

► Hard-won deal shows 'greater world identification in energy transition'

COP28 concludes with deal to transition away from fossil fuels

By Zhang Changyue and Shan Jie

Countries finally agreed, for the first time, to transition away from fossil fuels in Dubai on Wednesday to avert the worst effects of climate change after clashing over whether to include the wording "phase out of fossil fuels" in previous drafts. Observers at the UN COP28 climate summit called the hard-earned deal a milestone after the 2015 Paris Agreement as it reflects greater global identification in a gradual energy transition away from fossil fuel.

The global stocktake text has been adopted, with no objections, and the room burst into applause, as COP28 President Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber gavelled through the agreement, the Guardian reported as the landmark proposal was finally adopted on a plenary session which started at 9:30 am on Wednesday local time, ending the two weeks of tough negotiations that ran a day into overtime.

The draft called for "Transitioning away from fossil fuels in our energy systems, beginning in this decade, in a just, orderly and equitable manner so as to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science" and "Rapidly phasing down unabated coal," a compromise made by all parties over the phase-out of fossil fuels.

While the US, the EU and small island nations were among those demanding a commitment to phase out coal, oil and gas, this was rejected by oil-rich nations including Saudi Arabia and Russia. China's special envoy for climate change Xie Zhenhua said China wanted a version which reflected inclusiveness to the utmost extent and is acceptable to all parties.

"Whilst we didn't turn the page on the fossil fuel era in Dubai, this outcome is the beginning of the end," said UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Stiell in his closing remarks sent to

the Global Times on Wednesday.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said on Wednesday that China hopes the outcomes of this meeting "will contribute to the full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and lend more support to developing countries' efforts to realize energy transition and better cope with climate change."

Ma Jun, director of the Beijing-based Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs, who was attending COP28 as an invited observer from December 1 to 9 in Dubai, said the biggest consensus was in boosting renewable energy as the deal reads "Tripling renewable energy capacity globally and doubling the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030."

Ma said that many countries, including both developed and developing countries, realized during COP28 the need to cooperate with China in terms of equipment and technology to promote renewable energy development.

UNGA vote 'barometer of global concern'; US increasingly 'isolated' in supporting Israel

By Liu Xin

The latest resolution that calls for a cease-fire in Gaza and passed by large majority is an important barometer of global concern over the dire humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, and it indicates that the US is increasingly isolated in its support for Israel, analysts said, calling for more humanitarian aid and political and diplomatic mediation to avoid the conflict from spilling over.

On Tuesday, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution, which calls for an immediate humanitarian cease-fire by a vote of 153 in favor, 10 against and 23 abstentions. None of the major powers joined Israel and the US in their opposition to the resolution.

The resolution, which was submitted by Egypt on behalf of Arab countries, expressed serious concern about the humanitarian situation in Gaza, calling for an immediate humanitarian cease-fire and calling on all parties to comply with their obligations under international law, to effectively protect civilians, and to immediately release all hostages.

China welcomed the resolution's high-vote passage at the General Assembly and said it reflects the will of the international community and must be fully and effectively implemented, said China's Permanent Representative to the UN Zhang Jun, according to a release from the website of China's Permanent Mission to the UN.

The overwhelming vote supporting the resolution shows that the US and Israel are facing scant support and moral pressure, Liu Zhongmin, a professor at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, told the Global Times.

Israel is continuing its military assaults in Gaza. On Tuesday, Israel's military reportedly begun pumping seawater into the Gaza tunnels said to be occupied by Hamas, according to media reports.

The international community and the US should exert more pressure on Israel and people should be held accountable for any actions that violate international laws, Liu said.

He noted that more humanitarian aid should be offered to relieve the shortage of daily necessities in Gaza.

COP28 DUBAI

DUBAI 2023



COP28 President Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber (center) applauds among other officials before a plenary session during the UN climate summit in Dubai, UAE, on December 13, 2023. On the same day, nations adopted the first ever UN climate deal that calls for the world to transition away from fossil fuels.

Photo: VCG

Biden administration's subtle change in tone hints at 'possible decrease in aid to Kiev'

By GT staff reporters

The tone of the Biden administration on aid to Ukraine has seen subtle changes from being a commitment for "as long as it takes" to "as long as we can" during Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's latest visit in Washington, where he is making a reported last-ditch plea to US lawmakers as an aid package with billions in funds for the country stalls amid partisan disagreements over immi-

gration policies.

Such a change in tone could signal a possible decrease of US aid to Ukraine against the backdrop of increasing GOP skepticism in Congress, observers said.

Standing alongside the Ukrainian leader at a White House press conference on Tuesday local time, US President Joe Biden announced that "We'll continue to supply Ukraine with critical weapons and equipment as long as we

can," NBC News reported.

Biden's administration has long committed to supporting Ukraine for "as long as it takes," but funding appropriated by lawmakers is set to run out by year's end.

Biden's latest remarks have left room for the possibility of the US reducing aid to Ukraine, said Cui Heng, a scholar from the China National Institute for SCO International Exchange and Judicial Cooperation.

With the end of the year ap-

proaching and Congress about to go on recess, it is very difficult for Biden to garner congressional support to continue aiding Ukraine due to the severe partisan disagreement. Therefore, Biden's remarks actually gave himself an out, so if he fails to secure aid for Ukraine, he can claim that he did his best, Cui explained.

Zelensky on Tuesday spoke with lawmakers in a closed-door gathering on Capitol Hill, where there is growing GOP

skepticism about providing more financial and military support for Ukraine.

The domestic skepticism within the US over the supply to Kiev has made more people in the international community realize that the US is the instigator who creates chaos at the cost of interests of Ukraine and the Europe, experts said.