



CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK

Joint COP/CMP/CMA/SBs opening plenary

November 2021

Thank you

My name is Tasneem Essop, and I am speaking on behalf of Climate Action Network.

Thousands of delegates have travelled to an in-person COP in the middle of a pandemic, risking their health in the context of vaccine inequity, sacrificing time and resources in the hope of contributing to a positive outcome for the climate crisis. Thousands more, especially in the Global South, are effectively excluded due to vaccine apartheid and imposed barriers to participation. For months, we told the world our concerns about hosting a COP that is safe and inclusive, we have shared our ideas hoping for measures that would address this. Here we are and our worst fears have materialised! Parties and non-party stakeholders' physical participation has been drastically reduced to a point that makes meaningful engagement at this COP really challenging. This COP faces a huge risk of power imbalance. Why, we ask, did we have to go through all these arduous journeys only to find out on arrival that we will be excluded from doing our job?

And this COP takes place during an unprecedented time. Millions of people and the natural ecosystems on which they depend are suffering across the world. The health and climate crises have led to increasing inequality and poverty, loss of lives and livelihoods, loss of homes, massive climate-induced displacement, especially in developing countries. How then, in this context of reduced participation do we ensure that the needs of those on the frontlines of these crises are taken care of? How do we ensure that financing for the losses and damages caused by climate impacts are agreed to? How, if this is indeed the last best hope to keep 1.5 alive, do we do this? As one of the largest networks of civil society working to address the climate crisis, we want to be very clear, we will do everything in our power to make sure that this COP delivers for vulnerable peoples and communities across the world. You will hear our voice even if we are not in the rooms!

People Power, Climate Justice.