

Day 1

I had the privilege of travelling to Dubai to attend the COP 28 as an observer provided so kindly by CAN International. I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to Harjeet Singh of CAN Int. and University of Liberal Arts Vice Chancellor Prof. Imran Rahman and Professor Samiya Selim, Director of Center of Sustainable Development for providing this incredible opportunity.



Attending COP 28 for the first time was exhilarating and a very overwhelming experience – nothing really prepared me for the scale of this event. Getting early and through the opportunity gate saved plenty of time. With more than 70,000 people showing up for COP 28 everyday getting through the gates to the Blue Zone was 30 minutes to sometimes an hour-long affair. I would give credit to the UAE organizers for excellent crowd control and the free cold water to avoid dehydration during these waiting periods. Once inside navigating through the blue zone and the green zone was complicated and an adventure every day. The first two days I had a difficult time finding the locations of the events I was intending to attend. From the 3rd day I had decided to give up attending as many sessions as possible and only attend events spaced with 15 to 20 minutes apart.

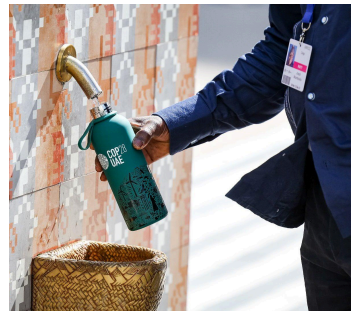
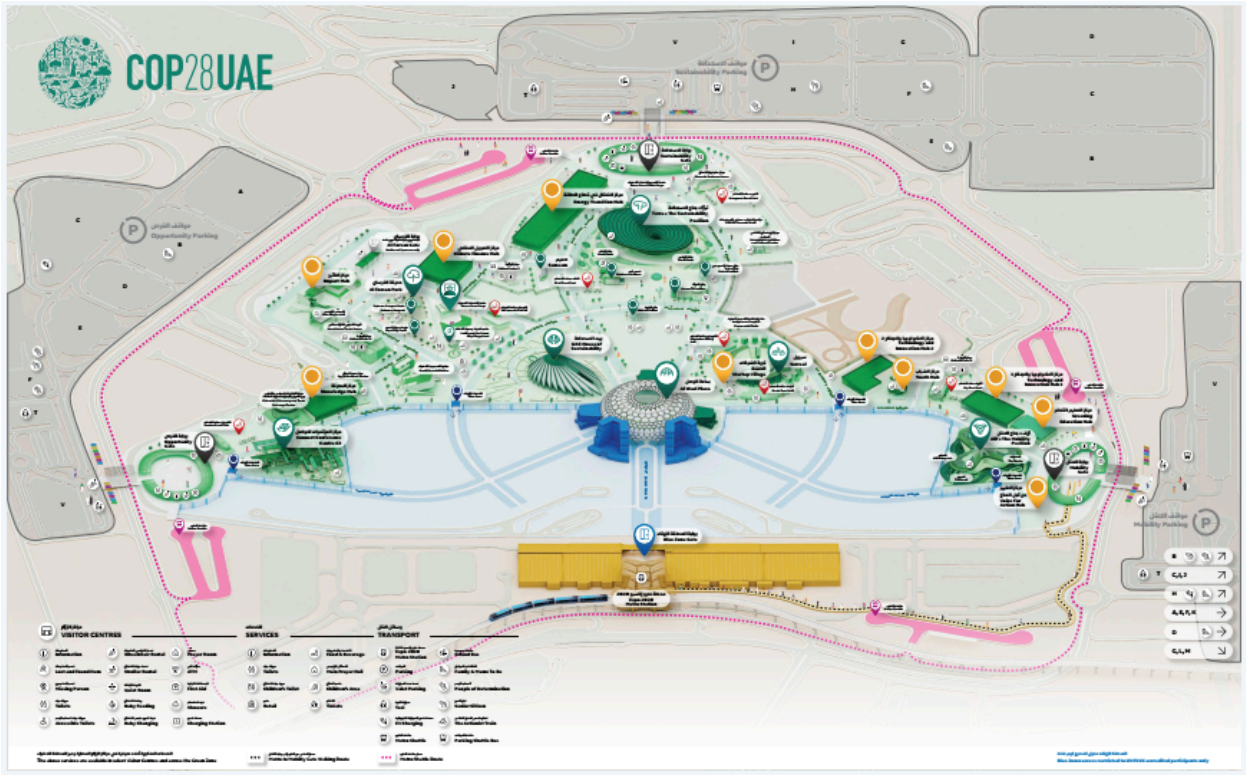


On the first day after visiting the different zones in the Blue Zone (there were 7 different zones in the blue zone) and the different stalls in the green zone I attended the opening ceremony. The opening ceremony started with the president of COP 27 Sameh Shukry handing over the presidency baton over to Sheikh Sultan Al Jaber of UAE and officially the COP 28 began. The session began with an outpouring of remembrance and respect to two climate scientists of our times who passed away in 2023 - Professor. Saleemul Huq from Bangladesh and Pete Betts from the United Kingdom. I attended many such tribute events paid to Prof. Saleemul Huq throughout COP28. His absence was felt and he was missed by people coming from across the globe with many of these remembrance sessions ending in very emotional exchanges.

The ending of Day 1 at COP 28 was monumental. With a standing ovation from delegates, attendees the operationalization of a Loss and Damage Fund was approved with the UAE pledging the first 100 Million dollars in the fund followed by few other countries. This move was strategic for multiple reasons first UAE pledging the first 100 Million put burden on other polluter countries to pledge an amount for the fund. Second the announcement of the fund provided the delegates plenty of time to agree to a comprehensive, ambitious GST (Global Stocktake) decision over the two weeks. Initial pledges totaled 420 million on the first day, very way off from the billions needed to assist developing countries responding to economic and non-economic loss and damages associated with adverse effects of climate change. National contributions after



the two weeks stands at \$700 million. This is only 0.2 % of what is actually needed for the loss and damage fund. So, filling the Loss and Damage Fund is the next big priority for all of us.



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