**COP26 as the turning point: From climate negotiations to solutions**

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The evidence is clear. In August, the world’s leading scientists concluded once again that immediate action is needed. Climate change is uncomfortably close to all our daily realities no matter where in the world we live. Already it is triggering the kind of climate disasters we saw this summer, putting the survival of many species at risk and soon rendering certain parts of the Earth uninhabitable to humans.

As climate scientist Prof. Kimberly Nicholas framed it, “It’s warming. It’s us. We’re sure. It’s bad. But we can fix it”. In Paris, five years ago, the international community finally agreed to embark upon an ambitious journey: to limit global warming to between 1.5 and 2°C. While such levels of warming might seem trivial, the difference could be existential. For the human body, a two-degree difference can be the difference between life and death. Containing Earth’s temperature increase means limiting climate disruption and reducing the chance of natural disasters.

[Renowned journalist Dr Ajmal Niazi passes away](https://nation.com.pk/18-Oct-2021/renowned-journalist-dr-ajmal-niazi-passes-away)

Yet the news is not all grim—science also tells us that a zero-carbon society is possible—a society of new green jobs and growth that limits warming to 1.5°C. The European Union has already shown that it is feasible to decouple growth from CO2 emissions (since 1990, our GDP has grown by over 60 percent while net greenhouse gas emissions have fallen by a quarter). In July 2021 we launched a set of measures to implement the European Green Deal and deliver a 55 percent net reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 on the path to climate neutrality by 2050. This transition—how we generate and use energy, move around, build and heat houses and use the land—is designed in the fairest way possible, ensuring no one is left behind. Otherwise, it won’t work.

Being responsible for 8 percent of global CO2 emissions, the EU will not be able to solve the climate crisis alone. We have to inspire others—even the most reluctant partners—to join the path to climate neutrality. When the EU committed two years ago to zero net GHG emissions by 2050, few believed Japan, USA, South Korea and even China would follow. When we announced the EU Green Deal, few imagined the EU would finance the most ambitious climate neutrality plan in the world. We set up the first Green Alliance for climate neutrality, starting with Japan on 27 May, and we pushed for the G7 to commit to climate neutrality in June. Now we are strongly pleading for the G20 to follow suit. The EU is determined to never stop pushing for progress in the fight against climate change in all international fora and in our bilateral relations.

[Muslim Council of Britain condemns ‘cold-blooded murder’ of lawmaker](https://nation.com.pk/18-Oct-2021/muslim-council-of-britain-condemns-cold-blooded-murder-of-lawmaker)

We invite all partners to strengthen their climate mitigation and adaptation plans. We are ready to offer technical and financial support, and are walking the talk with our own Climate Law, 2030 package and Adaptation Strategy. The EU and its member states are among the world’s biggest providers of climate finance to developing countries, with EUR 22 billion (USD 26 billion) released in 2019 representing more than a third of the total effort by developed countries.

This amount will need to be scaled up in the years to come and the EU is committed to increase its contribution, as can for instance be seen by European Commission President Von der Leyen’s recent announcement of an overall 4 billion top-up under the EU’s core budget over the 2021-2027 period.

But we need others to do more, also to meet the commitment by developed countries to provide USD 100 billion per year for climate action in developing countries. Mobilising more private funding will also be important in this regard.

[Shias in Afghanistan fearful amid deadly mosque attacks](https://nation.com.pk/18-Oct-2021/shias-in-afghanistan-fearful-amid-deadly-mosque-attacks)

The EU has fought hard to keep the Paris Agreement alive. Now, after the UNFCCC’s disheartening report released last July, the time has come to materialise the declared contributions and significantly boost climate action globally. Under current reduction commitments, global temperature would still rise by an unacceptable 2.7°C by 2100—a gloomy outlook to say the least.

Each and every country in the world needs to increase its ambition to cut global emissions. A lack of ambition means a tax will be levied by climate change itself, a tax that is bad for everyone, paid for with destruction, and without any upside for society. This is why the EU is launching a flexible carbon border adjustment mechanism allowing to equalise the price of carbon between domestic products and imports. This will ensure that imports from outside Europe do not have an unfair advantage if manufactured with a bigger carbon footprint. Putting a price on carbon is essential to trigger the fundamental change the world needs and stimulate clean technology and market innovation. That being said, such a mechanism will take into account the limited capacity of some of the EU’s trade partners. Those who are unable to decarbonise rapidly, will not be penalised unfairly. But those who can, are expected to deliver.

[Petrol price hike: Traders, clerks announce long march after Rabi-ul-Awal 12](https://nation.com.pk/18-Oct-2021/petrol-price-hike-traders-clerks-announce-long-march-after-rabi-ul-awal-12)

If we close the gaps in financing and ambition, if all countries commit to doing more, then we can still keep the climate crisis under control. The science is clear: today’s cost of inaction is immeasurable. It is a fantasy to believe we could afford not to act.

We need a systemic shift away from fossil fuels. It is good for our health, our households, our crops, our water, our jobs and our economies. World leaders’ commitment and pressure from citizens need to go hand in hand. Every action counts: how we vote, what we eat, how we travel. Just how damaging climate change will be is in our hands.

The EU strives to take a leading role in climate action, and we want to do more with Pakistan. Pakistan is the 8th most affected country in the world due to adverse impacts of climate change—including severe water stress, food insecurity, degradation of ecosystems and biodiversity loss and extreme weather events such as floods and droughts. Pakistan is signatory of all major climate and environment international agreements and is also showing its determination to act concretely through bold initiatives in support to reforestation and to preserve biodiversity and ecosystems, tackling both climate change adaptation and mitigation of climate related risks.

[Rehmatul lil Aalameen (PBUH) Conference to begin today](https://nation.com.pk/18-Oct-2021/rehmatul-lil-aalameen-pbuh-conference-to-begin-today)

Cooperation on climate change is an important aspect of the EU’s strategic ties with Pakistan, and we are eager to take all the opportunities that may present to intensify this collaboration. Several International Conventions related to the environment are part of Pakistan’s commitments related to GSP+ trade preferences, which allow Pakistani businesses to export duty free to the European Single Market. In this sense, by delivering on its commitments, Pakistan is not only contributing to the global fight against climate change, but also helping secure its trade benefits.

The EU remains fully committed to a sustained and increased investment in enhancing resilience and adaptation in the most disaster-prone countries and regions and to build-back-better strategies for recovery. With the collective efforts of the international community we are in a position to make sure that the whole society can benefit from green, inclusive growth. Particularly vulnerable groups such as refugees, women and children need to be actively involved in decisions about resources that will affect future generations.

Pakistan should feel free to challenge us and go even further than the EU. Climate action can take place anywhere, at any level. There is no time left for inaction—the time for practical solutions is now, from the most basic to the most innovative.