

# COP28 Overview & SHE Changes Climate Strategic Engagement

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Concept note using a broad intersectionality approach

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## COP28 and the Climate Agenda in 2023: what is at stake ?

COP28 serves multiple roles in the rhythm of climate diplomacy this year:

- **As a Summit marking the first Global Stock Take (GST) of the Paris Agreement:** while recognizing that we are off track, it can be a critical milestone for the global community to address the climate emergency, bridge the ambition gap and accelerate climate action during these critical next few years;
- **As a political meeting of world leaders:** this is an opportunity to demonstrate political will and cooperation on one of the most pressing issues of our times, despite a challenging geopolitical context and a “polycrisis” impacting climate, people, security and nature;
- **As a UN negotiation forum:** COP28 must secure progress on important tracks including the Loss Damage Fund, the Global Goal on Adaptation, the phase down of fossil fuels and the energy transition as part of mitigation, and the new Post-2025 Climate Finance Goal and Finance Pact among others.

In its UNFCCC official communication released on July 14<sup>th</sup>, the UAE COP Presidency has recently defined a clear vision around 4 essential pillars of work or paradigm shifts for a systemic transformation of society:

1. **Fast-tracking the energy transition** and slashing emissions before 2030;
2. **Transforming climate finance** by delivering on old promises and setting the framework for a new deal on finance;
3. **Putting nature, people, lives and livelihoods at the heart of climate action;**
4. **Mobilizing for the most inclusive COP ever.**

**The goal for the formal negotiations is to achieve a balanced outcome on adaptation, finance, mitigation, loss and damage, finance and means of implementation** in a comprehensive manner while also identifying gaps. It should also rally all Parties to enhance their NDCs and NAPs and adopt long-term strategies to reach carbon neutrality in line with the 1.5°C target.

**The Action Agenda** will gather governments as well as Non-State-Actors to scale up solutions, finance, technology and practical implementation measures while galvanizing ambition across partners, champions and coalitions in each sector; this is organized around a two-day World Climate Action Summit on December 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, and a two-week program of thematic days from November 30<sup>th</sup> to December 12<sup>th</sup> (see below).

The UAE is also planning to release a **Call to Action** with a message to the world on how governments, industries and individuals can play their part in the exponential change needed to fast-track the transformation required according to science to secure a safe future for all.

## Who are the key actors being involved ?

**The UAE COP Presidency** is willing to play a very proactive role, in particular for the energy transition, investing both funding and political capital into the process, while sending and receiving mixed signals, which could make this COP one of the largest but also one of the most controversial COP in history.

The country is planning for a significant **increase in fossil fuel production and consumption, with an investment of USD 150 billion in oil and gas extraction through to 2027, to be compared to USD 15 billion in clean energy production, energy efficiency, electrification and CCS.**

To fulfill his job as **COP President, H.E. Sultan El Jaber** would need to demonstrate a clear separation between his role as COP President and his business leadership position as CEO of ADNOC. Without a clear firewall between the Presidency and the interests of the fossil fuel industry, it could be challenging to build trust with all Parties involved and civil society. An option could be to empower **H.E. Hana Al Hashimi, UAE Lead Climate Negotiator** to step up and lead on the most critical and political consultations with Parties to build trust in the process and unlock a strong negotiated outcome.

As SHE Changes Climate, we have already issued an important **Open Letter on the urgency of the firewall between the COP Presidency and the influence of the fossil fuel industry**, which was made public on **the 5th of June for the World Environment Day** and picked up by **France 24** and **TED Women** among others. We have also **raised this issue directly with Sultan El Jaber himself during the UNFCCC session in Bonn in June, as well as with Hana Al Hashimi during an extensive face to face private meeting in Bonn.**

Additional key figures in the UAE Presidency include:

- **Razan Al Mubarak**, UN Climate High-Level Champion & President of IUCN,
- **Mariam Almheiri**, UAE Minister of Climate and Environment,
- **Shamma Al Mazrui**, UAE Minister of State for Youth Affairs & Youth Climate Champion,
- **Majid Al-Suwaidi**, Director General of COP28.

The COP staff team include global experts from around the world (potentially 300+ people).

The COP Presidency also appointed a woman and a man, **Barbara Creecy, Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries of South Africa** and **Dan Jorgensen, Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy of Denmark** as co-chairs for the GST consultation process. The **UNFCCC Executive Secretary Simon Stiell** and the **UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres** are also likely to play important roles.

**Other institutional actors include key governments and negotiations blocs** such as the EU, the USA, China +G77, the BRICS, the Africa Group, the LDCs group, AOSIS, etc. G7/G20 Ministers and Heads of States are usually expected during the Summit at the start of COP. **Regional and local governments** are usually also very active on the topics of transport, cities, energy and local participation.

**Large industry coalitions and multinational companies** will also drive the action agenda, including heavy emitting sector producers and consumers for energy, as well as cement, steel and aluminum as part of the First Movers Coalition. **IFIs, Banks and insurance companies** also play a key role on climate finance.

**Civil society** will participate actively both on the inside and on the outside of COP, including Youth and Indigenous Peoples, Trade Unions, and other groups likely to increase pressure on the UAE Presidency and the largest emitters, using the **media** and social media to amplify their demands.

### **Key milestones:**

- 22-28 July: G20 Energy & Environment Ministers Meeting in Goa, India
- 24-26 July: UN Food Systems Stocktake in Rome, Italy
- 8-9 August: Amazon Summit in Belem, Brazil
- 20-24 August: World Water Week in Stockholm, Sweden
- 22-24 August: BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa
- **4-6 September: Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi, Kenya**
- **9-10 September: G20 Leaders Summit in New Delhi, India**
- **17-25 September: UNGA, SG Climate Ambition Summit, Climate Week in New York, USA**
- September (tbd): Global Stock Take report and Loss & Damage Ministerial
- 9-12 October: Middle East and North Africa Climate Week in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- **9-15 October: IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings in Marrakesh, Morocco**
- 23-27 October: Latin America and Caribbean Climate Week, Panama City, Panama
- 30-31 October: Pre-COP, most likely in the UAE
- 1-2 November: GST Workshop
- Late Autumn (tbd): Asia Pacific Climate Week
- **30 November- 12 December: COP28 in Dubai, UAE** including:
  - 1-2 December: World Climate Action Summit
  - 3 December: Health, Recovery and Peace
  - **4 December: Finance, Trade, Gender Equality, Accountability**
  - **5 December: Energy, Industry, Just Transition**
  - 6 December: Multilateral Action, Urbanization, Built Environment, Transport
  - **8 December: Youth, Children, Education and Skills**
  - **9 December: Nature, Land Use, Oceans**
  - **10 December: Food, Agriculture and Water**

### **Challenges and opportunities linked to the international geopolitical context**

Some of the main challenges for this COP will be in particular for the UAE COP Presidency to build trust and restore the environmental integrity of the process, given the increasing level of public scrutiny regarding the influence of the fossil fuel industry, with some precedent already last year at COP27 in Egypt.

The geopolitical context and economic consequences of the war in Ukraine are also deepening the tension on the issues of food security, energy prices, access to finance, debt and inflation, with the impacts of COVID-19 still being felt across societies, deepening social tensions and inequalities. The world 2023 is also expected to be affected by a very strong El Nino effect with upcoming natural disasters in Latin America and Asia Pacific.

SHE Changes Climate could position itself as a key influencing actor both on the inside and outside of the process, as a bridge builder, connector and honest broker for partnership building and global cooperation in an increasingly fragmented world. The risk is the widening gap and polarization between the North and the South, the richest and the poorest, the elite and the masses, the East and the West, etc. By being a facilitator and natural convener, SHE Changes Climate can however contribute to strengthening global

cooperation, climate action and peace-building by fostering a multi-stakeholder dialogue approach across various geographies and sectors for an inclusive and systemic transformation of society.

## **Proposals for SHE Changes Climate to leverage its communities and initiatives**

### **Strategic priorities and top policy asks**

SHE Changes Climate could focus its efforts on its core strategic priorities, which also align well with the climate action agenda in 2023 and where we could leverage the power of collective action by building synergies with our existing communities and partners in these sectors:

#### **1. Championing and advancing the 50:50 pledge:**

Our top ask is for a **50:50 balance** with at least 50% of women represented at all levels of decision-making; this is valid for the COP Presidency but also each negotiations track as well as for Country and NSA delegations.

We are also asking for a **meaningful engagement**, and beyond numbers, want to ensure that women are being given leadership roles to be at the negotiating tables as Heads of Delegations or Chairs or Co-Facilitators.

We have already made good progress on these asks, and see that women are being given leaderships roles (eg: Hana as Chief Negotiator and Razan as HL Champion) but there is still a big gap to be addressed if we look at the history of COP (only 4 women being COP Presidents in 28 years) and statistics from COP27 (36% of delegates and only 20% of Heads of Delegations were women).

After focusing on the COP Presidency level at the beginning of the campaign, SHE Changes Climate is now willing to take a more systematic approach to also target countries and NSA attending COP.

A coalition of gender champions and supporters has been emerging, with Ambassadors (mainly from the UN permanent missions in Geneva), diplomats and delegates from governments and NSA.

This document lays out the [background](#) about the 50:50 pledge and the very simple form to sign to express interest to endorse the pledge is also online [here](#). If easier for protocol, we are also inviting Member States to send their letter of intent using their own language.

Once received in written form, we will invite all Parties and also Non State Actors to join the coalition of gender champions for the multistakeholder convening at COP28, and we are keeping this open until December 1st.

**The countries** that have expressed positive support include:

- Finland
- Germany
- Costa Rica
- Norway
- Mexico
- Sweden
- Netherlands
- Australia
- Mauritius
- Maldives

- Hungary
- Spain
- Chile.

Hana Al Hashimi, Chief negotiator for the UAE COP28 Presidency and the Lubna Qsim Deputy Ambassador of the UAE Permanent Mission in Geneva also expressed their support but UAE has not positioned itself yet as a country.

**Non State Actors** include the International Federation of the Red Cross, the Cambridge Sustainability Institute which have already formally endorsed; IUCN and CAN International are looking at it positively for approval.

The pledge and sign-up form are available on the SCC website under our main section [“Take action”](#).

Making progress on this between now and December 1st will require a sustained engagement from SHE Changes Climate policy team and beyond to reach out to countries and secure online meetings as well as in-person consultations with countries represented by UN Permanent Missions. It is a heavy lift and long-term commitment and effort that may need the continued support of the campaign beyond COP28. Working in partnership with other women-led organizations and movements such as the Dandelion women leaders initiative and the WGC will also be essential to make further progress beyond our direct sphere of influence.

The other areas of work are important to highlight that we are also working on content and in broader environmental intersectionality context which requires a systemic approach. As we have limited capacity and resources dedicated to the delivery of the CHANEL Foundation grant agreement focused on the 50:50 vision, we would want to approach these other areas through a partnership engagement approach by leveraging collective action with other players that are already active and specialized in these sectors:

2. **Phasing out fossil fuels and fast-tracking a just and inclusive energy transition:** this work would be done in partnership with other players in this field, including for example the Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty team, the GGON network, the WEF Climate Ambition Initiative, the First Movers Coalition, the CEO Climate Leaders Alliance.
3. **Transforming climate finance and scaling up resources for Loss & Damage and access to the Early Warning System:** this work could be done in partnerships with the WGC and WEDO partners that are focusing in particular on the Loss & Damage track at COP28, and with humanitarian organizations on the Early Warning System.
4. **Putting nature, people, resilience, lives and livelihoods at the heart of climate action:** it connects with partners working on Ocean, Forests, Food, Water, for example the Women's Earth Alliance, Indigenous Peoples groups and organizations as well as some the Champions for Nature and the WEF led Nature Agenda,, etc.

### **Key events and multi stakeholder dialogues**

SHE Changes Climate may also want to consider building a new Partnership for People and the Planet (in the spirit of the One Planet Summit, the Finance Pact for all and the G20 topic of the year “One Earth, One Family, One Future” which could **bring together the various community leaders together through a more systemic and interconnected approach, valuing diversity and unifying the vision and agenda**

**to unlock positive impacts for climate, people and nature.** This could be done by convening a series of **High-Level Multi-stakeholder Dialogues, giving a voice to the ones who are the frontlines of climate impacts and connecting them to decision-makers,** a building a bridge between the UNFCCC and the CBD, as well as between the public, private and civil society sectors, growing an ecosystem of very diverse actors, with a long-term goal of achieving positive impacts within 3 to 4 years.

This can build upon the initial successful dialogue which took place on the World Environment Day in Geneva on June 5th and continue with a **second multi-stakeholder dialogue on the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> of December during COP28** (these are the days dedicated to Nature, Land Use, Oceans, Food, Agriculture and Water) and consolidating a more systemic approach through various work streams during other events at COP28 and then at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2024.

**The event at COP would aim at convening UN, government, private sector and civil society leaders, with a 50:50 balance of panelists** (hence walking the talk on the process), and a **broad geographical diversity.** We would invite in priority the **actors that have been championing the 50:50 pledge,** with the goal **putting the gender champions under the spotlight,** in the spirit of “**naming and faming**” the ones that are **leading by example** by doing the right thing.

The SHE Changes Climate **online Summit which will take place on the 21st of November** will also be essential to build an **inclusive space for women leaders from around the world to make their voices heard and prepare a widely shared priority list of top messages ahead of COP28.**

It will be co-created with the **SHE Changes Climate Ambassadors and will also support locally-led initiatives and events,** planting the seeds for potential local community-based chapters in the future.

### **Other areas we could be pursuing**

- **Leadership training, mentoring and capacity building** linked to the COP28 day on Youth Empowerment and Education
- **Systemic change and break-through innovation in finance and economics to bridge the inequality gap** linked to the COP28 day on gender and finance: the financial and economic incentives for keeping fossil fuels underground and more broadly the importance of systemic change in financial markets, the reform of IFIs and the Bridgetown initiative for debt cancellation and guarantees for the most vulnerable countries impacted by climate disasters, as well as innovative sources of finance such as financial transaction tax or maritime bunker fuel carbon market mechanisms to scale up resources for the new Loss & Damage and access to Early Warning Systems.

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