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The double face of China at COP27, in favor of limiting climate change but blocking major agreements



Sources: Infolibre [Image: Chinese President Xi Jinping in Bangkok, Thailand, on November 19, 2022. EFE]

The Asian giant does not want to roll back the progress made in the Paris Agreement, but did not support the proposal to further reduce global emissions in the medium term

China also confronted the West in the negotiation to create the mechanism of loss and damage: it does not want to contribute money to the fund and aspires to be one of the beneficiary countries.

The world's most polluting nation measured its every step in the UN climate summit. Their goal in the 14-day summit was convey that the regime is committed to curbing

climate change, But **with the other hand he torpedoed** key negotiations that would help him. to accelerate the transition to clean energy.

Although it was possible to reach **a minimum agreement** between The 198 countries that came to Egypt, failed the negotiations to achieve A reduction in fossil fuel consumption, one of the two pillars that debated at COP27.

High-level observers say China **has made it harder to tighten emissions targets** for all countries to cut further the burning of oil, gas and coal, a measure that had the support of the Union Europe and 80 other countries. Even nations like India, which emits as much as the 27 EU countries, or Norway and Colombia, two major exporters of Fossil fuels, I was in favor.

However, the same sources acknowledge that China did not attend the closed **summit**. in band, but strengthened its relations with the United States and met with future Brazilian President Lula da Silva and with the Secretary General of the UN, António Guterres, two leaders who clearly advocate the fight against climate change. The Asian delegation also **remained aligned with the scientific evidence** and did not question the Paris.

"In the negotiations they were quite present and did not question Never the goal of limiting global warming to **1.5 degrees**. Whenever this goal was fought, they supported it or at least not it. boycotted," said one person present at the talks.

China last year launched its goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2060, a plan harshly criticized by experts that proposes to reach the peak of emissions in 2030. The organization Climate Action Tracker, calculates that the Project is **"very insufficient"** and that if the rest of the countries If they adopted the same ambition as China, the planet would warm 3 degrees.

Despite China's reluctance to reduce its emissions in the short term, the The government is aware that it cannot forget about climate policy. The Pollution **kills one million citizens every year Chinese** and this summer the The country suffered the worst drought in its history, which left several cities without light due to the fall of hydroelectric generation.

Sources present at the negotiations also accuse the officials. Egyptians to hinder talks to reduce emissions as As the host country, it was in charge of managing the agenda and prioritizing a negotiations on others.

Egypt has also been accused of Take advantage of the climate summit to close at least four agreements of sale of natural gas, a fuel that when burned emits CO₂. The conference has also been Taken advantage of by many other countries to close similar deals: they have gone out to light at least 15, from countries such as **Germany or States United**. This

Monday, one day after the closing of the COP, China has signed one to buy gas from Qatar, in one of the largest gas trading contracts ever registered.

The settlement of losses and damages, Pending for 2023

The other front that China and the West clashed on during the summit of Egypt was the negotiation to create a **mechanism of loss and damage**, A formula for rich countries to help nations economically Development to repair the damage caused by extreme weather.

In the middle of COP27, the Asian giant aligned itself with the countries of the global south – the so-called G77, composed of 134 countries – to claim Europe and the United States the creation of this mechanism, which de facto showed that China considered itself a victim of global warming, **not one of its biggest causes**.

The tug-of-war caused the agreement to go ahead without detailing who and how will put the money from the fund, and who will receive it. "China does not has no responsibility [for loss and damage], but is willing to help developing countries increase their adaptive capacity through South-South cooperation and China is already doing so," said Xie Zhenhua, China's representative to COP. Now opens a period of negotiations which should culminate at next year's summit.

China is **responsible for 30% of the CO₂** emitted by humans into the atmosphere, making it play a role in the UN conference is essential, but the failure of the talks will be it attributes especially to Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Middle East. The Petrostates group knocked down negotiations to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels to ensure that your revenues from the sale of oil and gas Natural are kept for as long as possible.

Paradoxically, **COP28 will be held in the United Arab Emirates United**, one of these countries. "It certainly doesn't help that the summit is there," says Pedro Zorrilla, representative of Greenpeace Spain at the summit in Egypt. "This year we have Having regard to the power of the host country to dominate the negotiations'.

The emirate used the summit in Egypt to campaign for the year that comes and sent a delegation of more than 1,000 people, twice as many as possible. next largest, Brazil. The entourage was composed of minus **70 fossil fuel lobbyists**, proof of how this nation takes advantage of International summits to promote the sale of gas and oil.

Five keys to COP27

The general mood after two weeks of negotiations is of pessimism for not having managed to close an agreement to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels, but both Europe and the

most vulnerable nations They were satisfied this Sunday for having closed a minimum agreement. These These are the main advances that the event has brought:

- Loss and damage mechanism: commitment to create a humanitarian aid fund for countries suffering heavy losses from the climate change. Whether it can be accessed by poorer countries remains to be seen. or it expands to larger nations with more economic capacity. The money It will in principle be provided by the rich countries and possibly by institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF.

- 1.5 degrees: the agreement approved unanimously recognizes the importance of not warming the Earth more than 1.5 degrees, but does not It imposes that figure as a goal to be met to the letter. To achieve this, it would be necessary to drastically cut emissions by 2030, as at the current rate the The planet will increase its average temperature by 2.4 degrees this century. It has already been Heated 1.1 degrees compared to the period 1850-1900.

- Use of low-emission fuels: according to the present at the summit, Egypt included in extremis in the outcome document that the Urgency to reduce pollution includes the use of low-cost fuels emissions, a nod to the use of natural gas and Middle Eastern countries to Prevent this technology from being deprecated by the end of this decade

- Anti-greenwashing: the UN published during the summit Recommendations for multinationals to stop calling themselves "Green" if, for example, they have money invested in fuels Fossils.

- Early warning system: 3,100 will be allocated million dollars to implement systems in vulnerable countries to detect possible disasters and warn the population to minimize victims. From technologies to improve weather prediction, to programs to send SMS or install megaphones in cities.

- Brazil returns: President-elect Lula da Silva attended COP27 as a guest and there announced that he will recover the protection of the Amazon, one of the largest natural sinks on the planet. The vegetation of this tropical forest allows each year to absorb millions of tons that are expelled into the atmosphere.

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