

## Briefing Note: COP26 and support for South Africa

The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26) took place in early November 2021. The conference aimed to mobilise support and negotiate a sustainable climate future among global countries. The conference was attended by 25 000 delegates from about 200 countries, along with around 120 heads of state. COP26 culminated in the Glasgow Climate Pact, which reflected the widely differing interests, conditions, contradictions and political will in the countries involved.

Some of the agreements reached at the conference have important implications for South Africa. The parties reached a decision on phasing down coal power and reducing fossil fuel subsidies. While there was a lot of support for a complete phase out of coal, ultimately the conference only supported a phase down. It also noted adaptation financing as an area requiring further support, with an agreement to double adaptation finance for developing countries. Other agreements related to recognising that climate change constituted an emergency, accelerating country action, calling for increased support, and increasing technical support for developing countries.

A number of deals were also announced at COP26, with South African support highlighted on the global stage. In the run up to COP26, climate envoys from the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union (including France and Germany) visited South Africa to discuss aid packages in assistance for a sustainable transition. The focal areas of support related to South Africa's just transition, and support for e-mobility and green hydrogen. In preparation for COP26, South Africa also submitted a revised Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to reduce domestic carbon emissions. It foresaw a target range for emissions of between 420 CO<sub>2</sub>-eq and 350 CO<sub>2</sub>-eq by 2030 – around 10% lower than in 2019.

Based on the negotiations with the respective climate envoys and the South African government, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union committed to providing \$8.5 billion (R131 billion) over the next three to five years through a range of instruments, including grants and concessional finance, to support the implementation South Africa's revised NDC through a just transition to a low carbon and climate-resilient economy. The exact projects to which funding will be directed have yet to be publicised, however, this funding can certainly assist carbon-intensive value chains to mitigate emissions further and speed up South Africa's transition to a lower carbon economy.