

## Taking the Temperature Episode 4

Speaker: Farah Ahmed

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Hi everyone, and welcome to another episode of Taking the Temperature. I'm Farah Ahmed, I'm the Climate Justice Lead at Julie's Bicycle.

In this episode we'll be covering the big climate and culture news from COP28. If you are not sure what this is, COP, which stands for "Conference of the Parties", is the UN's decision making process. The annual climate COP is probably the most well-known, but there are [other COPs for different themes](#), like for biodiversity. The hosting and presidency of the annual climate conference rotates to different regions around the world. Two years ago the UK hosted COP26 in Glasgow, in 2022 Egypt hosted COP27 in Sharm el-Sheik, and in December 2023 it was hosted by the UAE in Dubai.

COP28 was the biggest COP ever, with estimates of between 65 - 97,000 people attending in the UAE over the two weeks of the conference. The main attendees are policy negotiators and country delegations, but it is increasingly becoming a space for civil society, including campaigners, industry groups, Indigenous and frontline communities, and the arts and culture, which creates space for some really exciting developments that we will talk about later in this episode, but first, let's talk through the key agreements from the conference.

The main focus of this COP was on the Global Stocktake report – an assessment of where we are on climate action and what more is needed based on the goals of the Paris Agreement.

The Paris Agreement set 2023 as the year for this first report, with the next reports taking place every 5 years. It takes two years to put together all of the data, using information from sources like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), countries who are parties to the Paris agreement, and experts from NGOs, civil society and industry. The Global Stocktake report was presented at COP, and countries now have two years to adapt their commitments, called "Nationally Determined Contributions".

So, what does the Global Stocktake tell us? It has 17 key findings, most of which show that current progress on climate action is not enough, and that "much more is needed on all fronts", including on "systems transformation" to achieve the core goals of the Paris Agreement.

The first goal is mitigation, which is about reducing or preventing carbon emissions to keep temperature rises below 2c, with a more ambitious target of 1.5°C. The stocktake report tells us that we are not on track for 1.5°C. We're still pumping out far too much carbon - between 20 to 24 billion tonnes worth of it - to meet the goal emissions still need to be halved globally. To close the gap each country's Nationally Determined Contributions need to get much more ambitious - to plan for the phase out of fossil fuels, boost biodiversity, and plan for a just transition.

The second goal is on adaptation, which is about reducing the risks posed by present and future climate impacts and building resilient communities. The global stocktake shows that while there is action being taken globally, it is described as “fragmented, incremental, sector-specific and unequally distributed across regions”. One in six countries still does not have a national adaptation planning framework. The costs of adaptation in developing countries are estimated at US\$215 billion per year throughout this decade, rising significantly by 2050 because of growing climate risks. Many solutions can meet both mitigation and adaptation goals at the same time. For example, nature restoration helps to build carbon sinks and also improves our health and wellbeing. Adaptation needs early action and much more investment, and solutions are more effective if they are locally-driven and centre marginalized people. There’s a real opportunity here for culture to support action which engages audiences, and redesigns our communities for the climate impacts we are seeing now, and likely to see more of in the future.

Another core goal is around finance. While there has been an increase in climate finance moving from the Global North to the Global South, it is not enough, too slow, and not always accessible to communities who need it most. The Adaptation Gap report tells us that adaptation finance needs of developing countries are 10-18 times greater than what is currently available. The global stocktake asks for a transformation of our financial systems so that international funding can better support climate action in more impacted regions, and to make it simpler to access funding and to invest in new products and technologies.

Loss and Damage was a key story from Dubai right from the start, with recognition building of its importance as another core pillar of climate action. Loss refers to climate impacts that can’t be prevented or recovered, while Damage refers to impacts that could be restored. Loss and Damage can also be split into two broad categories: economic - the damage or destruction of resources or products which have market value, like crops or buildings; and non-economic, which is about the things you can't place a price on - the destruction of cultures, ecosystems, and of course, human and non-human lives. Many regions are already experiencing Loss and Damage, with the least responsible people and places seeing the biggest impacts.

On the very first day of the conference an agreement was reached on how to implement the loss and damage fund first adopted at COP27 in Egypt. Over \$700millionUSD was pledged by the end of COP28 to support developing countries by wealthier countries who bear more responsibility for carbon emissions. The UK pledged £60m to the Loss and Damage fund, although campaigners point out that these are not new funds but come from an existing £11.6bn climate finance pledge. While this agreement is historic, and a hard-won victory for developing countries, it represents around 0.2% of the irreversible losses these regions are seeing - a report from the Loss and Damage Collaboration suggests a target of \$400billion per year is needed.

Another landmark achievement for COP28 was the first ever mention of fossil fuels in a UN climate change agreement. This comes after many years of deliberation around the inclusion of coal, oil and gas, and tensions around the subtle but hugely important difference between the language of “phasing down” or “phasing out”. 130

countries backed a phase out of fossil fuels, but were opposed by a small number of oil producing countries.

Campaigners from civil society, Indigenous groups, environmentalists, trade unions and human rights organisations staged protests throughout COP calling for a fair, fast, full, and funded phase out of all fossil fuels, but there were also a record number of delegates representing fossil fuel interests in the space – at least 2,456 people – bigger than all but two country delegations. The COP28 president was Sultan Al Jaber, who is the chief executive of the UAE's state oil company, Adnoc, as well as the UAE's special envoy for climate change. These tensions of course highlight some of the complexities and glaring contradictions of climate negotiations on a global scale.

Ultimately, the final text uses a looser term, calling for countries to “transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade, so as to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science”.

COP28 is also the first to follow the 15<sup>th</sup> Biodiversity COP, which took place in December 2022, and concluded with a landmark initiative known as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, like a “Paris Agreement for nature”. As a result, lots of the discussions, pledges, and initiatives around nature, focused on how actions can meet the goals of both the Global Biodiversity Framework and the Paris Agreement.

The alignment of action for climate and biodiversity is an extraordinary development, which we hope will help us to scale rapid, justice-centred progress towards both.

So how does culture, the arts, and creativity fit into this?

COP28 was a really exciting year for culture. For the first time, there was a dedicated Entertainment and Culture pavilion within the blue zone - the “official” COP space. This pavilion was hosted by ECCA, which is Entertainment and Culture for Climate Action. Climate Live, a global charity using music to connect and educate youth for climate, also had a pavilion in the blue zone. There were a huge number of events, talks and performances also happening in the Green Zone, which is the space for civil society, about the role of culture, art, creativity, and storytelling. Julie's Bicycle hosted four events in the Resilience Hub, alongside partners ECCA, Peoples Palace Projects, HIVOS, and the Climate Heritage Network, which you can watch back on the official Youtube channel for the COP Resilience Hub - and find links on our website.

Alongside this incredible activity, a historic new initiative to put arts, heritage and creative industries at the heart of climate action was launched. On December 8th, the UAE's Minister of Culture Sheikh Salem bin Khalid Al Qassimi, and Brazil's Minister of Culture Margareth Menezes hosted a meeting, attended by ministers from more than 30 governments, key intergovernmental organisations and cultural organisations.

This meeting launched the Group of Friends for culture-based climate action. The purpose of this group of friends is to support political recognition for the unique power of culture for climate action. They will advocate for something called a Joint Work Decision - this is essentially asking the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, or the UNFCCC, to begin a process to permanently include culture, heritage, the arts and creative industries in the frameworks and negotiations at COP. The idea is that mainstreaming art, culture, and heritage into this space would reinforce the local cultural-based climate action that is needed to build resilient communities and support a just transition. It would also support new infrastructures for policy and funding for this work, and use creative and cultural perspectives to help shape more powerful climate planning and action.

The next steps for this process involves building political support for the Joint Work Decision. Once this is approved, which we hope will happen at COP30 in Brazil, it launches a one year consultation process, which would hopefully lead to a ground breaking work plan on culture for the UN at COP31. The Group of Friends, and the co-chairs from the UAE and Brazil, will be hugely valuable to that ambition, but each of us also has a vital part to play.

Alongside the Group of Friends, Julie's Bicycle and the Climate Heritage Network launched a public campaign, the Global Call to Action. This campaign is for everyone who cares about empowering the creative climate movement. Your voice matters here too, so we'd really like your support - you can add your voice to the global call and find everything you need to spread the word at - [www.climateheritage.org/jwd](http://www.climateheritage.org/jwd) We already have over 1,500 signatories from individuals and organisations, including networks who represent many more thousands of organisations worldwide. This is a huge moment for arts, culture, and the creative industries to impact this space, so we really need everyone to get involved!

If the Joint Work Decision is approved, engagement by the sector in the consultation process will be crucial. We expect that it would include a call for submissions to the UNFCCC highlighting stories of inspiring creative climate action, as well as opportunities to intervene in scientific meetings, so this really has the potential to have a huge impact.

So, what's next for COP?

COP29 will be held in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November this year. After that, COP30 will be held in the Amazonian city of Belem, in Brazil. This is the COP where all of the countries signed up to the Paris Agreement will have to present their updated Nationally Determined Contributions based on the Global Stocktake. This will be hugely important for climate action planning for the years to come. The next Biodiversity COP will be hosted in Colombia in October 2024.

Back in the UK, there are also moves to more deeply solidify culture and climate action. One of these is the new Creative Climate Charter, launched by the Creative Industries Council, which is a joint forum between the UK government and industry leaders. It was developed in collaboration with members of a working group co-chaired by Minnie Moll, Chief Executive of the Design Council, and Julie's Bicycle's Director, Alison Tickell. The charter outlines how the creative sector could use its

“collective imagination, economic influence and leadership” to reduce its environmental impact and find “practical and scalable” solutions to tackling the climate crisis. it includes eight key principles, which are

1. Targets and Pathways
2. Creativity
3. Stewardship
4. Learning
5. Advocacy
6. Collaboration
7. Just Transition
8. Accountability

You can find out more about the charter at the [thecreativeindustries.co.uk](https://thecreativeindustries.co.uk). Link to all of the campaigns, resources, and information we've referenced can be found below this update.

Please check out the links, and sign up to the Global Call to Action and share it with everyone you know! This is a really pivotal moment for culture, arts and the creative sector to really make the work we do visible, and to champion locally rooted, innovative, justice - led ideas for climate action.

Thank you for joining us on this episode of Taking the Temperature.

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## Resources

- <https://www.climateheritage.org/jwd>
- <https://www.carbonbrief.org/cop28-key-outcomes-agreed-at-the-un-climate-talks-in-dubai/>
- <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/global-stocktake-reports-highlight-urgent-need-for-accelerated-action-to-reach-climate-goals>
- <https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/cop28-deal-fossil-fuels-gives-impetus-just-transition-2023-12-18/>
- <https://earthjournalism.net/stories/cop28-partnership-to-support-women-empowerment-on-gender-equality-day>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/dec/13/what-the-cop28-agreement-says-and-what-it-means>
- <https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/explainers/what-is-the-global-stocktake/#:~:text=29%20November%2C%202023,world's%20progress%20on%20climate%20action.>
- <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/12/global-cop28-agreement-to-move-away-from-fossil-fuels-sets-precedent-but-falls-short-of-safeguarding-human-rights/>
- [https://assets-global.website-files.com/605869242b205050a0579e87/655b50e163c953059360564d\\_L%26DC\\_L%26D\\_Package\\_for\\_COP28\\_20112023\\_1227.pdf](https://assets-global.website-files.com/605869242b205050a0579e87/655b50e163c953059360564d_L%26DC_L%26D_Package_for_COP28_20112023_1227.pdf)
- <https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/explainers/what-is-non-economic-loss-and-damage-neld/>
- <https://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/site-content/creative-climate-charter>