COP28 Global Stocktake -
a comprehensive evaluation of progress
against climate goals.

UAE EMBASSY – PRETORIA
For nearly 80 years, the United Nations has brought the world together around the principles of peace, security, and human dignity on a healthy planet. Its founders urged the world to think beyond borders, beyond politics, and beyond our own lifetimes.

Today, in the face of climate change, I urge all of you to reaffirm those same principles. Climate change is our common enemy and we must unite to fight it. As the recent report on the Global Stocktake confirmed, the world is falling short and we are running short on time. But it’s not too late to correct course. We know the size of the problem. 22 gigatons. That’s the amount of greenhouse gas emissions we need to cut in the next 7 years to keep 1.5 within reach.

I believe that in the face of the climate crisis, we can - and we WILL - rediscover humanity’s greatest strength: our capacity to collaborate, to overcome differences, and to harness the power of collective action. That’s precisely what we aim to achieve through the COP28 Action Agenda. We are going after gigatons. And we need everyone on board.

The first pillar of this agenda is aimed at eliminating those 22 gigatons as part of a fair, just and well managed energy transition. The phase down of fossil fuels is inevitable. It is in fact essential, and it must go hand-in-hand with a rapid phase up of zero carbon alternatives. Our plan calls for a massive expansion of renewable energy- tripling capacity by 2030. And this call to action is gathering momentum. First the European Commission Presidency signed up. Then Kenya. Then the African Union Commission. And most recently, the G20. This is a good start that we must build on.

I call on countries to sign up to the COP28 Declaration on Food, Agriculture, and Climate to help transform food systems for the health of the planet and its people. In addition, COP28 will be the first to put global health on the climate agenda by hosting the first climate health Ministerial, in partnership with the World Health Organization. Roughly a million lives a year could be saved worldwide by 2050 through air pollution reduction efforts alone. All of this requires funding which we should view as investments not costs. That’s why we are calling on countries to double adaptation finance by 2025, replenish the Green Climate Fund, and operationalize the fund for Loss and Damage with early pledges.

I want everyone who intends to come to COP28 to come with hope, with optimism and the will to deliver real results. Together, let’s turn pledges into projects and let’s turn ambition into action. Let’s be brave. Let’s be bold. Let’s go after gigatons, let’s activate a truly global response to the global stocktake, and let’s unite, let’s act, and let’s deliver.
Combating climate change is vital for the UAE. We live in one of the harshest climates in the world which is why climate action has been central to our country’s development ever since the formation of the UAE in 1971. Climate change is a harsh reality for the UAE, over and above the desert in which we sit, we are also at great risk from rising sea levels, water scarcity and even hotter temperatures. Our region is doubling at twice the global rate.

COP28 must ensure that no one is left behind. This has to be a COP of action and a COP for all. There are those who ask, why hold COP 28 in the UAE, after all we are in a desert and we are an oil producing country? Both of these assertions are true, but they ignore very real facts about the UAE, chief among which is our track record in literally transforming the desert and what were once seaside fishing villages into an ultramodern society atop an oasis where there was once only sand.

Hosting COP28 is more than an honour for us and an affirmation of the strides that we have made as a country in this regard, it is also a clarion call for us to reach out to help where we can. Africa is a place where we can be of great assistance because the continent bears an unequal share of the climate change burden too.

As a continental leader, South Africa plays a critical role in leading the drive towards an equitable and sustainable climate. Domestically, the government is focused on advancing a Just and Equitable Transition towards a low-emissions and climate-resilient economy.

Regionally, South Africa has led the African position on COP that the continent should be heard in all discussions. The UAE supports this approach and thus we assert that at COP28 all parties must be given the platform to contribute to the discussion and no one should be left behind. The UAE is open to collaborating with our partner South Africa in its climate transition optimising on our experience and knowledge from our climate transition.

South Africa is a vital partner for us in the greater MEA region to make a very real contribution to creating the better life for all that Nelson Mandela spent his life trying to achieve. It has to start with fixing the planet and COP 28 in Dubai later this year is going to be a critical milestone on humanity’s long walk to freedom.
OVERVIEW OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change discourse has become so broad due to the almost lack of barrier in locations and magnitude of its effects. Hence efforts from both policy and academic fields have been made to explain the concept and the dynamics of climate change in the human society.

Climate change has brought about alterations in the weather and ecological conditions because of human activities. These conditions include observable changes in temperature, rainfall and sunshine etc.

A wide range of human activities contribute to climate change with fossil fuel combustion being the largest contributor, in addition to other activities such as rice cultivation, livestock farming, and some manufacture.

In the quest for survival and self-actualization; man has fundamentally tampered with the ecosystem in fundamental and complex ways. This has brought with it a contradiction of man destroying his very own habitat in the name of development and survival.

The temperature of the earth has been on an unhealthy rise since the end of the 19th Century in which industrial revolution and modern democracy have become the currency of the world.

The unprecedented level of industrialization since this period is the harbinger of a warmer earth which has led to extreme events on a worsening trajectory.
RESPONSES OF THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY TO CLIMATE CHANGE

- The first UNFCCC Conference of the Parties took place in 1995 in Berlin, Germany. It voiced concerns about the adequacy of countries’ abilities to meet commitments under the Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (BSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI). COP 1 agreed on “Activities Implemented Jointly”, first joint measures in international climate action.

- Since then Climate change discussions dominated the global politics with the proliferation of diplomatic conferences aiming at countering the global warming menace facing the world.

- COP-3 (Kyoto) marked the awakening of global climate action. The Kyoto Protocol was adopted as the first addition to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), an international treaty that committed its signatories to develop national programs to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases.

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- COP-21 was the moment where the world agreed collectively to address the effects of Climate change. The COP 21 of Paris was therefore a watershed event in the global efforts to manage climate change.

- The uniqueness of the Paris Agreement stems from the wide array of actors and parties that had political will to agree on limiting carbon emissions and other decisions on climate change.

- In terms of finance, despite successive promises of financing Loss and Damage as well as adaptation, Africa and other poor nations continue to be under-resourced.

- COP27 which was held in Africa, saw significant progress on adaptation, with governments agreeing on the way to move forward on the Global Goal on Adaptation.

- COP27, deliberations continued on setting a ‘new collective quantified goal on climate finance’ in 2024, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries.

- The establishment of a Loss and Damage Fund was the highlight of the COP 27 and the culmination of decades of pressure from climate-vulnerable developing countries. The fund aims to provide financial assistance to nations most vulnerable and impacted by the effects of climate change.

- COP27 also emphasized the need for increased momentum to reform the Multilateral Development Banks and International Financial Institutions and called on the shareholders of these institutions to take decisive action to scale-up climate finance in 2023 and make their institutional arrangements fit for purpose.
AFRICA’S CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVES

- Africa is arguably the least contributing region to carbon emissions, which remains the major source of climate change but the continent’s unique status as a very poor continent means that much needs to be done to respond to the climate change challenge to humanity.

- Africa needs to advance multi-level and participatory climate change response because the continent is at great risk of climate change.

- The World Economic and Social Survey of 2016 classified the bulk of the African continent as being at the risk of climate change when compared with the rest of the world in terms of human security. This is because climate change carries with it uneven effects across the world.

- Beside the adoption of the facility on loss and damage during the COP 27, the other positive outcome that was witnessed was a lot of ambition and determination from African countries seeking to implement climate resilience on their own terms, based on the resources that they have; whether in terms of adopting energy pathways that are more resilient and sustainable or actually investing in climate adaptation.

- During the recent inaugural Africa Climate Summit (ACS23), the African leaders adopted a declaration that will form the basis for Africa’s position during the Conference of the Parties (COP28) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Dubai in November 2023.

- During the Africa Climate Summit, $4.5 billion was committed to climate adaptation and mitigation. Pledges made were from governments, businesses, and development partners.

- The United States pledged $3 billion annually for adaptation, as part of its President’s Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE) initiative.

- The United Arab Emirates pledged $1 billion for climate action in Africa.

- The African Development Bank (AfDB) committed $1 billion for the African Adaptation Initiative and $100 million for the Climate Resilience Adaptation Finance and Technology Transfer Facility.
SOUTH AFRICA ACTIVISM ON CLIMATE CHANGE

• South Africa is one of the foremost African nations and has also taken up leadership in Africa’s global environmental governance negotiations. This is coupled with the fact that the country is arguably one of the largest economies and also the most industrialized African nation.

• Just like any other African country, South Africa is equally affected by the effects of climate change and as such it is expected that the country should provide leadership on climate change mitigation strategies that will not only benefit the country but the Africa continent at large.

• As a lead country in the continent, South Africa’s policy and research on climate change has moved from purely environmental concern to a developmental outlook. This has brought about the need to address the ‘adaptation deficit’ based on the conceptualisation of climate change in frameworks such as National Development Plan which see the phenomenon as a development challenge.

• South Africa has the most advanced climate change research in Africa and has been able to mainstream adaptation into its development strategies through sectoral synergies in which climate change will be a key part of the development agenda.

Minister of Forestry and Fisheries and Environmental Affairs of the Republic of South Africa HE Babra Creecy and President-Designate for Cop28 Dr Sultan Al Jaber.

• SA called for COP27 to establish a framework for Global Goal on Adaptation that contained high level indicators and targets to galvanize collective global action and support.

• During the COP 27, South Africa stressed the need for a fundamental transformation and modernisation of the global financial architecture and reform of the multilateral development banks to make them fit-for-purpose in supporting Sustainable Development and Just Transitions.

• The SA President further presented the country’s JETP-Investment Plan whilst indicating that South Africa will need R1.5 trillion dollars in the next five years for implementation. The money required should be in the form of highly concessional loans and grants.

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UAE ACTIVISM ON CLIMATE CHANGE

• The UAE’s founding father, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, was a pioneer on environmental conservation, and his legacy includes the creation of nature reserves; billion-dollar investments in renewable energy; and pioneering zero gas flaring well ahead of industry standards.

• As such the environment is central to the UAE’s federal and emirate-level development KPIs, the National Climate Change Plan, and the Zayed Sustainability Prize.

On land and in the sea, our forefathers lived and survived in this environment. They were able to do so only because they recognised the need to conserve it, to take from it only what they needed to live and to preserve it for succeeding generations

The Late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan

• The UAE see climate action as an unprecedented opportunity for economic growth, security, and job creation. Today over 70% of UAE economy is non-oil based, and the UAE is focused on diversification into climate-critical sectors like renewables, hydrogen, climate-smart agriculture, and STEM education, among others.

• Due to its geographic location, the UAE has always had to adapt to an extreme climate and the challenges this brings for lives and livelihoods. Heat is harsh and water is scarce. That’s why the country has made climate action central to its development as a nation.

• For over two decades, the UAE has been on a path of balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability – with climate action at the heart of its development agenda.

• The UAE was the first in the region to sign the Paris Agreement and the first to set a strategic pathway to net zero by 2050. It understood early the need for the energy transition and began to diversify over two decades ago.

• Today over 70% of the UAE’s economy is non-oil based. It is one of the world’s leading investors in renewable energy. It already operates three of the largest and lowest cost solar plants in the world.
• The UAE is committed to reducing the carbon intensity of its hydrocarbon operations a further 25 per cent over the next decade. The UAE’s hydrocarbons are among the least carbon intensive in the world and ADNOC’s crude grade – Murban – is less than half the industry average. 100% of the grid electricity used by our national oil company now comes from nuclear and solar – an industry first.

• The UAE’s leading renewable energy company, Masdar, is a major investor in renewable energy globally, and has already helped install, develop and secure more than 20GW of renewable energy in more than 40 countries, both developed and resource-constrained.

• By 2030, it will grow its global renewables capacity to 100GW and its own installed capacity of national clean energy will be 14GW with the aim of becoming a major global supplier of hydrogen.

• Furthermore, the UAE is also investing $15 billion to advance low-carbon solutions such as investments in clean power, CCUS, further electrification of hydrocarbon operations, energy efficiency and strengthening international partnerships.

• The UAE has provided more than US$1.5 billion of assistance to build renewable energy plants in over 40 countries, including 30 SIDS. The UAE at COP26 launched the $1 billion Energy Transition Accelerator Financing (ETAF) Platform with IRENA and AIIB to expand support.

PLEDGES AND INVESTMENTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

As part of the country contribution towards addressing climate change challenges, the UAE:

• Pledged $1 billion for climate action in Africa during the recent inaugural Africa Climate Summit (ACS23)

• Invested $15 billion to advance low-carbon solutions such as investments in clean power, CCUS, further electrification of hydrocarbon operations, energy efficiency and strengthening international partnerships.

• Provided more than US$1.5 billion of assistance to build renewable energy plants in over 40 countries, including 30 SIDS.

• Launched the $1 billion Energy Transition Accelerator Financing (ETAF) Platform with IRENA and AIIB to expand support.

“The UAE is open to collaborating with our partner South Africa, in its climate transition optimising on our experience and knowledge from our climate transition”

by the UAE Ambassador to South Africa, HE Mahash Al Hameli
UAE APPROACH TO COP 28

The UAE takes its role as host of COP28 very seriously and is committed to furthering progress hence the emphasis on ‘leave no one behind’ approach to climate action.

The COP 28 President-Designate appointed the UN Climate Change High-Level Champion and Youth Climate Champion as part of the COP28 Presidency team to engage with young people, women, Indigenous groups, business leaders, civil society groups, and city and sub-state governments.

“Climate change is our common enemy and we must unite to fight it”

by COP28 President-Designate Dr. Sultan Al Jaber during His UNGA Address
COP28 Presidency Team
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COP28 Action Agenda
Sets out a series of calls to action for the public and private sectors in four key areas: fast tracking a just, orderly, and well-managed energy transition, fixing climate finance, focusing on people, lives and livelihoods and underscoring everything with full inclusivity.

Mitigation Goals
A key goal for COP28 will be to reignite momentum on mitigation and to accelerate the effort to slash emissions by 43%. This requires concerted efforts across all sectors, from all countries, businesses, and stakeholders. Key, high-emitting areas to be addressed include land and food use systems, energy, and high emitting industries, such as cement and aluminium.

Adaptation Support
As part of its push to support vulnerable countries and build resilience, COP28 will aim to double financing for adaptation – reaching $40 billion annually – and will embrace nature-based solutions, such as reforestation and ecosystem protection.

Just Energy Transition
The global energy transition will be front and centre at COP28, with a concerted push to triple renewable energy capacity, double hydrogen, and accelerate efforts to decarbonize industry. The UAE will lead a process for all parties to agree upon a clear roadmap to accelerate progress through a pragmatic global energy transition and a “leave no one behind” approach to inclusive climate action.

Climate and Health Action
COP28 will drive international action on climate and health, with the first-ever Health Day and climate-health ministerial. Dr. Al Jaber stressed the importance of addressing the crucial connection between climate change and health. He has said: “The connection between health and climate change is evident, yet it has not been a specific focus of the COP process — until now. This must change.” As we prepare for the groundbreaking Health Day at COP28, we are resolute in our determination to address the challenges posed to health by climate change and encourage ambitious investment in the health sector. Our goal is to build resilient, equitable health systems capable of withstanding the impact of climate change.

Loss and Damage Fund
We are committed to working with the parties to operationalize the fund for Loss and Damage. The Transitional Committee on the operationalization of the funding arrangements and new fund for responding to loss and damage resulting from climate change started its engagements in August 2023. H.E. Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber has called for creativity in identifying funding sources and defining the funding arrangements to ensure that funds are adequate and distributed efficiently.

Global Stocktake
As mandated by the Paris Climate Agreement, COP28 UAE will deliver the first ever Global Stocktake - a comprehensive evaluation of progress against climate goals. The global stocktake is a critical turning point in our battle against the escalating climate crisis – a moment to take a long, hard look at the state of our planet and chart a better course for the future. We need a detailed action plan that delivers a robust and comprehensive response to the Global Stocktake across the key pillars of the Paris Agreement.

Food Systems and Agriculture
The COP28 Presidency has made a call for increased global action to address the interlinked challenges across climate change and the food system, including production, consumption, trade and resilience. To this end, the COP28 President-designate has invited Parties to sign the COP28 Declaration on Resilient Food Systems, Sustainable Agriculture, and Climate Action and align this commitment in their climate action plans. The Declaration is aimed at mobilizing political commitment to drive positive changes in systems, enhance food security, and promote sustainable agricultural practice.

UAE FOCUS AREAS FOR COP 28

• A key goal for COP28 will be to reignite momentum on mitigation and to accelerate the effort to slash emissions by 43%. This requires concerted efforts across all sectors, from all countries, businesses, and stakeholders. Key, high-emitting areas to be addressed include land and food use systems, energy, and high emitting industries, such as cement and aluminium.
COOPERATION ON THE GLOBAL STOCKTAKE

- The Global Stocktake is the main mechanism under the UNFCCC’s Paris Agreement to take stock of the collective challenges and opportunities in implementing the Paris Agreement. The purpose of this is to help inform parties in preparing their next nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement to raise ambition and accelerate climate action, as well as to enhance international cooperation.

- The first stocktake got underway at the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow last (COP26) and will conclude at COP28 in 2023. It is a critical moment in the multilateral process because it provides an opportunity to reflect both on the collective achievements made under the historic Paris Agreement, as well as to agree on course corrections to bring the international community on course to fully meet the global goals.

- To achieve that the COP28 President-Designate appointed the South Africa’s Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, H.E Barbara Creecy, and her counterpart from Denmark, Minister Dan Jørgensen as co-facilitators of the discussions at a political level amongst ministers responsible for climate change ahead of the Global Stocktake discussions.

- The roles entailed reaching out and listening to a representative sample of parties, groups and constituencies to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to hear their views on what they consider the critical elements of the outcomes of the GST.

- The two Ministers reported back their findings to the COP 28 President-Designate ahead of the opening of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September 2023, where the COP 28 President-Designate a ministerial meeting on the GST.

THANK YOU