Climate Action Committee Statement on COP28 Achievements

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Through its Climate Action Committee (CAC), MENA2050 commends the work of the COP28 and salutes its unprecedented call to a transition away from fossil fuels. MENA2050 calls on the international community to build further on the achievement by the UAE presidency.

After Morocco, which gave birth to the Marrakech partnership in 2016, Egypt with the decision to create the loss and damage mechanism in 2022, the UAE has demonstrated the engagement of the region in adaption and mitigating climate change; the declaration for sustainable agriculture signed by over 150 countries is another example.

COP28 concluded with the landmark call to transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems, and one cannot underestimate the considerable importance of the first ever such language in a COP decision.

Climate negotiations and conferences are a highly complex and tense, difficult process, which must be apprehended holistically. It may seem deceptive and frustrating for many observers and activists, but what matters most is the transformational power of the process undertaken under the United Nations' umbrella and its centrality in helping the world correct its trajectory on global warming.

More to celebrate

There are many other successes to celebrate from the outcomes of COP28, notably the initial breakthrough on losses and damages, the extension of the methane pledge, the commitment to triple the world's renewable energy capacity by 2030 and the strong, science-based, recognition of the prominence of the 1,5 degree objective and of the 2050 net zero global target.

Also, it is remarkable that this COP has finally recognized the importance of civil nuclear energy's contribution to the ambitious implementation of the Paris Agreement, with 22 countries pledging to triple capacity, in a move that can support decarbonized growth, competitiveness and socioeconomic progress.

Within the Agriculture and food systems, notable achievements include the 'Emirates Declaration for sustainable agriculture, resilient food systems and climate action', signed by over 150 countries and the launch of FAO's Global Roadmap, aimed at eliminating hunger and all forms of malnutrition (SDG2) without exceeding the 1.5°C threshold set by the Paris Agreement.

The progress made with deployment of climate financing also cannot be underestimated as seen with the establishment of the Alterra Fund.

The UAE presidency still has a lot to achieve

The COP28 agreement comes after numerous unfulfilled promises and a 'stocktake' that shows the worldwide inertia of climate action. It comes at a time when crises are multiplying and exacerbated by climate change. It comes at a moment when natural disasters have become the norm instead of the exception.

In this context, it is regrettable for instance that the talks on article 6 collapsed. MENA2050 nevertheless takes into account the many developments in the world on carbon markets, carbon taxations and instruments such as the EU CBAM.

The challenge is to have building blocks for a universal regime that doesn't constitute WTO inconsistencies. MENA2050's Climate Action Committee calls on the international community to intensify efforts on carbon markets and price mechanisms. It hopes substantial progress will be made in the coming months under the UAE presidency.

Beyond the decisions --or lack of--, a powerful change underway

Although the COP28 agreement has, for the first time, called things by their name, the promises of Paris have not yet been fulfilled in terms of financing, adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer, and transparency mechanisms. The mechanism for loss and damage, whose operational framework is still unclear, has received only 2% of the needs of the most vulnerable countries.

However, MENA 2050's CAC recognizes that COPs should not be seen just on the criteria of negotiating decisions ; what they have created is a unique worldwide mobilization of all possible kinds of actors, stakeholders, in an organized way, and this is totally unprecedented as it reflects a profound transformational wave.

That's why it is of paramount importance to keep supporting this movement--and in this regard COP28 has been a re-energizing exercise--while continuing to act at all levels to achieve much beyond COP decisions. As stressed in the final text of the COP28, the Parties "welcome that the Paris Agreement has driven near-universal climate action by setting goals and sending signals to the world regarding the urgency of responding to the climate crisis".

Considering the current state of fragmentation of the international system, the "UAE Consensus" at COP28 is a brilliant climate diplomacy achievement which constitutes a much-needed reaffirmation of the benefits of international cooperation and of the indispensability of a robust and inclusive multilateralism.

While this agreement may have held oil-producing countries and industries accountable and recognized the role of nuclear energy in the energy mix, there is still a long way to go. The end, even if it seems to be starting at COP28, still has many days ahead, days that can prove to be very hot or very rainy.

MENA2050 congratulates the UAE for this successful COP and the leadership of H.E. Dr Sultan Al Jaber and his committed and hardworking team. We respectfully call on the UAE to maintain a positive pressure on global action throughout its one year COP presidency that just started: the UAE and all mobilized forces can continue to make a difference in the coming year to solidify the outcomes and continue to foster progress and prosperity.

About MENA2050

MENA2050 (www.mena2050.org) is an inclusive and a neutral organization committed to driving regional development and fostering hope in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Led by numerous members from 20 regional countries, including Palestinians and Israelis, MENA2050 represents a diverse group of policymakers, strategists, businesspersons, scientists, media figures, civil society leaders, entrepreneurs, and other influential figures. Through extensive online meetings and workshops held throughout the region, we have collaboratively established a shared vision and a values-based declaration for the MENA region in 2050.

Our vision is stability, prosperity, and hope for our great region, based on regional cooperation and development. This vision revolves around 20 domains crucial to the

region's progress, including healthcare, climate change, food and water security, education, women's empowerment, and more. Our mission is to drive a positive mindset and promote regional development and cooperation through policies and projects. We offer transformative projects designed to tackle the region's challenges and unlock its potential through wide-scale regional development and create a better and more hopeful future for the next generations in the MENA region.