



Ambitious Coal Transition Pledge Not Fully Embraced at COP26

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Over the course of Energy Day, the COP26 parties amended through negotiation the four aspects of the Pledge (which we reported on yesterday) in an effort to generate greater support. As we previously noted, the United States, China, India and Australia have not signed the Pledge, representing a major blow to its ultimate impact and efforts to meet the Paris Agreement's climate targets.

Crucially, the signatories diluted the timeline for transitioning away from unabated coal power generation. Now, the Pledge aims to achieve this transition for “major economies” in the 2030s (or as soon as possible thereafter), and for the rest of world in the 2040s (or as soon as possible thereafter).

It is also worth noting that certain nations did not commit to all aspects of the Pledge, including Indonesia and the Philippines, which refused to endorse part 3 of the Pledge relating to the construction and financing (both domestically and internationally) of new unabated coal-fired power generation. In addition, nations have already communicated parameters around their ability to phase out unabated coal in line with the already vague timelines set out in part 2 of the Pledge. Poland, for instance, noted that it considers itself a developing nation and will phase out unabated coal by 2049, while Indonesia promised only to consider accelerating its phase-out of coal in the 2040s (ahead of its national net zero target of 2060), conditioned on the receipt of international financial and technical assistance.

It is fair to say that ambitious statements at the beginning of Energy Day signaling that coal would be consigned to history as part of COP26 may not come to fruition for many years.

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