



The World Economic Forum's 5 major priorities for climate action at COP28

The 28th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP28) which will be held in the UAE from 30th November - 12th December 2023, with four cross-cutting themes aimed at tackling the causes of climate change and managing the impacts of a warming planet: Technology and Innovation; Inclusion; Frontline Communities and Finance.

At COP28, the World Economic Forum (WEF) will focus on key priorities of climate actions for high-level delegates to discuss and find effective solutions.

1. THE FIRST GLOBAL STOCKTAKE ON CLIMATE ACTION PROGRESS

The majority of agreed international climate targets are embedded within the Paris Agreement on climate change and the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals. At the halfway point for meeting climate goals by the target date of 2030, COP28 will host a “global stocktake” to measure progress in detail, identify areas of failure and reinvigorate commitment to ensure climate pledges are turned into action.

2. SPEEDING THE ENERGY TRANSITION

Reducing carbon emissions from fossil fuels will be critical to keeping the 1.5°C target alive. According to a study published in the journal *Earth System Science Data*, greenhouse gas emissions are now at an all-time high. The same study says the rate of emissions is slowing but the target set in the Paris Agreement is in immediate jeopardy. This is a critical decade: human-induced global warming rates are at

their highest historical level, and 1.5°C global warming might be expected to be reached or exceeded within the next 10 years.

Accelerating the energy transition inclusively and sustainably will sit high on the agenda at COP28. Discussions will focus on the rapid scaling up of renewable energy, how innovations like hydrogen fuels and carbon capture technologies can help reduce emissions. At the same time, delegates will look for pathways to ensure the energy transition benefits developing nations and minority communities in equal measure, to deliver a just transition that leaves nobody behind.

3. PUTTING PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF CLIMATE ACTION

Climate change is already impacting human health across the world. Air pollution blights lives in cities and millions in developing countries live with water shortages or supplies that are a danger to health.

At COP28, delegates will discuss on initiatives that be designed to “protect lives and livelihoods and support community resilience and stability” in the face of the advancing effects of climate change. High-level discussions will take place around health, relief, recovery and peace. There will also be a focus on regions of the world consumed by conflict and beset by a range of issues that make climate mitigation and adaptation extremely difficult.

4. CLIMATE FINANCE AND THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL TRADE

Global trade has been a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions - with production and distribution responsible for around 25% of global emissions. Trade Day at COP28 will explore the potential for trade to reduce emissions across the value chain and grow markets for climate-friendly products such as electric vehicles and non-plastic packaging.

Providing equitable financing for climate action and adaptation will be critical in keeping 1.5°C alive. Many developing countries are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis and are struggling to access the adaptation and mitigation funding they need. COP28 will dedicate a day to climate finance in an attempt to ensure affordable sustainable development finance is available to all stakeholders. In addition to the financial aspects of food and agriculture, and the nature ecosystems pillars, the Forum is also working with the COP28 Presidency to explore potential outcomes for financing the net zero transition.





The WEF's Centre for Nature and Climate is a multistakeholder platform that seeks to safeguard our global commons and drive systems transformation. It is accelerating action on climate change towards a net-zero, nature-positive future:

Scaling up green technologies: Through a partnership with the US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry, and over 65 global businesses, the First Movers Coalition has committed US\$ 12 billion in purchase commitments for green technologies to decarbonize the cement and concrete industry.

1 trillion trees: Over 90 global companies have committed to conserve, restore and grow more than 8 billion trees in 65 countries through the 1t.org initiative - which aims to achieve 1 trillion trees by 2030.

Sustainable food production: The WEF's Food Action Alliance is engaging 40 partners who are working on 29 flagship initiatives to provide healthy, nutritious, and safe foods in ways that safeguard our planet. In Vietnam, it supported the upskilling of 2.2 million farmers and aims to provide 20 million farmers with the skills to learn and adapt to new agricultural standards.

Eliminating plastic pollution: The WEF's Global Plastic Action Partnership is bringing together governments, businesses and civil society to shape a more sustainable world through the eradication of plastic pollution. In Ghana, more than 2,000 waste pickers are making an impact cleaning up beaches, drains and other sites.

Protecting the ocean: The WEF's 2030 Water Resources Group has facilitated almost US\$ 1 billion to finance water-related programs, growing into a network of more than 1,000 partners and operating in 14 countries/states.

Circular economy: The WEF's SCALE 360 initiative is reducing the environmental impacts of value chains within the fashion, food, plastics and electronics industries, positively impacting over 100,000 people in 60 circular economy interventions globally.

5. BROADER LEADERSHIP ON CLIMATE CHANGE

COP28 will also look to engage a broader range of leaders to convert climate pledges into action. The COP28 Local Climate Action Summit will bring together hundreds of mayors, governors and leaders from business and NGOs who play a critical role in implementing climate policy at city and regional levels in their home countries.

Recognizing the impact these sub - national leaders can deliver, United Nations Secretary - General António Guterres said: "Cities are where the climate battle will largely be won or lost. We all need to push further and faster; keep collaborating, innovating and raising ambition. Mobilizing and equipping local governments with the capacity and financing to accelerate climate action is necessary if we are to bend the emissions curve".

COP28 President - designate Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber added: "By bringing hundreds of local leaders to COP28, we will foster new, multi-level partnerships to help fast - track the energy transition, fix climate finance, focus on people, lives and livelihoods, and make sure local voices are heard at the international climate table".

Looking ahead to the next 10 years, climate and environmental risks dominate global risk perception, with failure to mitigate climate change the most pressing, according to the WEF's Global Risk Report 2023 ■

MAI HƯƠNG

(Source: World Economic Forum)

As the impacts of climate change continue to increase, concerns over climate risks are compelling companies and organizations to invest in carbon offsetting. Voluntary initiatives serve as a strategic approach employed by corporations to enhance their environmental performance and foster innovation for climate solutions.

Barriers to the development of voluntary carbon offsetting

Almost a fifth of global emissions are now covered by some kind of carbon market, and the cumulative value of all of those was an estimated US\$ 850 billion (€ 768.1 billion) in 2021. But we still need to do more if we are to reach net zero emissions by 2050. More companies than ever are aware of the severity of the challenge we face, and they are searching for ways to be part of the global solution to the climate crisis.

To address climate risks, a carbon offset broadly refers to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions - or an increase in carbon storage (through land restoration or the planting of trees) - that is used to compensate for emissions that occur elsewhere. Although, voluntary carbon offsetting has picked up steam in recent years, these offsets are definitely not perfect. For instance, there is no internationally defined standard for what constitutes a valid offset, meaning schemes can be marketed to businesses with little oversight. Companies with good intentions have to navigate an oversupply of low-quality offsets that do little to actually remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in a permanent way. Companies can easily offset today's emissions against new forest growth that may not begin to store significant amounts of carbon for another 70 years and which might not grow successfully at all.