

(Authored by Anup Garg, Founder and Director, WOCE (World of Circular Economy))

Headline: COP27 and Net Zero Journey: Where India and the world stands?

Sub head: *Fundamentally “one which cannot be measured cannot be managed”. The biggest dilemma is when the rest of the world could not convince Russia and Ukraine not to engage in a war, how effective is it going to be for COP to convince the world that actions are needed on the ground to save mother earth?*

Body text:

Environmentalists, innovators, corporate, and common masses, carried myriad expectations from the conference of parties (COP) 27. It looked like the most revered global climate conference, in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt (from November 06 to 18). It provided no less than a golden opportunity for stakeholders, countries, corporates, climate advocates, and advisors, to ‘walk-the-talk’ of effectively tackling the global challenge of climate change.

2022 has seen extreme weather across the globe, with historic flooding (in Pakistan and Nigeria), wildfires (in Australia and the US), and drought (in Europe and China). In the UK, the temperatures reached 40 degrees centigrade plus, and the frequency is increasing now. As per climate experts, only reducing carbon emissions will help to reduce the frequency in the UK.

According to the IPCC report ‘Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation & Vulnerability’, half of the world’s population is highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change and those living in highly vulnerable regions already are 15 times more likely to die due to floods, droughts and storms. Those highly vulnerable regions tend to be in lesser-developed parts of the world. This urgently calls for spreading awareness amongst the masses, especially youth, and bringing a behavioral change in not just corporate but amongst individuals as well.

We must understand that transition to Net Zero not just requires a planned fossil fuel phase-out and shift to renewable energy, energy efficiency, and clean tech solutions, but also a change in the mindset of the common masses. And to bring this behavioural change- at the heart of India’s vision of a safe planet is a one-word Mantra – Lifestyle for Environment that Prime Minister Modi had set forth in our National Statement at COP26. Towards realisation of the mantra, Mission LiFE was launched by Prime Minister Modi in the presence of the UN Secretary General His Excellency Antonio Guterres, in October 2022.

The entire world urgently needs a paradigm shift from mindless and destructive consumption to mindful and deliberate utilization. We are responsible for our life, environment and this planet earth. We must nurture it through sustainable lifestyles that minimizes waste and causes least damage to the nature.

Responding to the call for increased ambition in our 2030 climate targets, India updated its Nationally Determined Contributions in August 2022. We have embarked on far-reaching new

initiatives in renewable energy, e-mobility, ethanol blended fuels, and green hydrogen as an alternate energy source.

Within one year, it was laudable that India could submit its Long-Term Low Emissions Growth Strategy indicating low carbon transition pathways in key economic sectors. Besides, other countries too declared their higher decarbonisation targets, backed by policies and investments. The agenda for COP27 focussed on four main subjects: increased ambition, climate finance, adaptation, and loss and damage.

There was quite a hot debate on the topic- “Those most responsible for causing the climate crisis should financially support those who are suffering the most on the frontline of climate change.” The effective planning around loss and damage financing, followed execution and real actions will decide the fate of the global climate crisis.

It is unfortunate that despite the occurrence of extreme weather events and the rise of global emissions, countries like Russia and Ukraine dare to engage in a war that not only has killed human lives, but the global economy raised inflation to an all-time high and has now increased the use of coal at an alarmingly high level.

COP27 does a great job of bringing all the stakeholders come together to agree on the objective of reducing emissions which is essential to avoid further climate change impacts, but it is lacking the measurement of the actions being done against the pledges made by the stakeholder.

Fundamentally “one which cannot be measured cannot be managed”. The biggest dilemma is when the rest of the world could not convince Russia and Ukraine not to engage in a war, how effective is it going to be for COP to convince the world that actions are needed on the ground to save mother earth? Hoping that COP 27 brings a meaningful change and just does not become a mere networking social event.