



COP29: A TURNING POINT FOR GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION

Dr. Vivek Panwar

Assistant Professor, Sri Venkateswara College
University of Delhi

The upcoming COP29 conference holds significant global attention as countries prepare to discuss critical strategies to address climate change and assess progress toward the goals of the Paris Agreement. COP29, the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), will be hosted by the United Arab Emirates in 2024. It presents an important opportunity for nations to evaluate their climate action commitments, advance financing for adaptation and mitigation efforts, and tackle pressing environmental issues that demand urgent and coordinated action.

This conference comes at a critical time, as the impacts of climate change are becoming increasingly severe across the world. With record-breaking heatwaves, devastating floods, prolonged droughts, and intense storms becoming more frequent, the urgency for impactful policies and concrete actions has never been greater. Scientists have consistently warned that if global temperatures continue to rise at the current rate, the planet will likely exceed the 1.5°C warming threshold within the

next decade, leading to irreversible changes in ecosystems and climate patterns. COP29's agenda will, therefore, revolve around not just mitigation but also resilience and adaptation strategies for countries already grappling with these adverse impacts.

One of the most anticipated topics at COP29 is the global stocktake of climate commitments. This process, mandated by the Paris Agreement, assesses whether current national efforts are sufficient to meet the collective target of limiting global temperature rise to well below 2°C, with an aim to keep it within 1.5°C. The stocktake will provide a clear picture of where countries stand in terms of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), the voluntary commitments made by each nation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate impacts. Many countries have updated their NDCs over the past few years, but a significant gap remains between pledged actions and the reductions needed to achieve the Paris goals. COP29 will likely push for more ambitious targets and greater accountability mechanisms to ensure nations uphold their commitments.

Financing for climate adaptation and mitigation will also be a central theme. Developing countries, particularly those in regions most vulnerable to climate impacts, have long called for increased financial support from wealthier nations. In previous COP sessions, developed countries committed to providing \$100 billion annually by 2020 to assist developing countries, yet this target has not been fully met. COP29 will aim to address this shortfall and explore new ways to mobilize funding, including through climate finance institutions, public-private partnerships, and debt-for-climate swaps. Furthermore, the Loss and Damage Fund, established during COP27 to compensate vulnerable nations for irreversible climate damages, will be a critical area of focus as countries work to operationalize and fund this initiative effectively.

Another significant issue for COP29 will be the transition to renewable energy and phasing out of fossil fuels. With fossil fuels accounting for a large portion of global greenhouse gas emissions, shifting to clean energy sources is essential to meet climate targets. The United Arab Emirates, as the host country, has announced plans to advocate for “pragmatic” energy transitions that support economic growth while reducing emissions. However, as one of the world’s leading oil producers, the UAE’s role as a COP host has sparked some controversy, with critics questioning whether meaningful commitments to phasing out fossil fuels can be achieved. Nonetheless, this could also be an opportunity for oil-producing nations to demonstrate leadership by committing to substantial investments in renewable energy and carbon capture technologies.

Technological innovation and carbon markets will also be on the agenda at COP29. Carbon markets, as established in Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, enable countries to trade emissions credits, providing flexibility in meeting emissions targets. This approach has gained traction, yet it requires robust regulatory frameworks to prevent misuse and ensure that emission reductions are genuine and verifiable. Additionally, advancements in technology, such

as carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS), offer promising solutions for reducing emissions in hard-to-abate sectors, and COP29 will likely promote greater collaboration on deploying these technologies on a large scale. Public awareness and civil society engagement will play an influential role in COP29 as well. Youth activists, environmental organizations, and indigenous groups have consistently advocated for stronger action on climate change, and their voices will be crucial in holding governments accountable. Recent climate protests and advocacy efforts highlight the growing impatience of global citizens who demand urgent, effective policies to secure a sustainable future. Civil society participation in COP29 is expected to bring additional pressure on policymakers to deliver concrete outcomes. The COP29 meeting represents a critical juncture in the global fight against climate change. With the stakes higher than ever, the decisions made at this conference will shape the planet’s trajectory in the coming decades. As the world watches closely, COP29 presents a unique opportunity for countries to demonstrate genuine commitment, forge stronger partnerships, and take meaningful steps toward a resilient, sustainable future for all.