

## **Presidential Climate Commission**

### **Reflections Key Outcomes from COP28**

December 2023

#### **COP 28, A SUCCESSFUL SHOWING AND ENGAGEMENT ON SOUTH AFRICA'S JUST TRANSITION JOURNEY**

The 28<sup>th</sup> United Nations Conference of Parties (COP28) took place from 30 November to 12 December in Dubai – where 198 nations engaged in talks dealing with the impacts of climate change. COP28 aimed to reach consensus on cutting global emissions of greenhouse gases, increasing funding for developing countries to reach their mitigation, adaptation and just transition goals, and operationalising aspects of the Paris Agreement (2015) that were outstanding, such as the Loss and Damage Fund.

South Africa was represented in the UNFCCC negotiations by the Minister and Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE). The Presidential Climate Commission played a supportive role at COP as part of the SA Pavilion, hosting side-events on various topics, including the just transition, employment strategies and diversification and adaptation.

The PCC's Just Transition Framework, the Climate Finance Landscape report, the Komati Recommendations, and the country's Just Energy Transition Implementation Plan provided important context for climate action, particularly for developing countries.

#### **OUR REFLECTIONS ON COP 28 DECISIONS**

COP28 will be held against a backdrop of unprecedented climate-related disasters (resulting in death, injury, and displacement), and conflict. The last year has seen devastating [climate-related disasters](#), including amongst others, heatwaves in Europe and Asia, flooding along the east coast of Africa and in parts of Asia, cyclones in Southern Africa, wildfires in Australia, and droughts in east Africa. The toll of these disasters was particularly severe in vulnerable, developing countries.



COP28 also took place at a time when significant [social and economic challenges remain](#) unresolved, including staggering levels of poverty and inequality and unemployment or jobs in poor working conditions.

The reflections below are the PCC's own assessment of the COP28 outcomes, and do not necessarily reflect the DFFE position (see Minister's media statement for further clarity on [government's position](#)).

## 1. Global Stocktake and Mitigation

- The technical report of the first Global Stocktake (GST) (published this past September) illustrated that collectively the world is woefully off track to meet its commitments under the Paris Agreement.
- In the political talks on the first GST, which concluded at COP28, for the first time there was collective agreement from nearly 200 countries to move away from fossil fuels, “done in a just, orderly, and equitable manner,” This is an important political signal about the significant transition that lies ahead, with explicit fossil fuel transition language never before included in a COP outcome.
- The final GST decision, framed as the “UAE consensus” also makes clear an ‘all of economy’, ‘all of society’ approach is required to tackling climate change and achieving a just transition. This transformation includes tripling renewable energy, doubling energy efficiency, accelerating sustainable transport, transforming the food system, and protecting forests and nature.

## 2. Loss and Damage Fund

- The agreement to establish a fund for Loss and Damage was an early win this COP, with financial commitments of approximately [\\$700 million](#) pledged.
- While this is an important initial contribution, it falls far short of what is needed by developing countries.
- There remain outstanding issues on the loss and damage fund, such as [how it will be funded](#) moving forward.
- Contributions to the fund are voluntary - there is no obligation for countries to fund it.
- The World Bank will act as a trustee of the fund for the first four years.
- The fund will be governed and supervised by a Board that will have full responsibility for funding decisions.

## 3. Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA)

- The final GGA text is more progressive than the original draft, but the targets lack specificity.
- There is specific reference to gender-responsive, participatory, and fully transparent national adaptation plans.



- It acknowledges the work done by developing countries in drafting adaptation plans and the challenges that they face in accessing finance for such plans.
- The text on funding is slightly unclear, stating that developed countries must double adaptation finance by 2025 – with no specific mechanisms in place to manage this.
- The text also acknowledges that the adaptation funding gap is widening, and that current funding and resources provisions are inadequate.

#### **4. Finance**

- There were considerable pledges from developed countries to developing countries to assist with adaptation and mitigation, although the original target of \$100 billion, articulated in the Paris Agreement, has not yet been met.
- It is estimated that the adaptation finance needs of developing countries are at \$215–\$387 billion annually until 2030, and about \$4.3 trillion per year needs to be invested in clean energy up until 2030, increasing to \$5 trillion per year up until 2050, to reach net zero emissions by mid-century.
- Importantly, the concluding text acknowledges that new and additional grant-based, highly concessional finance, and non-debt instruments remain critical to supporting developing countries, particularly as they transition in a just and equitable manner.
- The text noted the need to simplify processes for accessing finance.
- Developing countries stated that financial pledges fall short of what they require.
- An agreement was reached to draft a post-2025 finance target ahead of COP29, which will be negotiated at the next COP.

#### **5. Just Transition Work Programme**

COP28 adopted a Just Transition work programme, with a broad interpretation of a just transition i.e., the just transition demands an all of economy and all of society response.

Significantly, Parties agreed that the work programme would include the following elements:

- Just transition pathways to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.
- Just and equitable transition, which will explore pathways that ensure socio-economic justice, noting nationally determined contributions.
- Opportunities, challenges, and barriers relating to sustainable development and poverty eradication in the process of transitioning to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy.
- Enhancing adaptation and climate resilience at the national and international level.
- Employment matters related to the just transition in line with nationally defined development priorities.
- Inclusive and participatory approaches to just transitions that leave no one behind with international cooperation in enabling just transitions.



The PCC welcomes the opportunity to make annual submissions to the Just Transition work programme, which are due by non-Party stakeholders annually, before 15 February.

## 6. PCC Events at COP28

The PCC delegation of both Commissioners and the Secretariat also participated in numerous invited side events hosted by the various South African and international development partners. It was through these events that the various issues pertaining to South Africa's Just Transition journey and the role of the PCC was further amplified.

There was great focus on South Africa's just transition and the PCC's Just Transition Framework, including:

- **Monitoring successful just transitions** – and the development of methods for measuring such transitions, including how to measure the JUST element.
- **Financing mechanisms for just transitions**, using local and international examples of coordinated mobilisation of funding for just transition programmes.
- Managing the **socioeconomic consequences** from the implementation of a just transition
- Lessons and recommendations from a **decommissioning** project in South Africa.
- **Monitoring just transition processes**, including evaluations and lessons for implementation.

The PCC was a full partner at the South African Pavilion at COP 28 and successfully hosted several side-events as highlighted.

- **High level roundtable on implementing Just Transitions** dealt with the management of the social and economic consequences of a just transition and proposed cooperative actions that would assist to mitigate challenges and accelerate just transitions. This panel included high-level representatives from government ministries, philanthropy, and civil society.
- **Just Energy Transition (JET) Investment Planning in Developing Countries**: the discussion looked at the advantages of developing JET frameworks, with investment plans, including progress that has been made and challenges faced in the development.
- **Economic Diversification and Skilling People**: the discussion noted the impact that the transition to a low-carbon and/or climate-resilient economy will have on employment, particularly vulnerable communities – and what can be learned from transitions that have already occurred.
- **Climate Finance Landscape Report**: the event provided the findings of the PCC's most recent report on climate finance in South Africa. It looked at funding flows and their sources, barriers to climate finance and recommendations to secure funding in the future.



- **Skilling Young People for the Labour Force of Tomorrow:** the discussion looked at ways to train and skill young people for entrance into a job market that is transitioning, including engaging the youth on decision making related to skills and employment.
- **Towards a Just Adaptation and Resilience Investment Plan:** the discussion illustrated the lag in the provision of funding for adaptation and mitigation in a just energy transition and examined the investment case for adaptation and resilience, including methods of quantifying or costing investment planning for food and water security and the built environment.
- **Lessons and Recommendations from South Africa's First Just Transition Project:** The Side event further elaborated on the key findings, lessons, and recommendations from the PCC Komati Report. The discussions highlighted the need to continue to socialise the key findings and emphasis on the recommendations and way forward and to communicate the facts surrounding the project.

### **Appreciation to Team South Africa**

The PCC wishes to thank the South African delegation as **led by President Cyril Ramaphosa and Minister Barbar Creecy** and numerous Ministers and Deputy Ministers, for their leadership guidance and support at COP28.

We equally extend our appreciation to the **National Business Initiative (NBI)** for their work on SA Pavilion provided which provided an interactive and high impact platform and enabled Team South Africa to host an excellent suite of side events and a space for the positive portrayal of South Africa's climate efforts.

We also thank the **PCC Commissioners and the PCC Secretariat** who provided leadership and guidance and for their participation in the programme before and during COP28 in showcasing our work through the various side-events, media interviews, and other engagements.

Lastly, our events and engagements could not have been successful without our **stakeholders and partners** who participated as speakers and guests. We thank them and look forward to future collaboration.