# 1.

# Oil and gas avoided censure in Glasgow for the 26th time. Let’s not make it 27

****he Glasgow Climate Pact struck on Saturday named and shamed coal, in a symbolic first for the UN climate talks. Big coal producers such as India and China resisted but they couldn’t escape the pressure inside (and outside, especially from youth climate strikers).****

As Cop26 president the UK was obsessed with getting something on coal at the summit. They were probably hoping it would distract from anyone asking awkward questions about oil and gas, such as why the UK government is [legally committed](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/7/section/41" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/16/oil-gas-avoided-censure-glasgow-26th-time-lets-not-make-27/_blank) to extracting [every last “economic” drop](https://www.ogauthority.co.uk/media/1022/mer_uk_strategy.pdf" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/16/oil-gas-avoided-censure-glasgow-26th-time-lets-not-make-27/_blank) out of the North Sea.

It wasn’t just the UK that was keen to avoid the topic. None of the G20 signed up to join the [Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance](https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/11/space-opening-discuss-oil-gas-exit-cop26-lobbyists-pushing-back/) last week, apart from France which [produces very little of the stuff](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-hydrocarbons-idUSKCN1BH1AQ" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/16/oil-gas-avoided-censure-glasgow-26th-time-lets-not-make-27/_blank) and will continue to import.

So, we have to ask why, after 26 UN climate summits have oil and gas, which between them are [responsible for more CO2 emissions](https://ourworldindata.org/emissions-by-fuel" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/16/oil-gas-avoided-censure-glasgow-26th-time-lets-not-make-27/_blank) than coal, been virtually ignored?

To begin to answer we need to look beyond a Saturday evening in Glasgow in November to what’s going on in the capital cities of G20 countries.

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One factor is that while G20 governments increasingly support green technologies, lobbyists have successfully persuaded them to provide:

* [$5.9 trillion in fossil fuel subsidies](https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2021/09/23/Still-Not-Getting-Energy-Prices-Right-A-Global-and-Country-Update-of-Fossil-Fuel-Subsidies-466004" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/16/oil-gas-avoided-censure-glasgow-26th-time-lets-not-make-27/_blank) in 2020 (“efficient” or otherwise)
* [$300 billion](https://productiongap.org/2021report/" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/16/oil-gas-avoided-censure-glasgow-26th-time-lets-not-make-27/_blank) since the Covid-19 pandemic began to [expand extraction](https://fossilfueltreaty.org/fossil-fuel-5" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/16/oil-gas-avoided-censure-glasgow-26th-time-lets-not-make-27/_blank)
* Support for options that will extend the use of oil, gas and coal for decades, like hydrogen, carbon capture and storage, and petrochemicals.

My [own research](https://www.routledge.com/Carbon-Inequality-The-Role-of-the-Richest-in-Climate-Change/Kenner/p/book/9780815399223" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/16/oil-gas-avoided-censure-glasgow-26th-time-lets-not-make-27/_blank) on the political power of the oil and gas companies – such as [BP, Shell, ExxonMobil and Chevron](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214629621001420" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/16/oil-gas-avoided-censure-glasgow-26th-time-lets-not-make-27/_blank) – has highlighted the grip they have on national governments, whom they have lobbied behind the scenes to delay, delay, and then delay some more.

Companies like Saudi Aramco, Shell, Gazprom, BP, China National Petroleum Company and ExxonMobil are in competition but unite around self-interested positions. They jointly operate major infrastructure (for example Gazprom and Shell on Nord Stream 2 or Saudi Aramco and Sinopec on the Yasref refinery in Saudi Arabia) and they lobby together through global, regional and national oil and gas trade associations.

While the differences between investor-owned and state-owned companies are highlighted they are members of the same oil and gas trade associations at the global, regional and national level.

Saudi Aramco and Gazprom join Shell, BP and Chevron as members of trade associations with a big presence at Cop26 such as the International Emissions Trading Association (IETA) and the International Association of Oil and Gas Producers (IOGP).

At the national level state-owned companies such as Chinese major CNOOC join ExxonMobil in being members of oil and gas trade associations in Canada, Mexico and Brazil. Shell is a member of Federation of Indian Petroleum Industry and of the China Petroleum and Chemical Industry Federation.

They have a common agenda: to stop national governments phasing out the production and consumption of fossil fuels. And it’s working. They are successfully hiding behind G20 governments’ mostly hollow net zero promises.

Several G20 countries including the United States and Saudi Arabia [set up the Net Zero Producers Forum](https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/04/26/saudi-us-net-zero-oil-producer-initiative-lands-scepticism/) earlier this year, which may have looked like climate action. But there has been little sign of follow-up and it was nowhere to be seen at Cop26.

It helps us understand why these same countries pursue common goals such as when the US and Saudi Arabia [lobbied against](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-46496967" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/16/oil-gas-avoided-censure-glasgow-26th-time-lets-not-make-27/_blank) fully recognising the IPCC’s 2018 report, or [recent leaks](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-58982445" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/16/oil-gas-avoided-censure-glasgow-26th-time-lets-not-make-27/_blank) showing Japan and Australia tried to remove language on reducing fossil fuels.

The way in which language on phasing out coal and fossil fuel subsidies [got watered down](https://twitter.com/LeoHickman/status/1459824545792200704" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/16/oil-gas-avoided-censure-glasgow-26th-time-lets-not-make-27/_blank) in Glasgow was just the latest outrageous example.

Perhaps it’s not surprising with over [500 fossil fuel lobbyists](https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/11/space-opening-discuss-oil-gas-exit-cop26-lobbyists-pushing-back/) attending the Cop26 negotiations, many of them registered under 27 national delegations including the UK, Canada, Russia and Brazil.

To give Cop27 a chance of doing better, we need to confront the G20’s close ties to the oil and gas industry.

Dario Kenner is a visiting research fellow at the University of Sussex and author of Carbon Inequality: The Role of the Richest in Climate Change and White Knights, or horseman of the apocalypse? Prospects for Big Oil to align emissions with a 1.5 degree pathway.

# 2.The breakdown: What is in the Glasgow Climate Pact?

**UN climate talks closed on Saturday night with countries agreeing the Glasgow Climate Pact to reinforce action and finalise the Paris Agreement rulebook.**

The UK presidency’s aim for the talks was to “keep 1.5C alive”, referring to the most ambitious temperature target of the Paris Agreement.

[Analysis](https://climateactiontracker.org/press/Glasgows-one-degree-2030-credibility-gap-net-zeros-lip-service-to-climate-action/" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank) by Climate Action Tracker suggests that current policies put us on course for a 2.7C world. The most optimistic reading of national commitments before and during the Cop26 summit bends the curve to 1.8C.

That leaves a gap that the deal seeks to narrow by requesting another round of national climate plans – both stronger 2030 targets and long-term strategies – next year. The [package](https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/glasgow-climate-change-conference-october-november-2021/outcomes-of-the-glasgow-climate-change-conference" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank) makes incremental progress on how to cope with the impacts already brought by 1.1C warming and mobilise support for developing countries.

“We can say with credibility that we have kept 1.5C within reach but its pulse is weak,” said Cop26 president Alok Sharma as the conference closed. “It will only survive if we keep our promises, if we translate commitments into rapid action and if we deliver on the expectations set out in this Glasgow Climate Pact to increase ambition to 2030 and beyond.”

On the Paris rulebook, common emissions reporting standards aim to prevent cheating. A compromise on carbon trading rules enables cash to flow to climate projects across borders and avoids some of the biggest potential loopholes, while still carrying a risk of greenwash.

Here is a breakdown of what was agreed.

**[Cop26:](https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/13/huddles-tears-glasgow-countries-strike-uncomfortable-climate-deal/)**[After tense huddles in Glasgow, countries strike ‘uncomfortable’ climate deal](https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/13/huddles-tears-glasgow-countries-strike-uncomfortable-climate-deal/)

****Naming coal****

The pact states that “limiting global warming to 1.5C requires rapid, deep and sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions.” This means cutting emissions by 45% by 2030 and net zero by 2050, compared to 2010 levels.

It gets more specific than previous UN climate agreements on how to achieve that, calling for a scaling up of clean energy and “efforts towards the phasedown of unabated coal power and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies”. The direct reference to coal is a first for the process, with the caveats around it reflecting the fact that many big emerging economies rely heavily on the fuel.

India’s environment minister Bhupender Yadav said it was reasonable for developing countries to use fossil fuel subsidies, for example on cooking gas for low-income households. “Developing countries have a right to their fair share of the carbon budget,” he told ministers.

Despite the watered down language, Laurie van der Burg from Oil Change International told Climate Home News the reference to fossil fuels was an “important symbolic breakthrough”.

“This is a foot in the door for an urgently needed conversation about winding down coal, oil, and gas and ending all subsidies,” she said.

As part of the phasedown plans, the pact recognised the need to support a “just transition” away from fossil fuels, which can mean retraining coal miners or providing social security.

In another first, the document stresses the need to cut non-CO2 gases such as methane. And it emphasises the importance of “protecting, conserving and restoring nature” – avoiding the [contentious phrase](https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/11/nature-based-solutions-prove-divisive-glasgow-climate-talks/) “nature-based solutions”.

India’s environment minister Bhupender Yadav talks to Cop26 president Alok Sharma about changing the language of the final text from coal “phase out” to “phasedown” (Photo: [Kiara Worth/UN Climate Change](https://www.flickr.com/photos/unfccc/51677993785/" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank))

****An extra ratchet****

Under the Paris Agreement, countries agreed to review their climate plans every five years, with a view to raising ambition. Glasgow was the first test of that “ratchet” mechanism. While most countries brought some improvements to their targets and/or policies, there were some notable exceptions and collective action remained well off the pace to 1.5C.

Under the new pact, countries are asked to “revisit and strengthen” their 2030 climate plans by the end of 2022 to align with the Paris temperature goals, “taking into account different national circumstances”.

David Waskow from the World Resources Institute said the clear time frame “would put the world on a path that will accelerate action”.

How much it can close the gap depends on which governments heed the call – with Australia for one [quick to assert](https://twitter.com/thomwoodroofe/status/1459963863097651210" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank) its 2030 target was “fixed”. Major emerging economies have indicated they are not keen to do yet another round of homework, particularly given the developed world [has not come up with the cash it promised](https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/10/25/donor-countries-set-reach-100bn-climate-finance-target-2023-three-years-late/" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank).

There was also a request for countries that have not yet done so to submit long-term strategies for reducing emissions “towards just transitions to net zero emissions by or around mid-century, taking into account different national circumstances”.

“Despite the Covid-19 crisis, we have accelerated action, the Cop has responded to the IPCC’s call to close the gap towards 1.5C, and coal is in the text,” said Laurence Tubiana, CEO of the European Climate Foundation and one of the architects of the Paris Agreement.

**Late payment plan**

Wealthy nations arrived in Glasgow having [failed to deliver](https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/10/25/donor-countries-set-reach-100bn-climate-finance-target-2023-three-years-late/) on a pledge to mobilise $100 billion a year between 2020 and 2025 to help countries cut emissions and cope with climate impacts. They were on track to pass the $100bn threshold in 2023 and promised to deliver $500bn over the period 2021-25.

Under the Glasgow climate pact, countries “noted with deep regret” that the finance goal had not been met and agreed to “significantly increase support” for developing countries beyond the $100bn annual target.

The pact “urges” developed countries to fully deliver on the goal “urgently and through to 2025”, emphasising the importance of transparency in setting how the pledge will be met. It “calls” on developed countries to provide greater clarity on their finance pledges.

The agreement doesn’t explicitly refer to meeting the shortfall of the $100bn goal as demanded by vulnerable nations. But Lorena Gonzalez, of the World Resources Institute, said the expression of “deep regret” was “unusual and encouraging”.

Glasgow kicked off a process to define a [long-term climate finance goal](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cop26_auv_8a_LTF.pdf" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank) beyond 2025, with biennial high-level ministerial dialogues on the topic to keep it in the political spotlight, starting in 2022.

China’s climate envoy Xie Zhenhua and the Chinese delegation at Cop26 (Photo: [Kiara Worth/UN Climate Change](https://www.flickr.com/photos/unfccc/51676451752/" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank))

**Cash to cope**

The delivery of finance to adapt to the impacts of climate change was one of the most critical issues for developing countries.

Developed countries pledged [$356 million to the Adaptation Fund](https://www.adaptation-fund.org/adaptation-fund-raises-record-us-356-million-in-new-pledges-at-cop26-for-its-concrete-actions-to-most-vulnerable/" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank) at Cop26, including first-time contributions from the US and Canada. While a record, it is far cry from meeting countries’ needs which are estimated in the trillions. The [agreement](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2021_L16_adv.pdf" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank) “notes with concern that the current provision of climate finance for adaptation remains insufficient”.

About three quarters of the fund were pledged by the EU and its member states. The European Commission alone committed [more than double the US pledge](https://twitter.com/joethw8s/status/1458163264379052034" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank).

A refusal by the US and other wealthy nations to link the provision of adaptation finance to bilateral carbon trading nearly derailed the talks in the final hours of negotiations on Saturday. African countries, which had pushed hardest for the measure, ultimately made do with a call for doubling adaptation finance from national contributions.

The pact “urges” developed countries “to at least double their collective provision of climate finance for adaptation to developing country parties from 2019 levels by 2025 in the context of achieving a balance between mitigation and adaptation”.

The late inclusion of the 2019 baseline, the latest finance delivery data, in the text provides a concrete benchmark for quantifying the increase of finance that is committed – a clear call from vulnerable nations. But doubling on a national basis allows low contributors like the US to keep lagging Europe.

Taylor Dimsdale, programme director for risk and resilience at E3G, said: “The most climate vulnerable countries have thrown the major economies a lifeline by accepting an agreement that doesn’t go far enough but does take a step forward, particularly by doubling finance for adaptation. This must be met by more concrete plans and action next year.”

Cop26 president Alok Sharma discusses last-minute changes to the final Glasgow pact with delegates (Photo: [Kiara Worth/UN Climate Change](https://www.flickr.com/photos/unfccc/51677112706/" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank))

**Defining adaptation**

Countries [agreed](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2021_L14_adv.pdf) that more work was needed to define what a global goal on adaptation would look like. To do so, they established a two-year Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh work programme, passing the baton to the Egyptian presidency of the next Cop.

The move was widely welcomed by developing countries.

While there are well established methods for monitoring emissions and efforts to limit global temperature rise, finding a common metric for various ways of adapting to regional climate impacts [is challenging](https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/07/27/south-africa-proposes-global-goal-adaptation-pre-cop26-ministerial/" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank).

As business leaders like to say, what gets measured gets managed – and finding a way to judge performance on adaptation is important for vulnerable communities to be able to hold their governments and the international community to account.

Under the text, countries recognised the value of combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches to review progress on adaptation. The objective of the work programme is to set out methodologies, indicators, data and metrics, and support needed to assess progress and it will aim to strengthen the implementation of adaptation actions in vulnerable countries.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which is due to release its next major scientific report on impacts and adaptation in March 2022, has been invited to inform this work.

**Carbon trading is go**

There were large cheers on the plenary floor when the gavel came down on the rules to [establish a global carbon market](https://unfccc.int/documents/310511" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank) and [govern bilateral carbon trading](https://unfccc.int/documents/310510" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank). The fraught and complex issue had eluded consensus at the previous two UN climate summits.

The core tension was between countries like Brazil and India keen to attract finance for climate projects by selling carbon credits, who wanted to minimise obstacles to scaling up the market, and European and vulnerable countries defending its environmental integrity.

Brazil backed down from a proposal that would have allowed significant double counting of emissions reductions, undermining collective ambition.

But a push by Brazil, Russia, China and India to allow old carbon credits from the Kyoto Protocol era to transition to the Paris carbon market was partially successful. Under the rules, credits registered from 2013 will be allowed to be traded and used by countries towards meeting their climate plans.

Gilles Dufrasne, policy officer at Carbon Market Watch, said that would mean around 300 million cheap and poor-quality credits being allowed under the new market. This is “cleansing climate targets on paper but spoiling the atmosphere in reality,” he said.

The deal requires that 2% of credits traded under the centralised carbon market be cancelled, to tighten the overall reduction in emissions, but the measure is voluntary for credits trading bilaterally between countries. Carbon Market Watch says this means markets “will be used to shift pollution from one place to another” with little benefit for the climate.

Carbon market rule negotiators pose for a photo at the end of the Cop26 climate summit  
(Photo: [UN Climate Change/Flickr](https://www.flickr.com/photos/unfccc/51677786544/" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank))

In a separate dispute over whether to earmark a share of revenues from bilateral and voluntary carbon trading to the Adaptation Fund, the US came out on top, quashing the proposal. African countries had hoped to gain a more predictable source of adaptation finance, but instead had to settle for assurances on voluntary contributions.

Finally, language on respecting, promoting and considering obligations on human rights, the right to health and of indigenous peoples and local communities made it into the text.

Rachel Kyte, co-chair of an [initiative](https://vcmintegrity.org/" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank) calling for more rigour and transparency in voluntary carbon markets, said the agreement closed down some of the more outrageous loopholes that had been considered, “but the language remains unclear in some areas and we have much to do to stop companies and countries gaming the system”.

“We have no room or time for markets like buckets of water, with 100 tiny holes. It will spill out and dilute the Paris Agreement and make keeping warming to 1.5C that much harder,” she said.

**Dialogue for disaster**

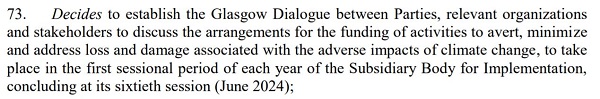
One of the most contentious issues during Cop26 was loss and damage: support for the victims of extreme weather and rising seas.

Developing countries fought hard for dedicated funding to those who lose their homes, lives and livelihoods as a result of the global overheating caused by fossil fuel burning and deforestation.

In the final days of the summit, a group known as the G77 and China, which represents 134 developing countries, put forward a proposal for a funding facility dedicated to the issue.

That was [blocked by the US and EU](https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/12/climate-reparations-crunch-issue-cop26-goes-overtime/" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank). Rich countries have long resisted opening up another channel of climate finance, insisting that humanitarian aid can do the job.

Instead, they conceded to establish a Glasgow Dialogue “to discuss the arrangements for the funding of activities to avert, minimise and address loss and damage associated with the adverse impacts of climate change.”



Harjeet Singh from Climate Action Network said that some progress had been made, but without finance “we are walking in inches, when we must move in miles.”

There is also a plan to get the Santiago Network [up and running](https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/10/cop26-deal-brings-support-victims-climate-disaster-step-closer/" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank) to provide technical advice, and provide it with necessary funding. Germany has pledged [€10 million](https://www.bmu.de/pressemitteilung/deutschland-staerkt-santiago-netzwerk-um-neue-loesungen-zum-umgang-mit-verlusten-und-schaeden-fuer-entwicklungslaender-zu-entwickeln" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank) ($11.5m) to the network.

“We are leaving empty handed but morally stronger and hopeful that we can sustain the momentum in the coming year to deliver meaningful support which will allow the vulnerables to deal with the irreversible impacts of climate change created by the polluting world who are failing to take responsibility,” said Mohamed Adow, director of Kenyan thinktank Power Shift Africa.

Patricia Espinosa celebrates the signing of the Glasgow Climate Pact (Photo: [UN Climate Change/Flickr](https://www.flickr.com/photos/unfccc/51677479813/" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank))

**Deadlines optional**

Countries agreed to “encourage” nations to set climate plans that cover a five-year time period beyond 2031. The issue of whether countries’ climate plans should cover a 5, 10-year period or whether each country should be free to decide was one of the last unresolved issues of the Paris rulebook.

Developing and vulnerable countries called for the next rounds of nationally determined contributions to cover a five-period, in line with the ambition cycle of the Paris Agreement. With backing from the [EU](https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12594-2021-INIT/en/pdf), the [US and China,](https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/10/china-us-announce-deal-cop26-accelerate-climate-action-decade/) a majority of countries supported the proposal. They see regular reviews as supporting urgent action.

But the language of the text was watered down, allowing nations like Russia wiggle room to determine the length of their next plans, which they are expected to submit to the UN in 2025.

The final text “encourages” countries to communicate in 2025 a climate plan with an end date of 2035 “and so forth every five years thereafter”.

“It’s complacency,” Yamide Dagnet, of the World Resources Institute, told Climate Home News.

****The no-cheat charter****

Agreeing on a transparency framework to report greenhouse gas emissions reductions may sound like a simple task but it proved one of the most difficult negotiations in Glasgow.

The US wanted to make sure China was held to rigorous reporting standards, while Beijing was not keen to be pinned down. Arguments came down to details like the structure of spreadsheets.

It matters because weak carbon accounting can allow countries to cheat, particularly when it comes to forests and methane – two areas where many are promising action. An [investigation](https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/interactive/2021/greenhouse-gas-emissions-pledges-data/?tid=ptv_rellink" \t "https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/11/15/breakdown-glasgow-climate-pact/_blank) by the Washington Post estimated that global emissions are 16-23% higher than reported.

A push by Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Arab Group and China on behalf of a group of “like-minded” developing countries for nations not to all have to use the same tables and format in their reporting was scrapped from the final deal.

Developing countries with low emissions have been granted some flexibility if they don’t have the capacity to meet all the reporting criteria. The agreement further “recognises” the need for enhanced financial support for developing countries to comply with the rules, including though the Global Environment Facility.

Countries are expected to use the new framework to report their emissions by 2024.