

Report on The Conference of Parties 28, COP28

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Introduction

This report aims to reflect on my first-hand experience at the Conference of the Parties 28 or COP28 and demonstrate my insights gained and contribution to COP28. This report will provide an overall summary of my learnings, contributions, and key takeaways. This year I had the opportunity to attend the COP28 as a youth fellow from the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD). I have represented myself on the platform as a youth from Bangladesh. The COP is an annual climate meeting of the United Nations, and this is the 28th COP. COP28th took place in Expo City, UAE from 30th November to 12th December. COP is a platform where all the heads of state, government delegates, global leaders, officials, and climate leaders across the world embark on this summit to protect the earth, minimize climate degradation, and leave behind a sustainable environmental future. COP is a platform of the supreme decision-making body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) where 198 countries that have ratified the convention participate in this global platform every year. During the event, all the state parties submitted the emission reports for the assessment of whether the convention has been followed by the states or not and how much they are achieving the UNFCCC target through the reduction of greenhouse gases. Approximately, 85,000 participants from ratified states from government officials, civil society, marginalized communities, indigenous communities, researchers, youth negotiations, and local and international organizations have joined. One of the most awaited pledges was the fossil fuel phaseout since all the states have agreed by the treaty to reduce the global temperature by 1.5 degrees by 2030. Hence, the parties need to act, increasing the usage and methodology of renewable and green energy to achieve the Paris Agreement goals. On the other hand, for the first time at the COP, 700 billion dollars has been operationalized for loss and damage fund. I will explain more updates and learnings that I had absorbed in the rest of the article.

30th November: First Day at COP28

This was my first COP and in the first of attending COP was unforgettable. I was super excited to enter the venue and explore the COP. On the first day, we get to the venue by the Metro and then get out from the metro, and then come to the venue on the other side of the metro station a 5/6-minute walking distance.

Registration at COP: After getting into the Expo City, I went through the registration Booth, and there was a huge line. I gave them my passport and UN acknowledgment letter at the registration booth. Then they took a picture of me on the spot, it was a machine on the spot. Then they issued my COP Badge. I got the Yellow Badge "OBSERVER" Badge. Then I went to the security check and got to the main venue. After passing the security check, we went to the "Service Centre " to collect the free metro pass and water bottle. The metro pass was free to all public transportation till the COP ended. As it was our first day, we were trying to find and understand the map. Since we had to catch an event around 10 AM. We were lost and struggling to find the exact location of the event, as it was the very first day of COP, and some of the buildings did not have the number plate that day. Hence, we took a lot of time to explore the unnumbered building was our destination. But while we were looking for the destination, we also explored other pavilions and read the nameplate and organization events to memorize.



Figure 1: OBSERVER BADGE for 6 days

Event attended and takeaways of the day

- We had a short ICCCAD meeting there, where Saqib Bhai instructed us what to follow or not, and which event to attend others shared much more information like what side event would be useful for us, and divided the table between us, who was going to follow which event, meeting, and negotiations.



Figure 2: Inside Expo City, COP28 venue

- Even though we failed to catch two events on the first day we got to learn many strategies to keep going for the rest of the COP days. Additionally, I have gained knowledge from the pavilion and side events that I explored and observed my surroundings and the event as much as possible. These are the following.
- Though the expo city lacked greeneries I felt that the whole expo city was giving an example of urbanization. While they tried to keep some space for refreshment and entertainment some of the buildings were designed with balcony gardening.



Figure 3: Using spaces in a white building inside the Expo city

- The building was designed in a way so that light and wind can pass through the building and people staying inside do not feel they are completely detached from the natural environment, especially the walls along with the staircase.
- To promote youths' future in the climate and environmental sector many top-notch universities like the University of Cambridge, University of Florida, and Penn State were presented at the “Higher Education Pavilion” talking about their ongoing research and what they offer for the graduate school and future opportunities.
- Same as the previous pavilion, I have explored another one named “Global Alliance of Universities on Climate” that serves the same purpose of climate education. Not only education, but there were also side events on arts, culture, and heritage; health and wellbeing; infrastructure, energy, and mobility; and cities and urbanization organized by Resilience Hub. So, I got an idea of what the resilience hub is about and what programs would be arranged at COP.
- Another pavilion named "Welcome to A Pop-up University Pavilion: Just North and Beyond” is the result of cooperation between American, British, and Norwegian academic institutions that are committed to using energy, environmental, and climate justice as a lens through which to achieve sustainable development.

- We went to the Korean Pavilion and saw how they are minimizing the technology in stuff in water purification, they use some pieces of block in dirty water to purify it. Additionally, they have made t-shirts from plastic waste to promote sustainability and fashion.
- Also explored the “Stories of Nations” where they demonstrated traditional and cultural stuff, traditional household parts, and other things such as the Door of Morocco, the Traditional Totem House of Timor-Leste, etc. So, I could relate it to the stories of nations about why it is important to preserve and demonstrate traditional and cultural values, which could also lose visibility in the hands of climate change over time.



Figure 4: Traditional Totem House of Timor-Leste

- At the China Pavilion, there were demonstrations of Chinese government projects on energy efficiency. Another incredible thing was an art wall where Chinese children expressed their thoughts on climate change through art.
- Went to Thailand, Turkey, and Indian pavilions, and at the end of the day we went to join Professor Saleemul Haq’s memorial event at Least Development Countries pavilion.

1st December: Second Day at COP28

On the second day of COP, we tried to use the strategy that we discovered on the first day. As it took time to get to the venue due to a huge number of people in the line going through security checks hence, we reached the venue earlier than the previous day. We took some snacks in the bag as the food costs at the venue. So, on the day we were hoping that the route would be the same as the first day, we would go down the same path. But on that day, we entered through “Green Zone” and that day it was a longer queue and took 2x time than the previous day to get into the venue. After entering the Green Zone, we were seriously taken to the buggies to get into the Blue Zone. The walking distance from the green zone to the blue zone was huge.



Figure 5: Entrance to Green Zone

Event attended and takeaways of the day

- **Opening Ceremony of Resilience Hub (RH):** I have joined the opening ceremony of Resilience Hub, where they have invited people from different indigenous communities and tribes. All they were representing their voices on behalf of wisdom gatekeepers. The

opening ceremony started with their traditional prayer and shared their ideologies of why they are closed to nature and why it is necessary to stop degrading nature.



Figure 6: Opening Ceremony of Resilience Hub

- **Reflection on the Regional Resilience Hub:** This session's purpose was to pay tribute to the late Professor Saleemul Huq. All the partner organizations took part in this session. Emi Mahmoud, UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador dedicated a poem called "Song of the Earth" to Professor Saleemul Huq. Nusrat Naushin, ICCCAD told her transformative journey to the development sector which was motivated by Professor Huq. On the other hand, Andres Mogro, Program Manager for Resilience and Climate Transition, AVINA stated that in a COP there are 50-70 thousand participants but among those participants, less than 20% come from the global South. in the negotiation, only 3-5 thousand people represent the global South while the world's total population of 85% is in the global South. So, all over we need more participation in negotiation and policymaking from the global south. Seth Schultz, CEO, of Resilience Rising shared Professor Huq's dedication to the scientific world and he is the lead author of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th IPCC, 1997 to 2014. Sheela Patel, Director, SPARC showed her gratitude to Professor Huq, describing how he mentored her

through her journey. Overall, every speaker has recognized Professor Huq's dedication and effort to every COP to make a positive change and motivate and inspire others.

- **Monash University Pavilion:** Two of the university professors shared their experiences at COP. One of the professors said that even though this is not her first COP, she might get lost in the venue, while another professor has encouraged everyone to bring lunch to their room or home. Finding the food in the venue sometimes gets difficult.
- **How to bring different local voices into global policy space and what does local voice look like?:** Attended this session which took place at RH. **Anju Sharma**, LLA, working on the GCA report said, "We need to understand the basic idea that without effective action on the ground that is led by the community and people, nothing would be effective whether it's sustainable or not". Additionally, on behalf of ICCCAD Fateen Maisha and Savio Rousseau Rozario have shared their actions on Locally led adoption in Bangladesh and its importance. The session was wrapped with a panel discussion of the indigenous youths of diverse communities. Joyee Chakma, the Youth Representative of ICCCAD, has emphasized the participation of indigenous youth must be boosted by breaking the language barrier and providing them with broader opportunities for climate actions and knowledge.

2nd December: Third day at COP28

So, the learning from the second day was that, even though we reached the venue on time, we still had to wait in the long line. Hence, we decided to reach the security check earlier and get entry into the venue earlier as well. On the 3rd day, we succeeded in reaching the security check earlier, unfortunately, the security desk was not open at 9 AM, so again everyone was in the long line. On that day, we had to go through the green zone. Around 9:20 AM they opened the security check. Even though we were in front of the security entry at 8:30 AM. As we had another gate to enter the venue it was more walking distance from the destination, so we wanted to attend an event. We were going through a new entrance and that was a great experience.



Figure 7: A long line in front of the security checking booth of the Green zone

Event attended and takeaways of the day

- **Locally Led Iterative and Transformative Adaptation for Enhancing Community Resilience:** The session started with Juel Mahmud, Programme Coordinator, ICCCAD, he talked about the LLA and root levels of farmers' engagement in adaptation choice. Dr. Moklesur Rahman, Director, CNRS shared his concerns about how the government sometimes thinks of the local representatives as threats when they want to lead an initiative by themselves. Hence, he expects that we will be able to see more local champions and their participation at the policy level. Additionally, Ritu Bharadwaj, Lead Climate Change

wing, IIED shared how L&D would be distributed, and who would get the adaptation finance; she was more pointing out the accountability of adaptation finance.



Figure 8: Juel Mahmud, Programme Coordinator of ICCCAD has shared the adaptation choices of local farmers in the UNCDF Pavilion

- **UNCC Pavilion:** Sarah El Battouty, Global Ambassador UNFCCC, shared her working experiences and how she has taken one of her customer's opinions to transform. The customer runs a hotel business and produces a lot of plastic waste, Sarah has taken action to transform the plastic trash into a sustainable cottage.

3rd December: Fourth Day at COP28

After spending the three days I was slowly understanding everything and managing myself. So, I had confidence and working, as I almost became aware of the venue. Also, I was able to understand what to do if I missed an event and whether I could attend another event during that time even if I had not registered earlier for that event. For example, after a while in front of the pavilions, there were digital screens, where the whole day's events, high-level meetings, and negotiation schedules and places were given. So, on the fourth day, I was very confident and had no problem participating in the event.

Event attended and key takeaways of the day

- **Empowering the Vulnerable: Evaluation Locally Led Adaptation for Climate Finance Accountability in the Least Development Countries and the Global South” in LDC Pavilion:** On behalf of ICCCAD, Savio Rousseau Rozario, Programme Coordinator and Afsara Binte Mirza, Research Officer; has emphasized on experiences and successful stories of LLA in the context of Bangladesh and how the finance is being distributed in the climate adaptation projects. Other speakers have addressed the issues of centralizing the local communities in decision-making and accountability in all stages.
- **Opening of the 5th Capacity Building Hub:** At the beginning of the ceremony, the late Prof. Saleemul Haque was remembered, expressing his gratitude for his sacrifice and love of work and his efforts to leave a sustainable climate for all.



Figure 9: Remembering late Professor Saleemul Huq at the 5th Opening Ceremony of Capacity Building Hub

- When we are talking about transition, we should not only focus on transitions, rather we have to investigate the process of investment, commitment, and actions.
- It's high time that existing climate policies should be implemented and mandating the multifunctional UNFCCC process for accessible information and communication.
- One of the youngest delegates at COP28, Prasiddhi Singh a 12-year child from India, has shared her journeys on restoring the mangrove trees in Kerela. She also points out that while adding climate education to the curriculum, it should not be based on bookings knowledge and bulk information, rather there should be some easy examples for the children to better understand in real life.

4th December: Fifth day at the COP28

Today it took a long time to get through security again and it was very crowded. I came to explore a little bit of Bangladesh Pavilion after the sad at the venue. Where the bags made from our country's jute were kept in demonstration. However, this is the first time the “Gender and Climate Day” theme was included at COP.

Attended Event and Key takeaways:

- Attended an event on the day of Climate and Gender Days theme at COP, it happened in Al Hairat where Hillary Clinton, Jennifer Klein the Assistant to the president of the director of the White House and Gender Policy Council, Melanie Nakagawa the Microsoft Chief Sustainability Officer, and the chief heads of leading companies.



Figure 10: Celebration of “Climate and Gender Day” with renowned women leaders

- According to Jennifer Klein, Climate change affects women everywhere unfairly and women are the front fighters of adaptation and climate migration. Worldwide in 2021, women held only 29% of the global economy jobs.

- The United States committed with the partnership of the Rockefeller Foundation and African American Bank will invest 1.4 billion Dollars to support women in green and blue economy.
- Attend an event at the Bangladesh pavilion, where the climate actions plan was described like the Mujib Property Plan 2022-2041, also the speakers talked about the initiatives that are taken are climate climate-vulnerable women in coastal areas.

5th December: Sixth day at COP28

Today was the last day at COP, though I was very tired from all the running and walking for so long; I thought it would have been better if all the programs had ended a little earlier. Since it was the last day, and I knew it from the beginning I felt a little bad thinking that from today onwards I wouldn't be able to come to this venue again, to catch all the hustle and bustle of events, to miss everything. But I was very determined to attend one of the high-level meetings today.

Event attended and Key takeaways of the day

- In an event of Indigenous Pavilion, saw how much they have made that event inclusive so that every person could participate in the open discussion and Q&A session. In that room, there were translators, who were translating the English speech to their indigenous native language through the device, a simple action yet creating a big impact and breaking down the language barriers.



Figure 11: At an event of the Indigenous Pavilion

- Then attended another event on Bangladesh Pavilion, that even highlighted the evidence of loss and damage to water and sanitation infrastructure and how to influence L&D finance for economic and noneconomic losses. WASH has also increased violence against women in different parts of the world which needs to be highlighted.
- One of my observations from a high-level meeting of the Drafting the Adaptation policy event was that Bangladesh was missing in that room. Due to a lack of a high level of knowledge, although I could not understand everything during the drafting, I noticed how every country was taking their position and interest in changing the draft according to them.

7th December: Development and Climate days

It was the last event we attended in Dubai. The event took place outside of the COP venue which was in Sofitel Dubai Downtown. RCCC, IIED, CECG, CJRF, FAO, and the World Bank organized this event. The program started at 9 AM and the event's purpose was to bring together world leaders, climate activists, negotiators, thinkers, and innovators to discuss climate talks and share the best practices of climate change. Also, the events were mainly on Decolonizing climate finance, Equitable Climate Partnership, and accountability for the Paris Agreement.

Takeaways of the event

- In every National adaptation planning, it is necessary to consider the local actions, addressing local co-creation and local adaptation techniques.
- Maya a Youth Activist from Jamaica has shared why she is encouraging the youths in her community and the importance of youth inclusion in climate actions.
- Co-creation is needed to bring together all the successful climate actions and strategies for all and prioritize the local actions as well.
- Most of the adaptation plans remain successful while they approach bottom-up approaches.
- Whilst thinking about climate resiliency, firstly we should identify the most important sections such as food, agriculture, and fishers. Secondly, we need to prioritize the settings.
- Nevertheless, accessibility across the systems like getting feedback, accessible finance, and transformation for emergencies should be easy at the local to national level.



Figure 12: Development and Climate Days

Conclusion

This whole COP journey was very important for me, through this platform I got an opportunity to confront myself and my existing knowledge of global climate. With that, I got an idea of what I wanted to do in the future and how to do it. Coming to Cope, I felt that if you want to work on climate change, just going to fieldwork will not be a sustainable solution. In addition to that, a lot of studies need to be done, like what is happening in global climate policy, the progress of global stocktake, and successful solutions should also be looked at. Since this time the loss and damage fund has been operationalized, I got the idea of how many obstacles there are to accessing funds for my community as an indigenous representative or any other root-level marginalized communities. Ultimately there are many gaps between the fund and accessibility that need clarification while getting funds. Moreover, from the beginning to the end of the COP, there was something to learn at every step. I have been inspired by many and learned through many observations. And many times, I became emotional. Since I could not catch meetings or events by understanding the map, I would get lost again, I would feel hungry and then there would be no food. Then I was inspired by the ICCCAD team, they always told me that Prof. Saleemul Haque sir always said, “To understand how copy works, at least three COPs need to participate”. Additionally, they gave me the space to explore the journey which was a plus point for me. The journey of this COP was amazing, where I learned how to prepare myself and navigate for the next COP. I have also learned what strategies to use to save time. Also, this platform was a great global networking opportunity, which I also took advantage of. Have talked to and been inspired by many climate leaders, as well as received great guidance from many professionals. Which will be useful in my future climate journey. COP is a platform where many things happen at the same time, so as a first-timer, I was very interested in everything. But what I understand is that it is not possible to go or participate in every event, so we have to fix some specific topics or agenda that we are interested in and want to know, and then the journey becomes easier. It is important to know what happened in the previous COP with the selected interesting topics, otherwise, many things cannot be understood. At last, I started working on the lessons I had learned from the COP.