



The Daily Dish

What Did COP26 Accomplish?

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Unless you follow climate change policy fairly closely, you probably noticed news about a climate meeting in Glasgow, Scotland and thought: “I wonder what got accomplished at that meeting.” Or perhaps even: “Why is it called COP26?” The good news is that Ewelina Czapla has the [answers](#) to both questions.

As it turns out, this is the 26th meeting of the Conference of Parties, hence COP26. Those parties were the signatories of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. And what did they accomplish? The COP26 summit produced the Glasgow Climate Pact (GCP), which was unanimously agreed to by all participating countries. If each country meets the commitments in the GCP and other agreements, the reduced emissions could limit the growth of atmospheric temperatures to less than 2 degrees Celsius.

Here’s the catch. Like other international climate agreements – for example, the Paris Agreement – there is no enforcement mechanism for the commitments made by nations at Glasgow. That, of course, is one reason the summit was able to unanimously agree to the GCP. Had any single nation held out, the GCP would not have been approved. This leads to an important insight, namely, that “the current pace of implementation would allow temperatures to rise 2.7 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels by 2100,” Czapla writes. “On the other hand, if all pledges, targets, and nationally determined contributions (NDCs) undertaken to date were implemented fully and in the agreed-upon timeframe, this would reduce the expected global temperature increase to 1.8 degrees Celsius. This suggests that current emissions reduction commitments reflect the scope of the problem, but without appropriate implementation, they will fail to adequately address it.”

COP26 resulted in not only an official agreement but also a series of commitments to various mitigation and conservation efforts. In particular, Czapla notes, “the United States and EU also launched the Global Methane Pledge to reduce global methane emissions by at least 30 percent from 2020 levels by 2030; over 100 countries have joined. The Biden Administration recently proposed additional regulation of oil and natural gas producers’ methane emissions (for more see Dan Bosch’s [analysis](#)).”

In the end, the bottom line is familiar: “COP26, like the summits before, has resulted in various international commitments and highlighted the growing urgency of addressing climate change. The GCP serves as reminder that commitments alone are insufficient to limit climate change. Without the appropriate policies, investments, and technologies, the growth of atmospheric temperatures may continue beyond 2 degrees Celsius.”