

# From COP 27 to COP 28

## Experiences, Reflections and Recommendations

June 21, 2023



**Swedish Dialogue Institute**  
for the Middle East and North Africa

## Executive summary

On June 21st, the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa organized a digital roundtable discussion titled *"From COP 27 to COP 28 - Experiences, Reflections, and Recommendations"*. The objective was to gather climate experts and activists of diverse backgrounds and ages from the MENA region and Sweden to reflect on the experiences from attending COP27 and to exchange ideas and shape recommendations for the upcoming COP28. The discussion focused on inclusivity, sustainable development, and promoting participatory processes.

During the discussions, participants shared key takeaways from COP27, reflected on generational gaps in climate decision-making, and provided concrete recommendations for enhanced inclusivity at COP28.

Some of the key points raised and take-aways from the discussion included:

- In addressing climate change, adaptation and mitigation strategies should be employed together. These strategies complement each other and form a comprehensive approach to climate change.
- The inception of the UN's Loss and Damage Fund Transitional Committee during COP27 highlights the need for a trust-building framework between the global north and global south, crucial for assisting low-income, climate-vulnerable nations in managing climate change impacts. It is vital to engage major oil companies in conversations about climate change to increase their understanding and motivate them to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- To bridge the generational gaps in climate decision-making, it is essential to enable youth participation and inclusion. This can include, for example, the provision of negotiation and mediation training prior to attending COPs, support in the visa application process for climate activists, particularly those from the Global South as well as ensuring equal speaking time for young and old.
- To maintain momentum in addressing the climate agenda in the MENA region beyond COP28, countries in the global north and south must prioritize the needs and solutions of those most impacted by climate change. In this the Dialogue Institute should continue to organize regular roundtables involving participants from both the MENA region and Europe.

## Detailed report

In June 21, the Swedish Dialogue Institute hosted an online roundtable discussion titled *"From COP 27 to COP 28 - Experiences, Reflections, and Recommendations"*, gathering a group of climate experts and activists of diverse backgrounds and ages from the MENA region and Sweden. Most of the participants were engaged in earlier activities that the Dialogue Institute had arranged on climate, including [\*"Building bridges between youth and climate advocates in the MENA Region and Europe"\*](#) ahead of COP27. Some of them had also either attended COP27 or previous COP meetings.

The purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for young climate advocates to reflect on experiences from COP27 and contribute with concrete recommendations on strengthening engagement and inclusive participation for COP28.

## Introductory remarks

In her welcoming remarks Charlotta Sparre, the Director of the Dialogue Institute provided a recap of the Institute's work on climate and environment in the MENA region. She highlighted the links between peace and sustainable development and emphasized the institute's work on inclusive participation. Over the past years the Institute has organized numerous meetings and discussions, fostering collaboration and connectivity among professionals and activists from the MENA region and Europe. These meetings have aimed at sharing best practices, experiences, and expectations, specifically targeting youth and climate experts. Sparre stressed that the Institute's approach to climate work is collaborative, designed to transcend regional boundaries and to bring together climate experts from both the MENA region and Europe, in both digital and physical settings.

Carmen Lopez, MENA-Regional Program Manager at the Swedish Development Cooperation section of the Swedish Embassy in Amman, briefed the participants about the priority areas of Sweden's regional development cooperation strategy for the Middle East and North Africa 2021–2025<sup>1</sup>.

Erike Tanghøj, Deputy Director of the Dialogue Institute presented an overview of the institute's work on Intergenerational Dialogue, a work that is relevant to issues related to climate, sustainable development, inclusivity, and peace and security. Erike emphasized the importance of dialogue across generations as an effective tool for inclusive participation. One of the key objectives is to mitigate conflicts and bridge gaps between different generational identities. These gaps and conflicts can arise not only from age differences but also from diverse backgrounds and varied life experiences, among other factors.

The discussion later revolved around three areas, including 1) key takeaways from COP27, 2) reflections on generational gaps in climate and environmental decision-making, 3) concrete recommendations for strengthening the engagement and inclusive participation in COP28.

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<sup>1</sup> [Strategy for Sweden's regional development cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa 2021–2025 - Government.se](#)

## Key take-aways and experiences from attending COP27

The participants discussed a wide range of key take-aways from the 27th annual Conference of the Parties (COP27) held in Sharm Al-Sheikh, Egypt. They highlighted that holding the COP27 in Egypt and the COP28 in UAE had brought the climate agenda more to the forefront in the MENA region and had contributed to broader regional conversations about this vital global issue.

A couple of participants mentioned the establishment of the UN Loss and Damage Fund Transitional Committee, during COP27, and argued that this marked a significant milestone in the global collective climate action journey. This committee was specifically created to help low-income countries that are particularly vulnerable to the harmful effects of climate change. The creation of such a mechanism reemphasized the urgent necessity for building a robust trust framework between countries in the global south and global north. Trust and cooperation form the bedrock of any effective climate change management and mitigation strategy.

***“The establishment of the UN Loss and Damage Fund to aid low-income nations in battling the impacts of climate change underscores the urgency for a roadmap built on mutual trust between the Global North and South.”***

(Young Swedish participant)

However, one of the participants also noted that during the conference, there had been those who put an excessive emphasis on the north-south divide. This tendency, regrettably, risked being used by particular interest groups, e.g. by interests from the oil industry to delay the green energy transition. The participant also warned that stressing the divide might also distract from shared objectives of addressing the climate crisis.

Participants also highlighted that discussions and debates at COP27 had underscored that adaptation and mitigation strategies should not be seen as separate, but rather as interconnected, often synergistic tools in the fight against climate change. The participants stressed the importance of maintaining a holistic and effective approach to tackle the complex challenges of climate change.

In terms of areas for improvement for future COP meetings, was the role and preparation of young participants. Participants agreed that the youth, being key stakeholders need to be given a chance to make meaningful contributions in the preparation of and during the COP. To ensure voices of young men and women are heard and considered, there is a need to develop more structured and comprehensive strategies to enhance their capacities and access. Concrete recommendations included better preparations for events such as the COP meetings, as well as offering continuous training on mediation and negotiation techniques, communication, etc.

## **Addressing Generational Gaps and Enhancing Inclusive Participation in Climate Decision-Making at COP Meetings**

Reflecting on the generational gaps prevalent in climate and environmental policy work and decision making, the participants stressed the essential need to bridge these gaps. Despite initiatives to encourage inclusivity, they reminded that many obstacles remain, e.g. visa access issues and high accommodation costs significantly restricting involvement of certain groups, especially young people from the global south, incl. from the MENA region. These obstacles unintentionally (or intentionally) create exclusion. All participants emphasized the need for strategies that ensure broader participation.

Moreover, it was mentioned that enhanced communication is a vital component in achieving this inclusivity. Regular updates from youth representatives at such international conferences can bridge the gap between attendees and their communities. This approach would not only amplify the voices of youth delegates but also create a dynamic feedback loop, ensuring that diverse communities are adequately represented.

Additionally, the drive for equality in participation stood out as a central theme during the discussions. To accurately represent the diversity of society in climate discussions, it is crucial to allocate equal speaking time to all parties involved, with a specific emphasis on ensuring the active involvement of underrepresented groups, such as women and youth.

To make COP meetings more inclusive, participants underlined the importance of delegations considering input from observers as well as main speakers. A practical strategy to facilitate this would be to integrate a speaking list of observers and speakers. Typically, observers, are often scheduled to speak last, present their remarks to a significantly reduced audience. By intermixing the speaking list, observers can deliver their comments to a more attentive and larger audience, thereby encouraging a more democratic and inclusive dialogue on climate change.

## **Discussion on concrete recommendations and actions for strengthening the engagement and inclusive participation of COP 28. What can Sweden do?**

During the final part of the meeting, participants provided concrete recommendations aimed at bolstering engagement and promoting inclusive participation at COP28. Special attention was paid to the role that Sweden and the Swedish Dialogue Institute could play in this process.

- It is vital to engage major oil companies in conversations about climate change. One suggestion brought forward was to facilitate dialogue with oil companies, with an aim to amplify these companies' understanding of climate change and stimulate them to take proactive measures to lower greenhouse gas emissions.

- To bridge the generational gaps in climate decision-making, it is essential to enable meaningful youth participation and inclusion. This can include, for example, the provision of negotiation and mediation training prior to attending COPs, support in the visa application process for climate activists, particularly those from the Global South as well as ensuring equal speaking time for young and old.
- To maintain momentum in addressing the climate agenda in the MENA region beyond COP28, countries in the global north and the global south must prioritize the needs and solutions of those most impacted by climate change. In this regard, the Dialogue Institute should continue to organize regular roundtables involving participants from both the MENA region and Europe.
- It was underscored that the narrative surrounding climate change must evolve to frame it as both a developmental and security issue. This comprehensive viewpoint is likely to encourage broader commitment and a more holistic approach to combating climate change.
- To maintain momentum in addressing the climate agenda in the MENA region beyond COP28, Sweden along with all countries should continue to engage with initiatives undertaken by the youth, by encouraging cooperative efforts, and by cultivating relationships among diverse stakeholders.
- The Dialogue Institute was encouraged to continue facilitating regular roundtables, bringing together individuals from the MENA region and Europe, as these meetings serve as a platform to foster increase mutual understanding, dialogue, and collaboration. Specifically, the Institute was urged to prioritize direct conversations among the youth from EuroMed area, focusing on addressing environmental justice, with a particular emphasis on climate justice. Through such measures, the road to COP28 promises to be one marked by collaboration, inclusivity, and targeted action.

***“To truly reflect the broad spectrum of society in the climate debate, equal speaking time must be given, with special attention to inclusive participation of youth and of women.”***

(One of the participants)