



CLIMATE COP28 REPORT



United Nations
Climate Change



COP28UAE

DUBAI 2023



United Nations
Climate Change



ABOUT THE SIKH HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP (SHRG)

The Sikh Human Rights Group is an NGO with UN ECOSOC status promoting pluralism, environment, diversity, human rights and responsibilities. It is based on Sikh philosophy. With an emphasis on pluralism, SHRG champions good intentions and diverse approaches that can be found within different civilisations, cultures and peoples. If you would like to exchange ideas and information with the Sikh Human Rights Group please email us at info@shrg.ngo.

For more information, visit:

<https://shrg.ngo/>

Geneva, July 2024

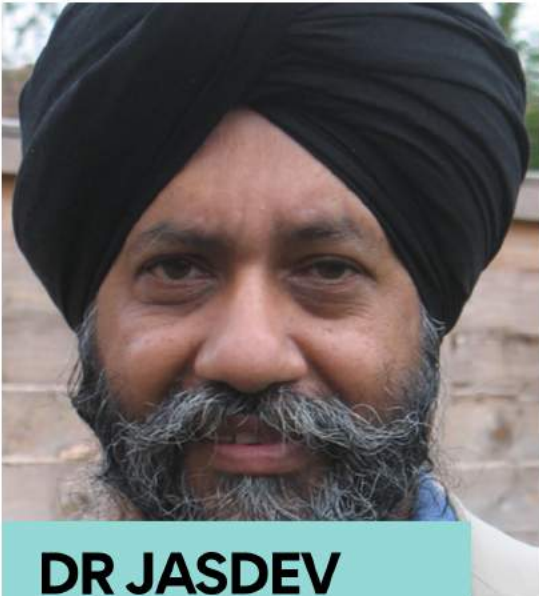
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DIRECTOR'S NOTE



**DR JASDEV
SINGH RAI**

Founding Director
Sikh Human Rights Group

COP 28 in Dubai was a phenomenal gathering of over 70,000 people, all the Governments, all UN agencies and a few thousand NGOs, academics, activists and climate leaders. They all had one mission. How to reduce, reverse and come to terms with the disastrous impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. Almost all realise that the world is where it is due to the relentless pursuit of development, lifestyle changes, industrialisation and population growth.

The human species needs more food than ever before, so encroaches on more land mass for its sustenance.

Humans need more space to live than ever before, so takes away more land from nature and other species. Humans travel more widely now, monopolising airspace, ground space for roads and in the process also emitting more gases from the vehicles of travel.

What has not happened is that while on the development spree, human beings didn't think through the impact of all this on the earth, other species, on land mass for nature, on the quality of air, the impacts on climate and generally on the ecosystems that have evolved over millions of years.

The Conference of Parties, abbreviated to COP, offers the platform to reflect on this and come to common policies that can reduce further damage, mitigate the changes to the environment and climate, reverse the damage done and help to adapt to the impacts.

However it is not that simple. Countries have to provide housing, food and transport means to their current and ever growing number of citizens. Human society has increased the average life span of the human, reduced infant mortality significantly but not thought our the impact of the ever growing and ever ageing population upon our surroundings, the earth that supports us and the ecosystems that maintain life on earth.

Hence COP is a place where different organisations, both international and local, UN bodies and States come to show case their work, their ideas, their specific suggestions and try and persuade countries to adopt development and mitigation policies that will prevent human species going into more desperate crises and even possible extinction. Through history the earth has reacted aggressively by sending a few species to extinction in its millions of years when the survival of all life forms was at stake. Whether the earth does it consciously or not is a matter of debate among many, but the circumstances, such as freezing of the earth surface (Ice Age), pollution of atmosphere reducing Oxygen through Volcanic eruptions, wild fires through overheating, desertification through over consumption has happened a few times.

COP for Sikh Human Rights Group is an opportunity to present the wisdoms of the Sikh Gurus from Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the work of organisations affiliated to Sikh Rights group, such as Nishan-e-Sikhi, the Indigenous Knowledge Systems from South Africa and any new partners that ascribe to our approach.

SHRG's overall approach is pluralism and promoting plural approaches to the climate change and environment and bring organisations that can show case some unique approaches that have worked for generations. Secondly SHRG promotes civil society ownership of the climate change issue as we believe that if civil society is not engaged in taking steps to mitigate the climate change and environmental damage, then State and international policies wont really work.



Thirdly it brings the unique practices from some Sikh organisations based on the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib, particularly the Nishan-e-Sikhi project in Punjab, India.

An article on plural approaches is included in the report. The basis of this approach is that some human societies have thought of human relations and approaches to the environment for a very long time and have concepts and cultural practices that reflect their philosophical ideas, whether through religion, belief or civilisation's overall paradigms. These approaches have largely been swept aside in the juggernaut of science, human rights and so called reason often based on utilitarianism or economics.

It is important for human society to respect the many different approaches and practices that have worked through the ages and which can help them and possibly the world in meeting the current crises. We also believe that it is important for civil society to take greater ownership of the climate issues. States can make policies but if people as civil society are not willingly changing habits, lifestyle choices etc, States cannot achieve their goals. If people demand big energy consuming cars, Governments cannot adopt policies that deny them, as governments lose votes or support.

Civil society needs more education and COP needs to promote a greater engagement of civil society.

The Sikh approach is quite brilliantly expressed in the work of Nishan-e-Sikhi. GurSikhi takes a cosmological approach to environment and believes that everything is both interconnected and dependent on everything else and secondly there is a single source of all of existence which manifests in the millions of forms in nature and man made structures. This means that humans have a responsibility to other animals, to the earth, to the climate and to other human beings. The tree planting, the rewilding project and the organic farming projects of Nishan-e-Sikhi are all manifestation of GurSikhi philosophy in the field of human relations to the environment.

We hope this report will be informative and help us to form partnerships with others.



PLURAL APPROACHES TO CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION, ADAPTATION AND LOSS AND DAMAGE

by Jasdev Singh Rai

Climate change is a growing crises' is a statement on many people's mind. Many youth now lives under a sense of hopelessness and depression about the future as more and more alarming statistics are being spewed out by institutions working in climate change. How to address it remains an elusive answer. In a world dominated by economics, science and personal happiness, the route to addressing climate crises is also sought from within the same paradigm that has led the human race to this crisis.

There are thousands of organisations, research centres, policy groups, academics and international bodies working towards solutions. But while a lot has been proposed and many actions taken such as increasing electric cars, promoting solar energy, shifting away from fossil fuels etc, the damage continues and consumption continues.

In its work Sikh Human Rights Group found that there are many cultures, beliefs and civilisations that have well developed and once deeply held perspectives on human relations with the environment that were part of cultural practices and their worldviews. Human concerns about the environment and other species is not a twentieth century 'discovery' but has been part of human cultures and beliefs as long as human society has lives in communities. Some of these ideas are mystical relationship with the environment. Some are spiritual relations with environment and other species. Some have a

deep belief in ecosystems in which human beings are merely one member of millions of species and diversity of life and hence with no right to take more than necessary. Some have cosmocentric concepts in which the human is part of a solar system that is related to the rest of the cosmos and in which the human is just one miniscule element or speck in the scheme of things. Some believe that the earth systems correct themselves by fighting back or getting rid of the menace that destroys the ecosystems evolved over millions of years. Some believe that their ancestors' souls are in the trees and animals around them and by killing animals and destroying forests, they are actually killing their ancestors. Some have deep affections for some species of plants and animals. Some consider that if some animal or insect species disappear, such as bees and some birds, it could be the end of the world.

These might sound irrational, superstitious or even semi religious. However the fact is that they have maintained the environment functional and healthy for humans and other species for hundreds of thousands of years. When analysed closely, many of these beliefs make a great deal of sense as strategies to ensure human beings don't destroy what they rely on for continuing the species. Furthermore the prevalent dominant utilitarian modern model where concepts have to make some scientific sense or fit into a particular structure of rationality or be economically viable, has not done the world much good. Confidence in human rationality has brought the human race to the brink of near complete disaster with repeated warnings that much of the earth could become inhabitable in a few decades. The one single element that is present in almost all alternative systems is a reverence for all that exists around us, along with us and on which our survival as a species is dependent.

Reverence instils a sense of awe and respect and influences our habits.

The Sikh Human Rights Group is of the opinion that these alternative worldviews and concepts of human relations, responsibilities and duties to the environment and other species need to be given more respect and provided platforms on the world stage to encourage change in civil society attitudes to the environment.

As an organisation, we are not competing with others to come up with the best scientific idea or lifestyle urban model, but concentrating on these many alternative worldviews which are beginning to be submerged and lost under the juggernaut of modernity. We will continue to promote other perspectives and what have been successful in the past and to some extent still are in many places. We aim to promote them as also one of the solutions to meet the targets of mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage missions that the UNFCCC and particularly COP sets itself up for. Hence we call this project, plural approaches to the environment.



OUR DELEGATION



**ALBERT
BARSEGHYAN**

Representative to the UN
Sikh Human Rights Group

What is like being part of the Sikh delegation among eighty-four thousands participants engaged in the world's largest climate conference on record? Here I am going to tell you a bit more about what we have seen, what we have done and what we have contributed to during two busy weeks in December 2023. Hope this reading will not only inform you about COP28 but also motivate you to work for the betterment of our planet and, who knows, to join the Sikh delegation in the next COP!

Compared to the very first COP in 1995, attended only by some four thousands delegates, Dubai's COP was the biggest ever climate gathering. Compared to Sharm el-Sheikh, where we went with six delegates, in Dubai we almost doubled our presence.

Just for the record, we are going to COPs to 1) contribute to parties (states) positions on climate action by bringing GurSikhi wisdoms,

2) represent our affiliate organizations and the community, and act as 3) civil society observers to hold power to account.

We are also at COPs to get first-hand information about the current state of negotiations and about the health of our planet which guides our and our affiliates' environmental activities throughout the year. Like in Sharm el-Sheikh (2022), I had a privilege to be in Dubai COP for the whole duration of the conference, and have been therefore coordinating our delegation's work. We went to COP with pluralism and reforestation agendas, and held an exhibit and a joint side event to these ends. We even managed to get in some rooms which were "at full capacity" (there are not necessarily at full capacity but it's the usual excuse to deny the access of non-party delegates, meaning any delegate which doesn't represent a state government).

The Cambridge dictionary defines "no-nonsense" as something which is practical and serious, only interested in doing what is necessary or achieving what is intended, without silly ideas. In the opening ceremony, COP28 President Sultan Al Jaber chose this very adjective to describe the approach he wanted that delegates adopt during negotiations. By "no-nonsense approach", he implied that parties should be guided by trust, partnership, and pragmatism while never losing sight of the 1.5°C target.

Similar to the UN General Assembly (GA), in the COP, the Member States are organized in formal and informal groups with a variety of different purposes and memberships. Besides well-known geopolitical groups like G-77/China, European Union, African Union, Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Arab Group (called League of Arab States in the GA context).

We have COP-specific groups such as the Environmental Integrity Group (EIG), including Switzerland, Korea, Mexico, Liechtenstein, Georgia and Monaco, who didn't want to join the Umbrella Group (in climate change jargon, it designates fully industrialized nations). Another COP-specific group is the Coalition for Rainforest Nations, consisting of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America with vast rainforest lands, calling developed countries to meet historic obligations to reduce emissions and provide means of implementation, stressing equity and common but differentiated responsibilities. For an observer, it's important to understand where each country/group stands on climate debate to influence their positions or if they already have aligning positions, ask them to implement their public pledges.



For G-77/China Group, the operationalization of the loss and damage fund was high on their agenda. As regards to just transition, they called other states to consider the three pillars of sustainable development: environmental, economic, and social equity. The EU wants to triple renewable energy and double energy efficiency by 2030, phase out fossil fuel subsidies, and reduce non-carbon dioxide gases, like methane. The EIG was in the same line, calling for a future which is renewable and free of fossil fuels. Ending deforestation was high on Umbrella Group's agenda.



If AOSIS, representing small developing islands which witness the alarming consequences of global warming firsthand, called for agreement on a robust framework for the global goal on adaptation, the African Union wants that developed nations provide finance commensurate with the losses and damages experienced in developing countries.

Not all observers come with similar objectives. You have genuine civil society, grassroots, you have universities, but you also have businesses whether representing oil and gas interests, or renewable energy, carbon capture and storage which numbers have proliferated in COP28.

After two weeks of negotiations, the COP28 concluded with so-called UAE Consensus on "transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner."

The word choice here is important, as we are not yet talking about "phasing out" but about the intention to phase out at some point in the time. Is this what COP28 President meant by "no-nonsense approach"?



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS AT COP28

by Albert Barseghyan

We went to the COP with Pluralist and Reforestation Agenda, and have been promoting it through our side-event, our exhibit, and our exchanges. Although we're new into core negotiations process, we have made useful connections with states and will be advocating for inclusion of our positions through more active work within our constituency.

to meet Paris Agreement Goals and reduce, avoid and neutralize current GHG emissions, thus strengthening Paris+10 Agenda to clean up accumulated Atmospheric CO2.

We called for plural and urgent communication to make climate every person's issue. The event took place on 6 December 2023, in SE Room 3. The event has also been livestreamed and recorded on the UNFCCC YouTube Channel, you can watch it [here](#).

2. Holding an Exhibit Booth for a full Week

In partnership with the University of Colorado (CU-Boulder), the African Centre for Climate

SIDE EVENT
PLURAL APPROACHES TO CLEAN THE ATMOSPHERE, CRAFTING PARIS+10 AGENDA
COP30 FOR EARTH SYSTEM STABILITY

Speakers



Baba Gurpreet Singh
Nishan e-Sikhi, Sikh Human Rights Group, India



H.H.E. Honourable Hadja Safiatou Diallo
Minister of Environment & Sustainable Development, Republic of Guinea



Izabella Teixeira
Co-Chair IRP-UNEP and Former Minister of Environment, Brazil



Paulo Magalhães
Common Home of Humanity, Portugal



Juliana Ribeiro
Boticario Group Foundation, Brazil



Kenneth Nana Amoateng
GILINAVO, Ghana



Moderator



Sara Moreno Pires
Common Home of Humanity, Portugal

1. Hosting an official side-event on “Plural approaches to clean the atmosphere, crafting Paris+10 agenda/COP30 for earth system stability”

Jointly with the Boticário Group Foundation for Nature Protection, the Common Home of Humanity and the Giving Life Nature Volunteer, we hosted an official COP28 side event titled “Plural approaches to clean the atmosphere, crafting Paris+10 agenda/COP30 for earth system stability”.

The event explored the diverse civilizational and philosophical approaches for adaptation in order

Actions and Rural Development (ACCARD) Initiative and International Cryosphere Climate Initiative (ICCI), we held an exhibit dedicated to locally-led pluralistic climate solutions in the Exhibits Area B12, in the official Blue Zone of the Expo City Dubai. During the first week, we have exchanged with hundreds of COP28 delegates from our exhibition booth dedicated to small jungles in intensive farming areas, and presented the impact of planting trees on lowering temperature in small farms. Over 200 jungles as well as 500 000 trees have been that

brought animal life back to the region, improved farming and made people more content.

The exhibit showcased the work and the approach of one of our affiliates, the Nishan-e-Sikhi project in India. They have not been merely waiting for COP decisions to take actions, but doing an incredible work for the benefit of communities and the planet, guided by Gursikhi. Their participation in the COPs helps to share their expertise with others and have already motivated many climate activists to take similar action in their communities.



You can learn more about Nishan-e Sikhi's environmental work [here](#).

The exhibit also presented DRR-related lessons to prepare river basin highlanders (drought/flood) & lowlanders (river deltas & SLR) for hydromet hazards by enhancing: trust in hydromet forecasts; youth & intergenerational equity; EW value by reducing hesitancy to ENSO-related forecasts.



BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

by Albert Barseghyan

During two weeks of the climate conference, you can witness two parallel processes: the official negotiations between mainly Parties (states) and informal discussions between wide range of actors. Both states and observer organizations can host gatherings in dedicated Pavilions, which they are renting on commercial basis. Pavilions are separate from negotiation halls and provide opportunities for showcasing research, expertise, and fostering open dialogue with COP attendees, enhancing transparency in the negotiation process. This is what I like to call “Pavilion Diplomacy”.

There were more than 200 Pavilions, hosted by countries such as Angola, Australia, Barbados, Bahrain, Bhutan, Botswana, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, Guinea, India, Iran, Italy, Nepal, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Thailand, UK, US, Tanzania, Zimbabwe; regional and international organizations such as the European Union, the AOSIS Group, the Caribbean Community, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the UN entities (UNICEF, UNCDF, UNCTAD), development banks and funds such as the European Investment Bank, the Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the World Bank, the Green Climate Fund, the OPEC Fund for International Development, the WWF. There are also multistakeholder pavilions such as Civil Society Pavilion, Faith Pavilion and Women & Gender Pavilion. The Pavilions are important spaces where the “communities of practice” emerge, where people linked to each other by common

activity, shared expertise, a passion for a joint enterprise come together to learn or improve their practice. For example, in the first-ever Faith Pavilion, non-party delegates came together to issue a call to action urging summit negotiators to reach more ambitious commitments, actions and agreements within the final negotiations and beyond.

Out of 200 pavilions, I substantially engaged with a dozen of them, while visited almost all to get a general idea of different priorities.

We were invited by Knellee Bisram of AHAM Education to participate in her side-event on Eco-Affinity: Water and Climate Activism through Contemplative and Faith-Based Practice. We're interconnected with nature, sharing the same essence as Earth. Healing ourselves and healing the planet is one unity. Session explored how mindful awareness and unity with nature can lead to sustainable and peaceful outcomes for both people and the planet, featuring perspectives from various leaders across the Americas. We decided to work together and co-host an event on SDG Lifestyles in the margins of the HLPF or the General Assembly in New York.

In the event on Farmers and traditional producers at the heart of food systems transformation, organized by COP28 Presidency and Asia Farmers Association, we interacted on smallholder farmers' vital role in addressing the climate crisis, showcasing their innovations in agriculture and biodiversity as key to resilience and mitigation efforts. I had a chance to present the work of our affiliate in India, Nishan-e Sikhi in the area of reforestation thus contributing to climate mitigation as well as adaptation. I also talked also about our ongoing campaign in favour of smallholder farmers in Geneva in the context of UNDROP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas) advocacy.

For religious leaders, the climate crisis is at root a spiritual one. Addressing climate change involves more than reducing fossil fuels and carbon emissions; it's about embracing our spiritual existence within a physical world. The crisis stems from issues like shortsightedness, greed, and materialism, countered by solutions rooted in long-term vision, humility, empathy, and care for both people and the planet. In the event on the State of the Climate Negotiations and Faith-Based Advocacy, I made key connections with leaders from different communities.

On reforestation, I had an opportunity to meet and discuss a possibilities of South-South and triangular cooperation with Guinea's Minister of Agriculture and Sustainable Development, Ms. Safiatou Diallo. I have followed up the high-level meeting with the representatives of the government and civil society partners.

We discussed reforestation also during the event on Scaling smallholder tree-based systems for resilience and carbon removals. While tree-planting has gained serious popularity among all actors during last decades, it isn't a new thing and even dates back to climate change. Some important questions remain and we do have an expertise to answer them: what to plant, where and why?



BETHAN'S REFLECTIONS



BETHAN WALTERS

Human Rights & Comms Officer
Sikh Human Rights Group

COP28 provided a platform for engaging with a diverse range of stakeholders, fostering collaboration, and contributing to discussions on critical environmental issues. As a representative for the Sikh Human Rights Group, it was truly an enriching experience and provided many opportunities to expand our network and share our perspective with country delegates, UN bodies and NGOs. This report summarises key activities and interactions during the four days of the conference.

Day 1

Side Event: Addressing biodiversity and climate change synergistically

The day commenced with a side event focused on the synergistic approach to biodiversity and climate change. Contacts made during this event included representatives from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological

Diversity (CBD), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the UNFCCC Secretariat, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Highlights:

- Collaboration potential with an NGO founder focusing on women's and young girls' health education.
- Invitation to an interfaith Pavilion side event.

Day 2

Meetings and Side Events: What Fuels Fashion?

The second day involved discussions with the Clean Air Fund and an agricultural NGO in Malawi. The side event, "What Fuels Fashion?," highlighted the need to address waste, overconsumption, and decarbonisation in the fashion industry.

Key Points:

- Interest in supply chain transparency, living wage, and gender impacts in the fashion industry.
- Identified collaboration opportunities for sustainable soil and cotton initiatives.

Networking and Side Event: Faith communities & resilient frontlines

Networking efforts resulted in an alliance with a representative from Guinea for a gender project. The side event emphasised the role of faith communities in responding to the nexus of food, water, and climate change.

Insights:

- Potential collaboration with an interfaith group for engagement at COP29.

Negotiations and Working Programme: Framework Article 6

Focused negotiations on just transitions, emphasising inclusivity of human & indigenous rights. Convergence on language and dates was noted, but no significant developments were made on Framework Article 6.

Day 3

Side Event: Protecting biodiversity

A side event emphasised the critical role of biodiversity in addressing climate change impacts. Contacts included representatives from the International for Animal Welfare Inc. (IFAW) and Angola.

Context:

- Discussed the "elephant in the room" regarding elephant migrations and water sources.
- Emphasised private community partnerships and women's economic participation.

Networking and Side Events: Biodiversity-climate nexus and Interfaith event

Arranged meetings with universities for potential collaboration on climate change's impact on women's health. Engaged with Youth 4 Planet, an NGO connecting with environmental journalists. Connected with an interfaith organisation in California.

Day 4

Meeting and Side Event: Africa's Just Transition

Discussed plans for collaboration at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and coordinated a potential side event at COP29. The side event focused on Africa's Just Transition, with contacts from Power Shift Africa (PSA) and Transforma.

Context:

- Emphasised the importance of a people-centred approach in renewable energy solutions for Africa.

Side Event: A Healthy Response to Climate Change

Discussed the role of health professionals in climate change communication. Engaged with representatives from the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, India Youth For Society, International Pharmaceutical Students'

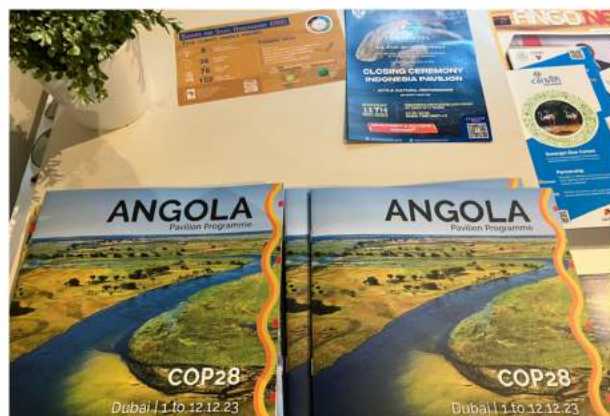
Federation, and International Society of Doctors for the Environment.

Context:

- Highlighted the lack of health discussions in country pavilions related to climate change.

Negotiations

Participated in negotiations, focusing on insights from Climate Youth Negotiators, particularly in the section on loss and damage.



Conclusion: COP28's Distinctive Progress

COP28 marked a notable departure from the previous year, with a palpable sense of progress and momentum. The atmosphere was charged with optimism, and it felt like substantial strides were being made in addressing pressing environmental challenges. This positive shift was evident in various aspects of the conference, differentiating it from COP27.



Increased Progress and Momentum

Compared to COP27, COP28 witnessed a more robust commitment to collaborative efforts and tangible progress.

The discussions on just transitions, biodiversity-climate nexus, and sustainable initiatives resonated with a shared determination to effect positive change. The convergence observed in negotiations on Framework Article 6, while incremental, indicated a collective willingness to move forward.

Networking and Collaborations

The highlight of COP28 was the opportunity to meet exceptional NGOs and leaders, forging valuable relationships that extend beyond the conference walls. The alliances formed during side events and networking sessions are crucial for building on existing projects and initiating new, impactful endeavours. The commitment and passion exhibited by these partners create a solid foundation for collective action.



Ongoing Projects and Future Prospects

The relationships cultivated during COP28 lay the groundwork for ongoing projects with a shared vision. Collaborations with NGOs focusing on women's and young girls' health education, sustainable agriculture, fashion industry reform, and interfaith initiatives demonstrate the diversity and depth of the connections established. These ongoing projects serve as a testament to the commitment to translating discussions into tangible actions.



Preparations for COP29

Looking ahead to COP29, the enthusiasm is high, buoyed by the anticipation of continued progress and impactful contributions. Plans for coordinating a side event at COP29 with the newfound partners and allies underscore a commitment to amplifying collective efforts. This proactive approach signals a dedication to making each subsequent COP more impactful and influential.

In summary, COP28 felt distinctively different from its predecessor, radiating a sense of optimism and achievement. The collaborations formed and projects initiated during the conference create a promising trajectory for future COPs, reinforcing the belief that concerted efforts can indeed lead to meaningful change in the face of global environmental challenges.



IVAN'S REFLECTIONS



IVAN LORENCI DE FRANCISCO

Representative to the UN
Sikh Human Rights Group

The international response to climate change began with the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992. This foundational document aimed to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere to avoid dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. The UNFCCC, which entered into force on the 21st of March 1994, has been ratified by 197 parties.

To enhance the effectiveness of the UNFCCC, the international community adopted the Kyoto Protocol in December 1997, committing industrialised and transition economies to quantified emission reduction targets for six greenhouse gases. The Protocol entered into force on the 16th of February 2005 and includes 192 parties. It covered two commitment periods: 2008-2012 and 2013-2020. Every year, the United Nations Framework Convention on

Climate Change (UNFCCC) organizes a Climate Change Conference in a different country. Known as the Conferences of the Parties, or COPs, they are numbered sequentially to indicate their order since the first conference in 1995. Let's take a look at some of the most significant and recent ones.

COP 21 (2015) was held in **Paris** and, thanks to the adoption of the **Paris Agreement**, this conference was an important milestone. This ground-breaking agreement fixed the ambitious goal of limiting the global average temperature increase to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and to continue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C. It also emphasised enhancing the capacity of parties to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change and aligning financial flows with low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development pathways. The Agreement underlined the importance of **equity** and the **principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and capabilities, considering different national circumstances**.

In addition to this, the Paris Agreement introduced several tools. First, each country is obliged to communicate successively more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) at five-year intervals. Second, the Global Stocktake (GST) was also introduced in Paris 2015 to establish a five-year review of collective progress on mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation. Third, with the purpose of improving national reporting and setting targets and provisions on adaptation, finance, technology, loss and damage, and compliance, the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) was also introduced. Lastly, the Paris Agreement Work Programme (PAWP) was launched simultaneously with the adoption of the Agreement to develop its operational details, and parties also agreed on the need to mobilise

stronger and more ambitious climate action by all parties and non-party stakeholders.

COP 22 (2016), was organised by Morocco in the city of **Marrakech**. Being the first COP after the Parisian conference, made it the first conference which included the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA). Furthermore, different decisions related to the PAWP were adopted. The most important of these decisions was the initiation of a process to identify information to be provided in accordance with Article 9.5 of the Paris Agreement (biennial ex-ante financial communications from developed countries). This process is aimed at increasing the transparency and predictability of the financial support given by developed countries to developing ones.

COP 23 (2017), also known as the **Fiji/Bonn** Climate Change Conference was held in Bonn – Germany – under the chairmanship of Fiji. This conference launched the Talanoa Dialogue, a facilitative dialogue to take stock of collective progress towards the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. Additionally, COP23 established the "Fiji Momentum for Implementation" to emphasise the implementation and ambition of climate measures before 2020, and provided guidance for completing the PAWP.



COP 24 (2018), held in **Katowice** – Poland – concluded a busy year with the adoption of the "Katowice Climate Package", which finalised almost the entire PAWP. This included decisions facilitating the common interpretation and implementation of the Paris Agreement on several aspects, such as NDCs, adaptation communications, the ETF, GST and financial transparency.

However, work on cooperative approaches under Article 6 of the Agreement was not concluded, and parties agreed to conclude this work in 2019. The conference also echoed the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on 1.5°C of Global Warming which showed the urgency of remedying climate change and the importance of not increasing the temperature by more than 1.5°C to avoid serious environmental consequences.

COP 25 (2019), also labelled as the **Chile/Madrid** Conference was chaired by Chile and resulted in the establishment of the Santiago Network to Avoid, Minimise and Address Loss and Damage. It also adopted the Lima Five-Year Enhanced Work Programme and its Gender Action Plan. As a consequence of this, three umbrella decisions were adopted under different governing bodies, each called the "Chile/Madrid Time for Action". However, consensus was not reached on a number of issues, notably Article 6 and long-term funding. After the COVID-19 hiatus, COP26 (2021) took place in Glasgow – Scotland – finalising the rules of procedure of the Paris Agreement. It adopted guidelines, rules and a work programme on Article 6 and agreed on the reporting format under the ETF. Furthermore, the conference resulted in the "Glasgow Climate Pact", which, for the first time, included a reference to phasing out unabated coal power and phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.

Agreements were reached on work programmes for a global adaptation goal, scaling up mitigation efforts, the Glasgow Dialogue on Loss and Damage, a process to define a new collective quantified target on climate finance and an annual dialogue on ocean-based climate action.

COP27 (2023) held in **Sharm El-Sheikh** – Egypt – concluded with the adoption of 60 decisions. For the first time, parties recognised the need for funding to respond to loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change and established a fund, the details of which were finalised in 2023. Key elements leading to this agreement included work programmes on increasing mitigation ambition and the Global Goal on Adaptation. The meeting also adopted two overarching decisions, collectively referred to as the "Sharm El-Sheikh Plan of Implementation". These decisions uphold calls to phase out unabated coal power and to eliminate inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.

These conferences and agreements represent the evolving global effort to address climate change through international cooperation, policy development and collective action towards sustainable development goals.



My perspective

The recent COP28 summit has elicited mixed reactions, reflecting both significant progress and notable shortcomings in the international policy response to climate change. Despite the historic consensus reached under the leadership of COP28 President Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, criticism points to the postponement of significant measures and the lack of ambitious commitments to reduce the use of oil and non-renewable energy.



The summit successfully completed the first Global Inventory, a vital mechanism for achieving the Paris Agreement targets, and for the first time mentioned all fossil fuels in a UNFCCC decision.



However, the consensus reached in the UAE is criticised for its weak language and insufficient steps towards the urgent shift away from fossil fuels that is needed. This outcome, while a step forward, falls short of the transformative change advocated by many.

African priorities at COP28, reflected in the Nairobi Declaration, included greater global ambition on the Paris Agreement targets and increased climate finance commitments. Although more than \$700 million was pledged for the Loss and Damage Fund, and more than \$85 billion committed in total, the funding is considered insufficient compared to the enormous needs.



The agreement on adaptation targets was seen as a positive step but lacked specific targets on adaptation finance. The presence of fossil fuel lobbyists in the negotiations and the decisions taken reflect the ongoing challenge of balancing energy poverty and equity with the urgent need for a global energy transition.



COP28 concluded with agreements that offered some progress, but not enough to avoid the detrimental effects of climate change. The launch of the Loss and Damage Fund and pledges of financial assistance to vulnerable countries were seen as steps in the right direction, but the actual flows of funds remain uncertain.

The global commitment to renewables and energy efficiency was enthusiastically welcomed, but the absence of key emitters such as China and India from the agreement underlines the challenges ahead. The call to move away from fossil fuels was approved, but the vague and non-binding language of the agreement allows for the continued use of fossil fuels.

All in all, COP28, like its predecessors, has a big gap between the ambitious rhetoric and the reality of its outcomes. As many organisations from the civil society and member states pointed out, changes arrive too slowly to meet



the necessity and the influence of major oil exporters in the shaping of the agreements has allowed them to prop up the world's dependence on fossil fuels and an inadequate response to the urgent climate crisis.



DILPREET'S REFLECTIONS



DILPREET KAUR BAINS

Youth Representative
Sri Guru Singh Sabha,
Southall (SGSSS)

The purpose of my trip to COP28 was to deepen my understanding of how technology is integrated in value systems across different cultures, societies, and continents. As a blue zone badge holder at COP28, I had the opportunity to connect with country delegates, policy makers, NGO representatives, and attend seminars and panel discussions, to understand how they are leveraging technology to combat climate change.

My key takeaways from COP28 are:

- As climate change is a threat to farmers globally, it is crucial sustainable practices and knowledge is shared across stakeholders in the agri-food sector. In turn, encouraging farmers to adapt with climate change. '[Wikifarmer](#)' is an online global platform designed to empower farmers across several products including:

1. Wikifarmer Market provides farmers with

access to domestic and international markets, in turn enhancing visibility, revenue and profit.

2. Wikifarmer Academy provides farmers with free courses and certifications to boost their confidence and grow their business.

3. Wikifarmer Library is a digital library consisting of hundreds of articles, videos, webinars (translated into 17 languages) where farmers can benefit from free agricultural knowledge.

- Revolutionary technology is being used by UAE as they utilise AI at borders to scan shipping to report illegal wildlife trade at Dubai port. To address the impacts of climate change, it is paramount that biodiversity is protected and preserved. AI at borders to report illegal wildlife trade will help combat wildlife crime. Illegal animal trade can lead to pathogens, viruses and diseases being spread; hence it is crucial technology is implemented to mitigate this and diminish wildlife crime.
- What do Beijing, New Delhi, London all have in common? ... Pollution! Whilst at COP28, I visited the '[Clean Air Fund](#)' Pollution Pods. It was an encounter that was truly life changing. There were three pollution pods that simulated the taste, touch and experience as if you were walking through the polluted streets of the cities, respectively. When I reached the simulated London pod, it was by far the city with the 'cleanest air' when compared to Beijing and New Delhi, but that is not enough to be complacent and not act NOW. If the air we breathe is polluted with carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide etc then this will lead to a rise in health concerns especially affecting the younger generation.
- Youth engagement and participation in climate action is on the rise, which is fantastic to see at a global summit on climate change; however, there is still more

work to be accomplished. I was fortunate enough to be interviewed by 'Youth4Planet' - an NGO utilising the power of storytelling and filmmaking to catalyse a sustainable future by providing young people with the tools they need to create, capture, and share their unique videos on sustainable change.

During the two weeks at COP28, SHRG had a delegation of 11 members, which is the biggest delegation SHRG has taken to the UN Climate Change Conference COP. The team consisted of 5 team members from SHRG and 6 from Nishan-e-Sikhi, Sri Khadur Sahib who attended as SHRG representatives too!

To optimise our time effectively, we used a strategic approach to allow my colleagues and I to cover diverse topics, including technology, agriculture, biodiversity, gender, faith and negotiations. Our organisation held a side event, focusing on out of the box approaches and success stories in addressing climate change in India. SHRG was fortunate enough to secure a booth, which was an instrumental platform for explaining our position. We engaged with numerous delegates and NGOs and developed connections to share insights and collaborate with to address climate change.



It was a privilege to attend COP28 as I have a strong passion for sustainability & social responsibility. I am eager to attend COP29 to support a brighter, diverse and sustainable future for people and the planet.

I look forward to attending informal UN negotiations as it is paramount to enhance our understanding of how negotiations operate and add value to, as a member of civil society at COP29.

In my role at SHRG as a youth intern, I've actively participated in a range of initiatives, including projects focused on gender and menstrual empowerment. Additionally, I've had the opportunity to represent our organisation at the annual Vaisakhi in Parliament event and attend a conference on Changing Global Order at Oxford University in collaboration with Wolfson College.



My time at COP28 was a memorable yet impactful experience and it's clear that the fight for climate change is not over! Moreover, after seeing what Nishan-e-Sikhi has achieved, I think I can proudly say that we Sikhs have something to offer the world on how to do it, as one of the approaches to tackle climate change. Thank you SHRG and SGSSS!

JAGROOP'S REFLECTIONS



JAGROOP SINGH

Climate Science Officer,
Nishan-e-Sikhi

In 2022, Nishan E Sikhi Kaar Sewa Khadur Sahib made its first appearance at conference of parties COP 27 held at Sharm Al Sheikh, Egypt as an affiliate of SHRG London. The representatives of the philanthropist organization working on a environmental projects in different states of India keeping in view the global climatic crisis- its reasons and impacts got an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the scientific findings, functionalities and opportunities proposed by an International event on climate change organised by UNFCCC. Dr. Jasdev Singh Rai Director SHRG London along with his team played an important role for providing platform to an organization like NISHAN-E-SIKHI Kaar Sewa Khadur Sahib working at ground level in the light of Gurbani with 100% community participation and assistance. Baba Gurpreet Singh and Dr. Kanwaljit Singh from NISHAN-E-

SIKHI (India) participated in the event and familiarized themselves with key points of global talks and strategies to be followed up for fighting the climate change.

Likewise as expected COP 28 at Expo City Dubai was much awaited global event to get the world ready to fight climate change and its impacts in much more united and cooperative manner keeping in view the drastic effects of both sudden and long term changes in living conditions of the planet Earth. The world leaders once again got an important opportunity to be there at a world's largest single platform for making historic decisions in mitigating the environmental crisis over the planet Earth.



NISHAN-E-SIKHI Kaar Sewa Khadur Sahib got an opportunity to display their success stories, methodologies, upcoming projects and plans to tackle climate change at a booth allotted to SHRG London. The attracted the other stakeholders at COP for the exchange programmes in learning, practicability, data evaluation and scientific approach. The team successfully managed to create a dialogue on the diverse approaches to clean atmosphere while focusing on the nature based learnings delivered by Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji. The air is the Guru, the water is the father and the Earth is the mother. So it is the duty of all of us to maintain their dignity and treat them as the most valuable presents by the Almighty Waheguru- The Creator.



At a side event based on Plural approaches to clean atmosphere Baba Gurpreet Singh and Dr. Jasdev Singh Rai collectively put on the philosophical aspect of teachings of Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji for cleaning the atmosphere and climatic balancing.



Guru Nanak's approach takes into account all the creatures of The Almighty Waheguru, depicting the all have equal rights. United Nations must entertain the diversity among ideas, suggestions and approaches for an impactful delivery of strategies and creation of dialogues among different communities of the world for fighting climatic crisis.

It was good to have the beginning of ending era of the fossil fuels along with loss and damage funds declarations. But at the same time the complexities and conditioning with longer time limits would be affecting its successful and high rate implementation.

The scientific assistance, project evaluation techniques and data monitoring devices should be easily made available globally so that all stakeholders could affectively plan and implement their strategies to curb the global climatic crisis without facing much hindrances.



As already, we are too late to serve the planet Earth and confine within the global temperature rise limits for making the highly recommended transitions for the sake of all the living as well as non living beings.



COP28 GLOSSARY

Adaptation

Adapting to climate change can take various forms, from water-saving agricultural practices to relocating people at risk of climate emergency. We are at the edge of a tipping point as 2023 saw new global temperature records and extreme events like heatwaves, droughts, and cyclones. Many hard-hit countries in the Global South struggle to fund adaptation programs, yet this issue receives less attention than mitigation.

Article 6

This controversial article of the Paris Agreement allows rich countries to finance greenhouse gas reduction measures in foreign countries and count the results towards their own targets. Funded projects range from deploying low-CO₂ stoves to environmentally friendly agricultural techniques. Critics argue that Article 6 lets countries shirk their own responsibilities.

Climate change

long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns that in the long run risk completely altering the ecosystems that support life on Earth, putting our existence as species in question.

Eco-anxiety

More you know about the climate change, more you're prone to eco-anxiety. It's strong and informed understanding of the risks of climate change and our confidence in making a difference by our actions.

Mitigation

It's perhaps the single most important term in climate negotiations. Mitigation refers to cutting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from human activities like energy, transportation, and agriculture. Mitigation also includes capturing excess CO₂, aiming for "net-zero emissions" by mid-century to meet the Paris Agreement.

Nationally determined contributions

NDCs are the most important tool for achieving long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. They embody efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The Paris Agreement (Article 4, paragraph 2) requires each Party to prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions (NDCs) that it intends to achieve. Parties shall pursue domestic mitigation measures, with the aim of achieving the objectives of such contributions.

Sultan Al Jaber Gavel

A small hammer with which COP28 President formally concluded COP28, where the language on "transitioning away" from fossil fuels have been unanimously accepted by all Parties. Civil Society and Small Island Developing States have been advocating for "phasing out" not "transitioning away". But in diplomacy, things take time, and it's difficult to immediately agree on strong language.



CONCLUSION

Systems transformation is essential to rapidly reducing emissions and building resilience, and for that we need to change our relationship with nature. That's why bringing Gursikhi wisdoms to the climate negotiations is of paramount importance not only for Sikhs, but also for non-Sikhs and for the planet. As the conservation, restoration, and sustainable management of nature is integral for achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement, our vision for plural approaches in tackling the climate change is of great importance. We need to transform education to close the skills gap for green jobs aligned with climate action. We need to scale climate action by increasing climate finance as well as accelerate adaptation, prevent and address loss and damage. As far as the trade is concerned, there is an urgent need to decarbonize supply chains and make sure that trade benefits everyone in the most equitable way possible. We need to learn more from Indigenous Peoples' intergenerational knowledge, and recognize their practices, and leadership in climate action and in stewarding planetary health.

As inspired by Gursikhi, the Air is our Guru, water our father, and the earth our mother, we need to act in a nature-positive manner, understanding that we are not masters of the Earth but just one of the species inhabiting this beautiful planet.

