

## A forceful call for climate action by world leaders

Dubai, 2 Dec (Eqram Mustaqeem) - The second day of the COP28 Dubai climate talks on 1 Dec. witnessed the convergence of over 100 world leaders for the opening of a high event called the World Climate Action Summit, which marked the start of the day's itinerary packed with high-level ministerial events. The world leaders made a forceful call for climate action.

The Summit commenced with a welcoming speech delivered by the **President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan**, followed by a call to action by the **UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres**. The distinguished speakers list continued with the **King of the United Kingdom, King Charles III** and the **President of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva**. The opening of the Summit ended with an address by **Isabel Prestes Da Fonseca** from **Brazil**, representing the voice of the indigenous peoples.

The **President** of the **UAE** pointed out that “this meeting comes at a time when the world faces many challenges, the most significant and crucial of which is climate change and its impact on all aspects of life”. He continued with highlighting UAE's record in climate action, emphasising its prior financial commitment of investing USD\$100 billion in climate action primarily on renewable

Noting the lack of readily available and affordable climate finance being an obstacle to advancing climate action globally, the President of the UAE announced the establishment of a USD\$30 billion fund for global climate solutions to bridge the climate finance gap, ensuring availability and accessibility, as well as affordability at scale with the final objective of stimulating the collection of USD250 billion in investments by 2030.

The **UN Secretary General** congratulated the COP28 UAE Presidency for the swift adoption of the landmark decision for the operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund (that happened at the opening day of the COP). He remarked that “we are facing a sickness that is bringing the climate to its knees; a sickness that only global leaders can cure”, adding “that the Earth's vital signs are failing and that we are miles away from the goal of the Paris Agreement and minutes to midnight for the 1.5 C limit and we can only prevent planetary crash and burn if we act now.”

Guterres stated that the world is unequal and divided, that bombs are sounding again in Gaza, and climate chaos is fanning the flames of injustice, global heating is bursting budgets, ballooning food prices and upending energy markets and feeding a cost of living crisis, but

climate action can flip the switch. He remarked that the diagnosis is clear.

“The success of the COP depends on the Global Stocktake (GST) prescribing a credible cure in three areas: firstly, by drastically cutting emissions, adding that the G20 that represents 80% of the world’s emissions must take the lead in emission cuts and urged countries to speed up their net zero timeline - 2040 for developed countries and 2050 for emerging economies.”

“Secondly, by accelerating a just and equitable transition to renewables. The science is clear; the 1.5C target is achievable only if we stop the burning of all fossil fuels, a phase out is needed, not reduce, not abate but a phase-out with a clear time frame aligned with 1.5C.”

“Thirdly, climate justice is long overdue; developing countries are devastated by disasters they did not cause, extortionate borrowing costs are blocking their national climate action plans and support is far too little and far too late. The GST must result in a surge in finance for adaptation and loss and damage and it must support reform of the multilateral development banks to leverage private finance at minimal cost for developing countries.”

The UNSG further remarked that developed countries must show how they will deliver the financial promises of doubling adaptation finance to USD\$40 billion a year by 2025 as well as the annual USD\$100 billion target. He concluded his speech by urging world leaders to show leadership in protecting the climate and make this COP count.

**King Charles III** asked world leaders to consider some practical questions to inform their tasks; on how multilateral organisations, which were established at a different time for different challenges, be strengthened for the climate crisis we face and the question of bringing together our public, private, philanthropic and non-government organisations in delivering climate finance. He stated that public finance alone will never be sufficient, but with the private sector we could mobilise trillions of dollars to drive the transformation we need.

He asked further on how can we bring together

different solutions and initiatives to ensure coherent long-term approaches across sectors, countries and industries and on accelerating innovation and the deployment of renewable energy, of clean technology and other green alternatives to move decisively towards investment in this vital transition across all industries, and on how can we forge an ambitious new vision for the next 100 years.

Lastly, he asked how can we draw on the extraordinary ingenuity of our societies, the ideas, knowledge and energy of our young people, our artists, our engineers, our communicators and importantly our indigenous peoples, to imagine a sustainable future for people everywhere, a future that is in harmony with nature, not set against her.

King Charles III ended his speech by emphasising that we are all connected, not only as human beings but with all living things and all that sustains life and that the earth does not belong to us, we belong to the earth.

The **President of Brazil** began his forceful speech by quoting Nobel Prize Laureate Wangari Maathai of Kenya that “the generation that destroys the environment is not the generation that will pay for the price”.

Lula emphasised that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that we only have until the end of this decade to avoid global temperatures going beyond 1.5°C and that 2023 is already the hottest year in the last 125,000 years with humanity suffering from natural disasters that are more extreme and frequent that resulted in a lot of destruction and death.

Lula stressed further that the planet is tired of neglected goals to reduce carbon emissions and climate agreements that were not fulfilled, adding that financing to the poor never comes, as they are only elegant and empty speeches without concrete actions.

The Brazilian President highlighted that only last year, the world had spent more than USD 2 trillion on weapons, amounts that could be invested to fight hunger and to confront climate change. He asked “How many tons of carbon were emitted by missiles that cruise over the skies and fall over

innocent civilians, mainly children that are hungry,” adding that “the amount that has to be paid for climate change is not the same for all and the first one to pay the price are the poor”.

He continued by saying that “the richest 1% of the planet emits the same volume of carbon as 66% of the global population and that the world has naturalised the unacceptable disparities in terms of income, gender and race” adding that “confronting climate change must come with fighting inequalities as those who are in hunger have their existence imprisoned by the pain in the present and become incapable to think about the future, about tomorrow.”

Lula recalled that in 2009, when he participated COP15 in Copenhagen, the climate change regime almost collapsed, as the negotiations failed and a great effort was needed to recover the trust and achieve the Paris Agreement in 2015. He noted that he sees parallels of that potential collapse today through the non-fulfilment of the climate commitments that erodes the credibility of the multilateral regime and it is important to rescue it.

The Brazilian President continued further that it is inexplicable that the UN shows itself as incapable in keeping peace simply because some of its’ members profit from war.

He also said that it is regrettable that the agreements from the Kyoto Protocol of 1997 or the Paris Agreements of 2015 are not being implemented.

Lula said further that Brazil has climate change goals that are more ambitious than many developed countries and is willing to lead as a role model for climate action, adding that now is the time to face the debate about the slow-motion pace of the de-carbonization of the planet and to work towards an economy that will be less reliant on fossil fuels in a way that is urgent and fair.

The President of Brazil concluded that all of us must aim to make the world capable of hosting with dignity the totality of their inhabitants and not only a privileged minority.

**Isabel Prestes Da Fonseca** said that only 2% of her indigenous community’s sacred biome still survives and that the Zag Tree, their millennia-old ancestor, is on the verge of extinction and how their ancestors predicted and warned about the future when the world would need their indigenous knowledge. She emphasised that we are no longer just protecting the future, but protecting against what is happening now. She ended her speech by inviting everyone to join the climate mission and become part of this journey for the regeneration of nature and life.

Shortly after, at the ceremonial opening of the high-level segment for heads of states and governments, the **Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi**, delivered his speech and stated that despite India being home to 17% of the world's population, their share of global carbon emissions is less than 4%. He highlighted further the need to increase climate finance commitments from billions to several trillions.

Modi then mooted the India’s ‘Green Credits Initiative’, a campaign that goes beyond the commercial mind-set associated with carbon credits, where it focuses on creating carbon sinks through community participation.

The Indian PM also stressed that “We don’t have much time to correct the mistakes of the last century. Over the past century a small segment of humanity has indiscriminately exploited nature; however, the entire humanity is paying the price for it, especially people in the Global South”.

He also stressed the need to give all developing countries their fair share of the carbon budget and to move climate action forward by maintaining a balance between adaptation, mitigation, climate finance, technology and loss and damage and emphasised that the energy transition should be just, inclusive and equitable.

The President of India ended his speech by emphasising India’s commitment to the UNFCCC and offered that India host COP33 in 2028.