

## Live from COP26

Sunday, Oct 31

### What is COP26?

Being billed as our “last best chance” to manage global warming, [COP26](#) in Glasgow will bring together signatories to the Paris Agreement and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to accelerate action towards shared climate goals.

This year, signatories must submit their updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) detailing their updated carbon reduction goals and their commitments to achieve those goals.

More than 25,000 are expected to be in Glasgow Nov 1 – 12. Many COP events will also be available online to audiences worldwide. Tens of thousands are also expected at protests throughout the 12 days.

### AIA joins industry partners urging governments to act on climate.

If countries hope to meet their stated carbon reduction goals (NDCs), buildings and cities must be part of their commitment. That’s why the American Institute of Architects is sending its first-ever delegation to COP26 to raise awareness of the role of the building sector, to connect with decision-makers and partner organizations, and to advocate for policies and finance that support decarbonization and adaptation.

The delegation includes Peter Exley, President of the American Institute of Architects; Mike Davis FAIA, Bergmeyer Associates President, COTE Advocacy Chair and AIA GAC Advocacy Chair; Julie Hiromoto FAIA, HKS Principal and COTE Leadership Group; Mark Breeze AIA, AIA UK Sustainability Chair; Derek Washam, AIA Director of International Relations; Paula Seidel, AIA Senior Director of Industry and International Relations; and Lisa Richmond Hon. AIA, climate strategist and former Executive Director of AIA Seattle.

The AIA will send official observers to COP26 events and industry convenings throughout the 12 days. Nov 11 is designated as [Cities, Regions and Built Environment Day](#).

Leading up to COP26, AIA joined [Architecture 2030](#) and dozens of organizations and firms to issue a [Communiqué to government leaders](#) challenging them to step up their emissions reduction targets for the built environment. The [1.5°C COP26 Communiqué](#) demonstrates an industry commitment to meet the Paris Agreement’s 1.5°C carbon budget and demands that governments do the same.

### COP theme: Climate justice

More than ever before, equity and justice are part of this year's COP discussions. Empowering Indigenous voices, fairly distributing the burden of carbon mitigation, and investing in adaptation of front-line communities are prominent themes throughout the 12 days.

Indigenous leaders are front and center, a result of the creation in 2015 of the [Local Communities and Indigenous Leaders Platform](#). Leaders of small, threatened nations like [Mia Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados](#) and [Mohamed Nashid](#), former President of the Maldives have thrown down the challenge to wealthy nations to ante up to their financial commitments .

### **Partnership Highlight: [Royal Institute of British Architects](#)**

AIA Past President Carl Elefante was among the featured speakers at a pre-COP RIBA event, the [Built Environment Summit](#) in London. A stand-out presentation by [Julian Allwood](#) (Cambridge University) charted a “credible plan” to reach true zero emissions in the building sector by 2050, focused primarily on embodied carbon. He painted a picture of a radically different landscape for the industry: switching 100% of building to adaptive reuse; entirely eliminating the use of cement; constrained use of timber and recycled steel. Allwood predicts that reclaimed and recycled materials will open up new design and business opportunities, and that big commercial gains will be available to “first movers.”

### **Opportunity for Components: Built for the Environment**

RIBA and [Architects Declare](#) released an impressive [Built for the Environment Report](#) for COP26 negotiators about the contributions buildings make to our climate and biodiversity crises, and the built environment strategies countries should be including in their NDCs. It's a compelling, thorough and far-reaching document, worth sharing with members. Notably, the report broadens the discussion of buildings' environmental impact to consider habitat and biodiversity, land and water degradation, preservation of natural areas, and climate justice .

### **Learning Opportunity: [New York Times Climate Hub](#)**

The NYT is hosting nine days of ideas to remake our future, led by New York Times journalism. You can sign up for online programming for free, Nov. 3–11, 2021.

### **Worth Sharing**

[Norman Foster and John Kerry to discuss low-carbon architecture as COP26 climate conference gets underway](#), Dezeen, Nov 1