

UAE Climate Action

Global Leadership and Enduring US Partnerships



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Introduction

As a country at the heart of climate impacts and undergoing a major energy transition, the UAE is taking aggressive action at home and with partners to meet the global climate challenge. As one of the world's largest energy suppliers and sovereign investors, the UAE is also leading on the energy transition by reducing the carbon impact of hydrocarbons, deploying sustainable and clean technologies, and investing in renewable energy ventures in island and developing nations.



On a visit to Masdar City in Abu Dhabi in 2016, then US Vice President Joe Biden discussed renewable energy solutions with the now COP28 President-Designate HE Dr. Sultan Al Jaber.

Collaboration with the United States is central to the UAE's climate strategy. The UAE is building solar and wind projects across the US, partnering with US institutions and research centers, and working closely with the US on initiatives like the Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate (AIM for Climate), the \$100 billion, 100 GW Partnership for Accelerating Clean Energy and more.



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Underscoring its commitment to global cooperation on climate, **the UAE will welcome the United States and the international community in 2023 as the host of the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28)**, which will focus on practical and positive solutions that drive progress on climate and the energy transition.

The UAE Climate Journey

With a clear understanding about the threat of climate change, the UAE is pursuing alternative means for producing the power needed to fuel its economy. The Energy Strategy 2050 targets an energy mix that combines renewable, nuclear and clean energy sources to meet the UAE's economic requirements and environmental goals. At the same time, the UAE is working to lower the carbon impact of hydrocarbon fuels. Recognizing that the world will continue to rely on oil and gas for the midterm, the UAE is a leader in carbon capture and is reducing the carbon intensity of its production operations.

In 2015, the UAE became the first country in the Gulf region to sign the Paris Agreement, which seeks to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The UAE reaffirmed its climate leadership in 2021 by launching the Net Zero by 2050 Strategic Initiative, becoming **the first country in the MENA region to pledge to reach net zero emissions by 2050.**

Today, the UAE's forward-looking approach is focused on **building resilient pathways for new industries, new jobs, and long-term sustainable economic growth** in line with the energy transition.



Masdar City, a pioneer in sustainability and a hub for innovation for sustainable urban development, located in Abu Dhabi.

Taking the long view that an energy transition was coming, the UAE began investing in nascent renewables technologies fifteen years ago through Masdar. **Today, the UAE operates three of the largest and lowest cost solar plants in the world.** Solar energy is now available at 1.35 cents per kilowatt hour, one of the lowest rates in the world. The Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park, the largest single-site solar park in the world, will help reduce more than 6.5 million tons of carbon emissions annually when completed, contributing to Dubai's net-zero strategy.

The UAE Climate Journey



Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park in Dubai.



The Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant is currently delivering 4,200 MW megawatts of clean and reliable electricity to the UAE grid 24/7.

The UAE is also **the first country in the Middle East to operate zero carbon nuclear power**, which, along with renewable energy, will provide 14GW of clean power for the UAE by 2030.

The UAE's peaceful nuclear energy program is also playing a critical role in decarbonizing the UAE's power sector while reinforcing energy security and grid resilience. The second unit of the Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant began commercial operations in March 2022, and the third unit began commercial operations in February 2023, with only one unit left to mark the completion of the plant. This is the first multi-unit operating plant in the Arab World and has already powered more than 80 percent of Abu Dhabi's clean energy consumption in December 2022.

These milestones are important steps for the UAE in achieving its 2050 net zero emissions target. With the support of US partners, the Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant will save up to 21 million tons of carbon emissions each year once fully operational.

The landmark "123 Agreement" initially established a required legal framework for peaceful nuclear energy cooperation between the UAE and US in 2009. It has consistently been reaffirmed as the "gold standard" by US officials across administrations and nonproliferation experts for its commitment to safety, security and operational transparency.

Enduring UAE-US Climate Cooperation

The UAE and US governments are building on many years of strong bilateral ties to tackle global climate change challenges together. The countries' joint efforts will not only accelerate progress toward climate goals, but will also enhance economic opportunity and diversification, while creating knowledge, skills and jobs.



Climate Envoy Kerry visited major strategic projects in the UAE supporting the country's efforts in the field of clean energy, including the Noor Abu Dhabi solar park.

The UAE and US lead the Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate (AIM for Climate), an initiative to accelerate agricultural innovation and assist subsistence farmers suffering from climate change effects. The joint initiative, which officially launched at COP26, has a growing coalition of support from over 40 countries and more than 180 non-government partners. AIM for Climate has already raised \$8 billion to accelerate innovation for climate-smart agriculture and food systems over the next five years.



UAE Minister of Climate Change and Environment HE Mariam Almheiri and US Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack led the first AIM for Climate ministerial meeting in February 2022.

“Agriculture is such a critical piece of the climate action puzzle. The United States thanks the UAE for accelerating the research and development necessary to lower emissions from that sector. The US is proud to join you as an inaugural member of the Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate initiative.”

US Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm

Enduring UAE-US Climate Cooperation



HE Mariam Almheiri introduced the AIM for Climate initiative and its objectives at COP26.

US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry has traveled several times to the UAE to engage with UAE officials, including COP28 President-Designate HE Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, and highlighted the UAE's climate leadership. Following bilateral discussions, the UAE and US are committed to acting against climate change and working to accelerate economic growth and sustainable development.

The US and UAE also collaborated to establish Mission Innovation, a partnership to double clean energy R&D within 5 years.

“The leadership of the UAE, I think among all the nations in that region, have been singularly understanding of the need for their shift [on climate and energy], and have for a number of years now... They have already been engaged in some of that diversification and investment in alternative and renewable. Now much more.”

US Special Presidential Envoy John Kerry

Enduring UAE-US Climate Cooperation

Creating Prosperity and Opportunity

In the private sector, UAE-US partnerships are driving advances in sustainability and clean energy technology. UAE investments in the renewable energy sector in the United States are helping grow the economy and create jobs while laying the foundation for a more sustainable energy future.

In 2019, the UAE's Masdar invested in renewable energy projects in the United States for the first time, acquiring wind farms in New Mexico and Texas. Building on this, in 2020 Masdar announced a second investment in eight additional wind and solar projects in Nebraska, Texas and California.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has played a key role in the establishment and development of Abu Dhabi's Masdar Institute of Science and Technology, which in February 2017 merged with the Khalifa University of Science, Technology and Research and the Petroleum Institute. The merger created Khalifa University of Science and Technology, a world-class, research-intensive institution that develops world leaders and critical thinkers in applied science and engineering.

Bilateral trade between the UAE and US is dynamic and diversified, exceeding \$27.8 billion in 2022. The US has a \$13.9 billion trade surplus with the UAE, the US' sixth largest trade surplus globally. This close economic cooperation supports nearly 125,000 American jobs and contributes to growth for US companies.

The UAE is an advantageous location for American companies due to its business-friendly environment and its diversified economy. **More than 1,500 US firms have a presence in the UAE**, from Bechtel,



HE Dr. Sultan Al Jaber and his US counterpart John Kerry at COP26.

ExxonMobil and Global Foundries to Starbucks and Cold Stone Creamery. Major global companies — such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Northrop Grumman, General Motors, Microsoft, Nova Chemicals, FedEx, Eli Lilly & Company, Mayo Clinic and Cigna Healthcare — recognize the opportunities offered by the UAE economy, and many base their headquarters and regional offices in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

A Global Partner for Climate Action

In January 2023, the UAE announced that Special Envoy for Climate Change HE Dr. Sultan Al Jaber will serve as COP28 President-Designate, taking the lead to host an inclusive and ambitious global climate conference that delivers game-changing action. Alongside Dr. Al Jaber, HE Shamma Al Mazrui and HE Razan Al Mubarak will serve as the UAE's Youth Climate Champion and UN Climate Change High-Level Champion, respectively.



The UAE is working with the international community to strengthen global efforts to address climate change.

In 2010, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), an intergovernmental organization that promotes sustainability, established its headquarters in the UAE, marking the first time an international organization with global membership has been headquartered in the region. At COP26, **the UAE and IRENA launched the Energy Accelerator Financing Platform** to assist countries' transition to renewable energy sources.



The UAE and IRENA launched the Energy Transition Accelerator Financing Platform, a new global climate finance facility to accelerate the transition to renewable energy in developing countries.

The UAE also joined the Global Methane Pledge at COP26, which aims to reduce global methane emissions by 30% over the next decade.

In January 2021, the UAE launched the Abu Dhabi Hydrogen Alliance, which will advance low-carbon green and blue hydrogen in emerging international markets and help build a substantial hydrogen economy in the UAE. The **Abu Dhabi Hydrogen Alliance aligns with the UAE's greater Hydrogen Leadership Roadmap**, a national blueprint to support domestic, low-carbon industries.

Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week (ADSW), a global platform to share knowledge, showcase innovation and outline strategies for delivering climate action, brings members of the global community together annually to accelerate sustainable development.

A Global Partner for Climate Action



Addressing UNSC members, HE Dr. Sultan Al Jaber underscored the importance of climate finance to enable sustainable progress and stability.

Beyond its multilateral commitments, the UAE supports global sustainable development. **The UAE has invested more than \$50 billion in renewable energy projects across 70 countries** – including 27 island nations – and plans to invest an additional \$50 billion over the next decade. The UAE provides \$1.5 billion of aid for renewables to more than 40 countries, with a special focus on island and least-developed nations.

In January 2017, the UAE announced a \$50 million fund for renewable energy projects in 16 Caribbean islands. The Caribbean Renewable Energy Fund aims to reduce energy costs in the region and improve energy security. And launched in 2013, the UAE-Pacific Partnership Fund supported renewable energy projects in 11 Pacific Island countries to meet most of the islands' energy needs.

Charting a Course for a Sustainable Future



In November 2021, the UNFCCC announced that the UAE will host COP28 in 2023.

The climate emergency is a global challenge that requires a global response. The UAE looks forward to further strengthening cooperation with the US and partners around the world to drive climate action and chart a course for a more sustainable future.

“The UAE and the US have a very close strategic relationship that is underpinned by shared values and interests.

We have worked very closely together over many decades to promote peace, security and economic prosperity regionally and globally. As such, both our countries view a successful energy transition as essential to global security and a significant opportunity for economic growth.”

HE Dr. Sultan Al Jaber
COP28 President-Designate