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What Will the Second UNFCCC COP in the Gulf Region Deliver?



Sustainability Research Paper

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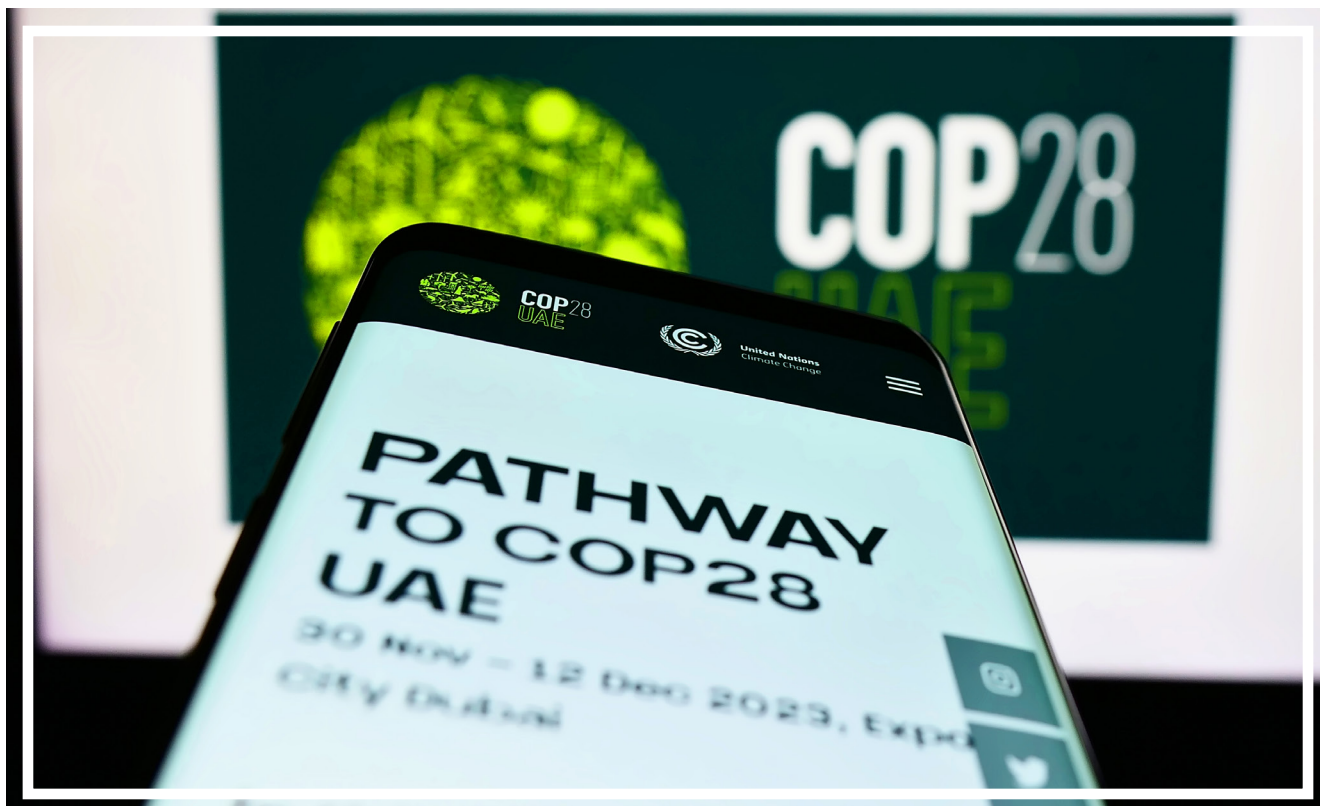


Since 1995, the Conferences of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COPs) have provided a vital platform for addressing the manifold challenges posed by anthropogenic climate change. Over the years, COPs have evolved from small gatherings of government negotiators to bring together tens of thousands of people from the global community working to address climate change. Besides strengthening global cooperation on all levels, COPs showcase innovative solutions. This year's 28th COP (COP 28) held in Dubai, UAE is the second COP hosted in the Gulf region after COP18 in Doha, Qatar in 2012. What significant outcomes are likely to emerge from COP28? What impact can COP28 have on the race to net-zero carbon emissions by mid-century? What can we expect from the first Global Stocktake (GST) at a COP? Will COP28 serve as a catalyst for further climate action in the Middle East?

SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH PAPER

This research paper is part of a 12-month series published by the Al-Attiyah Foundation every year. Each in-depth research paper focuses on a current sustainability topic that is of interest to the Foundation's members and partners. The 12 technical papers are distributed to members, partners, and universities, as well as made available on the Foundation's website.





- COP28, hosted by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) at the World Expo site in Dubai, is a COP of above average significance as it is scheduled to finalise the first Global Stocktake (GST). The GST will show where the world stands regarding its progress towards keeping global warming well below 2°C, as enshrined in the Paris Agreement.
- COP28 is tasked to operationalise the Loss and Damage (L&D) fund agreed at COP27 in 2022. Furthermore, COP is to advance concrete action on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), and the definition of the post-2025 new collective quantitative goal (NCQG) on climate finance due to be finalized in 2024.
- COP28 takes place against a backdrop of multiple crises, including a series of extreme weather events, geopolitical tensions breaking out openly in wars of a magnitude rarely seen since the end of World War II, and a surge of inflation and government debt problems.
- The UAE COP Presidency has articulated an ambitious agenda focused on four paradigm shifts crucial for advancing the objectives of the Paris Agreement, mainly focusing on renewable energy expansion and new international climate finance. The UAE promotes renewable energy, pushes for a circular carbon economy, and reaches out to African countries to participate in carbon markets.
- At COP28, the UAE needs to chart a credible course for the Gulf region to address climate change, given that it currently has reached a crossroads between its traditional reliance on fossil fuels and ambitious net-zero targets.



At the end of each year, attention of the global community working towards addressing climate change turns to the COP - a crucial event in the calendar of international climate policy where significant decisions and commitments are made. More than a conference, COP is a dynamic forum and exhibition that shapes the international and local discourse on climate and nature.

COPs are the annual gatherings of the UNFCCC, the international treaty that serves as a basis for international climate negotiations. These events have been held since 1995 with one hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Landmark agreements under the UNFCCC such as the Kyoto Protocol (1997) and the Paris Agreement (2015) have been negotiated at COPs. COP meetings have grown in size and scope and become central in crafting responses to the climate crisis.

In 2023, the 28th session of the COP takes place from November 30 to December 12 in Dubai, UAE; under the presidency of Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, Minister of Industry of the UAE. COP28 is the second COP in the Gulf region and the fifth in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.¹ The first COP in the Gulf region, held in Doha in 2012, had modest outcomes. The main result of this conference was the Doha Climate Gateway, which was a step on the way that eventually led to the Paris Agreement.² In addition, an amendment to the Kyoto Protocol was adopted at this conference, establishing a second commitment period from 2013 to 2020 for the European Union (EU), Australia and other developed nations.



While COP 28 may not hold the same historical weight as COPs in Kyoto, Copenhagen (Copenhagen Accords), Paris or Glasgow (Glasgow Climate Pact), which were instrumental in shaping global climate action, it is far from being just another second-tier COP.

COP 28 is scheduled to finalise the first Global Stocktake (GST). GSTs are scheduled every five years assessing countries' progress in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. These goals encompass: 1) limiting temperature increase to 2°C above pre-industrial levels, with the goal of limiting it to 1.5°C; 2) means of implementation (or finance), emphasising the importance of facilitating funds for low-carbon and climate-resilient development; and 3) adaptation.³ The GST evaluates progress towards achieving these three goals and

presents an opportunity for governments to outline a roadmap for accelerating climate action and closing the existing implementation and action gaps. COP 28 is also scheduled to operationalise the Loss and Damage (L&D) fund agreed at COP27, and the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA). It plays an important role to advance negotiations on the new collective quantified goal (NCQG) for international climate finance. Negotiations on this new finance goal are scheduled to be finalised at COP29 in 2024.

The UAE COP presidency holds a pivotal role in guiding this conference and it is expected to catalyse ambitious commitments and navigate the complex interplay of global dynamics, setting the stage for a conference that could bring about unexpected but pivotal turns in climate action.

The urgency of COP28 is underscored by the escalating global climate crisis. Recent temperature trends are deeply concerning; for the first time in recorded history, June temperatures exceeded a 1.5°C increase from preindustrial levels⁴, and the average temperature deviation during 2023, including October, has reached 1.4°C. 2023 will become the hottest year on record and is likely to break the previous record established in 2016 by more than 0.1°C.⁵ In Northern Argentina, in August, a heatwave led to a significant 20°C deviation from average temperatures.⁶

In addition to record-breaking temperatures, 2023 has been marked by impacts from meteorological extreme events. In Canada, 1.9 million km² of forests burned, three times the previous record.⁷ The United States witnessed a record number of events with damages exceeding one billion dollars.⁸ Due to record sea surface temperatures of the Mediterranean, a "medicane" formed in September, led to record precipitations in Libya creating a flood that killed over 10,000 people in the city of Derna.⁹ These events underscore the pervasive and escalating nature of the climate crisis.

Amidst these escalating temperatures and unprecedented climate disasters, the climate crisis demands immediate and resolute global action. However, a united front against climate change is prevented by several geopolitical crises. Russia's invasion of Ukraine takes centre stage as the largest war in Europe since World War II.¹⁰ This conflict has spawned humanitarian crises and severely impacted global flows of energy and food. Prices of these commodities reached unprecedented levels, triggering knee-jerk political reactions. For example, in 2022 many EU countries introduced general energy subsidies, a policy instrument they severely criticised when applied by developing

countries and energy-rich economies. In the Middle East, the outbreak of the Israel-Palestine war in late 2023 added to regional instability, complicating diplomatic relations.¹¹ Simultaneously, the United States-China relations have grown increasingly complex, marked by competitive postures in trade and supply chains, raising fears of financial decoupling and global market disruptions.¹² Moreover, after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic consumer spending rose, generating inflationary pressure that was then exacerbated by the conflict-triggered price spikes to reach levels last seen in the 1970s. This in turn forced central banks to massively increase interest rates in a very short period, with significant repercussions on debt service by governments and companies alike.

These international conflicts and economic upheavals are not only reshaping global dynamics but also significantly influencing the discourse and priorities in climate policy, with mixed outcomes. For instance, Europe's energy crisis, precipitated by the loss of Russian gas linked to the Russian war against Ukraine, has forced some countries to revert to coal¹³ as well as heavily invest in liquid natural gas (LNG) terminals. On the other side, after Russia tried to use cuts of gas supply as a political weapon, the EU pushed deployment of renewable energy infrastructure and improvements in energy efficiency, covering 25% of the supply gap left by Russia. The US administration used the inflation caused by the energy crisis as political argument to push the Inflation Reduction Act, which provides US\$370 billion to subsidise measures dedicated to improving energy security, renewable energy, and climate change mitigation.¹⁴ The latest World



Energy Outlook¹⁵ has significantly reduced the forecast of natural gas demand due to these effects, hence reflecting a positive outcome of the energy crisis for climate change mitigation. Furthermore, this report projects demand of all fossil fuels to potentially peak by 2030.

Likewise, several high-level political events are influencing the expectations regarding COP28 outcomes. First, the BRICS summit, held in Johannesburg in late August 2023, marked a significant milestone with its unanimous decision to expand, inviting Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE as full members from 1 January 2024.¹⁶ This expansion increases BRICS' representation to 30% of the world economy, with a combined GDP of US\$30.76 trillion and 40% of the global population.¹⁷ BRICS leaders aim for the group to comprise 50% of the world's GDP by 2050, potentially rivalling the G7 or G20 groups. The BRICS summit highlighted green

investments in sectors like agriculture, India's electric car market, and China's solar capacity, and thus indicates a shift towards sustainable growth. Second, the Africa Climate Week, held in Nairobi at the beginning of September, focused heavily on renewable energy. It underscored Africa's ambition to be a global leader in climate action, potentially powering not only the continent but also exporting clean energy. The Nairobi Declaration calls for a global carbon tax on fossil fuels.¹⁸ Third, the G20 summit in India stressed the financial needs of developing countries in responding to the climate crisis, estimated at USD 34 trillion by the end of the decade.¹⁹ G20 leaders pledged to encourage efforts to triple global renewable energy capacity by 2030, echoing a call of 250 major companies and non-profit organizations at the New York Climate Week and thus marking the issue as a clear priority for COP28. G20 however remains reluctant to commit to fossil fuel phase-out.

In anticipation of COP28, the UAE hosted a pivotal pre-summit ministerial consultation, known as the pre-COP, from October 30 to 31.²⁰ This gathering offered the COP28 presidency a chance to refine and secure support for its agenda. The event saw the participation of 70 Ministers and Heads of Delegations from over 100 countries, engaging in discussions about the upcoming negotiations and their political ramifications.²¹ At the end of the meeting, the COP28 president expressed optimism about reaching consensus on contentious issues. A primary focus of the pre-COP was the Global Stocktake, with the president highlighting the progress in drafting the decision to be adopted at COP28. He also emphasised the need for developed countries to provide clarity on the achievement of the USD 100 billion international climate finance target.

Lastly, it's worth noting that the recently announced climate deal between the United States and China, though not part of a high-level political event, signifies a notable collaboration that could influence the direction of COP28. This agreement sets out to triple global renewable energy capacity by 2030, with a focus on phasing out coal, oil, and gas generation. A primary objective is achieving significant emission reductions in the power sector within this decade. Despite lacking specific enforcement mechanisms, the agreement propels several key initiatives forward. Both nations have pledged to address all greenhouse gases (GHG), including methane, in their upcoming national climate pledges, not just carbon dioxide. This aspect is particularly significant considering China's previous reluctance to set concrete targets for methane reduction. The agreement marks a reinvigorated collaborative effort between the world's two largest polluters, establishing ambitious

targets and fostering momentum for future climate action. Unfortunately, the deal has ambiguous language concerning the shift away from fossil fuels, which has raised a lot of criticism.²²





COP26 in Glasgow marked a pivotal moment with the adoption of the Glasgow Climate Pact.²³ In this pact, countries collectively recognized the climate emergency and acknowledged the need to aim all efforts at limiting temperature increase to 1.5°C. The pact also called for more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as soon as possible, instead of waiting for the next revision deadline in 2025. COP26 also introduced language supporting the '*phase-down of coal power and a phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies*'; setting a new precedent in climate negotiations. Emphasis was made on the importance of climate and adaptation finance, recognising past shortcomings, and finalising the operational guidelines of the Paris Agreement. Since then, efforts have been concentrated on operationalizing this rulebook and broadly implementing the decisions and mechanisms it contains.

COP27 in Sharm-el-Sheikh yielded decidedly mixed results. Its major accomplishment was the establishment of the Loss and Damage (L&D) fund, a mechanism designed to support vulnerable countries in managing climate change impacts.²⁴ However, it was not able to define specific funding targets, contributors, and possible recipients for the L&D Fund. The conference deferred defining the specificities of the Global Goal on Adaptation to COP28, as well as most other decisions. The expansive agenda set by the Egyptian presidency and lack of focus resulted in limited advancement on many key issues. This means parties at COP28 must deal with a long list of issues:

Global Stocktake

The GST, which will be completed every five years from 2023 onwards, is a central pillar of the Paris Agreement's ambition cycle. It sums up the achievements of the NDCs, identifies gaps and provides recommendations to increase

ambition in the future. Thereby, it represents a collective assessment of global progress towards the three overarching goals of the Agreement. The GST process began with the systematic collection of data at COP21. The second phase, focusing on the technical assessment of the collected information, concluded in Bonn in June 2023. A GST synthesis report released by the UNFCCC at that juncture revealed a concerning gap: current national commitments are projected to result in CO₂ emissions exceeding the 2030 level commensurate with the long-term goal of the Paris Agreement by approximately 20.3 to 23.9 billion tons of CO₂ equivalent (t CO₂e), or over 50%.²⁵ This message was reinforced by the Emissions Gap Report published in late November finding a gap of 11–14 billion t CO₂e to a 2°C compatible path and of 19–22 billion t CO₂e to a 1.5°C path.²⁶

The last phase of the GST, often termed the political phase, will involve Parties at COP28 digesting this crucial information and formulating decision texts that reflect their acceptance of the findings and outline strategies for future action. The significance of the GST for COP28 cannot be overstated, but the nature of the outcome remains uncertain: it could be a legally binding CMA decision, or alternatively, a political declaration which would of course have much less weight.

The GST is intricately linked to other crucial aspects of the negotiations, including the mitigation work program, the Global Goal on Adaptation, and the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on international climate finance from 2025 onwards. These connections which essentially all relate to financing for climate action in developing countries as well as ambition of their mitigation actions underscore potential trade-offs and synergies that

characterise the negotiations, underscoring the complex interplay that needs to be managed by the COP28 presidency.

Loss and Damage

The L&D fund embodies a commitment to equity and justice, addressing the need for reparations due to climate impacts in the Global South. At the final meeting of the transitional committee appointed to operationalize the fund, a draft text was agreed, which will be presented at COP28 for adoption. The draft proposes the World Bank as the interim trustee and host of the fund, which had been strongly opposed by developing countries, for a four-year term with a subsequent transition process. While the document invites various funding sources to contribute to the fund, it falls short of mandating payments by developed countries, as desired by many developing nations. For instance, the US is advocating voluntary contributions, a stance that diverges from the document's framework.²⁷ On a more positive note, the EU has signalled readiness to announce a substantial financial contribution to the L&D Fund.²⁸ Open issues also include the scope of the fund, how funding can be accessed – only through accredited entities or directly by impacted communities, bypassing national governments – and whether funding is only based on grants or also includes loans. The negotiations on the L&D Fund will thus be heated and the outcome is by no means certain.

Adaptation

At COP26, the Glasgow-Sharm-el-Sheikh work programme (GlaSS) was adopted to advance the work on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) and conclude it at COP28. This two-

year work programme with eight workshops was tasked with developing a comprehensive framework to guide the delivery of the GGA and track progress towards its realization.²⁹ Contested issues include the specification of targets and their assessment, and agreement on methodologies, indicators, data, and metrics to track the GGA. These discussions might also bring up issues on adaptation finance and will be influenced by decisions on the GST.

Climate Finance

International climate finance has traditionally been the “elephant in the room” in UNFCCC negotiations relevant for almost all negotiation streams and COP28 is no exception. Finance discussions currently focus on the overall volume of international climate finance and the share of adaptation finance in that total. The debate on the overall volume, particularly concerning the NCQG, is complicated by the fact that the USD 100 billion target for 2020 was missed by a wide margin, with OECD figures for 2020³⁰ showing just USD 83.3 billion pledged. Faced with strong criticism by developing countries, the developed countries stated at COP27 that they would achieve the USD 100 billion in 2023. OECD (2023, p. 3) states that “based on preliminary and as yet unverified data, the goal looks likely to have already been met as of 2022”. The OECD numbers are criticised for overestimation by a few NGOs, for example Zagma et al. (2023),³¹ estimate 2020 levels of international climate finance as just USD 21 – 24.5 billion. Given that even the International Monetary Fund (IMF), hardly an unorthodox institution, states that emerging and developing countries require over USD 2.4 trillion annually for climate action by 2030³² and the UNFCCC Standing Committee

on Finance (2021)³³ saw a need of developing countries reaching USD 5.8–5.9 trillion for the period until 2030, the gap is daunting and the NCQG negotiations will be extremely difficult. They currently focus on the elements temporal goal and structure, qualitative and quantitative elements, mobilisation and provision of financial sources and quality and transparency arrangements.

Regarding adaptation finance, the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance (2023)³⁴ report on doubling adaptation finance by 2025 shows a startling inability to estimate 2019 baseline numbers robustly, showing a range of USD 7.1 billion to USD 20.3 billion. The estimated range of increase of adaptation finance between 2019 and 2020 was equally large - between 18 and 75%. Negotiations will thus focus on how to improve the estimates, and developing countries will certainly criticise developed countries for trying to obfuscate the real numbers.





International Carbon Markets Under Article 6

Article 6 of the Paris Agreement outlines both market-based (Article 6.2 and Article 6.4) and non-market-based (Article 6.8) approaches for international cooperation in implementing NDCs and raising ambition. Despite completing the Article 6 rulebook at COP26, significant unresolved issues persist, hampering the widespread adoption and implementation of these approaches.

The absence of formal international oversight for Article 6.2 cooperative approaches necessitates transparent reporting and independent verification to ensure environmental integrity and avoid double counting. The negotiations focus on the timing of authorisation of internationally transferred mitigation outcomes (ITMOs) and whether it is possible to change the uses of such ITMOs over time (ITMOs can either be used for NDC targets or on the voluntary carbon market, and prices on these market

segments will differ) and registry systems. Here, the disagreement is whether private carbon market programmes should be allowed to operate national registries and whether national registries should be able to make ITMO transactions.

Unresolved issues also persist in Article 6.4, especially concerning guidance for baseline and monitoring methodologies and how to treat removals. The effectiveness of the Article 6.4 mechanism in following stringent principles, as established in Glasgow, remains a key concern, particularly in comparison to the criticism faced by Voluntary Carbon Markets (VCM).^{35,36} The Article 6.4 Supervisory Body had to hold an emergency meeting in mid-November to come up with agreed texts for consideration by the CMA. The methodology guidance requires downscaling baselines over time through an approach like the ambition coefficient which is stringent.³⁷

All three baseline approaches require downward adjustment from business as usual. Life cycle and embodied emissions are now to be covered. For removals, monitoring is to be continued after the crediting period and negligible risk of reversal needs to be shown to discontinue monitoring. Reversals need to be fully compensated through cancellation of A6.4ERs regardless of the existence of a stock of A6.4ERs in the buffer pool. There will be a differentiation between avoidable and unavoidable reversals and the former be penalised. Activities deemed to have a low reversal risk can be exempted from feeding the buffer pool. Some parties may find both the methodology and removal guidance too stringent, others too lenient so there is a real risk that the documents could be reopened at COP28.

The progress on Article 6.8 has been slow, but efforts are underway to identify additional focus areas to advance this work.

Energy Transition

The topic of energy transition, especially the phase-out of fossil fuels, will be a central focus at COP28. This issue, as evident during COP26, continues to be one of the most contentious aspects of the global shift towards sustainable energy.

At last year's COP27 in Egypt, over 80 countries, including the EU and small island nations, agreed to include language advocating for the phase-down of all fossil fuels. However, countries such as Saudi Arabia and China resisted this inclusion, reflecting the wide-ranging views on fossil fuel reduction. In preparation for COP28, the EU and its member states are advocating for a significant decision to hasten the phase-out of coal, in stark contrast to countries like Russia and Saudi

Arabia as well as India, which oppose any global agreement that would restrict fossil fuel usage.³⁸

Further complicating the matter is the appointment of Dr. Sultan Al Jaber as the president of COP28. His role as the Group CEO of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC),³⁹ one of the world's largest oil and gas (O&G) companies, has raised concerns about potential conflicts of interest and the impact this may have on discussions regarding energy transition.⁴⁰ This is particularly relevant since ADNOC has also recently announced plans to expand its oil production significantly in the coming years, which would be inconsistent with any of the UNFCCC targets.



UAE's COP28 Presidency has articulated a comprehensive and ambitious agenda. This agenda highlights four paradigm shifts essential for realising the objectives of the Paris Agreement (COP28)⁴¹:

1. Accelerating the energy transition and curbing emissions before 2030.
2. Revolutionising climate finance by not only fulfilling existing commitments but also laying the groundwork for a new finance paradigm.
3. Placing nature, people, and their livelihoods at the forefront of climate action.
4. Striving to make this COP the most inclusive yet, engaging a wide range of stakeholders.

Recognising the GST as the main deliverable of COP28, the UAE aims to operationalise it through a three-tiered approach involving a negotiated outcome, the promotion of an action agenda and a call to action to Parties to the Convention.

The UAE's priorities are manifested in the ambitious renewable energy agenda, which calls for a global tripling of renewables capacity to 11 TW and doubling energy efficiency improvements by 2030.⁴² Other notable initiatives include halving scope 1 and 2 emissions and eliminating methane emissions in the oil and gas industry by 2030, doubling hydrogen production to 180 million tonnes per year by 2030 and promoting global hydrogen trade. Furthermore, the UAE is considering the creation of a multibillion-dollar fund, primarily financed by its sovereign wealth reserves, to boost global clean energy investments.⁴³ Although the plan is meant to be fully disclosed at COP28, the fund will presumably aim to support climate transition projects across the world and the funding could amount to USD 25 billion.

A different ambition is perceived when discussions turn to fossil fuel phase out. The UAE has not addressed this issue directly and has instead advocated for the reduction of fossil fuel emissions, potentially employing Carbon Capture, Utilisation, and Storage (CCUS) technologies. Early in September, ADNOC approved a significant carbon capture project, one of the largest in the MENA region⁴⁴, highlighting the conflict of national interests and global climate ambition.

Beyond the formal COP28 agenda, the UAE is positioning itself as a key ally to Africa. A testament to this was the UAE's pledge of USD 4.5 billion in clean energy investments at the Africa Climate Week.⁴⁵ Additionally, at the same summit, the UAE committed to purchasing USD 450 million worth of carbon credits from the Africa Carbon Markets Initiative. This initiative was launched at COP27, aiming to accelerate the growth of African carbon markets, focusing as well on job creation and distribution of revenues with local communities. This represents an ambitious initiative, aiming to produce 300 million carbon credits a year, until 2030 and further expand the market to 1.5 billion credits annually by 2050.⁴⁶ However, a shadow is cast on this initiative by the actions of a company called "Blue Carbon", run by a member of the ruling family of Dubai, which has negotiated contracts covering 2.5 million km² of forestlands in various African countries which seem not to take into account basic principles of credible carbon market approaches.^{47 48}

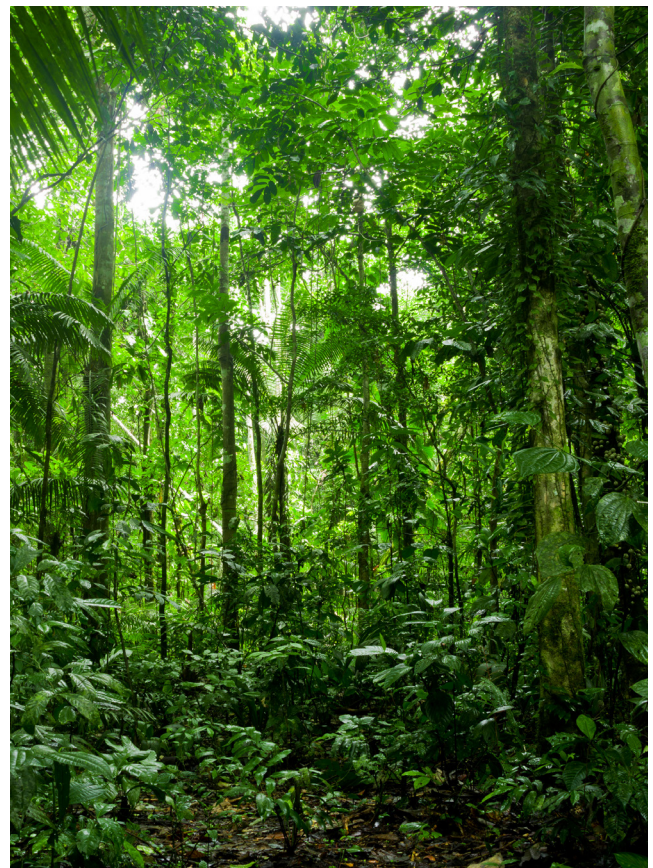
Gulf countries have set ambitious net-zero emissions targets. The UAE and Oman aim to be carbon neutral by 2050, while Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia have targeted 2060 as the year to achieve net-zero.⁴⁹ However, these commitments require a significant shift in their economies. The UAE plans to derive 30% of its power from renewables and nuclear by 2030, including the operation of the Arab world's first commercial nuclear plant. Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, and Kuwait have also set substantial renewable energy goals, which, if achieved, could add over 80 GW of solar capacity by 2030.

Yet, alongside these renewable initiatives, Gulf countries plan to expand their oil and gas capacities, relying on carbon capture technologies to balance increased output with emission reduction goals.⁵⁰ The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region is advancing in carbon capture and storage (CCS) (now often called "carbon management"), with 13 CCUS projects planned or operational, capturing an estimated 20 million tons of CO₂ annually, indicating a growing momentum in carbon capture technologies across the region. The role of carbon dioxide removal (CDR) technologies is a contentious topic. While these technologies could theoretically allow for the continued operation of the fossil fuel economy, they also raise questions about the long-term viability and environmental impact of such an approach. COP28 provides a forum to debate the extent to which CDR technologies can be relied upon to offset emissions, and whether they should be viewed as a license to prolong fossil fuel dependence or as a transitional tool towards a more sustainable energy future.

Green hydrogen has also emerged as a key alternative fuel, with Gulf states betting on

its potential. Saudi Arabia is constructing the world's largest green hydrogen plant in NEOM, while the UAE's hydrogen strategy aims to position it among the top 10 producers by 2031.⁵¹ Oman also has ambitious green hydrogen production goals. However, the development of green hydrogen is still in its infancy, necessitating significant scaling up of renewable energy sources to make it commercially viable.

The upcoming COP28 offers an opportunity for these nations to showcase their progress and commitments while addressing the challenges of transitioning from a fossil-fuel-dominated economy. The conference could potentially serve as the catalyst needed for the Gulf region to fully embrace renewable energy and innovative carbon management solutions, navigating the complex path towards a sustainable energy future.



While COP28 is unlikely to be heralded as a cornerstone event, it will negotiate three key topics including the Global Stocktake (GST), Loss and Damage (L&D), and the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA). If successful, these negotiations have the potential to fundamentally reshape the landscape of climate finance and national climate action strategies. The critical question is whether COP28 will catalyse policy shifts, particularly in regions heavily dependent on fossil fuels. As the host, the UAE is well positioned to maintain the momentum and translate dialogue into concrete action but needs to overcome challenges visible during the preparation phase. COP28's pledges and strategies could remain merely aspirational but also become relevant if underpinned by strong political engagement as shown by the recent United States-China climate agreement. The global community watches with anticipation, hoping that COP28 will not only be a meeting of nations but a catalyst for a decisive shift towards a more sustainable and equitable future.

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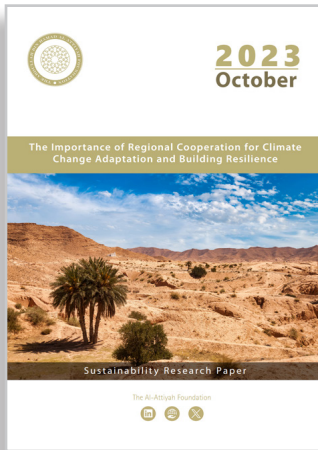
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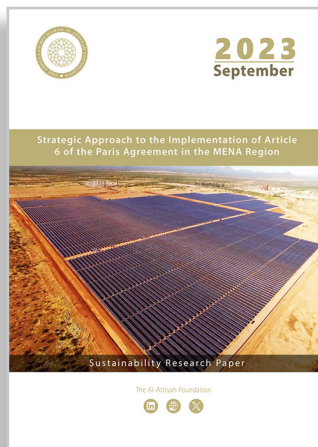
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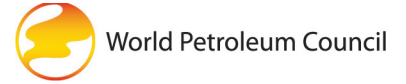
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