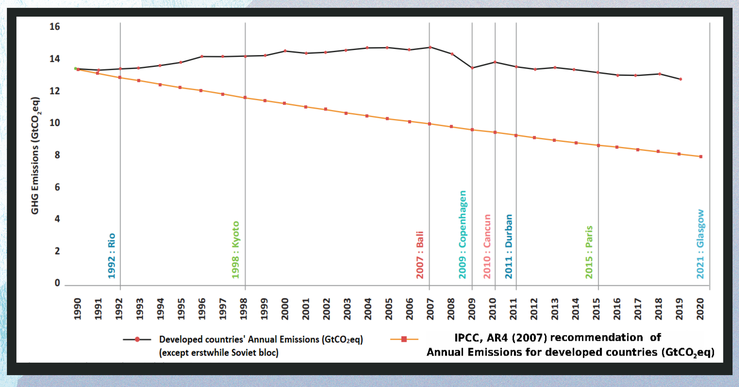
COP28, EMISSION REDUCTION AND CLIMATE JUSTICE: A REALITY CHECK

The Conference of Parties or COPs are yearly global summits under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC 1992) ratified by more than 198 countries, to assess progress in dealing with global warming through the implementation of the Convention.

The UNFCCC, is based on equity & the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities for different countries. It places the obligation on developed countries to take the lead in reducing emissions and to provide climate finance, technology transfer and capacity building to developing countries to meet the challenge of global warming.

Have the developed countries reduced their greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions in accordance with the principles of equity? Data over the past three decades unambiguously shows that the answer is NO!



COP28 (Dubai, 2023) resolved to pursue efforts to limit global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, while restricting it well below 2 deg C as agreed in COP21 (Paris, 2015). It also recognized that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change calls for annual global emissions to be reduced by 43% below 2019 levels by 2030 and by 60% by 2035.

Since developed countries have failed to decrease their emissions and have inadequate commitments for the future, the COP28 resolution means that developing countries like India are burdened with trading off emissions reduction against developmental goals. Implicit in the IPCC emission reduction targets is the assumption that more emission reduction will take place where costs are lower and not based on countries' responsibilities and capabilities. These are not consistent with the principle of equitable sharing of the burden of climate action.

The more equitable alternative is that developed countries must, as part of drastically reducing their emissions, substantially replace their fossil fuel-based power generation with renewable energy sources. For example, the US must ramp up installed capacity to 1565 Giga Watt in renewable energy and the EU up to 538 Giga Watt by 2030. Will they do so?

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Protesters at COP28.
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