

UN chief fears climate talks at COP26 will fail

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Antonio Guterres warns the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow will fail if G20 nations do not set aside mutual mistrust.

Rome, October 30 (RHC)-- United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called on G20 leaders to come together to deliver solutions on climate change and the global coronavirus pandemic before a global summit on climate change.

Speaking in Rome on the eve of the Group of 20 summit, the UN chief called on nations to overcome “dangerous levels of mistrust” to avoid a “climate catastrophe” as well as narrow an “immoral gap” on global vaccine distribution.

“We see dangerous levels of mistrust among the big powers,” Guterres said on Friday, labelling that an obstacle to the “massive mobilisation of political will” needed to successfully deal with the most pressing issues.

The two-day forum for international economic cooperation will bring together representatives of the world’s leading economies, who together account for 80 percent of the world’s gross domestic product (GDP), paving the way for the UN Climate Change Conference, or COP26, which begins on Sunday in Glasgow, Scotland, and will last for 12 days.

“Let’s be clear — there is a serious risk that Glasgow will not deliver,” the UN chief warned. Guterres called on the G20 to make good on commitments to provide \$100 billion each year to developing countries for climate finance and to revise their current commitments, which “still condemn the world to a calamitous 2.7-degree [Celsius] increase” in global temperatures.

“The most important objective of this G20 summit must be to re-establish trust — by tackling the main sources of mistrust — rooted in injustices, inequalities and geopolitical divisions,” he said.

Answering reporters’ questions, Guterres acknowledged that emissions-reducing efforts by China and Russia, whose leaders will not be attending the G20 in person, were crucial to successfully tackling global warming and other climate problems. He also slammed the geopolitical divides hampering a global vaccination plan against COVID-19. “Global coordinated action has taken a backseat to vaccine hoarding and vaccine nationalism,” he said.

The UN chief directed his criticism to the richest countries, where people are getting a third dose of the vaccine, while only 5 percent of Africans have been fully vaccinated. “The recovery is amplifying inequalities. This is immoral,” Guterres said, urging the G20 nations to do more on easing debt for developing countries.

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