**Live from COP26**

*Monday, Nov 1*

**World leaders convene**

World leaders, including President Joe Biden, convened today in Glasgow to discuss their countries’ commitments to mitigation and adaptation of climate change. Our group watched the ticketed, limited-participation event on live feed.

Among today’s announcements was a major new commitment to [end deforestation by 2030](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-59088498). Also today, over 100 countries, including such major polluters as the US and UK, signed the [Global Methane Pledge](https://www.globalmethanepledge.org/) to reduce methane emissions 30% by 2030. Methane is a much more powerful greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide and it is responsible for more than a quarter of today’s global warming.

Nov 2 was the second and last day of participation for most world leaders. Biden will return to the US Tuesday night. Negotiators will take the reins on Wednesday for more detailed, and perhaps more challenging, conversations about delivering on ambitious goals.

**Biden releases comprehensive climate strategy**

The White House released [President Biden’s comprehensive actions](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/11/01/fact-sheet-president-biden-renews-u-s-leadership-on-world-stage-at-u-n-climate-conference-cop26/) to address climate change, including a new adaptation initiative, the [President’s Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Full-PREPARE-Plan.pdf); the [Long Term Strategy of the United States: Pathways to Net Zero](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/US-Long-Term-Strategy.pdf); as well as the current Build Back Better package. Taken together, if implemented, this sweeping set of actions would make significant strides toward climate goals.

Biden has also made a commitment to direct 40% of of overall benefits from federal investments in climate and green energy to disadvantaged communities. [Justice40](https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/briefing-room/2021/07/20/the-path-to-achieving-justice40/) is a whole of government initiative now in pilot phase. The AIA delegation is attending a presentation on Justice40 on Tuesday in the Green Zone.

**Private sector actors a new force at COP**

“The private sector is at the table at this COP in a way we’ve never had,” noted US Envoy for Climate Change John Kerry in a live interview at the New York Times Climate Hub. Investors and banking interests, manufacturers, technology, and of course the architecture, engineering and construction sector are highly visible in COP26 discussions, commitments and events.

**COP theme: Adaptation**

COP26 isn’t focused solely on reducing our future emissions (mitigation), but also about adapting to changes that are now inevitable. The UN has called on countries to dedicate 50% of their climate-related funding to adaptation, a goal that’s still a long way off. The Resilience Hub, a physical and virtual platform, is running 12 days of content focused exclusively on adaptation and resilience.

The conversation about adaptation is more nuanced than I have previously heard, dividing strategies into two categories: resistance and acceptance. Resistance strategies actively seek to halt or reverse climate change impacts, while acceptance strategies accept the inevitable change we have locked in and works with changing nature.

**Partnership Highlight:** [**Climate Heritage Network**](https://climateheritage.org/)

Formed out of conversations after the Global Climate Summit in 2018, the Climate Heritage Network works to mobilize arts, culture and heritage to achieve the ambitions of the Paris Agreement. As a leader on the climate benefits of existing buildings, AIA former president Carl Elefante has been instrumental in this group since its inception. AIA has provided support to get this network off the ground.

At COP26, CHN’s success has been evident in the central role that culture, heritage and Indigenous leadership are playing in these proceedings. On Nov 1, members of the AIA delegation attended the CHN’s Annual Assembly in Glasgow.

**Opportunity for Components: Lego**

Lego has created a COP26 handbook illustrated by children, [Build the Change,](https://www.lego.com/en-gb/sustainability/children/build-the-change/) which it will be distributing to delegates here at COP. An [online version](https://www.lego.com/en-gb/sustainability/children/build-the-change/) invites kids to share their ideas for a better planet and complete some fun online challenges. We had an opportunity to meet the Lego folks behind the project at an art performance here in Glasgow, and they expressed interest in connecting with festivals and centers for architecture.

**Learning Opportunity: Resilience Hub**

The [COP26 Resilience Hub](https://cop-resilience-hub.org/) will be offering robust, free online programming throughout the COP event. View offerings and register [here](https://cop-resilience-hub.org/).

**Worth Sharing**

# [Business as Usual or Build Back Better? Architectural Leaders Share Their Thoughts on This Weekend’s COP26 Opening](https://archinect.com/features/article/150286702/business-as-usual-or-build-back-better-architectural-leaders-share-their-thoughts-on-this-weekend-s-cop26-opening), Archinet, Oct 29

**On the ground: civic action**

Arriving at the Glasgow train station on Saturday night, we found ourselves in the glare of dozens of press photographers and hundreds of demonstrators. At the COP26 venue, buses were shut down for several hours due to street demonstrations by Extinction Rebellion. Silent vigils are happening throughout the city led by faith communities. Yet despite the dire warnings of mayhem (and the resulting police presence), Glasgow has been remarkably calm.

The atmosphere feels more collegial than adversarial. With 25,000 climate leaders staying in the city’s hotels and restaurants, riding its buses and walking its streets, every moment provides new opportunities to connect with folks working towards a better planet in their own orbits. Among the varied and inspiring people we’ve met: an oceanographer, a gorilla conservationist and Earthshot prize finalist, an ambassador, an ecovillage expert, mayors and governors, artists and musicians, grassroots activists and business leaders. We’ve talked with people from countries as varied as Pakistan, Sweden, Chile and Burkina Faso.

A big climate march is planned for Saturday, offering an opportunity for direct action to balance the intellectual pursuits of the week.