

Cop26: world on track for disastrous heating of more than 2.4C, says key report

Research from world's top climate analysis coalition contrasts sharply with last week's optimism



A boy walks through a dried up field in eastern Iraq, which suffered a blistering summer heatwave and drought this year. Photograph: Ahmad Al-Rubaye/AFP/Getty Images

Fiona Harvey in Glasgow

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The world is on track for disastrous levels of global heating far in excess of the limits in the Paris climate agreement, despite a flurry of carbon-cutting pledges from governments at the UN **Cop26** summit.

Temperature rises will top 2.4C by the end of this century, based on the short-term goals countries have set out, according to research published in **Glasgow** on Tuesday.

That would far exceed the 2C upper limit the Paris accord said the world needed to stay “well below”, and the much safer 1.5C limit aimed for at the Cop26 talks.

At that level, widespread extreme weather – sea-level rises, drought, floods, heatwaves and fiercer storms – would cause devastation across the globe.

The estimate stands in sharp contrast to optimistic forecasts published last week that suggested heating could be held to 1.9C or 1.8C, thanks to commitments announced at the talks, **now in their second week** and scheduled to end this weekend.

Those estimates were based on long-term goals set out by countries including India, the world’s third-biggest emitter, which is aiming for net zero emissions by 2070.

By contrast, the sobering assessment of a rise of 2.4C from Climate Action Tracker (CAT), the world’s most respected climate analysis coalition, was based on countries’ short-term goals for the next decade.

Global temperatures are likely to rise more than 2C above pre-industrial levels by 2100, with even the most optimistic scenario passing the Paris agreement’s 1.5C goal



Guardian graphic. Source: Climate Action Tracker, Warming Projections Global Update - November 2021

Bill Hare, the chief executive of Climate Analytics, one of the organisations behind CAT, told the Guardian: “We are concerned that some countries are trying to portray [Cop26] as if the 1.5C limit is nearly in the bag. But it’s not, it’s very far from it, and they are downplaying the need to get short-term targets for 2030 in line with 1.5C.”

Emissions will be twice as high in 2030 as they need to be to stay within 1.5C, based on promises made in Glasgow, CAT found. **Scientists have warned** that beyond 1.5C, some of the damage to the Earth’s climate will become irreversible.

The analysts also found a chasm between what countries have said they will do on greenhouse gas emissions and their plans in reality. If current policies and measures are taken into account, rather than just goals, heating would rise to 2.7C, based on the CAT analysis.

The findings should serve as a “reality check” to the talks, said Niklas Höhne, one of the authors. “Countries’ long-term intentions are good, but their short-term implementation is inadequate,” he told the Guardian.

The 197 parties to the 2015 Paris agreement were asked to come to Glasgow with two aims: a long-term goal of reaching global net zero emissions around mid-century; and shorter-term national plans, known as **nationally determined contributions (NDCs)**, pegging emissions reductions to 2030. Scientists say greenhouse gas emissions must fall by about 45% this decade for global temperatures to stay within 1.5C of pre-industrial levels.

Countries responsible for about 90% of global emissions have signed up to net zero goals, mostly by around 2050 for developed countries, rising to 2060 for China and 2070 for India, but the NDCs for actions in the next decade do not match up. The climate responds to the cumulative carbon in the atmosphere, so if emissions are high enough in the next two decades the world could surpass the 1.5C limit even if carbon reaches net zero later.

“It’s great that countries have long-term net zero targets, but they need to close the gap with short-term measures,” said Hare.

The first week of the Cop26 talks was dominated by a **rush of announcements**, including commitments on preserving forests, private sector finance for clean

energy, and countries phasing out coal. Some of these quickly started to unravel as countries appeared to renege or clarify some of their commitments.

At the start of the second week of the fortnight-long talks, sharp rifts are appearing between countries that want tougher action, specifically to **force countries to revise their NDCs annually if they are not in line with 1.5C**, and others wanting to stick to the Paris timetable of five-yearly revisions. There are also disputes about how countries should monitor emissions, and over climate finance for poor countries.

Hare noted there was no contradiction among the varying assessments, published last week by Melbourne University and the International Energy Agency, as they came to similar conclusions based on long-term goals. CAT also found in its “optimistic scenario” that if all targets countries had promised were fully met, temperatures would rise by 1.8C.

The UN environment programme updated its analysis of the “emissions gap” between the cuts needed to stay within 1.5C and those offered by governments. Unep found that with the recently announced pledges by China, Saudi Arabia and others, temperatures were likely to rise by between 1.9C and 2.1C, but like the IEA and Melbourne estimates, that depended on long-term pledges being fully implemented.

Hare said many of the long-term goals countries had set out lacked credibility. He pointed to Brazil, Australia and Russia. “We are concerned that there is not a seriousness of purpose at Cop26. It’s very hypothetical, getting to net zero in 2050,” he said.

Höhne said countries must agree to revise their NDCs every year if they were found insufficient, adding: “If we came back every five years that would be a very bad choice. If countries agree to come back every year, they would have a chance of closing the gap.”

Jennifer Morgan, the executive director of Greenpeace International, said: “This new calculation is like a telescope trained on an asteroid heading for Earth. It’s a devastating report. We have until the weekend to turn this thing around. That means countries agreeing how they’re going come back next year and every year after that until the gap to 1.5C is closed. The ministers shouldn’t leave this city until they’ve nailed that.”

A Cop26 spokesperson said: “We know that the window to keep 1.5C alive is closing but the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is clear that it is still achievable. As today’s reports make clear, we’ve seen genuine progress in the first week of Cop26, but we have a lot more to do.”

Labour’s Ed Miliband, the shadow business secretary, said: “The test of Cop26 has always been what concrete commitments it would deliver by 2030, the decisive decade to keep 1.5C alive. This report is an important reality check on the government’s attempt to greenwash Glasgow.”

Green party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said: “Today was the day the sugar coating fell off the Cop26 talks to reveal the bitter pill that world leaders are going to force us to swallow if they don’t take much stronger action. This report shows that action in the next 10 years is vital. Long term targets, promises and non-existent technofixes, with no actual policies to get us there, are worth nothing. It shows that most global leaders have been asleep at the wheel. This is their wake-up call.”

COP26: World headed for 2.4C warming despite climate summit - report

By Georgina Rannard
BBC News
Published
5 hours ago



A prolonged drought set up the conditions for fire in this forested area of Indonesia

Despite pledges made at the climate summit COP26, the world is still nowhere near its goals on limiting global temperature rise, a new analysis shows.

It calculates that the world is heading for 2.4C of warming, far more than the 1.5C limit nations committed to.

COP26 "has a massive credibility, action and commitment gap", according to the Climate Action Tracker (CAT).

The Glasgow summit is seen as crucial for curbing climate change.

But the prediction contrasts with optimism at the UN meeting last week, following a series of big announcements that included a vow to stop deforestation.

COP26 is expected to finish this week.

The projection comes as the UK's Met Office warns that a billion people could be affected by fatal heat and humidity if the global average temperature rises by 2C above pre-industrial levels.

The report by Climate Action Tracker looks at promises made by governments before and during COP26.

It concludes that, in 2030, the greenhouse gas emissions that warm the planet will still be twice as high as necessary for keeping temperature rise below 1.5C degree.

Scientists say that limiting warming to 1.5C will prevent the most dangerous impacts of climate change from happening.

The COP summit held in Paris in 2015 laid out a plan for avoiding dangerous climate change which included "pursuing efforts" to keep warming under 1.5C.

But when governments' actual policies - rather than pledges - are analysed, the world's projected warming is 2.7C by 2100, suggests Climate Action Tracker. The Tracker is backed by a number of organisations including the prestigious Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany.

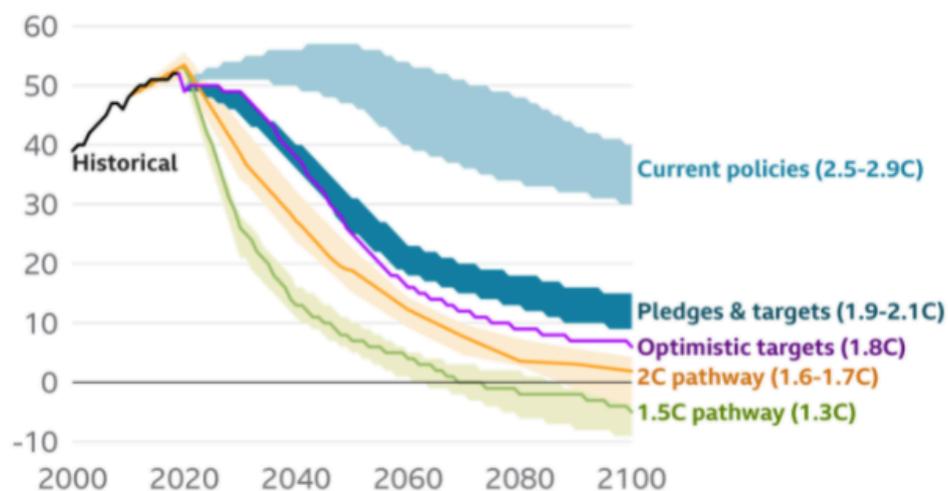
This new calculation is like a telescope trained on an asteroid heading for Earth. It's a devastating report that in any sane world would cause governments in Glasgow to immediately set aside their differences and work with uncompromising vigour for a deal to save our common future," said Greenpeace International's executive director Jennifer Morgan.

However, the world's outlook has improved since the Paris climate summit in 2015 when Climate Action Tracker estimated the policies put the planet on track to warm by 3.6C.

Climate Action Tracker blames "stalled momentum" from governments for limited progress towards cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

How the world is projected to warm by 2100

Past and projected emissions in gigatonnes of carbon dioxide



Source: Climate Action Tracker

BBC

It says new promises by the US and China to reach net zero have slightly improved its forecasting on temperature rises. But it concludes that the quality of most government's plans to limit climate change is very low.

Reaching net zero involves reducing greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible, then balancing out any remaining releases by, for example, planting trees - which remove CO₂ from the atmosphere.

More than 140 governments have promised to reach net zero, covering 90% of global emissions.

But Climate Action Tracker says only a handful have plans in place to reach the goal. It analysed the policies of 40 countries and concluded that only a small number are rated "acceptable", covering a fraction of the world's emissions.

"If they have no plans as to how to get there, and their 2030 targets are as low as so many of them are, then frankly, these net zero targets are just lip service to real climate action," said Bill Hare, chief executive of Climate Analytics, one of the groups behind the Tracker.

The main driver of the gap between promises and projections is continued coal and gas production, the organisation concludes.

A false dawn

With one sharp jab, this Climate Action Tracker report has punctured the balloon of optimism that's been swelling since the start of this conference.

For days now, a number of observers, including the formerly conservative International Energy Agency, have been pushing a narrative that the new net zero goals from countries like India plus the long list of announcements made here in Glasgow had pushed the prospective temperature rise this century down to 1.8C.

That seemed like huge progress from the 2.7C that the UN Environment Programme had announced at the start of the conference.

So how has the confusion come about?

The problem comes from the inclusion of long-term pledges to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

More than 140 countries, covering 90% of global emissions have announced a mid-century-ish carbon neutrality target - China's is 2060, India's 2070.

According to the CAT, these goals are giving "false hope". Based on what countries have put on the table for 2030, the world is set to warm by 2.4C by 2100. That picture gets a bit better if you include the US's and China's long-term targets, which reduces the temperature to 2.1C.

If every country implemented their long-term net zeroes, then 1.8C could indeed be possible.

But the reality is that, without a serious plan for 2030, most of these longer-term goals will not be realised.

That's why the real focus for the negotiators here must be on the actions that countries take over the next nine years.

Any deal agreed here will need to have a strong and credible pathway for the next decade. Otherwise Glasgow will be judged a failure.

What has been agreed at COP26?

The summit is still negotiating a deal that all 197 countries will agree on. But a series of side deals were announced last week:

- More than 100 world leaders promised to **end and reverse deforestation** by 2030, including Brazil, home to the Amazon rainforest
- The US and the EU announced a global partnership to **cut emissions of the greenhouse gas methane** by 2030 - reducing methane in the atmosphere seen as one of the best ways to quickly reduce global warming
- More than 40 countries committed **to move away from coal** - but the world's biggest users like China and the US did not sign up
- Some new pots of money were announced to help developing countries adapt to climate change and deal with the damage and loss it brings - but **many say it's not enough**

World is on track for 2.4 degrees of warming despite COP26 pledges, analysis finds

By [Rachel Ramirez](#), CNN

Updated 1528 GMT (2328 HKT) November 9, 2021



Young protestors demonstrated in Glasgow, Scotland, on Friday to demand climate action from world leaders at the COP26 summit.

(CNN) The world is on track for 2.4 degrees Celsius of warming above pre-industrial levels, if not more, according to a new analysis -- despite countries' new and updated climate pledges, including those made [at the COP26 summit](#) in Glasgow, Scotland.

The watchdog Climate Action Tracker (CAT) [warned on Tuesday](#) that global greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 will still be roughly twice as high as what's necessary to limit warming to 1.5 degrees — a

threshold [scientists have said the planet should stay under](#) to avoid the worst consequences of the climate crisis.

The net-zero goals of 40 countries account for 85% of global emissions cuts, but the group found only 6% of those emissions were backed up by concrete plans.



Reality check: Here's what the COP26 deals actually mean for our future climate

"It's all very well for leaders to claim they have a net zero target, but if they have no plans as to how to get there, and their 2030 targets are as low as so many of them are, then frankly, these net zero targets are just lip service to real climate action," said Bill Hare, CEO of Climate Analytics, in a statement. "Glasgow has a serious credibility gap."

Delegates from around the world are gathering at COP26 to attempt to limit the climate crisis. While there were several breakthroughs in the first week of negotiations, experts warned the deals may not meet the urgency of the moment -- specifically, that they won't bring the world closer to limiting warming to 1.5 degrees.

"There's a lot of big statements, which don't have the details underneath: exactly when, how much, who's going to do what," said

Helen Mountford, vice president for climate and economics with the World Resources Institute.

More than 130 countries that represent more than 85% of the planet's forests [pledged last week to end and reverse deforestation](#) and land degradation by 2030, in what was seen as the first big deal of the COP26 summit. When destroyed, forests can emit carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The agreement included some of the world largest carbon stocks locked away in tropical forests.

In another breakthrough, more than 25 countries have so far signed on to an agreement to [stop financing fossil fuel projects abroad](#). But critics say it doesn't go far enough and should include financing for fossil fuel projects at home, not just internationally.

Christine Shearer, the program director for coal at Global Energy Monitor, called the deal "a game changer," but stressed that fossil fuel projects must be stopped within these countries' own borders, too.

Under current policies -- not proposals, but rather what countries are actually doing -- CAT projects global temperatures to climb to 2.7 degrees.

If all net-zero pledges are fully implemented, CAT reported the most optimistic scenario would be warming of 1.8 degrees, which would require bold and rapid action by 2030. Still, countries' climate targets for 2030 remain inadequate, according to the analysis.