

Climate Change Conference COP 28

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

30 November-13 December 2023

International Environment Forum Summary

COP28

UN Framework Convention
on Climate Change

28th Conference of the Parties

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

30 November-13 December 2023



Dubai conference site for COP28

Events around COP28

With 70,000 participants in Dubai, including over 40 Bahá'ís and several IEF members, the following report illustrates efforts to bring a values perspective to the public discourse on climate change, especially through the Bahá'í International Community.

Bahá'ís
at
COP28



COP28 “Values Roadshow2

During COP28, a group of organizations including the Bahá'í International Community coordinated a “Values Roadshow” to explore humanity’s shared values and the coherent principles to be collectively embraced to advance climate justice. These events offered an opportunity to explore the following questions:

COP28 “Values Roadshow2

What values must underlie initiatives and advancement on each issue?

What values currently underlie work on the issue - consciously and subconsciously?

Where do we see misalignment between the two previous questions and how can we overcome it?

What are examples where we see an evolution of thinking at the level of values on the issue?

COP28 “Values Roadshow2

The Values Roadshow explored values through the lens of a diversity of intersecting themes and constituencies, including the following issues: climate induced migration, resilience, disaster risk reduction, faith, food systems, gender equality, Indigenous issues, Small Island Developing States, and youth.



Bahá'í International Community at COP28

Bahá'í International Community

Dan Perell said the Bahá'í International Community at COP28 is trying to be more future-oriented, more detached from the immediate challenges. The BIC's primary role is to contribute to conversations at the UN and internationally, and it draws on the learning of Bahá'í communities at the grassroots. The Bahá'í writings ask us to be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age in which we live, but this should be locally driven, whether the issue is biodiversity, gender, race, etc.

Bahá'í International Community

The youth are really attuned to reading their local reality and identifying the needs. For example, a video shows how the youth on Tanna in Vanuatu saw that fish stocks were depleted, and started an intergenerational conversation in the community about returning to traditional ways of limiting overfishing. This worked so well that other communities copied it.

Bahá'í International Community

This is an opportunity to demonstrate that faiths can be a learning community, not rigid and outdated, producing more sustainable results. The faith declaration we adopted is only the first step. Now we have to come to terms with our own assumptions and our own faith identity. The next step should be for the interfaith community to learn to work together with the scientists, youth, Indigenous peoples, women, consolidating what we had achieved and reaching out to others.

Bahá'í International Community

It is hard to measure changes in heart, in values, that make things happen. What makes people accept short-term sacrifices for a long-term goal? We are clearly not moving fast enough and need stronger motivation. Market forces and self-interest are not sufficient. The economy discounts the future as compared to the present. The future is worthless in our economic model, yet parents will sacrifice everything for their children. We must replace the whole system as we go forward.

Bahá'í International Community

We must plan a just transition, beyond only words on a page. It is complicated when the issue is us versus them, so we need real solutions. One tool used in the Bahá'í community is consultation, with everyone together not adversarial and criticising but looking for positive solutions, co-creating a better future. The process is inclusive and open, suited to the needs of the community.



Bahá'í International Community delegation to COP28

Faith Pavilion

The Faith Pavilion held 65 sessions with 300 speakers from every corner of the world; 120 faith-based organisations signed up to take part.



Photo Courtesy of the Baha'i International Community

Faith Pavilion at COP28

Faith for Climate: A Call to Action

This interfaith call to action is extended as an expression of hope rooted in reality. We call attention to the extreme urgency of this moment. The climate science community has pointed out how quickly Earth's systems have reached tipping points. We know that at COP28, ambitious action is needed to hold to the ceiling of 1.5° C that may protect life today and in the future.

Therefore we add our energy, our prayers and our action to the voices of all the different sectors, to call together for ambitious advocacy, action and agreement on climate change at COP28 and beyond.

Strengthening Climate Governance

At an event on Climate Governance, Moderator Maja Groff introduced the Climate Governance Commission (CGC) exploring innovative ways to improve present governance and new systems that could better respond to the current triple crisis as we overshoot planetary boundaries. Science shows that we are in a planetary emergency on a path to catastrophe, requiring Earth System governance.

Strengthening Climate Governance

Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen then addressed the issue of accountability. There are many Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) but compliance is insufficient.

Strong accountability requires measuring performance, leading to consequences. The problem is that sovereign states refuse to accept accountability. In the short term there are three options: nurturing mindsets of shared accountability based on ethical concerns; enabling broad accountability where assessments of progress cover efforts, processes and outcomes; and empowering dynamic accountability resulting in learning.

Strengthening Climate Governance

Self accountability could encourage states to consider their ethical or moral responsibility with honesty and integrity. Sharing of national best practices could encourage learning. However, in the longer term, deeper change will be needed, starting with a move beyond consensus to majority voting to achieve strong accountability.

Strengthening Climate Governance

Drew Jones of Climate Interactive described EN-ROADS, a policy action simulator that can show which actions leverage the most change in greenhouse gas reductions. Experience shows that simply publishing research does not impact policy. People need to experience things for themselves. Their online simulator makes it possible to show what actions would bend the curve in emissions, and what demands are most important, making it possible to challenge assumptions and demonstrate the combinations of actions that can meet global warming targets.

Strengthening Climate Governance

David Obura of the Earth Commission and chair of IPBES explored the interconnections between our interlocking crises, both environmental and social. The start must be equity, acknowledging inequalities in consumption and decision-making. To bend the curve, we need transformative change in all of them, but our institutions are trapped in silos. The Earth Commission has shown the complexity of the drivers beyond just carbon to the social aspects that need to be balanced. We need to bridge the divide between the natural and social sciences.

Strengthening Climate Governance

Governance is struggling between science and policy action. The High Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism has made proposals for environmental governance, and the Secretary-General has proposed an emergency platform, but how should these be designed? We should build on what we have, including the interconnectivity built into the Sustainable Development Goals. Science needs to innovate.

Strengthening Climate Governance

Issues raised in the question session included how equity could be introduced into global models by providing breakdowns by country or income levels. One challenge is how to educate policy makers in climate governance. It would be useful to have a policy clearing house to share best practices.

Events around COP28

Video of COP28 on 11 December with IEF board member Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen:

https://www.instagram.com/reel/C0tgY_5J-7X/

Sylvia
Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen
at
COP28



COP28

COP28 was a crucial meeting for action on climate change, as the UN warns that a radical transformation is now required. Country positions were far apart, with many, including the most vulnerable and those listening to the science, insisting on a rapid phase-out of fossil fuels, while the oil-producing countries refused any mention of fossil fuels.

COP28 Plenary





COP28 Plenary

COP28

Complex negotiations throughout the night pushed the conference a day overtime.



COP28 negotiations

COP28

At 11:15 GST on 13 December 2023, a wave of thunderous applause swept through the halls of COP 28 as Parties to the Paris Agreement formally adopted the decision text on the first-ever Global Stocktake with no objections. The following is part of the statement of the COP President:

DUBAI 2023



COP28 applause on adoption of the text

COP28

“We have delivered a comprehensive response to the global stocktake. We have delivered a robust action plan to keep 1.5°C in reach. It is a balanced plan that addresses emissions... it is built on common ground. It is strengthened by full inclusivity. It is a historic package to accelerate climate action. It is the UAE consensus.”

COP28

"Many said this could not be done. When I spoke to you at the very start, I promised a different sort of COP, private and public sectors... everyone came together from day one. Everyone united, acted and delivered. We operationalised loss and damage and filled the fund. We delivered world first after world first."

COP28

"It is built on common ground, it is strengthened by full inclusivity. It is enhanced, balanced but make no mistake, a historic package."

"For the first time, to deliver on methane and emissions. We have language on fossil fuels in our final agreement for the first time ever."

COP28

"Let me sound a word of caution. Any agreement is only as good as its implementation. We are what we do, not what we say. We must turn this agreement into tangible action. If we unite, we can have a profound effect on all of our futures. Inclusivity kept us going in the difficult days. Everyone has been heard, from Indigenous peoples or youth to global south."

COP28

"We have reframed the conversation around climate finance. We have integrated the real economy into the climate challenge."

- Sultan Al Jaber, COP 28 President

imate Change



DUBAI 2023

Sultan
Al Jaber
COP 28
President



COP28 conclusions

Reflections and photographs by Kiara Worth on 13 December 2023

"I don't know how, but we survived COP28."

"After consultation all night, the revised text on the Global Stocktake came out early this morning. While it didn't bring a clear call to phase out fossil fuels, it did set in motion the transition away from them and indeed, this is a big step. There was applause as the decision was made and immediately news headlines hailed this as an 'historic achievement'."



Applause at COP28

COP28

"As the COP President said in his closing remarks, 'The world needed to find a new way. By following our North Star, we have found that path.'"

"But not everyone agrees."



Demonstration at COP28

COP28

"Samoa, representing the small islands most vulnerable to climate change, said it was not ambitious enough. 'We have concluded that the course correction needed has not yet been secured.' This was met by an uproar of applause, particularly from civil society and developing countries."



Delegation of Samoa, not ambitious enough

COP28

"The delegate from Marshall Islands burst into tears, realising the fate of her people has been sealed, and I burst into tears too."



Delegate of Marshall Islands in tears, the end of her country

COP28

"I've been crying ever since and I don't know how I made it through that closing plenary. I was overwhelmed with emotion, thinking about the small islands, and Palestine, the self-congratulatory remarks about what a 'success' this has been, how we'll 'take note' of people's suffering, and the 'north star' I don't get to see because I, like most people, am from the global south."

COP28

"'Shame,' the youth delegates screamed into the microphone, 'shame!'"



Youth delegates screamed “Shame, shame”

COP28

"I felt like they were shouting at me. Have I done enough? Can I hold myself to account, the way I expect others to? What has my contribution been and why haven't I done better? Why haven't we all done better and what will it take for us to recognise our common humanity? I know a lot of this is sheer exhaustion, and the sudden depletion of direction after giving so much of myself over these weeks, but there's an underlying truth to it too."

COP28

"Yes, there were positive outcomes, and yes, we're on a better pathway, but it's not enough. My virtue for today was acceptance, and I don't think I've done very well with that."

COP28

"The only thing I can think of are the words of the UN Secretary-General: 'I promise, I won't give up.'"

Kiara Worth

Kiara Worth from South Africa was official photographer to the Secretary-General at COP28, and is a niece of IEF board member Wendi Momen. This comes from her posting on Facebook on 14 December.



UN Secretary-General: 'I promise, I won't give up.'