

A short guide to the United Nations COP conferences

Find out how you can get **involved!**

UN Biodiversity Conference, COP16 Colombia
21 October - 1 November 2024

UN Climate Change Conference, COP29, Baku,
Azerbaijan 11 - 22 November 2024



What exactly is biodiversity?

Biodiversity, according to the National Geographic, refers to the variety of living species on Earth, including plants, animals, bacteria and fungi. While Earth's biodiversity is so rich that many species have yet to be discovered, many species are being threatened with extinction due to human activities, putting the Earth's magnificent biodiversity at risk.

The diversity of nature is beautiful and essential. Nature is an interconnected web, where each part depends on the thriving of other parts. This is true for humans too – we are part of the interconnected web of nature, and depend on it as it depends on us. We have also been given a particular responsibility 'to till and to keep' the earth (Genesis 2:15 NRSV). The current rate of nature loss suggests that we are not keeping it very well.

Many of us feel sad when we realise that we don't see as many birds or butterflies as we used to. But there are many more complex eco-systems which we rely on, especially the eco-system of our soil. We need the soil to stay healthy so we can grow the food we need. If we lose the biodiversity of our soil, we risk being unable to feed ourselves.

What's happening in Colombia?

The Biodiversity COP last met in Montreal in December 2022, which was a breakthrough moment. For the first time, a global strategy was agreed, known as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. At COP 16, governments will need to review how this framework is being implemented. Each country is expected to show how their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) align with the Framework.



COP16
COLOMBIA
Paz con la Naturaleza



Climate change



The average temperature of the world is getting hotter. We've known this for a long time, and we know that the main cause is human activities which increase the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Rising global temperatures are causing all sorts of changes to our climate. Storms are more frequent and more ferocious. Rainfall is increasingly unpredictable, so some parts of the world experience droughts, which are more common and last longer, while others see more flooding more often. And some see both.

Many of the poorest communities round the world are experiencing the worst effects of climate change. They have contributed to very little to the greenhouse gases which cause climate change and often have limited resources to deal with the consequences. If we are to obey God's call to love our neighbour, then our acts of love must include tackling the climate change which is so devastating for our global neighbours.



'Who is my neighbour?' the lawyer asked Jesus. And when the answer came, 'The one who showed him mercy,' Jesus said, 'Go and do likewise.'



What's happening in Azerbaijan?



COP29
Baku
Azerbaijan

The breakthrough moment for the Climate COP came in Paris in 2015, when there was agreement to stopping global temperatures rise more than 1.5°C above the pre-industrial average. Countries also agreed to declare how they would do their fair share to stick to this target (known as their Nationally Determined Contribution or NDCs) and to keep raising these commitments. So, there will be expectations of new commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and stop burning fossil fuels.

There was another breakthrough when the COP was held in Glasgow in 2021 – an agreement that there should be a fund to support the poorest countries to deal with the loss and damage caused by climate change. There's still a lot of detail needed about where the money should come from and where it should go, so expect a lot of discussion about climate finance in Baku.

Is the Church of England attending the COPs?

The Church of England is part of the Anglican Communion delegation to the COPs.

Delegation to COP16

Bishop Graham Usher - England; Nicholas Pande – Kenya; Michelle Cordova - El Salvador (youth rep); Guilherme Gastal – Brazil (COP30 host); Elisiva Uafu - Tonga.

Delegation to COP29

Archbishop Julio Murray – Panama; Archbishop Marinez Bassotto – Brazil; Martha Jarvis – England; Young Anglican Christian Climate Observers (hopefully someone from Eswatini).

The Anglican delegation wants their presence to bring a message of hope which comes from faith in God, and to encourage the negotiations to prioritise peace, to listen to the wisdom of indigenous communities, and to work for justice, in particular for climate finance.



What can my church do?



Pray

Pray for the Anglican Delegation as they participate in the negotiations at each COP. These prayer suggestions are based on their asks to the two COPs:

- Pray for a just transition to phase out fossil fuels and phase in renewable energy
- Pray for peacebuilding and reconciliation work to protect the planet
- Pray for the protection of indigenous land and the ways of living of indigenous people
- Pray for full funding of action to reduce damage and inequality

Go outdoors and pray, on your own or with your church. Find a connection with nature, take a walk in the park or just look out of your window. Worship our creator God and pray for progress to protect people and planet.

Green Christian have prepared resources to help you and your church to pray. There is a [reflection on the Biodiversity COP](#) and the opportunity to [join daily prayer](#) at 8am during COP29.



What can my church do?

Contact your MP

Every country is being asked to make stronger commitments for each COP, so you could ask about the UK's National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) for COP16 and the UK's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs) for COP29.

Find your MP here: www.theyworkforyou.com

Join the Make Polluters Pay vigil

Ahead of COP29, with a new government in place, people of all faiths and none across the UK will gather to mark the loss and destruction caused by climate breakdown.

Faith and belief communities across the UK are invited to join a Weekend of Worship and Reflection from the 25-27 October, with interfaith reflection prompts to use with your community and ways to share your involvement online.

And those able to get to central London are also invited to a vigil on the 29 October from 9am-10am. We will gather to ask the Government to put in place the polluter pays measures that are urgently needed to support communities facing climate-induced loss and damage. We will also plan to hand in an interfaith open letter bearing our message.

Together, we will pray for and uphold the Government to do the right thing, before it's too late. It's time to ensure the UK – and the heaviest polluters – pay our fair share.

Take action with the Anglican Communion

There are more ways to get involved with actions to protect nature and tackle climate change on the Anglican Communion Environment Network website, including information about the Communion Forest and videos of webinars featuring indigenous people at the forefront of climate change.



A Prayer for UN Conferences



**Creator God, Giver of life,
You sustain the earth and direct the nations.
In this time of climate crisis,
grant us clarity to hear the groaning of creation
and the cries of the poor;
Challenge us to change our lifestyles;
Guide our leaders to take courageous action;
Enable your church to be a beacon of hope;
And foster with us a renewed vision of your purpose for your world;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
by and for whom all things were made.
Amen.**

