



INTERNATIONAL WEBINARS AND LIVE EVENTS

“GENEVA ENVIRONMENT DIALOGUES - UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE (COP26)”

by UN Environment Programme and Geneva Environment Network – 14 May 2020

The 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was scheduled to take place on 9-19 November 2020, in **Glasgow, UK**, with the “**Youth for the Climate**” event and **Pre-COP in Milan and Rome, Italy**, in September-October 2020. On 1 April 2020, the COP Bureau announced that the Conference and its preparatory meetings **will be rescheduled to 2021**.

Ovais Sarmad – Deputy Executive Secretary, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Covid-19 crisis highlighted the vulnerability and the importance of science, transparency and common action – which also applies to climate change. Covid crisis has shaken the world economy. At the same time we are focusing on **recovery, which offers unprecedented opportunities and hope** – we must make sure that this recovery happens in a much more sustainable, green, fair, and inclusive manner.

The impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the UNFCCC Secretariat: in Bonn everyone is smoothly adapted to working remotely, and considers it a great learning experience. The priority remains the well-being of the staff, good relations with donors, and ensuring that all stakeholders (including civil society) remain engaged. The chairs of the Subsidiary bodies keep a detailed inventory of all the decisions, the mandates that need to be addressed, and make sure that the parties are engaged. NDCs are seen as the central feature of the effectiveness of Paris Agreement, even if they are not part of the negotiation.

Regarding the **COP27**, under the coming presidency of African Group, there have been suggestions to hold both COPs in 2021. If this was to happen, the exact format will have to be discussed. Another solution is to delay COP27 – but that would delay the whole cycle. NGOs remain engaged and informed.

Youssef Nassef – UNFCCC Director of Inter-Governmental support

UNFCCC is aiming now to ensure that the dialogue continues and not to lose the momentum.

Two principles to abide by during the negotiation sessions when they take place online:

- to ensure **inclusive participation** of all stakeholders;
- virtual events should not be of negotiating or decision-taking nature, but rather **evaluating progress**.

Challenges linked to postponing COP26 to 2020: the workload for the COP next year may become a bit larger. Mandates have a link to specific years and session numbers – we need to make sure the adjustments will take place. Constitutional bodies have term of 3 or 5 years, linked to session number – this is also to be revised. Elections: each COP elects members of Bureau and Constitutive bodies.

The submission of **new NDCs is linked to 2020** – this has not changed, we still expect to receive the NDCs this year, and prepare a report with all the submissions. So far, the Global Stocktake is still planned for 2023. Need for **structured thinking**: the Secretary General placed a huge emphasis on green and climate-friendly recovery, we have to use this call, to synthesize all the lessons learned from the Covid crisis, so that can they be replicable or change our thinking on how we respond to climate change.

H.E. Miriam Shearman – Deputy Permanent Representative, UK Mission in Geneva

In 2021, COP26 will still be hosted **in Glasgow, in partnership with Italy**. Virtual preparation conferences are successfully taking place and enjoy higher ministerial attendance. Our promise from the UK: our teams will work tirelessly to raise the ambition. UK recognized the need to keep taking action on NDCs before COP26. UK is looking forward to working closely with civil society. The **link between human rights and climate change** is important for the UK which is signing for Human Rights Council at the moment.

Marie Sol Fulci – Deputy Permanent Representative, Italy Mission in Geneva

It is paramount to call upon all parties to cease the moment. “**Youth for Climate**” event (initially scheduled for September 2020 in Milan) will foster innovative elements and new ideas from the youth. Re-arrangements will allow us for more dialogue opportunities. Climate change has disproportionate impact on youth, and there is strong desire to make young people active participants of the dialogues from the start. African continent responsible only for 2-3% emissions, but carries a disproportionate burden. Important to address the role of private actors.