

COP 25- Call for Global Action Now



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The Conference of Parties (COP)-25 kicked off at Madrid, Spain, yesterday. Its importance is clearly indicated in the event logo and tag-line: Time to Act. Alarm bells have been going off over the last many years with irrefutable evidence to anthropogenic contributions and impacts of climate change. The meeting comes only days after the European Union (the third largest greenhouse gas emitter) collectively declared a “climate emergency”, echoing the equally grim warning issued in early November in Bioscience by more than 11,000 scientists from 150 countries.

This sense of urgency was clearly reflected in United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Chief, Antonio Guterres’ opening speech. Highlighting the need for all countries and leaders to show accountability and responsibility, he said, “**anything less would be a betrayal of our entire human family**”.





COP25 comes close on the heels of the UN Climate Summit in New York, in September. Several countries (68 countries accounting for 8% of global GHG emissions) signalled that they will be strengthening commitments at Madrid.

So what can you expect from COP25? For starters, expect intense discussions on enabling 1.5/2 degree pathways. This COP event serves as the second CMA meeting of parties to take decisions on the nuts, bolts and gears of the Paris Agreement. These discussions will likely focus on strengthening implementation procedures, technology, and financing, to enable implementation of the Paris Agreement, while delving deeper into the mechanics of this effort.

There may also be some turmoil with regard to countries' actions, considering recent scientific evidence (especially since the 2015 Paris Agreement, which indicates that NDCs will not be able to curb global warming to the 1.5 or 2 degree pathway). Given the lack of action from developed countries since the Kyoto Protocol, sounding urgency across the board could unjustly place the burden of historic inaction on economically and environmentally vulnerable countries.

India has always maintained the need for developed countries to act on their historical responsibility, while framing India's climate goals based on the principles of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC). Negotiations attempted in the conventional way may go awry if the recent assessments (projecting just a 10-year window for all countries to drastically curb emissions to stay on the 2 degree pathway) are ignored. This is particularly challenging for countries like India, which are still setting up infrastructure and key industries for its economic and developmental aspirations. On the other hand, India's actions, reflected in its domestic policy, have been growing at a feverish pace, with Indian negotiators likely to focus on this. Illustratively, at the UN Climate Summit in September, India announced that it would follow up its 175 GW renewable-power-capacity target for 2022 with a 450 GW target for 2030.

We anticipate some pressure on 'stepping up ambition' for developed countries too with respect to new Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and time-frame for implementation. It is common knowledge that plans submitted by Annex 1 countries (industrialised countries responsible for majority of historical emissions) are not ambitious enough, given their historical contribution to global GHG emissions. Their

NDC pledges also do not reflect on how to advance finance and capacity building. So far, only USD 9.7 billion in pledges towards Green Climate Fund replenishment have been confirmed, as opposed to the formal agreement to mobilise USD 100 billion annually. Additional financial support would help bolster the credibility of the negotiations, especially on contentious issues of pre-2020 actions and post-2030 time-frames for implementation.

Researchers from CSTEP's Climate, Environment and Sustainability team will be sharing observations, perspectives, and providing a round-up on the conference, with a special focus on New Climate Science, Earth Information Day (3 December), enhancing pre-2020 ambition, implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Katowice Rule Book (discussion on Article 6 on market-based mechanisms) and much more.

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