



Curbing the curve or missing the turn? Outcomes from COP28

1. Editorial

Dear members of the Climate, DRR and Environment network

The fight against climate change is not on track. Given current ambitions, the 1.5°C target set under the [Paris Agreement](#) in 2015 will be soon out of reach and far exceeded by 2100. According to the [UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2023](#), average temperature is likely to rise to 2.5°C above pre-industrial levels by the end of this century if the currently adopted [Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\)](#) made under the Paris Agreement were fully implemented, and to 2.9°C if only unconditional NDCs were fully executed. Much more decisive efforts to mitigate climate change are needed given the still increasing concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. To cope with rising temperatures and other impacts of climate change, more effective adaptation strategies are required as well, and, relatedly, action to avert, minimize and address climate loss and damage. All these efforts are very costly, with developing countries being unable to bear the costs for their national measures. The “[finance gap](#)” is considerable, for adaptation alone it is estimated to be around USD 194-366 billion a year.

The first newsletter of the new year is dedicated to a retrospective to the achievements of COP 28, the big multilateral gathering climate meeting that took place last month.

Enjoy the reading!

André Wehrli, Focal Point SDC Network Climate, DRR and Environment
&
Matthias Bachmann, Senior Policy Advisor

2. What is the COP28 about?

The Conferences of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement annually set global ambitions and define actions to address climate change. From 30th November to 12th December 2023, the 28th COP took



place in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) presided by H.E. Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber. More than 97'000 participants from 195 countries were present, from international leaders and other government delegates to representatives from civil society, the private sector and academia.

The 28th COP reached a record number of over 97'000 attendees

COP28 provided another key opportunity to get back on track in the fight against climate change. The aims of COP 28 included more ambition around several issues, pressing parties to take stronger action towards reducing emissions, adapting to climate change, and financing climate action. The launch of the Climate Loss and Damage fund, which is the first financing vehicle of its kind in this field, and the Global Stocktake, which evaluates progress in achieving climate goals, have attracted particular attention.

3. Swiss engagement at the COP28

The official Swiss delegation was headed by the President of the Swiss Confederation, H.E. Alain Berset, and Federal Councillor and Head of the Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications H.E. Albert Rösti. The negotiation team, led by Ambassador Mr. Felix Wertli from the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, consisted of 15 people mostly from the Federal administration but also civil society, youth, private sector, and academia. Matthias Bachmann, Senior Policy Advisor at SDC's Climate, DRR, and Environment section was part of the delegation.



Swiss official delegation at COP28 in Dubai with Federal Councillor and Head of Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications H.E. Albert Rösti (center, in blue), Matthias Bachmann (third from right).

For Switzerland, particularly given the completion of the first-ever [Global Stocktake](#) (GST) of the Paris Agreement, COP28 presented a pivotal moment to assess global progress towards the goals set in 2015 and to increase ambition in achieving them. Across negotiations, Switzerland's delegation advocated for effective action in [reducing emissions](#) and fostering climate resilience, with support for countries and people most vulnerable and least contributing to climate change, including through the [New Collective Quantified Goal \(NCQG\)](#), the [new fund on Loss and Damage](#) and building the framework for [the Global Goal on Adaptation](#). During the Summit of Heads of State, the President of the Swiss Confederation announced [Switzerland's new pledges](#) to the [Green Climate Fund](#) (see box 3), the [Adaptation Fund](#) (see box 2), the [Africa Climate Change Fund](#), the [Amazon Fund](#) and the [Santiago Network on Loss and Damage](#).

In addition to the Swiss delegation, the active support and participation of the Swiss Embassy in UAE, in particular Regional Advisor Ms Hanna Capeder and the Swiss Ambassador to UAE, Mr Arthur Mattli, as well as the participation of the Head of SDC's Migration and Forced Displacement Section, Ms Patricia Barandun, allowed the SDC to assist and partake in multiple side events, covering a broad range of key topics, promoting its climate work and supporting the efforts of partner organizations.

4. Selected results from COP 28

a. Loss & damage Fund

At the outset of COP28, a global Fund on Loss and Damage was [launched](#) after years of advocacy efforts, particularly by Small Island Developing States (simply called "the



Fund”, at least for the time being). This is a significant achievement addressing the increasing losses and damages caused by climate change in developing countries that are most vulnerable to climate hazards. The conference thus began on an excellent footing with many countries such as France, Italy, UAE and the United States making pledges of a total of USD 792 million. Parties agreed broadly on the scope and modalities of the Fund. Further details will have to be decided by its future board, including the exact scope and prioritization of its “beneficiaries”. While this Fund is the first global funding vehicle explicitly dedicated to Loss and Damage, multiple arrangements to avert, minimize and tackle climate-induced losses and damages already exist. COP28 also issued recommendations to strengthen them and ensure their coordination.



Civil society demanding improvements at COP28 inside the conference zone

Switzerland supports a fast but diligent operationalization of the Fund with a view to primarily serve the most climate-vulnerable developing countries and communities. Regrettably, not all parties agreed the Fund to be built on a human rights-based approach, as requested by Switzerland. The delegation also advocated for a diverse set of contributors, including not only industrialized countries but also high-emitting and financially capable emerging economies, as well as the private sector based on the polluters pay principle, through innovative sources such as a global CO₂ tax. This call was partly heeded, as the Fund can receive contributions from a wide variety of sources. Beyond the UAE who made a pledge of USD 100 million, expectations remain however low that other emerging countries will contribute to the Fund. There are also no innovative sources to finance losses and damages that could garner global consensus in the near term.

Box1: Climate change, conflict and fragility

80 countries, including Switzerland, and 43 organizations signed up to the [COP28 DECLARATION ON CLIMATE, RELIEF, RECOVERY AND PEACE](#). The signatories commit to bring climate action and finance to people that are highly vulnerable to climate change and affected by fragility, conflict, or severe humanitarian needs. This declaration, like many other ultimately voluntary statements of intent, is not part of the formally negotiated output of the conference. Switzerland also attempted to anchor the issue in COP28 decisions on climate finance and loss and damage. This endeavor failed due to resistance from some emerging economies, which are opposed to addressing this politically sensitive issue in the UNFCCC context.

b. Santiago Network for Loss and Damage

With SDC's active engagement in yearlong negotiations, the [Santiago Network for Loss and Damage](#) has finally [found a host](#) for its Secretariat with United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The Santiago Network is a catalyser (matchmaker between supply and demand) for technical



President of the Swiss Confederation, H.E. Alain Berset, delivering his speech at the Summit of Heads of States

assistance for averting, minimizing and addressing losses and damages in particularly climate-vulnerable developing countries. For the occasion, the President of the Swiss Confederation announced [Switzerland's contribution of CHF 1 million](#) to the Santiago Network for the period of 2024-27. Switzerland also announced its availability to host the Network's headquarters in Geneva. Its Advisory Board will decide on a location by its first meeting in March 2024.

Thanks to the decisions taken at the COP28, both the Fund for Loss and Damage and the Santiago Network can now be operationalized. This comes

timely, considering that climate-induced losses and damages are likely to continue to sharply increase in the future. The Fund will create opportunities for a wide array of partnerships between local, national and international institutions. SDC also encourages providers of loss and damage technical assistance, from multilateral development banks to non-governmental organizations, to liaise with UNDRR to form part of the Santiago Network.

c. The Global Stocktake (GST) and mitigation ambition

For the first time in COP history, a negotiated process called the [Global Stocktake \(GST\)](#) highlighted progress, gaps and related recommendations for action in view of achieving the Paris Agreement goals. The commitments on climate mitigation received special political attention. In this regard, [the GST](#) called upon parties to triple renewable energy capacity and doubling the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030. The countries are to transition away not only from coal but also for the first time from oil and gas in energy systems, "...in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade, so as to achieve net zero by 2050". A substantial reduction in non-carbon-dioxide emissions by 2030, notably methane emissions, is also part of the package. Furthermore, Parties aim to phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies "that do not address energy poverty or just transitions, as soon as possible". On the path to net zero in 2050, global greenhouse gas emissions should now be reduced by 43% until 2030 and 60% by 2035 relative to the 2019 level. There is fairly good language on making Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) more ambitious, including by revisiting and strengthening 2030 targets by the end of 2024. The GST permits the use of technologies for carbon capture and storage, which Switzerland intends to use only for [emissions that are difficult to avoid](#).

Are these commitments enough in light of the intensifying climate crisis? They are not. But they certainly represent progress compared to the level of ambition reflected in outcomes of previous COPs, including Glasgow (COP26) and Sharm El-Sheik (COP27). Or, as UN Climate Change Executive Secretary [Simon Stiell said](#), a complete turn of the page was not achieved in Dubai but the outcome may mark "the beginning of the end" for fossil fuels.

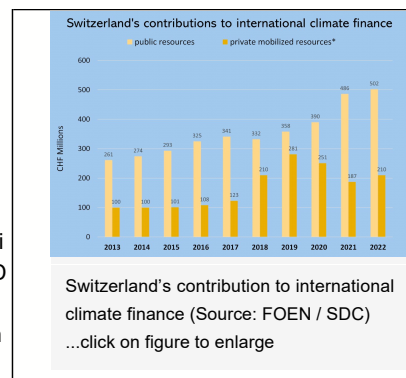
d. Climate Finance: Post-2025 climate finance goal & Swiss pledges

Progress has been made in Swiss co-facilitated negotiations regarding the [New Collective Quantified Goal \(NCQG\)](#) on climate finance, which aims to replace the soon-expiring USD 100 billion goal. Counting [USD 89.6 billion in 2021](#), the current goal has not been achieved as of yet. The discussions surrounding the new

goal are centred on its contributors, beneficiaries, quantum, timeline, and scope, including the utility of sub-goals and tracking. These matters will be decided this year, when the NCQG is to be adopted at COP29. The [COP28 decision](#) solely laid out the consultation process to get there. The new goal will likely exceed the current USD 100 billion/year, which in turn is probably much to also challenge Switzerland to keep pace with commitments (see figure above).

Switzerland advises against an "over-engineered" new global goal with too many sub-goals and targets, which would describe top-down to which sectors or through which financial tools money would flow instead of allocating funds based on realities in developing countries. In addition, Switzerland favours broadening the range of contributors to include governments from wealthy and high CO₂-emitting emerging economies. Importantly, the new goal should include private finance to ensure that all types of financial flows align with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

For more information on Switzerland's progress on climate finance in line with its commitments to the UNFCCC, see Chapter 7 of the [8th National](#)



Box 2: Swiss pledging for the Adaptation Fund

According to UNEP's latest [Adaptation Gap Report](#), the needs of developing countries for adaptation are 10-18 times bigger than the actual international public finance flows. Responding to this urgency, the [Adaptation Fund \(AF\)](#) effectively supports the most vulnerable countries and people in their efforts to adapt to the relentless impacts of climate change. In Dubai, Switzerland announced a further multi-year contribution of [CHF 15 million](#) to reinforce its work. In total, the AF mobilized [USD 188 million](#) at COP28.

Box 3: Swiss pledging for Green Climate Fund (GCF)

In the context of the Green Climate Fund's [second cycle of replenishment](#) Switzerland announced its contribution of CHF 135 million covering the years 2024-2027. As an active GCF board member, Switzerland advocates to make the fund primarily accessible to the most vulnerable countries and people, ensuring implementation of gender policies, including the private sector and increasing mobilisation and transparency in the fund's operation.

As of December 2023, 31 countries pledged support to the fund with a total of [USD 12.8 billion](#) over the next four years. This enables the GCF to channel new, additional and predictable resources to developing countries to support the paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate resilient development pathways – mitigating 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent – and enhancing the resilience of up to 1 billion people. By contributing to the world's largest climate fund, Switzerland helps to shape climate governance at country levels, which is critical to underpin climate action. The fund can deploy a variety of financial instruments, including grants, concessional loans, debt, equity and guarantees to maximize private co-investments.

More information on how to engage with the GCF and other climate funds can be found in the [CDE Network's resource section on Climate Funds](#).

e. Global Goal for Adaptation

A significant step towards the [Global Goal for Adaptation](#) (Art. 7 of the Paris Agreement) has been taken at COP28. Member states [adopted a framework](#) for the goal, providing it with a set of substantive and process targets. As a common ground for collaboration, the framework intends to help stakeholders, including funding and implementing entities, to systematically and efficiently work on

adaptation. To track the implementation of the GGA targets, Parties are tasked to agree on a set of indicators over the next two years. The granularity of this decision contrasts with the disappointing outcome on the [Mitigation Work Programme](#). The discussions under the latter, launched last year at COP27, lack thus far any concrete follow-up but will be continued next year.



Civil society demanding action to increase and unlock adaptation finance

5. Side Events at COP 28

Alongside with Switzerland's participation in official negotiations of the COP, SDC also actively engaged in many side events that were open to the public (in COP28's so-called "blue zone"). While not being a part of or directly linked to the official negotiations, these side events highlight the increasing complexity and impacts of climate change to multiple sectors, as is evident from three highlighted examples here below.

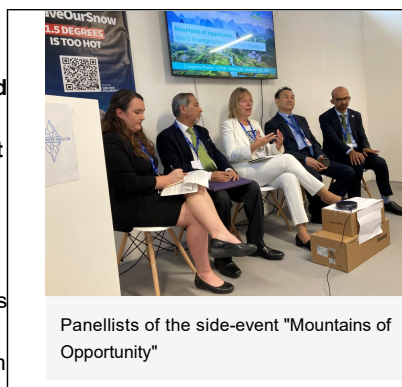
- **Clean Air Coalitions' (CCAC) Ministerial Meeting & Side-Event on Scaling up finance for climate and air pollution**

The Clean Air Coalition's [Ministerial Meeting](#) focused on finance to combat short-lived climate pollutants, with a spotlight on [upcoming initiatives](#) and opportunities for partners to engage in the CCAC's work. CCAC, established in 2012, is a 166-member coalition promoting measures to reduce pollutants with a short atmospheric lifetime but high warming power. The SDC supports the CCAC financially since 2014 and is a Board member since 2017.

In addition to the Ministerial Meeting, SDC was also present in CCAC's side event "[Scaling up finance for climate and air pollution together: A matter of health](#)". SDC shared its experience in bilateral work with Latin America, China and India on reducing pollution in the transport sector. By fostering research on sources of pollution and introducing new technologies in value chains, the collaboration helped to significantly reduce CO2 levels, providing a safer working environment and increasing workers' health and productivity.

- **Mountains of opportunity: How to leverage funding for climate adaptation organized by Adaptation@Altitude ZoiNet - SDC-funded project**

The [event](#), with speakers from SDC, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, GCF and the Alpine Convention, highlighted the challenge of reaching mountain areas in adaptation efforts. Despite being crucial for the provision of ecosystem services (climate regulation, freshwater, recreation, renewable energy) and reducing risks of disasters, only a small share of adaptation funding goes to mountains and the cryosphere. In other words, the generally large adaptation funding gap (see UNEP Gap Report 2023) is particularly large for mountain areas. In the period 2011-2019, only around 6% of all bilaterally or multilaterally financed adaptation projects were targeted at mountain regions. Among mountain countries, particularly vulnerable countries receive relatively few adaptation resources. Strategies to mobilize more funding include data and knowledge generation (and based on this, a coherent narrative for decision-makers and investors), mainstreaming into (government) strategies and policies, regional cooperation and, crucially, more "bankable" projects that clearly outline the risk-return structure needed by private investors.



Panelists of the side-event "Mountains of Opportunity"

- **Side-event on "Human mobility and just transition" organized by the International Labour Organisation**

This [event](#) focused on the human mobility dimension in a just transition and highlighted the importance of labour migration frameworks that uphold decent work conditions for migrant workers, to ensure that the transition to a green economy is truly inclusive. The event presented opportunities of the just transition, where migrant workers would have access to



Patrizia Barandun (SDC) speaking at the "Human mobility and just transitions" side-event

opportunities to develop necessary skills and transfer these to their countries of origin. Mrs Patricia Barandun, the Head of SDC's Migration and Forced Displacement section, announced a forthcoming programme in the Sahel region focusing on human mobility and climate change. She highlighted Switzerland's work in facilitating dialogue between origin and destination countries during which representatives of vulnerable populations (low-skilled migrant workers and migrant youth) are given a voice. The dialogue's goal is to make green jobs more inclusive and ensure that appropriate social protection is provided.

6. Next steps for Swiss climate engagement

With the window to reach the agreed global climate goal of 1.5° closing, [Switzerland is challenged](#) to vigorously implement the Paris Agreement at home by further developing and executing the relevant national legal framework. From the perspective of Patrik Hofstetter, head of climate and energy policy of WWF Switzerland and member of the Swiss delegation at COP28, there is room for improvement: "With its current course, Switzerland is not meeting any of the climate targets. However, the national parliament will be able to make improvements when it discusses the CO₂ Act: By increasing the CO₂ levy on fossil fuels, the support program for building renovations can be expanded and the incentive to replace old heating systems will be increased. At the same time, a fair reimbursement to the population could be ensured."

Concerning international climate finance, Switzerland is confronted with the challenge to keep pace with rising needs and in light of the new financial goal to be adopted at the next COP, probably also with increasing international commitments. This implies identifying how it can continue to provide and mobilize its "fair share" of the needed resources. The Swiss government will further analyse the COP28 results on Loss and Damage, including a possible contribution to the newly launched Fund. It will engage to help promote the Funds' and the Santiago Networks' smart operationalization.

In addition to its multilateral climate engagement, SDC and SECO will further increase the integration of climate change in their bilateral work on multiple levels.

CONTACT

Visit our webpage: SDC's Network on [Climate, DRR and Environment](#)

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