate justice and all of the solutions that we can come up with.”

What stuck out to us most was the connection Alyssa Ahrabare made between the rights of Earth and women. “There is an interconnection between the rights of the Earth, women, and human beings.” Similarly, *Laudato Sí* paragraph 240 states that “Everything is interconnected,” which makes the fight for the Earth and human rights so crucial.



Despite the key experiences migrant women can share, they are often excluded from the decision-making tables. As Azura Farrell-Mcleod stated, “when it comes to decision-making, —we are excluded. That’s the main issue.” Without the experiences and stories of migrant women, it is difficult to ensure that climate policy is representative. Their voices not only aid climate justice but when women are fairly represented and treated, it has positive ripple effects on the rest of their communities.

Towards the end of the event, it was obvious that it’s hard for change to occur if women – whether they are refugees, migrants, indigenous, or women from the global South—are not in the negotiating rooms. For now, many of their voices are excluded and all the speakers in the event often highlighted how they had to invite themselves to COP. Their stories and frustrations with COP, from COPs exclusivity to being far too white and male, were further exacerbated by the physical separation between the Green and Blue Zone.

As Bec Wonders eloquently put, “If migrant women or women in general are not at the decision-making table... aren’t on the other side of the river Clyde, clearly the problem isn’t being understood. There’s no respect, there’s no commitment to actually solving the problem if women like yourselves are not on the other side of the river.”

[Watch the entire event here.](#)

## People Not Polluters: Winning the Grassroots Movement to End the Era of Fossil Fuels – 8 November



This Blue Zone panel was a joint event between the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), and the Fossil Fuel Treaty. The event included community leaders from the Americas, Africa, Asia and Europe, including Ruth Miller (Native Movement), Benjamin

Yawakie (NDN Collective), Mitzi Tan (Fridays for Future Philippines), Baba Walia Bayonjo (Environmental Rights Action, Friends of the Earth, Nigeria), Osver Jaime Polo Carrasco (MOCICC), and Caroline Rance (Friends of the Earth, Scotland)

Throughout the event, speakers gave their personal accounts on how they as individuals or their organizations have tackled fossil fuel extraction, focusing on Indigenous knowledge of preservation of Earth. Panelists reminded us that indigenous people are putting their lives on the line not only to save the Earth and their “traditional life ways” but also for the “benefit of the globe.”

Despite the efforts of indigenous peoples to protect the Earth, indigenous climate leaders and activists are criminalized at high rates, making it hard for them to accomplish justice. However, Ruth Miller, the Climate Justice Director for Native Movement, emphasizes that the fight for our world lives in Indigenous’ bodies. Climate change is a “life and death fight” for Indigenous communities. Their voices and initiatives are critical to saving our planet, for we can learn from indigenous peoples how to live without fossil fuels. They have proven that “we don’t need to be dependent on fossil fuels to live. Colonial power tried to strip [Indigenous peoples] of [their] culture and ways of living,” but they have persevered.

It is indigenous people’s knowledge and perseverance against our energy system – which is inherently racist, colonialist, capitalist, and extractive – that has inspired and continues to inspire climate activists from all over the world. Indigenous knowledge should be allowed to repair and protect indigenous lands and beyond. Mercy reaffirms and acknowledges the power and importance of uplifting indigenous knowledge and voices. We stand for the rights of Earth and People and advocate for the protection of Earth for the spiritual and cultural wellbeing of communities.

[Watch the entire event here.](#)



## Our Future, Our Voice: Girls Education and Tackling the Climate Crisis – 9 November

The UK Government sponsored this event which featured youth climate leaders, government representatives, and academics who discussed how the world can protect girls' education, which can be a pivotal tool in tackling climate change.



Hon. Agnes Nyalonje, Malawi's Minister of Education, summarized why girls' education is so essential to climate change. According to her, it "is the right of women and girls to be leaders not spectators in the fight against climate change" because they are the "soldiers at the frontline of the

climate crisis" and are "recipients of the unseen forces created by the global North." Despite its importance, access to quality education remains a challenge in Malawi and other countries around the world.

Jamille Bigio, the United States Agency for International Development's Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment spoke about the linkages between education and prosperous green economies. She underscored how lack of access to equitable education is damaging to our fight against climate change.

Mercy Global Action reaffirms the importance of education for all as a pathway to knowledge and agency that enables girls and women to create change in our world on issues related to climate and all others that impact their lives.

[Watch the entire event here.](#)