



DIPLOMAT

Italian envoy leaves
with a sense of pride

3

8



COP28 Must
Focus on the
Climate-Fueled
Health Crisis

12

REGIONAL

Dubai fast becoming
the global hub for
creativity



What the world wants from COP28

By Sheikha Suhaila Fahad Al-Sabah
Managing Editor

Less than a week away from the start of the 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) on Climate Change in Dubai, there is palpable concern among many climate stakeholders that this conference too could go the way of so many other COP climate gatherings in the past. The fear is that COP28 could once again prove to be nothing more than a talkshop, with lengthy discussions, plenty of promises, and at the end very little in the form of meaningful measures to address climate change.

The question is, does the world have the luxury of time to let yet another opportunity slip by without resolutely and effectively addressing climate change? Can the world allow COP28 to become 'one more' ineffectual climate gathering that fails to credibly cut global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, to decisively reduce fossil fuel usage and production, and to provide the needed technological and financial support for countries in the Global South to tackle climate consequences?

Our apprehension on the upcoming talks arise from having attended and covered several previous climate discussions, which have been, in the most part, unfruitful gatherings, despite the highly publicized 'achievements' made at the



conclusion of the talks. Even the much touted 'Loss and Damage Fund', the key achievement of last year's COP27 has so far failed to deliver on its promise.

The Fund, which was set up to help impoverished developing countries to mitigate and adapt to climate change with funding from developed countries, materialized through persistent efforts and last-minute negotiations by Egypt's COP27 Presidency and other stakeholders. Despite those efforts and the passage of a year,

the Loss and Damage Fund has made very little progress. More importantly, there has been no significant cash flow into the Fund from the developed economies — responsible for much of the GHG emissions in the past.

Since the 2015 groundbreaking COP21 in France, at which the seminal international treaty on climate change, the Paris Climate Accords was adopted, subsequent COP gatherings have largely centered around achieving the main objectives of the Paris Agreement — holding global average temperature to below 2°C, while pursuing efforts to limit the rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial era levels; helping countries adapt and build resilience to climate change; and marshaling finance to support low GHG emissions and climate-resilient development in developing countries.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



Salvaging COP28



Gordon Brown

A former prime minister of the United Kingdom, he is currently the UN Special Envoy for Global Education.

The United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai is less than a week away. But it has become increasingly clear that only a bold financing initiative spearheaded by the United Arab Emirates could provide essential funding and support to the Global South.

Despite being preceded by a summer of devastating droughts, floods, and wildfires that

underscored the need for urgent action, the pre-summit talks on a Loss and Damage Fund to help the world's most impoverished countries mitigate the effects of climate change have made little progress. The fund, it was decided, will be housed for four years at the World Bank — but there has been no agreement on the obligations of the historic emitters and, as yet, no substantial flows of cash.

As the president of COP28, the UAE's Sultan Al Jaber faces the crucial task of breaking the current impasse and delivering on his promise to devise a funding plan to bridge the Global South's annual \$1 trillion shortfall in financing for mitigation and adaptation initiatives. The UAE holds the key to closing the climate financing gap.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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New EU Ambassador aims to build stronger partnership with Kuwait

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Ambassador of the European Union (EU) to Kuwait H.E. Anne Koistinen, who presented her credentials to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on 15 November, held a media meeting last week at the new EU premises in Kuwait at the Al-Hamra Tower.

Welcoming media personnel to the new location, Ambassador Koistinen said that she was delighted and honored to speak with the Crown Prince during the presentation of her credentials, and to discuss ways to build on the strong partnership between the EU and Kuwait.

Pointing out that there are several areas of mutual interest to further develop EU-Kuwait relations, she indicated her intention to jointly enhance bilateral relations across various sectors, including political cooperation, trade and investment, energy, climate change, economic diversification, education, health, research and innovation, as well as regional security and stability.

The EU ambassador said, "We share with Kuwait the belief that humanitarian aid is vital in supporting vulnerable people in the region and beyond. In this context, I would like to praise Kuwait for its humanitarian aid to the Palestinians in Gaza. It is worth noting the European Union is the largest international

donor to the Palestinian people and, since 16 October, the EU has launched a humanitarian air bridge bringing over 550 tonnes of humanitarian supplies for the Palestinians in Gaza."

She noted that "as the High Representative of the EU for Foreign and Security Policy Josep Borrell said, the EU calls for a political solution Israeli-Palestinian issue based on the Two-State Solution". She further said that this is the EU's shared objective with Kuwait, building on the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative. "I am really sad at the tragic loss of life among all civilians and hope that peace would eventually prevail," she concluded.

Pointing out that the EU High Representative had stated during his visit to Kuwait last year that the "EU is the second biggest trading partner for Kuwait, but we can still do more together", Ambassador Koistinen stressed that her mission is to translate these words into action working in 'Team Europe' spirit together with EU Member States.

"A strengthened partnership is beneficial both for the EU and Kuwait with the EU being the world's largest single market, a leader in research and innovation, an important security actor in the Gulf region and the leading actor on global challenges such as climate change and digitalisation.

"Another area of cooperation between the EU and Kuwait is inter-cultural cooperation, mobility for youth and students, higher



education cooperation and exchanges that will improve mutual understanding and trust between our peoples," she said. The EU envoy added that "the EU Delegation has been working with Kuwait also on women's empowerment, which is a subject I'm keen to discuss in close cooperation with the government, civil society, private sector among others".

Facilitating travel is an important element of enhancing people to people contacts, which is one of the pillars of the EU Strategy towards the Gulf. In this context, Ambassador Koistinen made it clear that she was delighted when the European Commission adopted on 8 September more favorable rules on the issuing of Schengen multiple entry visas to Kuwaiti nationals. This new 'visa cascade' regime for Kuwaiti nationals applying for Schengen visas in Kuwait will see all eligible applicants,

including first-time travelers, being issued with visas valid for 5 years, if the passport validity allows.

She also expressed her delight last October to welcome the recently appointed EU first Special Representative for the Gulf region, Luigi Di Maio in Kuwait, which was his first visit to Kuwait in this position. She also added that his very successful visit is proof of the EU's new ambition to take EU-Kuwait joint cooperation to a new strategic level. "The Special Representative was right when he said that he is seeking an EU-Gulf partnership based on dialogue, respect and results", she added.

She concluded by saying that she is really delighted to be in Kuwait. "I have already met many Kuwaiti friends from all walks of life and I look forward to working with Kuwaitis to strengthen EU-Kuwait partnership further."



Enterprise Ireland delegation visits Kuwait

A high-powered Irish trade mission led by the country's Minister for Business, Employment and Retail, Neale Richmond, is on a tour this week of the Gulf region. The three-day trade mission from Enterprise Ireland, the Irish government agency responsible for supporting businesses in international trade, includes visits to Kuwait City, Riyadh and Jeddah. The visits will focus on enhancing the existing trade links with the region and promoting Ireland as a world-class provider of goods and services across the aviation, digital technology and consumer sectors.

During his visit to Kuwait, Minister Richmond met with Kuwait's Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Acting Minister of Public Works Jassem Al Ostad, Director-General for Civil Aviation Eng, Emad Al Jalawi, Acting Chief Executive of Kuwait Airways Capt. Ahmad Al Kreebani and Chief Executive Officer for Al Jazeera Terminal 5, Nasser Al Obaid. Minister Neale was accompanied by Ambassador of Ireland to UAE, Kuwait and Qatar, H.E. Alison Milton.

As a major growth market, Enterprise Ireland has had a presence in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region for over 20 years. In 2022, Enterprise Ireland client exports to the

Middle East and North Africa region increased by 8 percent. Irish companies exported €163.5 million in goods and services to Saudi Arabia in 2022, making it Enterprise Ireland's largest trading partner in the MENA region, along with €44.9 million in exports to Kuwait.

"The Gulf region offers huge opportunities for Irish SMEs exporting to the region, with over €200m in exports to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia combined in 2022," said Minister Richmond. "Ireland's particular strength in the global aviation sector is an impressive success story. "With a large focus on the aviation sector throughout the Trade Mission, I'm looking forward to promoting Ireland's capabilities as a global leader in the sector, with the aim of opening up further opportunities for Irish enterprise."

Minister Richmond also met with Enterprise Ireland client company, Cleva Mamma who are celebrating their 20th anniversary, and their partnership since 2017 with Mother Care (Alshaya Group) in the region. He also held meetings with the new national flag carrier of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh Air, as well as with major airlines and operators in Kuwait.

"Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have large economic ambitions over the coming years," said Tom Kelly, divisional manager for Industrial and Life sciences, with Enterprise Ireland. He added, "During this trade mission Enterprise Ireland, along with our client companies, aims to further showcase the very best of what Irish companies have to offer and to engage with business leaders across this region."

Municipality approves new names for regions



Several regions in the country that were previously known mainly by their geographical direction from an adjacent area, such as East Sabah Al Ahmad, are to get their own distinct names following approval in this regard by the Legal and Financial Committee of the Municipal Council.

The committee, led by Fahd Al-Abduljader, approved the renaming to reflect the region's historical, cultural, and geographical significance. The decision, which aimed to enhance the identity and character of each locality, was approved unanimously at the committee's recent meeting.

The new names for the regions are as follows:

Rahiya Residential: This name replaces the city of South Saad Al-Abdullah, paying homage to the geographical and historical significance of the area.

Al-Istiqlal: Chosen for the city of East Sabah Al-Ahmad, this name commemorates Kuwait's independence from the United Kingdom in 1961.

Arifjan: Substituting for the city of South Sabah Al-Ahmad, this name is a nod to the Al-Arfaj plant.

Al-Joun: Instead of the northwestern suburb of Sulaibikhat, this name is chosen due to its proximity to Kuwait City.

Al-Bairaq: This replaces the low-cost affordable housing suburbs, Al-Alam, and Al-Raya.

Al-Soor: Substituting for the South Abdullah Al-Mubarak suburb, this name is in reference to the Kuwait Wall.

Al-Rayyan: Instead of the West Abdullah Al-Mubarak suburb, this name is chosen, representing 'one of the gates of Paradise'.

Sidra: Replacing the southern Kairouan, this name is selected due to the presence of 700 Sidra trees in the area.

The committee has also decided to retain the name of Nawaf **Al-Ahmad City;** the name Khaitan for the southern suburb of Khaitan; and the name Taima for East Taima through a merger.



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Italian envoy leaves with a sense of pride

By Rabih Kalas
Special to The Times Kuwait

After a highly successful tenure of over four years, Italian Ambassador H.E. Carlo Baldocci is leaving Kuwait with a sense of pride in having strengthened bilateral relations between Italy and Kuwait, and with fondest memories of deep friendships fostered during his stay in this country. In a parting interview with Arabic daily Al Jarida, the ambassador spoke openly about his feelings for this country and its people.

He began by stating, "My wife Cristiana and I leave with feelings of extreme gratitude towards Kuwait. I don't think about these feelings as nostalgia, which inevitably there are and will be, because Kuwait is not a closed page; we will carry memories of this place and its people with us which we will always treasure."

Describing the first few months after arriving in Kuwait as defining his feelings for this country and its people, the ambassador said, "I arrived a few months before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. I will never forget, and the Italian people will never forget, the generous support of the Kuwaiti Government at the beginning of the crisis, when Italy was one of the first countries in the world affected by this terrible contagion. In those early days of the pandemic it was difficult to perceive not only the causes but also the actual extent of this global catastrophe."

celebrated 60 years of Italian recognition of Kuwait with numerous events, in particular through publications and exhibitions. In addition, we have held concerts, and seasons of Italian music that were interrupted only during the pandemic, which allowed us to bring Milan's famous La Scala to Kuwait, the Accademia Chigiana with extraordinary young Italian performers, the music of Ennio Morricone and much more. All of this, together with a strong Italian economic and commercial presence."

Elaborating on the economic relations between the two countries, Ambassador Baldocci noted, "Economic relations have grown significantly. In 2022, Italy was Kuwait's foremost European trading partner, exceeding two billion euros in exports, thus doubling the figures of both 2019 and 2020. Kuwaiti exports also increased to Italy by an extraordinary percentage in the same period. We have a bright future ahead of us in the economic realm and plenty of scope to improve further."

Attributing bilateral economic growth to increasing awareness and friendship between Italy and Kuwait, the envoy added, "I consider the strengthening of economic relations as inevitable to the level of knowledge and friendship between our two countries. When I arrived in Kuwait we were issuing 35 visas a day. From January 1st of this year, we have issued 28,000 visas to Italy from Kuwait. The more Italians and Kuwaitis have the opportunity to get to know and appreciate each other, the more common interests they develop, including

"A truly extraordinary person, she studied in Italy and later wrote important texts on some of the greatest Italian writers. Her remarkable knowledge of Italian culture and her human energy have combined to influence many Kuwaiti students to learn more about Italy. It is by celebrating such high profile personalities that friendship between our two countries and



Mrs. Cristiana Baldocci

its people are consolidated and developed."

Turning to political relations between the two countries, the Italian ambassador noted that bilateral political and diplomatic relations received a further impetus during the visit to Italy in July by Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al Jaber Al Sabah. "During



Italian Ambassador H.E. Carlo Baldocci

(KFAED) and the Italian Cassa Depositi e Prestiti (CDP) for joint initiatives on development cooperation.

"Political relations between our two countries are also excellent. Italy and Kuwait have a natural tendency for dialogue; for historical, geographical and cultural reasons they have a common vocation to both be, as I define them, 'bridge builders'. The ability of our two countries to engage in dialogue, to mediate, while holding true to the principles in which we believe, has been a constant in our foreign policies and has always provided important contributions to regional and international security and détente." The ambassador also emphasized the strong collaboration that he had with his Kuwaiti counterpart in Rome, "I worked well with my counterparts in Rome during the years of my mandate. It is always important to discuss in order to guide, possibly by mutual agreement, towards achieving the best result for both countries. For example, with my current colleague, Nasser Al Qahtani, we are in constant contact and from the first day we met in Kuwait we said to each other that we would work together in agreement as if we were part of a single team."

He concluded by noting, "I leave behind a network of relationships whose weave is even more dense in all sectors. It is not thanks to me, but to the familiarity of relations between Italy and Kuwait; the people-to-people relationship that I have tried to encourage in recent years has allowed us to achieve many important results. Excellent relationships."

Ambassador Baldocci who leaves Kuwait with his wife Cristiana and their daughter in a few days time had this piece of advice for his successor, "Find time, every now and then, to walk around the beautiful Mubarakia Souq, and stop to eat fish and meat in one of the numerous good restaurants inside."



Political relations between our two countries are also excellent. Italy and Kuwait have a natural vocation for dialogue; for historical, geographical and cultural reasons they have a common vocation to both be, as I define them, 'bridge builders'.

"And I thank the support of the many Kuwaitis who sought me out at the time to express closeness, often through material support, towards my country, as well as a lot of solidarity and affection. This was an extraordinary test of friendship for me. Because friends, real ones, are there for you in times of need without you even asking and Kuwait and the Kuwaitis have proven to be great friends of my country and of the Italian people on this occasion."

"Following the pandemic, in 2021, we

those of a business nature.

"I also feel it was very important to give due recognition to special people who contributed to illuminating the common path and mutual knowledge between our two countries. Let me just name one of those whom I had the opportunity to decorate. I am proud to have been able to deliver, upon designation of the President of the Italian Republic, the insignia and diploma of the Order of the Star of Italy to Sheikh Dr. Rasha Al Homoud Al Jaber Al Sabah.

his visit to Rome, His Excellency the Foreign Minister met with and held discussions with the Vice President of the Council and Italian Foreign Minister, Hon. Antonio Tajani, and with the Hon. Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni.

"Several significant agreements were signed on the occasion, including one on starting a structured Strategic Dialogue; another on updating our cultural cooperation program; and a third for a new collaboration between the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development

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Antigua and Barbuda's growing diplomatic, economic ties with Kuwait

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda, H.E. Mohammed Al-Zoubi highlighted the robust and flourishing relations between his country and Kuwait. With a diplomatic presence spanning 16 years, the ambassador expressed hopes for further strengthening ties through increased trade cooperation and the establishment of an embassy in Kuwait.

Antigua and Barbuda, a Caribbean gem

with a population of 110,000, attracts around 3 million tourists annually. Ambassador Al-Zoubi urged Kuwaiti tourists to explore the country's abundant tourism potential, emphasizing the absence of taxes on investors and an almost zero crime rate. He also extended an invitation to Kuwaiti investors to explore opportunities in sectors such as tourism, education, cotton cultivation, and manufacturing.

Ambassador Al-Zoubi acknowledged Kuwait's pivotal role in supporting Antigua

and Barbuda's development, citing the assistance provided by the Kuwait Fund for Development in 1993 for the reconstruction of the airport and road repairs in the capital St. John's. The ambassador highlighted Antigua and Barbuda's Citizenship by Investment Program, established in 2013 to fund public sector projects. He detailed the two methods through which investors can obtain citizenship: a non-refundable donation to the National Development Fund and real estate investment in approved projects. The cost for a family of five is approximately US\$160,000.

He further highlighted the advantages of Antigua and Barbuda citizenship, including visa-free travel to 160 countries, acceptance of dual citizenship, and no language test requirements. Notably, citizenship applicants are not required to reside in the country but must spend at least 5 days there within 5 years of obtaining the passport.

He also outlined five cooperation agreements between Kuwait and Antigua and Barbuda, covering areas such as economic and technical cooperation, trade, cultural and artistic collaboration, and air services. These agreements reflect the depth and diversity of the bilateral relationship, said the envoy.



At 33 years old, Ambassador Mohammed Al-Zoubi holds the distinction of being one of the world's youngest ambassadors. Hailing from Tripoli, Lebanon, his journey from economic envoy to ambassador underscores the dynamic and forward-looking nature of Antigua and Barbuda's diplomatic representation.

The Ambassador also expressed his aspirations to open a direct flight route between Kuwait and Antigua and Barbuda, making the Caribbean nation more accessible. He also hinted at an upcoming visit by Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister to Kuwait, aiming to further solidify the diplomatic ties between the two nations.

Municipality to regulate communication towers

In a significant move to enhance regulations governing the establishment of public radio communications buildings and towers across Kuwait, the Municipality's Building Regulations Study and Review Committee has finalized a comprehensive schedule outlining specific requirements and specifications.

The newly introduced Article 39 in the telecommunications regulations stipulates strict penalties, including fines ranging from no less than KD9,000 to not exceeding KD10,000, for individuals and entities found in violation of the regulations. Under the new regulation, a broad range of violations have been earmarked for penalties and fines, including implementing or supervising the

construction of buildings and towers for telecommunications without the required license, exceeding the designated area of 300 square meters, and placing structures in unauthorized locations.

Other violations listed in the new regulation include a mandatory 20-meter distance between the station or tower and private residential buildings, schools, kindergartens, centers for people with disabilities, and nurseries. The committee also established fines ranging from not less than KD100 to not more than KD500 for the use of materials other than the specified iron mesh or failure to meet the specified height of the fence surrounding the towers. Furthermore, fines of not less than KD3,000 and not exceeding KD5,000 were outlined for placing advertising or promotional boards within a site or on the buildings of communications stations or towers.



LuLu Exchange opens 36th Customer Engagement Center in Kuwait at Khaitan-2



LuLu Exchange Kuwait, one of the nation's most trusted names in cross-border payments and foreign currency exchange, opened its 36th customer engagement center in Khaitan-2 on Thursday. This marks the 311th Global Customer Engagement Center under LuLu Financial Holdings, strategically aligned with the company's expansion strategy in Kuwait. The new engagement center at Khaitan-2 was inaugurated by Mr. Adeeb Ahamed, Managing Director of LuLu Financial Holdings, in the presence of other senior management of the country operations.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Adeeb Ahamed said, "The opening of our latest customer engagement center in Khaitan-2, brings us great joy and inspiration. This new center will serve as a connection point for our varied financial services, streamlining the integration of our digital payment solutions for customers.

Kuwait holds a strategic position in our operations, and we extend our gratitude to the government, regulators, and partners for

their support in contributing to our ongoing expansion."

Established in 2011, LuLu Exchange Kuwait is one of the country's leading financial services providers. It has been at the forefront of digital transformation, introducing several industry-first initiatives to enhance the service experience for both retail and corporate customers. As one of the most future-focused payment companies in Kuwait, LuLu Exchange delivers financial services with a focus on timeliness, transparency, and reliability through its network of customer engagement centers and the mobile payments app - LuLu Money.

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Belgium and Kuwait to celebrate 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations next year

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Belgian Ambassador H.E. Christian Domes held a reception at his residence on 20 November to mark his country's King's Birthday celebrations. The chief guest on the occasion was the Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Sadiq Marafi, who cut the celebratory cake along with Ambassador Domes to mark the occasion.

In his address to the gathering Ambassador Domes remarked that since 1866 King's Day in Belgium has been celebrated annually on 15

November.. Initially, it was the celebration of the then king's birthday and later the day of Saint Leopold.

He pointed out that Belgium and Kuwait had nourished excellent relations since the independence of Kuwait, so much so that Belgium took part in the international coalition to liberate Kuwait from its invaders. He added the two countries were also good trading partners and hoped to further improve on the Euro 371 million trade in 2022. Ambassador Dome also disclosed that the two countries would celebrate the 60th anniversary of their diplomatic relations next year.

This anniversary he said would provide them with plenty of opportunities to highlight their close cooperation, and to raise it at a higher level.

He also noted that Belgium and Kuwait have a seat at the Human Rights Council. This is a promising avenue for closer cooperation. Both our countries are also engaged in the anti-Daesh coalition. In addition, Belgium will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2024. The Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs Hadja Lahbib has already indicated that the Peace Process in the Middle East will be a priority of the Belgian Presidency.

Expressing concern for the children of Gaza on World Children's Day, the Belgian ambassador called for respecting the UN Charter and peaceful conflict resolution. "It is in this grim international context that we commemorate World Children's Day today. Belgium is committed to the protection and promotion of children's rights. Our thoughts are with all the children living in difficult humanitarian situations, particularly the children of Gaza, who suffer the brunt of the war," said the envoy..

Guests were treated to some traditional Belgian favorites of fries and chocolates.



Toyota and Al Sayer name brand ambassador for GR

As part of reinforcing motorsports in the region, Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Company and Toyota have signed a new partnership agreement with Ali Makhseed, the popular Kuwaiti racer, onboarding him as Gazoo Racing (GR) Brand Ambassador in Kuwait.

The sponsorship signing ceremony was attended by AlSayer Group Chairman Faisal Bader Al Sayer, the company COO Bengt Schultz, and Senior Business Director Toyota Sales, Martin Aherne and other officials.

According to Martin Aherne "We are delighted to start this new partnership with the renowned Kuwaiti race driver Ali Makhseed, with an exceptional record in the field of motorsport and drifting, as GR brand ambassador. The motor racing community in Kuwait recognizes Ali's past record of achievements and we are confident that our partnership will further strengthen Gazoo Racing initiatives in Kuwait along with supporting him to achieve even better results".

Some of the achievements of Ali Makhseed in the national and international racing arena are: Became the first Middle East driver to take top spot during the third round of Oman International Drift Championship (OIDC) 2023; Silver medal of the drifting race of the second international motorsports games, organized by the International Automobile Federation (FIA), in Marseille City France, October 2022;

Winner of Kuwait King of Drift in 2018 in the Red Bull Car Park Drift Series.

Speaking on the occasion Makhseed said "Global history is witnessing Toyota's mark in the world of car racing that is full of victories and championships. Furthermore, Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Company has always been a pioneer in supporting motor sports in Kuwait through Kuwait International Rally in the late seventies and eighties".

"It is an honor to be part of this great leading family with long-standing achievements. I would like to extend my gratitude to Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Company for their constant support to youth and sports. Thank you, Toyota Gazoo Racing for your trust" added Ali.

As part of the one-year sponsorship contract, AlSayer will provide Toyota GR models on quarterly lease along with a GR 86 to be built as competition car for the 2024-25 racing season in addition to the agreed sponsorship fee. Ali will also play an integral part in several activities under the GR calendar carrying the true spirit of motorsports.

As part of the first grass root level FIA Certified one-make race 'GR Yaris Cup season 2023-24', Ali Makhseed will be driving with guests at the Kuwait Motor Town track offering a thrilling hot lap experience and a special drift experience for guests. Ali has also played a vital role in transferring the technical know-how when it comes to modifying the GR Yaris stock cars and preparing it to be race ready.

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Turkish Embassy organizes landmark cultural event



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Turkish Embassy organized the second Kuwait Turkish Village, a cultural event aimed at strengthening cultural ties between the two countries, at the Hunting and Equestrian Club on 23 November.

The event, which was held in association with Rodax Company from Turkey, witnessed the presence of Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye, Dr.

Serdar Çam, and the Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye H.E. Tuba Nur Sönmez, along with Assistant Foreign Minister of Kuwait for European Affairs, Ambassador Sadiq Marafi, members of the diplomatic corps in Kuwait, and the General Secretary of the Hunting and Equestrian Club of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Fahd Al-Nasser Al-Sabah.

Spanning two weeks, from 23 November to 9 December, the Kuwait Turkish Village is offering visitors a unique experience that



allows them to immerse themselves in the depth and breadth of Turkish culture and

tradition, and witness first-hand the rich heritage and vibrant customs of Turkey.

The event is a testament to the enduring friendship and cultural affinity between Turkey and Kuwait and underscores the Turkish Embassy's commitment to fostering cultural exchanges and deepening bilateral relations between the two countries. With its array of activities and exhibitions, the event promises to be a landmark in cultural diplomacy and heritage.



Royale Hayat Hospital Celebrates World Prematurity Day

Royale Hayat Hospital, Kuwait, is proud to announce its celebration of the global observance of World Prematurity Day on November 17th as part of community-raising awareness about the incredible strength and resilience of these tiny fighters and the challenges faced by their families.

On Thursday, November 16, 2023, Royale Hayat Hospital hosted a series of initiatives with CME/CEPD points. People representing patients, healthcare service providers, and leaders from ministry hospitals attended the symposium.

The symposium included a showcase exhibited by Prof. Samuel Ighanesebhor (Head of the Neonatology Department) about the hospital's state-of-the-art Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Moreover, an interactive and informative session was led by expert neonatologists, Dr. Mohamad Hassoun, Consultant Pediatrician and Neonatologist, Dr. Abdul Mohsen El Anjari, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynecology from Ministry Hospital, and Nurse Laiza Fabian-SCN, who shared their knowledge and experiences, shedding light on the latest advancements in preterm birth care and the critical role of comprehensive support systems. Their valuable insights offered a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by premature infants and their families, as well as the incredible breakthroughs that enhance their quality of life.

In a heartwarming moment, Royale Hayat Hospital invited one of its own mothers, Ms. Eman Ali A. Al Shaya, who shared her personal experience with premature birth. Ms. Eman bravely recounted her journey, providing a first-hand account of the challenges faced by families in such situations. Her story touched the hearts of everyone in the audience, reinforcing the empathy and compassion that Royale Hayat Hospital aims to provide to all its patients.

Furthermore, Royale Hayat Hospital organized a range of engaging activities designed for its premature children and took the opportunity to celebrate their significant milestones during the event. This joyous occasion brought tears of happiness to the eyes of families, staff, and medical professionals alike. It showcased the dedication and expertise of the hospital's neonatal team, who have worked tirelessly to ensure the well-being and development of these precious infants.

"We are extremely proud to have celebrated World Prematurity Day with such an inspiring event," said Prof. Samuel Ighanesebhor (Head of the Neonatology Department). "It is our mission to provide exceptional care, support, and guidance to premature babies and their families. We remain committed to raising awareness, advancing medical advancements, and fostering a community that understands the challenges faced by these families."

LuLu Hypermarket launches 'Super Friday', the biggest sale of the year

LuLu Hypermarket, the leading retailer in the region, launched its much-anticipated sale of the year, 'Super Friday', on 22 November at all its outlets in Kuwait. The super sale that runs till 28 November offers shoppers a one-time opportunity to avail of a flat 50 percent off on selected products across all categories.

The sale includes amazing deals on mobiles, tablets, TVs, laptops, electronics, wearables, IT accessories, gaming products, home appliances, beauty gadgets, fashion items, footwear, luggage, fragrances, eyewear, makeup, beauty and lifestyle products, home furnishings and toys. In addition, all supermarket categories, including groceries, fresh foods, fruits and vegetables, fish, meat, and frozen and dairy products are being offered at special prices during the Super Friday sale.

Some of the major sales highlights during the week-long campaign are a 24-hour super sale, one day wonders, price match guarantee, super saver hours and midnight sale with up to 80 percent off. Additionally, there will be in-store exclusive deals, hourly offers, big brands sale, Super Day with a flat 50 percent off on Friday 24 November, and morning madness where customers can shop early and save more from 9am to 12 noon.

To make the Super Friday sale even more superb there are special deals on the popular Ikon brand products at never-before prices. For added convenience of customers, the hypermarket is also offering all promotions both online and offline. In addition to discounts, LuLu is also offering extra value-added services, including free deliveries, extended warranties, free installation, easy credit installment schemes, and more. Furthermore, customers can enjoy exclusive bank offers with instant discounts through credit cards.

To maintain the exciting Super Friday tempo, the hypermarket has also organized several amazing activities such as live deals, spin-the-wheel to win a prize, and a mystery box option for customers who shop for KD80 or above, which enables them to open a mystery box and win the super prize inside the box.

Super Friday, which is LuLu Hypermarket's own version of the Black Friday super sale period, provides an opportunity for shoppers in Kuwait to avail of amazing discounts and rock-bottom prices on items they had put-off purchasing earlier while also enjoying additional benefits, and engaging in activities that ensure shopping at LuLu Hypermarket always remains an exciting experience.





Oman, Kuwait relations deep-rooted and outstanding

Ambassador of Oman H.E. Dr. Saleh Al-Kharousi described his country's relations with Kuwait as deep-rooted and outstanding. The ambassador was speaking at the reception held last week by the Omani Embassy to mark the 53rd anniversary of Oman National Day.

The event was attended by Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Sabah and his deputy, Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Sabah as well as several sheikhs,

officials and heads of diplomatic missions in Kuwait.

Al-Kharousi said that the two countries' policies are aligned in that they adhere to principles and contribute to solving regional and international problems through dialogue and diplomatic means. He added that Oman's foreign policy focuses on positive neutrality and cooperation with all circles either through the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab, regional or international frameworks, he noted.

Ambassador Al-Kharousi

elaborated that non-interference in the other countries' affairs and not allowing others to interfere in Oman's domestic affairs are a main feature of the Omani foreign policy. He stressed Oman's keenness on building bridges of friendship, cooperation and joint action with all countries of the world. Oman Vision 2040 is based on



investing in Oman's human resources, he said, noting that the Sultanate is seeking to diversify income and enhance tourism as the country has an attractive tourist environment throughout the year. He also referred to continued bilateral efforts to enhance cooperation in the political, economic, technical and a variety of other domains.

Korean Language Center opens at Kuwait University

Ambassador of the Republic of Korea H.E. Byung-ha Chung along with the Dean of the College of Arts at Kuwait University, Dr. Abdulmuhsen Al-Medej, inaugurated the King Sejong Institute (Korean Language Center) at Kuwait University on 20 November.

The event marked a significant milestone in cultural and educational exchange between the two countries. Earlier this year, the Embassy of the Republic of Korea and Kuwait University initialed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish the King Sejong Institute, the first of its kind in Kuwait.

The Institute, named after King Sejong the Great, a revered figure in Korean history, is a global initiative by the Korean government to promote



the learning of the Korean language and culture worldwide, with over 250 institutes established in more than 80 countries.

In his speech on the occasion, Ambassador Chung underscored the importance of language as a bridge between cultures. Pointing to the upcoming 45th anniversary of Korea-Kuwait diplomatic relations and the 60th anniversary of energy cooperation, the ambassador emphasized the enduring friendship between the two nations.

He also acknowledged the cultural phenomenon of 'Hallyu' or the 'Korean Wave' among Kuwaitis, reflecting the deepening cultural cooperation. He further expressed gratitude by thanking Kuwait University for accepting this collaboration which will boost bilateral cultural exchange.

The ceremony included the distribution of certificates to students embarking on the inaugural Korean language course, symbolizing the beginning of an educational journey that aims

to deepen mutual understanding, particularly among young people.

Special guests on the occasion included, Director of the Liaison Department at the National Security Bureau and honorary chairperson of Han-Ku Cultural Diwaniya, Sheikha Dr Anoud Al Sabah, and the former Kuwaiti envoys to the Republic of Korea, Ambassadors Zaid Al-Sheridah, and Mohammad Al-Awadi, as well as several prominent members of the Korean community in Kuwait.





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COP28 Must Focus on the Climate-Fueled Health Crisis



Marina Romanello

Executive Director of the Lancet Countdown, is a climate change and health researcher at University College London.

Our continued dependence on fossil fuels is damaging our health and pushing global temperatures to record levels. The interlinked climate calamities of the past few years — extreme weather events, food insecurity, water scarcity, and worsening air pollution — are a direct result of greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions. But the adverse effects we are experiencing today could be just a preview of the catastrophes that await us.

That is the key finding of the latest Lancet Countdown report on climate change and health, authored by a group of leading health and climate scientists that I led. Undoubtedly, this grim conclusion will not come as a shock to the millions of people suffering from climate-related health issues and their loved ones. Most of us, wherever we live, are directly or indirectly affected by this crisis.

As climate change worsens, its effects on our physical and mental health are no longer hypothetical. Our research finds that, compared with 1981-2010, the increasing frequency of heatwaves and droughts over the past few years has exposed 127 million more people to moderate or severe food insecurity in 2021. Meanwhile, outdoor air pollution from the combustion of dirty fuels claims 1.9 million lives annually, and infectious diseases like dengue are expanding to new regions.

Yet, despite 27 years of annual climate-change negotiations, world leaders still refuse to acknowledge the urgent need to phase out fossil fuels. Despite overwhelming evidence that fossil-fuel combustion is the primary driver of the current health crisis, a draft statement on climate change and health, set to be released during the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, omits any reference to the issue. With many countries and companies backtracking on their climate



commitments, the world is moving in the wrong direction. At the current rate of GHG emissions, we are heading for a global temperature increase of nearly 3° Celsius by 2100, far above the 1.5°C target established by the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

The consequences could be catastrophic. Even with a global mean temperature increase of just under 2°C, annual heat-related deaths are projected to increase by 370 percent by mid-century. The most vulnerable groups, the elderly and children, are now exposed to twice as many heat-wave days as they were 30 years ago. And with heat-waves becoming increasingly frequent, the number of people suffering from moderate or severe food insecurity could increase by roughly 525 million by mid-century.

Beyond these direct effects, the climate crisis undermines individual well-being and the socioeconomic conditions necessary for a healthy population. In 2022, extreme heat-waves resulted in a loss of 490 billion working hours worldwide. Even if we manage to limit global warming to just below 2°C, heat-related labor loss is projected to increase by 50 percent.

It should be emphasized that these effects are not distributed evenly. The regions that have contributed the least to climate change — Africa, South and Central America, Asia, and small island developing states — often bear the brunt of climate-related health risks.

Given the urgency of the threat we face, the current pace of global efforts to reduce emissions is insufficient, falling far short of the Paris agreement's targets. Energy-based emissions hit an all-time high in 2022, while renewables still account for only 9.5 percent of the world's electricity. Households around the world still rely on dirty fuels. In the world's most climate-vulnerable countries, families rely on polluting fuels for 92 percent of their domestic energy, subjecting residents to toxic air inside their own homes.

While policymakers are tempted to address this crisis incrementally, solving one problem at a time or focusing on adaptation alone is insufficient. Without significant emissions reductions, adaptation will be futile. The climate-fueled health crisis cannot be solved without urgently shifting away from fossil fuels. By focusing on climate policies that enhance

public health and well-being, governments could prevent premature deaths, build a more resilient population and a stronger workforce, and bolster their domestic economies.

How can this be achieved? Our report outlines 11 concrete measures across five priority areas. First and foremost, to ensure that climate hazards remain within the adaptive capacity of our health systems, we must reduce GHG emissions in accordance with the Paris agreement. This requires a concerted effort to phase out fossil fuels through a just energy transition that mitigates the health effects of air pollution and expands access to clean, renewable energy, especially in the world's most underserved regions, where energy poverty remains a challenge.

At the same time, we must accelerate adaptation efforts to protect communities already suffering from the health consequences of climate change by bolstering cooperation between the health sector, environmental organizations, and meteorological services. And by eliminating all subsidies, lending, and investment in fossil fuels, we can create space for climate financing and resource allocation to support adaptation efforts in vulnerable countries.

The health sector must lead this transition. Strengthening health adaptation is critical to ensuring that our health systems can protect us amid escalating climate disruptions. Crucially, we must implement public-health measures that reduce air pollution, advocate healthier low-carbon diets, encourage active lifestyles, and enforce regulations on polluting industries. And, given that the health sector itself accounts for 4.6 percent of global GHG emissions and has influence over roughly 11 percent of the world's economy, it could play a significant direct role in global decarbonization.

COP28 is a test of world leaders' commitment to tackle this crisis. A genuine focus on health could catalyze a rapid and sustained shift away from fossil fuels and facilitate adaptation efforts. Failing to do so will result in a conference that does little more than pay lip service to health concerns and validate our collective inaction. Climate-related deaths will continue to increase, and a livable future will drift further beyond reach.





COP28
UAE

United Nations
Climate Change



Discover a world of action at COP28 Green Zone

Dubai Expo City, the venue for the COP28 climate conference taking place from 30 November to 12 December has two dedicated zones, the Blue Zone managed by United Nations Climate Change, which will be for accredited parties and observer delegates, and the Green Zone dedicated to civil society.

The Green Zone is managed and delivered by the COP28 UAE Presidency. Free-of-charge and open to everyone, the zone offers a platform to non-accredited delegates, including youth groups, civil society, NGOs, the private sector, and indigenous groups, to have their voices heard, promoting dialogue and awareness about climate action.

The Green Zone is the space where it is hoped collective action can transform climate policy into concrete outcomes. With an all-hands-on-deck approach, it will accelerate the energy transition, building upon a legacy of driving impactful initiatives and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

COP28's mission in the Green Zone is to translate insights and ideas into meaningful impact. Visitors can explore breakthrough climate innovations, cutting-edge tech, interactive exhibits, inspiring art installations, film screenings, and talks across Expo City Dubai.

Green Zone, which is located adjacent to the Blue Zone, will be operational between Thursday 30 November and Tuesday 12 December 2023.

Seven dedicated thematic hubs at the Green Zone will help connect, collaborate, and accelerate climate action. These hubs will give climate curious individuals opportunities to get inspired, learn, develop new skills, and collaborate to co-create and speedup climate solutions. These spaces of discovery include:

- **Energy Transition Hub:** This will be the place for connecting, collaborating and sharing insights, strategies and solutions to combat climate change.
- **Climate Finance Hub:** At the center of COP28's transformative mission, this place will host key players from the financial industry. Technology and Innovation Hub: This will be where cutting-edge



technologies and progressive thinking will converge to create innovative solutions aimed at tackling climate change and keeping 1.5°C within reach.

- **Startup Village:** This will be dedicated space within the Tech and Innovation Hub and feature over a 100 climate tech startups.
- **Humanitarian Hub:** This space will raise awareness about the humanitarian impacts of the climate crisis and inspire action to address climate related risks.
- **Greening Education Hub:** In partnership

with the UAE Ministry of Education, the Greening Education Pavilion, also known as Erth, Legacy for the Land of Zayed.

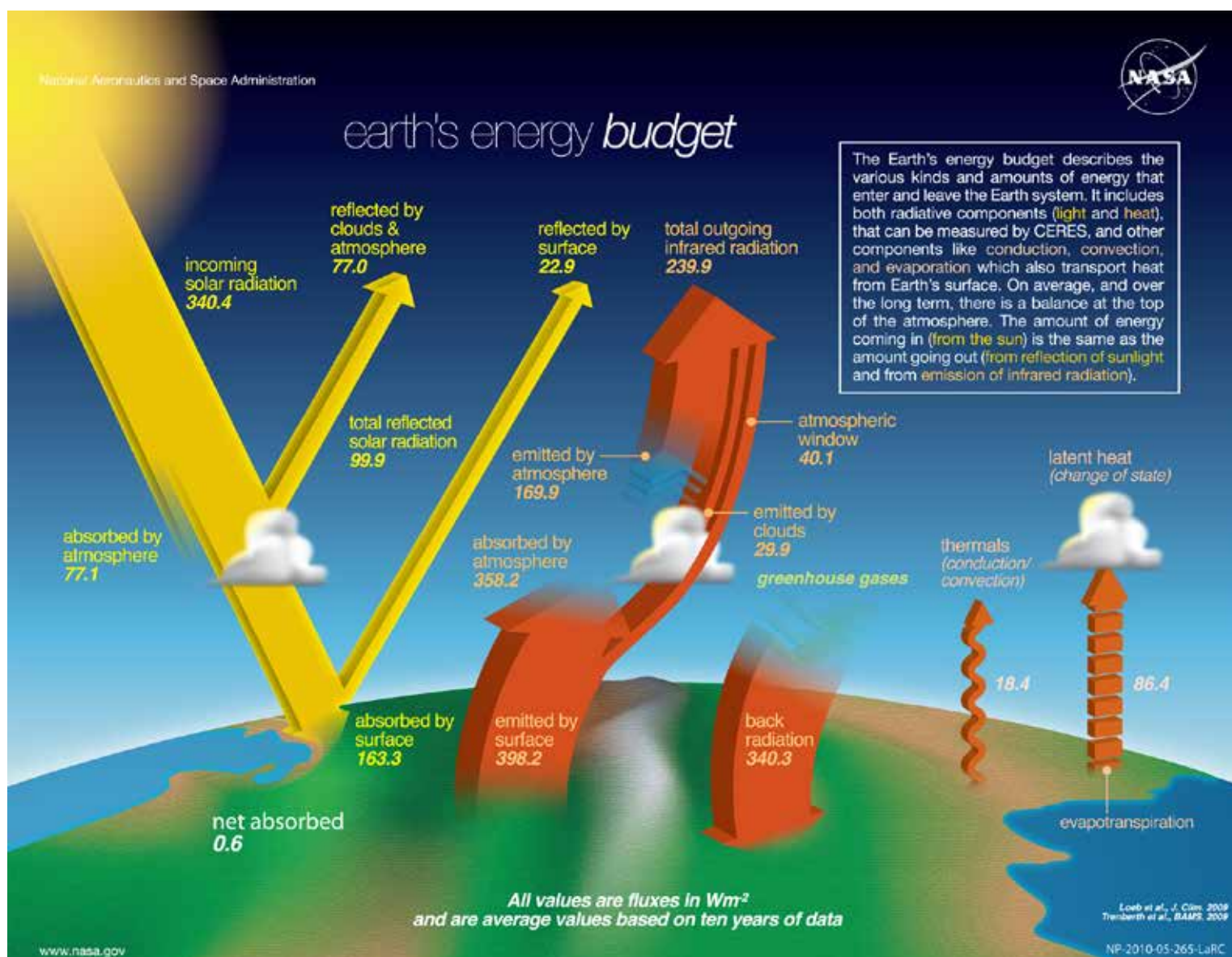
- **Knowledge Hub:** This will serve as a platform to bring together NGOs, UAE government ministries, local government entities and their partners.
- **Youth Hub:** This will be space to engage and amplify the voices of youth and indigenous peoples. It will allow young people to gather, to organize events, exchange ideas, find opportunities, and engage in climate change discussions.

World leaders to attend Climate Action Summit (WCAS) at COP28

United Arab Emirates President, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, has invited Heads of State or Government to participate in the World Climate Action Summit (WCAS), which will be held on 1 and 2 December, when the first part of the high-level segment for Heads of State or Government will also take place at COP28.

The invitation to the WCAS in the United Arab Emirates signifies the importance for world leaders to implement and transform key climate related decisions into concrete actions and credible plans. Their participation is key to continue raising ambition, building up from previous Conference of the Parties, and keep the high level commitment on climate change issues, with an aim to fight back climate emergency and to promote coordinated action to tackle climate change.

The WCAS will headline the 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) signatories to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which is taking place in Dubai, UAE from 30 November to 12 December.



WHO CAN VISIT THE GREEN ZONE?

- ✓ Anyone interested in climate action
- ✓ Public and private sector businesses
- ✓ Non-governmental organizations
- ✓ Blue Zone delegates



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT



Planning for a Future Beyond 1.5°C

**Simon Zadek**

Executive Director of
NatureFinance and Co-Lead of the
Secretariat for the Taskforce on
Nature Markets.

The negotiators and activists preparing to attend the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai are grimly aware that there is no realistic chance of limiting global warming to 1.5°C Celsius above pre-industrial levels. But what has become an open secret in climate circles must be shared more widely. Paradoxically, it may be the only way to muster the political will needed to eschew incrementalism in favor of disruptive action that is commensurate with the scale of the challenge.

The official view remains that the 1.5°C target set by the 2015 Paris climate agreement is still achievable, but only if we act decisively and immediately. While that may be true in theory, the necessary reforms are politically painful and therefore almost non-existent. Global coal consumption, for example, climbed to a new all-time high of 8.3 billion tons in 2022. Moreover, Chevron and ExxonMobil recently invested a combined \$113 billion in securing additional oil and gas reserves — an unambiguous bet on the long-term profitability of fossil fuels.

It has become starkly apparent that we are barreling toward global temperatures at least 2°C above pre-industrial levels. This aligns with the International Energy Agency's recent conclusion that, based on today's policies, global emissions could push up average

temperatures by around 2.4°C this century.

A future beyond 1.5°C will look very different from our current reality, and every tenth of a degree will have major consequences. At 2°C warming, it is estimated that around 40 percent of the world's population will be exposed to severe heatwaves, while up to one-third will experience chronic water scarcity. The human cost, in terms of displacement, lost livelihoods, and early deaths, will be unprecedented, with vulnerable communities, largely in poorer countries, bearing the heaviest burden.

We must do everything within our power to prevent these outcomes. But, ironically, raising false hopes of achieving the 1.5°C target has become a roadblock to progress on climate action. As NatureFinance highlights in a publication released on the eve of COP28 titled,

“Humans struggle to react to slow-moving crises. Escaping this pattern usually requires a ‘new truth’ to become self-evident, often through a sudden jolt that cements a paradigm shift and broadens the realm of possibility.”

‘Time to Plan for a Future Beyond 1.5 Degrees’, this goal reflects our ambition but, perversely, has embedded the fiction of a ‘win-win’ energy transition, whereby the future world looks much like ours, only without carbon emissions. This narrative, promoted by many political, business, and civil-society leaders, constrains our response, forcing us to act within the confines of conventional wisdom.

Humans struggle to react to slow-moving

crises. Escaping this pattern usually requires a ‘new truth’ to become self-evident, often through a sudden jolt that cements a paradigm shift and broadens the realm of possibility.

In the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis, for example, finance ministers and central bank governors abandoned the long-held belief that monetary expansion must be avoided at all costs for fear of inflation; instead, they embraced quantitative easing — in effect, printing money — to stimulate recovery. Similarly, after the COVID-19 pandemic erupted, leading G20 governments renounced their commitment to fiscal probity and adopted costly universal-income payments previously derided as utopian fantasy.

Pivoting to a ‘beyond 1.5°C’ narrative could provide the jolt necessary to reject a business-

As the same time, global food supply chains may become less important beyond 1.5°C of warming, as producing countries restrict exports and major sovereign importers like China focus on achieving self-sufficiency. Such on-shoring is likely to accelerate investment in capital-intensive food production that is more climate-resilient and less nature-dependent, including vertical farming and lab-grown proteins. Judging by the rollout of renewable-energy technologies, the main challenge may be deploying these resilient food systems at scale in poorer countries.

The finance sector is also ripe for disruption. Investments must urgently be steered away from carbon-intensive assets. Yet ongoing efforts to factor climate-related risks into asset valuation and allocation have obviously failed. Much bolder action is needed to align financial flows with national and international climate policies and commitments. Central banks and supervisors, for example, must move beyond financial risk and discard their cherished policy independence, which they have previously done in times of crisis. Under such circumstances, regulators could align with national net-zero policy goals and international commitments in imposing mandatory requirements on financial institutions to deliver net-zero, nature-positive portfolios within a certain timeframe.

Realism about the 1.5°C target is necessary to abandon incremental efforts and begin thinking bigger. Truly innovative climate action is impossible without letting go of this much-hoped-for goal and the comforting vision of an illusory future that accompanied it. While such a pivot would not guarantee success, it could unlock unconventional measures to limit rising temperatures and prepare for a warmer world.

as-usual mindset in favor of interventions that break from accepted norms and disrupt the status quo. Consider, for example, the existential issue of food security. Helping vulnerable smallholder farmers shift to regenerative practices might work in a world where warming is limited to 1.5°C. But it could hinder their pivot away from farming methods and livelihoods that will no longer exist if temperatures exceed that target.



Government submits proposal to introduce selective tax

Government has submitted a request to the National Assembly to expedite the ratification of the unified agreement for the selective tax, known as 'Harmful Goods Tax', ahead of its approval as a tax law in Kuwait.

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, Issa Al-Kandari, sent a letter to the Speaker of the National Assembly requesting urgency and to include it in the agenda for next Tuesday's session. The proposal also included a comprehensive presentation of the justifications for urgency from Finance Minister Fahd Al-Jarallah.

The finance minister confirmed that the ratification of the unified agreement across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states does not mean the start of implementing

the excise tax. Parliamentary ratification will need to be followed by the submission of a draft law that includes defining the goods subject to the tax and the provisions for application, and it will need to be discussed in the National Assembly.

The government also stressed that the excise tax does not affect the cost of living for citizens, and is imposed on goods that are harmful to health, and in Kuwait it is limited to only four goods — tobacco and its derivatives, energy drinks, soft drinks and sweetened drinks.

Al-Jarallah pointed to the challenges facing the Kuwaiti market due to the non-implementation of the excise tax, including the negative phenomena and economic repercussions in light of all other GCC states, with the exception of Kuwait, imposing



this tax. He noted that the neighboring countries in the region imposed a selective tax on tobacco and its derivatives, which led to the spread of smuggling these products from Kuwait to those countries, in addition to the companies that sell them in Kuwait

raising their prices.

Minister Al-Jarallah also explained that the tax will increase income for the state in non-oil revenues, in addition to the fact that a portion of the proceeds of these revenues can be used to confront the health and social damages resulting from the consumption of these goods.

He also clarified that there is no link between the excise tax and the value-added tax (VAT), as the latter affects all goods and services that the citizen consumes, with some exceptions, which makes it require more time and effort to discuss and decide on it.

As for selective tax, it has a fundamental goal that distinguishes it from other taxes as it is only imposed on goods that are harmful to health and aims to reduce consumption of these goods.

Salvaging COP28

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Persuading the world's wealthiest petrostates to pay a 3 percent voluntary tax on their windfall 2022 revenues from oil and gas exports could raise \$25 billion. Such a levy could provide the initial capital required to motivate the developed economies that account for most global greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions to issue guarantees that would enable multilateral development banks (MDBs) to boost investment.

To be sure, Al Jaber is well aware of the urgent need for decisive action. In June, in a private communication to some governments, he emphasized the importance of adopting a coordinated strategy that would use state guarantees to leverage private capital, reflecting the UAE's vision of new, innovative financial mechanisms to leverage private finance. He also wants to use large-scale state-guarantee mechanisms to mobilize significant private investments, framing this as a way to unite all parties and stakeholders in promoting climate action.

But Al Jaber is not just the president of COP28; he is also the CEO of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company. He is uniquely positioned to lead by example and steer his own country toward contributing its fair share. A \$25 billion levy, representing less than 10 percent of the oil and gas industry's annual revenues in 2022, should be considered the minimum contribution expected from major oil-exporting countries.

The stark contrast between the oil-producing countries' record-breaking export earnings and the millions of people across the Global South pushed into poverty by soaring electricity costs underscores this imperative. In 2022, the export earnings of OPEC countries alone totaled \$888 billion, a \$266 billion increase from the previous year. The six wealthiest oil exporters alone raked in roughly \$800 billion. The UAE's own oil-export earnings soared from \$76 billion in 2021 to \$119 billion.

The surge in energy prices has been particularly lucrative for the Middle East's petrostates. Qatar's

energy-export earnings jumped from \$87 billion to \$132 billion in 2022, while Kuwait's increased from \$63 billion to \$98 billion, allowing both countries to pay a levy of \$2 billion each. Norway, having nearly tripled its export earnings from \$48 billion to \$140 billion, could easily afford a \$5 billion levy.

But the largest contribution should come from Saudi Arabia, whose oil-export revenues skyrocketed to \$311 billion in 2022 – a staggering \$120 billion increase from the previous year. A \$9 billion contribution would be less than what the Saudis spend annually on football (soccer) and golf, and less than half of what they were reportedly willing to pay to acquire Formula One.

Moreover, a levy on windfall revenues from fossil fuels could incentivize all developed countries to contribute. The principle of fair burden-sharing is simple: those countries and industries that have historically contributed the most to GHG emissions and enjoy the highest per capita incomes should bear a larger share of the costs.

A portion of the \$25 billion levy should be directly allocated to the Loss and Damage Fund. The rest should serve as paid-in capital for a new climate-financing facility aimed at supporting the Global South. This capital, in turn, would be supplemented with multi-billion-dollar guarantees from the world's largest emitters. MDBs could then leverage these funds and potentially quadruple the resources available to low- and middle-income countries.

This strategic use of guarantees has been endorsed by several international bodies and highlighted in three recent reports to the G20, including those authored by economist N.K. Singh and former US Treasury Secretary Lawrence H. Summers. Adopting the Singh-Summers proposal to triple the World Bank's annual spending to \$390 billion, along with Barbadian Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley's initiative to direct \$100 billion in international funding to the Global South, would represent a major step toward mobilizing the \$1 trillion in annual investment required for the world's poorest countries to accelerate their transition to a climate-resilient future and achieve their development goals.

The Walk Mall launches series of family activities and events



Ricky Laxa
Staff Writer

The Walk Mall recently held a kids' activity marked the launch of series of activities and events scheduled in coming months with purpose of promoting the mall's facilities and tenants. The activity was organized in cooperation with Masterclass Events with participation of Jollibee, Philippines' top global franchise.

The event kicked off with a special appearance of Hetty Spaghetti, a popular mascot, spearheaded a follow me dance routine participated not only by kids but by their parents as well. Fun games with prizes for the kids and their parents was among the much-awaited segment. Loot bags with surprise gifts were distributed to everyone

followed by sumptuous kids' meal given out to the participants. Among the highlight of the occasion was the ice-skating experience for every kid who stepped on ice for the first time.

The Sky Rink which is in the basement of the mall is one the Walk's latest attraction to the public. Parents were also given complimentary OOREDOO sim cards during the event. On the 16th of December, The Walk Mall will cater to "Winter Wonderland" Kids Fun Day which will showcase face painting, balloon twisting, magic show, fun games, and ice skating for the children. The event will kick off at 3 PM till 7 PM and tickets are available for reservations, interested parents may call: 55650296 / 51197344.

The event was organized in cooperation with Pro Manpower, BSI Innovations and Berry Blast.

Decadal low in completion rate of development projects

Projects linked to the country's ambitious 2040 Vision, the New Kuwait development plan, have this year witnessed the worst completion rate since 2010, with over 70 percent of the project either running behind schedule or stalled due to numerous and complex challenges. Funds allocated for several development projects were also returned to the Ministry of Finance because the projects could not be completed due to various reasons.

In its annual assessment of the development

plan, the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, said the lack of any serious achievement in the projects was concerning. The assessment identified several major challenges facing development plan projects, including lack of coordination among ministries, inadequate understanding of these projects by some entities, and confusion between the development plan and the annual operational plan.

Six government entities were found



responsible for impeding 81 projects within the 2023-2024 development plan, with the Ministry of Finance bearing responsibility for holding up 23 projects, followed by the Kuwait Municipality, the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport, and the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, impeding 15 projects each. In addition, the Central Agency for Public Tenders held up 8 projects, while the Ministry of Public Works was responsible for holding up 5 projects.



Urban Hives by Nathalie Harb x BMW.



Designest by Ahmad Kattan

Dubai fast becoming the global hub for creativity

The Times Kuwait Report

Dubai Design Week 2023 gathered almost 500 designers, architects and creatives, offering a confluence of Middle Eastern and international design. The week-long event witnessed a diverse program of events and activities, including large-scale installations, new commissions, exhibitions, pop-ups, talks, workshops, a weekend market and the leading design fair in the region, Downtown Design.



Design Week featured a range of design disciplines, including architecture, product design, interiors and multimedia, with the festival seeing designers from across the globe coming together to exchange ideas and demonstrate the positive impact that could be fostered through design. Having firmly established itself as the region's largest creative festival, the event has positioned Dubai as the design capital of the Middle East.

Speaking to The Times Kuwait, Downtown Design Dubai Director, Mette Degn-Christensen, said that they were celebrating the 10th edition

of the fair this year, marking the anniversary with a unique experience that paid tribute to the beauty and necessity of their natural surroundings.

She pointed out that since its inception, Downtown Design has grown not only in size and variety of brands, countries and program represented in the fair, but has been an agent for positive change and a catalyst for growth of the burgeoning creative scene in the Middle East, and the creative community both regionally and internationally — enabling fruitful and strategic leads from one touchpoint to another.

Christensen explained that keeping in view the UAE's year of sustainability and COP28, a star-studded line up of international and regional speakers were present this year, starting with the opening keynote by world-renowned trend-forecaster Lidewijk Edelkoort, who shed light on her work promoting sustainable practices.

Christensen noted that spotlighting and providing a platform for regional talent, was very much key to the mandate of Downtown Design, as well as to Dubai Design Week that nurtures talent as well as important topics.

She added "I'm personally very excited to see the array of some of the most sought-after brands worldwide come together for the 10th edition of Downtown Design this year, alongside such a diverse line-up of independent designers and studios from around the world, with a spotlight on regional talent."

As Christensen passionately pointed out, the tenth edition has been the fair's most elevated experience to date, reflecting not only Dubai's ever-growing economy and its incredibly strong influence on the success of the region's burgeoning design industry, but also in attracting a wide segment of B2B and B2C audiences across the region's design communities and industries, including architects and interior designers, developers and hospitality operators, HNWIs and collectors,

and design enthusiasts.

Through the lens of Downtown Design, change can be seen across the market sectors and the shift in demand for high-quality, original design and contemporary design aesthetics.

Downtown Design Dubai (D3) works closely with all participants, big and small, to cater to their objectives and to consider their current set up or desire for a new set up in the UAE and the wider Middle East. From flagging their brand to the relevant audiences to distribution plans, accompanying participants on this journey, whether they participate every year or have

long term goals, D3 can assist achieve through the platform of Downtown Design and Dubai Design Week, the umbrella festival.

As the anchor event of Dubai Design Week, Downtown Design consistently produces a dynamic environment where design meets opportunity. Now celebrating a decade, the fair is at the center of design in the Middle East — forging foundational relationships between B2B and B2C audiences and brands, independent designers and studios. Downtown Design is cemented as the annual point of connection, fostering meaningful opportunities for exhibitors and visitors alike.

Of Palm by Abdalla Almulla.
Courtesy: Dubai Design Week

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

The Missing Element in Economics



Pinelopi Koujianou Goldberg

A former World Bank Group chief economist and editor-in-chief of the American Economic Review, is Professor of Economics at Yale University.



Last month, the economics community rejoiced when the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences to Claudia Goldin for "having advanced our understanding of women's labor market outcomes." One can hardly think of a more deserving recipient than the scholar who pioneered the study of women in the labor force, pursued it with passion, and mentored dozens of today's top thinkers along the way.

But the significance of this year's prize goes beyond Goldin, because it represents a long-overdue acknowledgment that the economic experience of roughly 50 percent of the world's population is worthy of scientific inquiry. What may be obvious today was not always so. Until nearly a decade ago, economics professors would routinely discourage their graduate students from studying gender-related issues. Unsurprisingly, the students most interested in such topics were the few women attending graduate programs in economics at the time.

“

Goldin's efforts paved the way for the flourishing of gender-related research today. But the implications of the recognition she has received also goes well beyond gender, which is just one of many dimensions of personal 'identity'.

”

"This is a very interesting question," academic advisers would say. "But you'd better have tenure before you pursue it."

It is testament to Goldin's drive and intellect that she pursued her research agenda successfully despite such an unsupportive environment. Her efforts paved the way for the flourishing of gender-related research today. But the implications of the recognition she has received also goes well beyond gender, which is just one of many dimensions of personal 'identity'.

In its early days, economics focused on 'representative agents', and thereby abstracted from all the traits that make each person unique.

Later, the discipline embraced heterogeneity, but only to the extent that it was directly related to socioeconomic status and economic outcomes (by distinguishing, for example, between people with and without education, high- or low-income, and so forth). Other traits, such as gender, sexual orientation, culture, or birthplace, remained outside the scope of mainstream economics. Not until Goldin were the economic implications of 'identity' fully appreciated.

It would take many pages to summarize Goldin's contributions to economics, so I will highlight two of her major insights that are particularly policy-relevant today — one for developing economies, and one for advanced economies, especially in the United States.

The first insight is that growth does not automatically bring about higher female labor-force participation and wage equality across genders. On the contrary, these relationships are complex, and contingent on many factors including norms, family status — especially the presence of children — and standard supply and demand forces. An uptick in female labor-force participation has often gone hand in hand with an increase in labor demand that exceeded what male workers could supply.

This is an important corrective to the long-held assumption that women will automatically join the labor force as countries grow richer. It also may explain the puzzling experience of India, where the female labor-force participation rate, one of the world's lowest (30%), has actually declined in the past two decades, despite fast growth.

Yet recent economics research shows that integrating women, as well as other historically underrepresented population groups, into the labor force can result in substantial productivity and income gains for a country. Policymakers in all low- and middle-income countries should take note.

The second major insight is that the pay gap between men and women in the US is primarily explained by children. Men and women's earnings paths tend to be similar up to the time when a woman has her first child; then they start to diverge.

Goldin is careful to point out that this pattern applies primarily to educated women. But that group is quite important in a rich country that already has a relatively high level of female emancipation. The implication is that the 'child penalty' weighs more heavily on pay and career outcomes than bias or discrimination. Goldin attributes this pattern to the current nature of work, which requires (or did until the pandemic) long, inflexible hours and face-time at the workplace, all of which is incompatible with the demands of a growing family. The

implication is that more flexible professional arrangements (working from home and at hours accommodating family needs) would help close the pay gap. Of course, not every job is susceptible to such changes; but the pandemic showed that many are. Goldin's latest book, *Career and Family: Women's Century-Long Journey toward Equity*, should be required reading for those weighing in on the recent, often heated, debate about whether employees should be forced to return to

the office five days per week.

In the short run, a Nobel Prize will not change the predicament of women, many of whom are still treated as second-class citizens in many parts of the world. But ideas matter in the long run, and to the extent that the Nobel Prize represents a celebration of an idea, this year's selection is a small victory for women. Let us hope that Goldin's work will inform policy-making more directly in the years to come.

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RECIPE

Colocasia Rolls in Turmeric Yogurt



Colocasia rolls are a delicious vegan, gluten free and savory snack that can be munched anytime of the day. The rolls can be deep-fried till crisp and served with sweet and sour chutney as a snack for tea.

Colocasia, a herbaceous plant with broad leaves and a large underground tuber, goes by various names in India and across South Asia, including 'arbi', kachu, and chembu. It is also known as kolokasi in some parts of the Middle East, or as 'taro' in some places. The plant is a source of carbohydrates, protein, and dietary minerals, as well as micronutrients, including iron, copper, magnesium, potassium, and zinc.

Both the leaves and the starchy tuber are edible and used in various dishes in many parts of the world. Colocasia leaves, if you can get hold of them, are very nutritious and tasty, forming an excellent side dish for any meal.

Total time: 40 - 45 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients:

8-10 Colocasia leaves

For batter:

- 1 1/2 cup gram flour
- 2 tbsp rice flour
- 1 tbsp ginger/chili paste
- 2 tbsp jaggery powder
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp red chili powder
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
- 1 tsp cumin-coriander powder
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 1 tsp oil
- 1 tsp Eno (fruit salt)
- Salt to taste
- Water as needed
- For tempering:
- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- 1 tsp sesame seeds
- 2 green chillies slit
- 6-7 curry leaves
- Pinch of asafoetida
- For garnishing:
- Chopped coriander leaves
- Freshly grated coconut

Instructions:

- In a bowl add all the batter ingredients along with salt to taste and sufficient water to make a medium-thick batter. Set aside
- Add eno and lemon juice to the batter, just before use later
- Meanwhile, add water and preheat a steamer
- Soak leaves in water for 2-3 minutes then dry them in kitchen towel
- Cut and discard the thick stock from the leaves
- Spread batter evenly on each leaf and place them in a layer of four or five leaves
- Roll the layer of leaves from the broader towards the narrow side tightly, applying batter to the leaf surface as you roll them. Fold from the sides and roll it tightly
- Arrange the rolls on a greased steamer plate and steam for 20 to 25 minutes
- Remove rolls from steamer and set aside to cool
- Once cooled, cut into medium thick slices
- Tempering:
- Heat oil in a pan, add mustard seeds, and when the seeds begin to crackle, add the rest of tempering ingredients.
- Add the cut roll slices to the pan so that the tempering coats the rolls
- Garnish with sesame seeds and finely chopped coriander leaves
- Serve the rolls with turmeric yogurt or sweet-and-sour chutney.



Chef Chhaya Thakker

Indian Chef Chhaya Thakker, who has a huge following online on WhatsApp and YouTube will be sharing her favorite recipes and cooking tips with readers of The Times Kuwait. For feedback, you can write to editortimeskuwait@gmail.com

Thought
for the
week

Climate change knows no borders. It will not stop before the Pacific Islands and the whole of the international community here has to shoulder a responsibility to bring about sustainable development.

– Angela Merkel
Former Chancellor of Germany

What the world wants from COP28

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Mitigating, adapting and financing climate change will continue to be the mantra at COP28. But the hope is that the Dubai conference would be an outlier from past such gatherings by driving momentum away from previous 'talking' phases towards an Implementation phase that initiates processes designed to achieve the main goals of the Paris Agreement.

COP28 is also important in that it will herald the conclusion of the first-ever global stocktake (GST), a mechanism that allows countries and stakeholders to assess their progress, or lack thereof, in meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement. Negotiators at COP28 will also be seeking common ground on wording a framework on the global goal on adaptation (GGA), as well as pushing for, or resisting, as the case may be, the operationalizing of the Loss and Damage Fund.

Other issues that will be in focus across several negotiating streams during the two-week-long COP28 include energy transition, food systems transformation, and enhancing water scarcity — a theme ardently advocated by the COP28 Presidency of UAE. But, as is often the case at these climate talks, discussions and negotiations on all issues and themes will eventually boil down to financing climate change.

Considering that emissions from the burning of fossil fuels, mainly coal, oil and gas, are responsible for catalyzing climate change, it is surprising that there has been no direct reference to the role of these fuels at past COP gatherings. The first ever reference to these fuels was in the cover decisions released at COP26, which called for accelerating "efforts towards the phasedown of unabated coal power and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies".

To clarify, unabated coal refers to coal power plants that produce coal without the use of abatement technologies such as Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS). As per the COP26 statement coal produced using CCS is apparently exempt from being phased down. Moreover, the statement makes no mention of phasing down oil or gas, but only on phasing out subsidies on these fuels.

At COP27, a coalition of over 80 countries pushed for the COP26 language on coal to be expanded to include all fossil fuels. Although such a reference did not make it into the formal decision text, the growing chorus to phase out fossil fuels is increasing pressure on the UN Climate Change secretariat to address this key issue. Climate activists and media have attributed the long silence on fossil fuels at COP gatherings to the money power wielded by the fossil fuel industry, and to the increasing presence and influence of fossil fuel lobbyists at COP talks.

The topic of phasing out fossil fuel is unlikely to garner much attention at COP28. Despite a synthesis report on the GST highlighting the need to phase out unabated fossil fuels there is no dedicated negotiation track set aside for discussing this in Dubai. Climate activists also voice concern that a focus on reducing only unabated fossil fuels, or on cutting emissions from fossil fuels, may detract attention from what is actually needed — phasing out production and use of all fossil fuels.

A recent report by UK-based international think-tank Chatham House underscored the importance of COP28 to the world. The report noted that discussions on the first Global Stocktake at COP28 are crucial as they provide a platform to assess the collective progress the world has made towards achieving the goals and purpose of the Paris Agreement, as well as areas where progress is still wanting. The stocktake will also guide governments on how to strengthen action, support and international cooperation on climate change.

The report explained the GST consists of three components that are structured to build on one another. The first phase that began at COP26 in 2021 focused on gathering and synthesizing information on climate change and climate action from governments, international organizations, scientific institutions, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders.

Drawing on the material received in the first phase, the second phase, or technical component of GST that began in 2022, took stock of progress made in implementing the Paris

Agreement and identified opportunities for strengthening action, support, and international cooperation on climate change. The technical dialogue was facilitated by a pair of co-facilitators, each from a developed and a developing country.

In September of this year, a synthesis report containing key messages and recommendations from the second technical phase of GST was released. The synthesis report showed that although the Paris Agreement galvanized climate action globally and significant progress has been made since, much more must be done to bring implementation of climate change back on track.

The third and final component of the GST is the 'political phase' that will now take place at COP28. During this phase, governments will discuss and consider the findings of the GST's technical phase, and the synthesis report, and what these mean for strengthening climate action. To do this, a series of high-level events will be convened at COP28, aimed at generating key political messages, and negotiating a decision or declaration.

The COP28 gathering is also slated to adopt a framework for achieving a global goal on adaptation (GGA) as indicated by the Paris Agreement. The GGA is intended to focus efforts by countries to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change. The Paris Agreement did not clearly define the goals to be achieved, as such, Governments at COP28 will need to both clarify the goal and set up mechanisms to measure progress in this regard.

However, the key area that will need resolving at COP28 is financing climate change. In 2021 at the COP26 in Glasgow, UK, developed countries pledged to double adaptation finance from 2019 levels by 2025. Despite this pledge, finance currently available for adaptation is far less than what is required today, and even the pledge to double adaptation financing by 2025 will be inadequate to meet future needs.

To put this adaptation need in perspective, in 2022, the UN Environment Programme estimated that the annual adaptation needs of developing countries to be US\$160-340 billion by 2030 and \$315-565 billion by 2050. While this funding may appear to be a considerable outlay, it is only a trifling compared to global subsidies granted to fossil fuel production — the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that in 2022, the world spent over \$7 trillion in fossil fuel subsidies.

Addressing climate change-induced loss and damage will also feature prominently during negotiations at COP28. Governments will need to agree on how to operationalize the Loss and Damage Fund and on key aspects of the funding. When the fund was agreed upon at COP27 several critical questions were left unresolved, including how broad its focus should be; which countries are eligible for support; and where the money should come from. These questions and others will need to be answered in Dubai.

Notwithstanding the incongruity of holding the COP28 climate conference in a country that is one of the biggest producers and exporters of fossil fuels, this could be the world's best chance to reach consensus on addressing climate change, or at least some aspects of it. The region's petro-states could find it expedient to combine their influence and money power to bridge some of the intractable issues that have stalled previous climate talks, especially those related to finances.

There is a growing awareness among Gulf states that no country is insulated from the risks of climate change, and they need to prepare for the day after oil. In what could be a reflection of this changing trend, the COP28 president-designate, Dr. Sultan al-Jaber was recently quoted as saying that the phasedown of fossil fuels was 'inevitable' and 'essential'. His words are of import; Dr. Al-Jaber is also the CEO of his country's national oil company, Abu Dhabi National Oil Company — one of the world's largest oil producing companies.

Our exposure to previous COP meetings may have jaded our outlook on these talks, but we sincerely hope that the two-week-long COP28 in Dubai will prove to be different from previous climate talks, and will deliver 'real achievements' on climate change for the future of our world, its environment, and all its species.

High heat, humidity could make many regions unlivable

Global climate change could unleash environmental catastrophes ranging from melting glaciers, rising sea levels, and climatic aberrations that lead to floods, droughts, and forest fires. A new study finds that the combination of high heat and humidity as a result of climate change could result in an increase in heat-related fatalities and make many regions in the world quite uninhabitable.

To understand the interactions between real-world problems like climate change and their effect on human health, the new study included interdisciplinary expertise from climatologists and physiologists at Purdue University and other research facilities in the United States.

The combination of heat and humidity has a devastating effect on the human body, as it can withstand only certain combinations of heat and humidity before beginning to experience heat-related health problems, such as heat stroke or heart attack. In addition to temperature and humidity, the specific threshold for any individual at a specific moment also depends on their exertion level and other environmental factors, including wind speed and solar radiation.

The study shows that an increase of 1.5 degree Celsius (°C) or more than current levels, could result in billions of people being exposed to heat and humidity so extreme that their body will be unable to cool itself naturally. To identify areas of the planet where warming would lead to heat and humidity levels that exceed human limits,

the researchers modeled global temperature increases ranging between 1.5°C and the worst case scenario of 4°C.

Over a period of several years, the research team conducted more than 460 separate experiments to document the combined levels of heat, humidity and physical exertion that humans can tolerate before their bodies can no longer maintain a stable core temperature.

The scientists explained that as people get warmer, they sweat, and more blood is pumped to their skin so that they can maintain their core temperatures by losing heat to the environment. At certain levels of heat and humidity, these adjustments are no longer sufficient, and body core temperature begins to rise.

The rise in core temperature is not an immediate threat, provided the body has immediate access to some form of relief. If people do not find a way to cool down within hours, it can lead to heat exhaustion, heat stroke and strain on the cardiovascular system that can lead to heart attacks in vulnerable people.

The study found that the limits of heat and humidity people can withstand are lower than were previously theorized. They found that the ambient wet-bulb temperature limit for young, healthy people is about 31°C, at 100 percent humidity. The research noted that babies, older adults, and people with cardio-pulmonary vulnerabilities could experience heat stress and the associated health risks at lower heat and



humidity levels than young people.

In human history, temperatures and humidity that exceed human limits have been recorded only a limited number of times — and only for a few hours at a time — in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, according to the researchers. Since the start of the industrial revolution, when humans began to burn fossil fuels in machines and factories, temperatures around the world have increased by nearly 1°C. The Paris Climate Agreement signed in 2015 by 196 countries aims to limit worldwide temperature increases to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

Results of the study indicate that if global temperatures increase by 2°C above pre-industrial levels, the 2.2 billion residents of Pakistan and India's Indus River Valley, the one billion people living in eastern China and the 800 million residents of sub-Saharan Africa will annually experience many hours of heat that surpass human tolerance.

These regions would primarily experience high-humidity heatwaves. Heatwaves with higher humidity can be more dangerous because the air cannot absorb excess moisture, which limits sweat evaporates from human

bodies and moisture from some infrastructure, like evaporative coolers. Worryingly, these regions are also in lower-to-middle income nations, so many of the affected people may not have access to air conditioning or any effective way to mitigate the negative health effects of the heat.

If warming of the planet continues to 3°C above pre-industrial levels, the researchers concluded, heat and humidity levels that surpass human tolerance would begin to affect wider areas. This would increase health risks and fatalities among billions of people in areas of the United States, in South America, in Australia, and elsewhere.

It is important to keep in mind that while climate models, such as those used in the above study are good at predicting trends, they often do not account for most unusual weathers, or of specific events such as the 2021 heatwave in Oregon in the US that claimed the lives of more than 700 people, despite heat levels being below limits of human tolerance.

Around the world, official strategies for adapting to the weather usually focus only on temperature only. However, the new study shows that humid heat is going to be a much bigger threat than dry heat. Governments and policymakers need to re-evaluate the effectiveness of heat-mitigation strategies to invest in programs that will address the greatest dangers people will face.

Unless mitigatory measures are introduced to curb use of fossil fuels, which is the main source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that contribute to recent higher temperatures and changing weather patterns, we will soon be confronted with a world where food insecurity is rising, and billions of people migrating because their native regions are uninhabitable.

Excess screen-time linked to developmental delays in kids

Development delays observed in children could be linked to the amount of screen time they are exposed to in early childhood. The new finding by researchers at Tohoku University in Japan followed analysis of more than 7,000 mother-child pairs participating in a cohort study conducted over three generations.

Each child's screen time exposure was assessed using parental questionnaires, covering viewing of all visual displays, including televisions, video game displays, tablets, mobile phones and other electronic devices.



The children in the study were almost evenly split between boys (51.8%) and girls (48.2%). Their screen time exposure was assigned to four categories: less than one hour (48.5% of subjects), from one to less than two hours (29.5%), from two to less than four hours (17.9%), and four or more hours (4.1%).

The children's development was assessed at two and four years of age in the five skill domains of, communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal and social skills. Previous studies conducted on similar topics had not broken down development into different domains, therefore offering a less refined view.

The association between screen time at age one and later developmental delay was assessed using an established statistical technique,

revealing a dose-response association — which means that the level of developmental delay (the response) was correlated to the amount (dose) of screen time.

The study found that for children aged two, increased screen time when aged one was associated with developmental delays in all domains except in gross motor skills. However, by the age of four, increased screen time was associated with developmental delays in only the communication and problem-solving domains.

The study surmised that the differing levels of developmental delays in the domains, and the absence of any detected delay in some of them at each stage of life examined, suggests that the domains should be considered separately in future discussions on this subject.

The researchers said that one of the reasons for undertaking the study was recent evidence published by the World Health Organization that too many children were spending too much time in front of digital displays, rather than engaging in physical activities outdoors or in social interactions.

According to pediatricians and social researchers side effects of too much screen time include: spending less time engaged in physical activities outdoors, sleeping problems, having a narrower scope of interests, lower grades in schools, weight and image problems, as well as mood or attention disorders.

The rapid proliferation of digital display devices has significantly increased the time that children and adolescents spend in front of these screens. The study, which suggests an association, not causation, between screen time and developmental delays, does not recommend a complete stoppage of screen time for children.

Given the proliferation of digital displays in today's world it is inevitable that children will be exposed to screen time no matter how restrictive parents are. Instead, the emphasis should be on limiting this exposure and in ensuring the viewed content is age-appropriate.



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From the ground up

Aiming to drive the country's green transformation, Kuwait has several energy efficiency initiatives underway to improve the sustainability of its flagship projects.

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Sustainability has become the key for Kuwait to mitigate the environmental impact of its oil production, an economic activity that accounts for approximately 43 percent of its GDP. Kuwait's petrochemical industry, with the massive Al Zour refinery as its flagship, will remain one of the most important in the world according to the Vision 2035 roadmap. But in addition to that fossil fuel-focused facility, the country has developed several environmental projects for the production of clean fuels, with the intention of remaining a regional leader in downstream refining.

One of these is a new hydrocracking unit at the Mina Abdullah refinery, which became operational in 2021, to produce up to 70,000bpd of low-sulfur diesel and kerosene that meet European standards. Another major project is the Sulaibiya wastewater treatment plant, which covers 26 percent of the country's overall water demand, serving non-potable uses in agriculture and industry, as well as aquifer recharge. Another important water treatment facility is the Umm Al Hayman plant, another project with which the country is highlighting its interest in eliminating the waste of water resources so that they can be used by the economic sectors.

"ENGIE has a strong commitment to accelerate the energy transition, which we do in three ways: by replacing conventional energy with renewables, deploying cooling and heating networks, and saving energy through our energy services," said Yassine Lafhail, Kuwait general manager at ENGIE Solutions. With the



digitalization and automation solutions offered by the company, Lafhail estimates that Kuwaiti companies can reduce their energy costs by up to 90 percent, a percentage that, if achieved, represents an environmental saving that reduces carbon emissions into the atmosphere. "As the nation moves towards reducing its greenhouse gas emissions, mitigating Kuwait's high per-capita power consumption is crucial," he added.

Part of Kuwait's sustainability vision is to increase the share of renewables in its energy mix to 15 percent by 2030.

A major project to achieve this goal is the planned Subiya solar PV water storage plant in Al Jahra with a generating capacity of 30MW, which will start its construction phase in 2023 and enter commercial operation in 2025. Another asset playing a key role in this transition is the Shagaya renewable energy project, which is expected to have a clean energy generation capacity of 3.2GW by 2030. Some phases of the commissioning of this facility, which mixes wind

and solar generation systems, are already in operation.

With such projects, the solar energy sector in Kuwait is expected to register a compound annual growth rate of 7 percent between 2022 and 2027, according to a report by consulting firm Mordor Intelligence. Much of this demand comes from companies, such as those in the oil and gas sector, which through power purchase agreements (PPAs) seek to decarbonize their energy supply and part of their operations with solar projects.

"We have received many inquiries for solar energy in the private sector. Most private sector clients are large companies looking into solar and renewable energy," said Hamad Al Radhan, CEO of Life Energy, a firm that provides smart renewable energy solutions in Kuwait and the Gulf region.

This company has closed several PPAs with companies and currently sees significant solar energy development in the country, but in recent years has seen a great opportunity in energy

efficiency management around new government buildings due to local regulations.

"The government has recently introduced a regulation for new buildings of public entities to produce 10 percent of the consumption of electricity with renewables," said Al Radhan, who points out that there is also currently a program that offers discounts on electricity rates to private companies that make tangible efforts to save energy. "Efficiency solutions are one of the most prominent services we can provide in Kuwait. We have tried to push for those types of projects and strategies and shift the priorities from producing clean energy to saving energy, which cuts 10 percent of the initial cost of solar power, renewable energies, and more," he added.

One of the flagship projects in terms of energy management is Terminal 2 of the international airport, currently under construction. This project, which aims to become the largest building in the world to achieve LEED Gold certification, will have solar panels on its roof to supply part of the energy it will consume, will use a system to collect wastewater from the laundries and treat it to provide 30 percent of the water needed for the toilets, and uses low-carbon materials for its construction.

"It is difficult to make a drastic shift from unsustainable to high-performance buildings that are respectful of the environment and resource consumption," said Sandra Draskovic, General Manager at the Kuwait Green Building Council. Achieving a change in engineering techniques to build sustainably must be done gradually, so one of the government's priorities to advance tangible sustainability initiatives is to get citizens to improve their efficient management of resources to save energy. "If consumers achieve a certain percentage of water and energy, they will have their annual bill amount reduced by 40 percent for electricity and 50 percent for water bills," Draskovic concluded.

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