

COP28 BRIEFING FOR FAITH COMMUNITIES

Our lived experience tells us we are running out of time, and the way most of these Cops end up tells us we are running out of time. Rev. James Bhagwan, General Secretary, Pacific Conference of Churches, attending Cop28, quoted in [The Guardian](#).

What happened at the Cop?

The 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (Cop28) took place in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from 30 November to 13 December. The scale of the conference was staggering, with nearly [100,000 delegates](#) attending in person, the largest Cop in history, and claims that over 2,000 delegates were [fossil fuel lobbyists](#).



This briefing highlights key outcomes of the Cop, gives up to date information on the science, and concludes with actions for Religious Leaders.

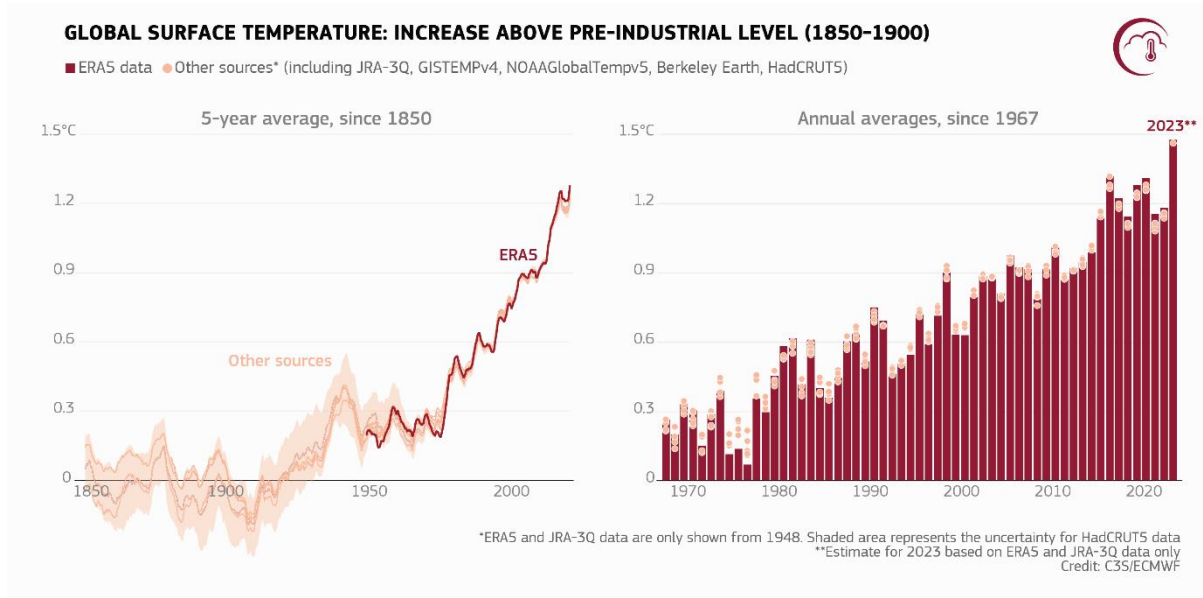
Highlights

- Controversy surrounded the chair of the conference, Sultan Al Jaber, who is also an oil executive, [accused of denying](#) climate science. The BBC reported that the UAE was [promoting oil deals](#) for the national oil producer ADNOC around the conference.
- There was early agreement to make operational a [Loss and Damage Fund](#) to be managed initially by the World Bank. This has been [welcomed](#) but the amount of new money committed remains unclear and will likely fall far short of what is [demanded](#). The leading role of the [World Bank](#) has been questioned
- For the first time there was a [Faith Pavilion](#) at the Cop opened by Grand Imam Ahmed Al Tayeb with strong support from faith leaders including [Pope Francis](#).
- [King Charles](#) addressed the conference warning the world remained “dreadfully far off track” in trying to implement the Paris agreement. [Rishi Sunak](#) made a brief visit and the First Minister [Humza Yousaf](#) was also in attendance.
- The Cop concluded with an agreement to call on all countries to [transition away](#) from fossil fuels. This was the first time a Cop decision has called for a move away from fossil fuels but fell short of demands that the treaty should agree to [phase out](#) fossil fuels.

A detailed report on the outcomes is available from [Carbon Brief](#)

Why is this so important? 2023 was the warmest year on record

Scientists at the Copernicus Climate Change Service and elsewhere have concluded that 2023 was the world's warmest year on record, beating 2016.

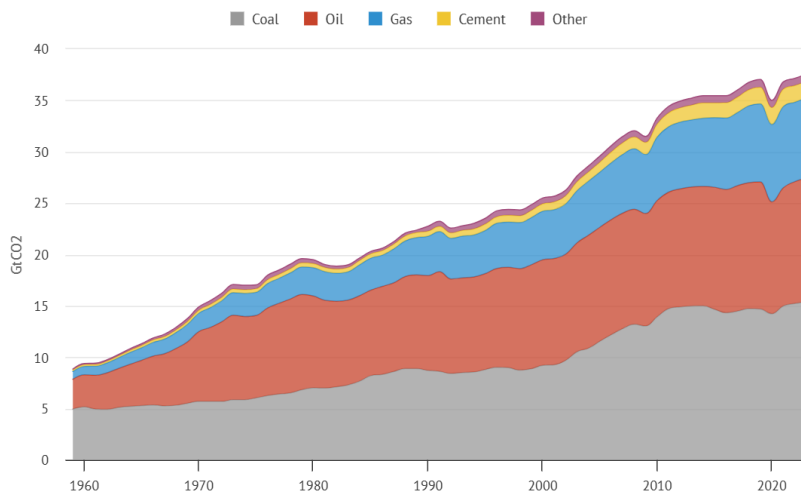


Source: <https://climate.copernicus.eu/copernicus-2023-hottest-year-record>

The Causes

Global emissions of greenhouse gases, primarily from the burning of oil, gas and coal, continue at a high level with little sign of reducing.

Annual CO₂ emissions by fuel, 1959-2023



Source: <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-growth-of-chinese-fossil-co2-emissions-drives-new-global-record-in-2023/>

The Consequences

As temperature rise there are increasing risks of extreme events or irreversible changes across the globe. 2023 has seen many examples of extreme weather linked to climate change.

- Flooding associated with extreme rainfall from Mediterranean Cyclone Daniel affecting Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey, and Libya.
- Tropical Cyclone Freddy severely impacting Madagascar, Mozambique and Malawi.
- Extreme heat in southern Europe and North Africa in the summer.
- Wildfires in Canada burned 18.5 million hectares causing severe smoke pollution.
- A wildfire in Hawaii led to at least 99 deaths.
- Drought in the Horn of Africa, parts of northern Argentina and Uruguay.

Source: <https://wmo.int/news/media-centre/2023-shatters-climate-records-major-impacts>

Government action will not keep global warming within 1.5 degrees Celsius

Despite the commitment at Cop28, the UN has reported that governments continue to support fossil fuel development.

‘Governments, in aggregate, still plan to produce more than double the amount of fossil fuels in 2030 than would be consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C.’ Coal, oil, and gas production are all forecast to increase until 2030. India, Indonesia and the Russian Federation are planning large developments. Source: *Production Gap Report 2023* https://productiongap.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/PGR2023_ExecSum_web.pdf

Action for faith communities and religious leaders in Scotland

Faith communities and religious leaders have expressed their concern about climate change on many occasions and have made commitments to respond – with impressive results. In 2024 it will be necessary to redouble efforts and religious leaders are *urged* to consider the following.

Spirituality

In learning, reflection worship or prayer explore care for creation and ensure members of faith groups are confident in responding to the challenge. Interfaith Scotland has gathered climate [resources](#) for faith groups to share.

Taking action

Work towards net zero as a priority. This is tough for the owners of historic buildings, but great work is underway in the [Scottish Episcopal Church](#), [Church of Scotland](#) and elsewhere to make it a reality. Help each other move toward net zero through Scottish Religious Leaders group and in partnership with [Eco Congregation Scotland](#) and others.

Advocacy

The Scottish and UK governments face tough decisions in moving away from fossils fuels. Support governments and encourage politicians to do the right thing in partnership with [Stop Climate Chaos Scotland](#).