

Somalia's participation in Cop28 Dubai marked a visible return after a prolonged absence from international arenas and forums, including those organized by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This re-emergence follows the conclusion of Cop27 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, just last year, a significant step by the country in such global platforms.

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, as the vanguard of the country's full participation, mobilized talented individuals, financial resources, and technology several months in advance to ensure a seamless delivery of the highly anticipated and elevated event in Dubai compared to Cop27 in Sharm El Sheikh.

Conference Of Parties is an annual event. The COP28, hosted by United Arab Emirates (UAE) Government in Dubai (source: <https://sdg.iisd.org/events/2023-un-climate-change-conference-unfccc-cop-28/>), took place from November 30th to December 12th, 2023. Over 170 countries participated in the conference, culminating in significant agreements on phasing out fossil fuels, easing climate finance for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and other measures aimed at mitigating and adapting to environmental challenges worldwide.

Under the leadership of Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), Somalia assembled large delegations, including representatives from Environment, Energy, Agriculture, Health, and Women and Gender Equality Ministries, as well as from Quangos, local NGOs, and Climate Change Experts and members of the media. The Ministry's strategy focused on active participation, highlighting the increased climatic change calamities the country faces and devastating impact on lives and livelihoods.



Source: Somalia Pavilion at Cop28 Dubai

Recent data indicates, Somalia is facing the brunt of climate change, with environmental disasters and unstable weather patterns leading to ongoing humanitarian crises. The country is particularly vulnerable to global warming, experiencing frequent floods, prolonged droughts, and intense summer heat. Due to its fragile state and ongoing conflicts, Somalia lacks the necessary resources to effectively address these climate challenges. As a result, the country relies on delayed external assistance, leading to immense suffering, internal displacement, and loss of lives.

Recently elevated from a directorate to a Ministry by the current Government, the MoECC has been prioritizing environmental issues since its establishment just over a year ago.

The primary focus of this Ministry is to highlight the negative impacts of climate change both local and at international platform with particular emphasis on the Horn of Africa region.

Since its inception, MoECC has made significant progress at a national level by formulating climate policies, enacting meteorology laws, and launching campaigns aimed at combating climate change through widespread tree planting initiatives across Somalia. Notably, at Cop28, Somalia was granted admission and secured a seat at the Inter-Governmental Task Force on Climate Adaptation Finance. The goal of this task force is to expedite access to climate finance for developing and conflict affected countries like Somalia.

Currently, it takes up to four years for funding approvals after submission. MoECC's role in this global climate debate involves advocating for faster funding processes specifically for communities that are severely affected by climate change and whose economic development is hindered as a result. During Cop28 discussions among delegates from Least Developed Countries (LDCs), there was an emphasis on the need for support in capacity building efforts as well as technology transfer and financing options that can help mitigate and adapt to the challenges posed by climate change in these nations.

Somali Pavilion Cop 28 Dubai

The remarkable achievement of Somalia at Cop28 can be partially attributed to the introduction of an innovative Pavillion. This Pavillion, functioning as a small-scale exhibition center, was specifically designed to showcase the country's strengths and identify areas for improvement in addressing climate change. Embellished with cultural artifacts, artworks, national symbols, and banners, it was inaugurated by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamuud. Not only did it become a focal point for high-level meetings and panel discussions involving Somali representatives and their international partners, but it also facilitated bilateral and multilateral conversations on climate-related issues and economic development. Furthermore, the Platform provided the platform for the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change to unveil two crucial documents in combating environmental disasters that plague Somalia: the flagship Climate Change Strategic Plan for 2023 to 2028 and the Nationally Determined Contribution that extends until 2030.



Source: Somalia Pavilion at Cop28 Dubai

More so, the Pavilion was a powerful symbol of Somalia's resurgence as a nation, where Somali officials warmly welcomed foreign delegates. They effectively highlighted the significant environmental obstacles that the country has faced in recent years, emphasizing the urgent need for timely action and adequate resources.

Although there was a one-day delay in the conference due to disagreements about phasing out fossil fuels, after extensive negotiations, an agreement was finally reached. This groundbreaking agreement marked the beginning of a projected decline in fossil fuel usage as an energy source. The delegates also found common ground on various other initiatives, such as establishing a fund to compensate Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for financial losses caused by climate change and damages resulting from emissions by developed nations over the past century. Furthermore, plans were made to convene UNFCCC Cop29 in Azerbaijan in November 2024.

For Somalia, achieving post-debt relief through HIPC and successfully joining the Climate Finance Adaptation Committee (including both developed and developing countries) aims to alleviate barriers to accessing climate finance for LDCs. Looking back at this event, it is clear that Somalia's Ministry of Environment and Climate Change played a pivotal role in organizing Cop28 Dubai and UNFCCC meetings. Observers at Cop28 Dubai and beyond are optimistic that Somalia is ready to overcome its previous challenges.

However, international support in addressing Somalia's climate-related disasters has been slow and somewhat limited. It is crucial for Somalia as a nation to develop a comprehensive resilience strategy involving not only government entities but also private sectors, civil societies, and affected communities alike.

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