

COPS: Opportunities & How To Report on International Climate Conferences.

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This is a simple summarised version of what covering International Climate Conference of Parties meeting requires, how you can prepare and what kind of stories you should produce. This is not exhaustive and thus you must do extra research to better understand the depth of these conferences. This is part of our X space conversation on Cops and the recording is available on our X channel.

AGENDA

- ▶ **The RIO Sisters**
- ▶ **Convention on Biological Diversity**
- ▶ **Convention to Combat Desertification**
- ▶ **United Nations Convention on Climate Change**
- ▶ **Reporting on the Conventions**
- ▶ **Issue Areas**
- ▶ **Opportunities**

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (UNCBD)

- ▶ Held every two years
- ▶ The Last one, COP 15, held in Montreal Canada
- ▶ Led to the Kunming- Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework- an ambitious pathway of global vision of a world living in harmony with nature by 2050
- ▶ This year (COP16) to be held in Cali, Colombia- October 21- November 1, 2024

CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD)

- ▶ Held every two years
- ▶ Last one held in 2022 in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire
- ▶ Global voice for land- for sustainable future

- ▶ To be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, December 2- 13, 2024

UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)

- ▶ Held annually, this year 29th edition to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan from November 11 to 22
- ▶ Governments (known as parties) assess global efforts to advance the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5°C
- ▶ world leaders come together to measure progress and negotiate the best ways to address climate change

A Closer Look at the Climate Change COP (UNFCCC)

- ▶ 198 Parties (197 countries plus the European Union) to the Convention
- ▶ COPs are a complex affair- you need to study before travel
- ▶ There are Party delegations (GOVS), & Observers, including UN organizations, Intergovernmental Organizations & NGO's
- ▶ Understand blue zone, where the formal negotiations meet and Green Zone is a place of expression for youths, artists, where every voice can be heard.
- ▶ Check out the history of COPS and their outcomes [UNFCCC Conference of Parties \(COP\) \(drishtias.com\)](https://www.drishtias.com)

BEFORE THE COP

- ▶ To cover, you must be registered and accredited by UNFCCC
- ▶ You need a press card, and an assignment letter from an authority in the org that issued the card
- ▶ Registration open now on UNFCCC website,
- ▶ Very important to be accredited even if you do not have a sponsor yet, you never know!
- ▶ Before your travel, make sure to get in touch with your country's party delegation, including the focal person as well as Africa Group of Negotiators
- ▶ At the COP find out if your country has a pavilion- includes meetings, exhibitions opportunity to meet with leaders

COVERING THE COP

- ▶ A COP is a labyrinth
- ▶ There are thousands of climate experts from all over the world, including presidents and leader of governments

- ▶ For instance, at COP28 in Dubai last year, the largest COP yet had 84,000 physical participants and 154 head of states
- ▶ Look out for relevant side events/ protests/ pressers
- ▶ What has your country pledged? Ask, find out and inform the public.
- ▶ You don't have to go to Azberjain to cover cop, tune in virtually and file stories.
- ▶ One would be tempted to cover everything be specific to your media house and country issue areas.
- ▶ Plan your stories before you arrive at cop, have your drafts ready, set up interviews.
- ▶ Explore, culture, diversity is all at your disposal. Cover some stories that you can sell about such topics.

TIPS FOR REPORTING FROM A COP

Connect with your country delegates
 Find out who from your country is attending the cop and establish a connection beforehand. This way it will be easier to engage them incase of a situation, and you could also tap into their networks for sources.

Interact with the local groups
 Establishing local links is the number one step to thriving in a space. it could be a local campaign group, indgenious people,organisation or community members., you could search for local climate centered organisations online and then look for them on ground.

Utilise experienced journalists
 If your not part of a journalists group or association, utilise social media to interact with experienced journalists by introducing yourself.They are always useful contacts on ground.

CLIMATE WOMEN

UNDERSTAND ISSUE AREAS: THINK GLOBAL ACT LOCAL.

- ▶ Your coverage will be of course be informed by your type of media
- ▶ COP29 is touted as the Finance COP
- ▶ The new target to succeed the 2009 100bn dollar annual pledge
- ▶ Known as New Collective Quantified Agreement on Climate Finance- still contested new target and it's implementation
- ▶ Adaptation to climate change
- ▶ The Loss and damage fund
- ▶ Carbon Markets and operationalization of Article 6
- ▶ Check on your country's Nationally Determined Contributions-
- ▶ Just energy transition.

Word of Advice from Journalists who have been there.

“You don’t need to be everywhere at the same time to try and cover everything,” warns Hellen Shikanda, Nation, Kenya who has covered two COPS

“You need to understand the chronology of events that builds up towards the outcome, known as the final text.” Joyce Chimbi from Kenya

“Be gender inclusive. Recognize while experts are often male, women are disproportionately affected by climate change. Seek out personal stories as they offer valuable insights from lived experiences,” Melody Chiloba, South Africa

The Opportunities.

- ▶ **As we have said Be Prepared- get Accredited**
- ▶ **Internews EJN- by far leads by offering opportunities- NOW CLOSED but important to know for coming years**
- ▶ **Subscribe to the newsletter for monthly updates on development & opportunities**
- ▶ **<https://climatetracker.org>- Climate Tracker- Caribbean journalists- Deadline Friday,6th september at 11.59 AST**
- ▶ **UN itself gives opportunities, for instance UNCCD offered a workshop this year to French speaking journalists reporting on desertification**
- ▶ **<https://pulitzercenter.org/>- has rolling deadlines opportunities on environment and climate change**
- ▶ **<https://africachinareporting.com/opportunities/>**
- ▶ **<https://grants.journalismfund.eu/en/environmental-investigative-journalism>**
- ▶ **Mongabay, check your region- currently calling for conservation reporting fellowship**
- ▶ **Subscribe to IJNET- International Journalists Network**
- ▶ **As well as Google Alerts- Journalism Climate Reporting Opp.**

Most Importantly

For most of these opportunities you need to apply

- ▶ **So you must learn how to write an effective, winning pitch**
- ▶ **Make sure you have a collection of relevant body of work, that is in-depth incisive stories (a Portfolio)**
- ▶ **Show a plan of work if selected for a particular workshop**

For more information on the above topic, find me at wkiundu@gmail.com