

COP28 reflection:

Title: COP 28: Far-Reaching Impacts of Climate Change on Well-being, Food Security, Energy Transition, Nature, Diversity and Equality.

(Yuhan Zheng, PhD student in Geography at University of Galway)



P1



P2

The scorching heat of 2023 marked the hottest year ever recorded, igniting a fervent call for action on climate change. The 28th UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference (COP28) concluded in Dubai, UAE, on December 13, 2023.

Together with colleges from the University of Galway (P1-P2), we were playing our role in different discipline to contribute the overarching agendas in the coming decades to combat climate change problem.

The IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) underscores the urgent need for climate action to secure a livable future. [Climate change and extreme weather events threaten food security and water availability for 3.3 to 3.6 billion people in vulnerable regions.](#) COP28 served as a vital platform to address the complex nexus between climate change and critical issues like livelihoods, health, food security, equality, and justice.

In the COP28 outcome, emphasis was placed on the [Global Stocktake](#) and Loss & Damage. While hailed as a success for advocating a **transition away from fossil fuels**, some stakeholders, including scientists and civil society, expressed disappointment over the absence of a clear "phase out" commitment. The final text's language, focusing on "**phasing out inefficient**" fossil fuel subsidies and "phasing down unabated" coal power, raises concerns about loopholes and potential setbacks in climate action, particularly impacting vulnerable communities disproportionately affected by climate disasters.

For me, myself, having the chance to study at the University of Galway, with a focus on Energy Transition Governance, I made my most intervening part around geopolitics, economic and social issues related to energy.



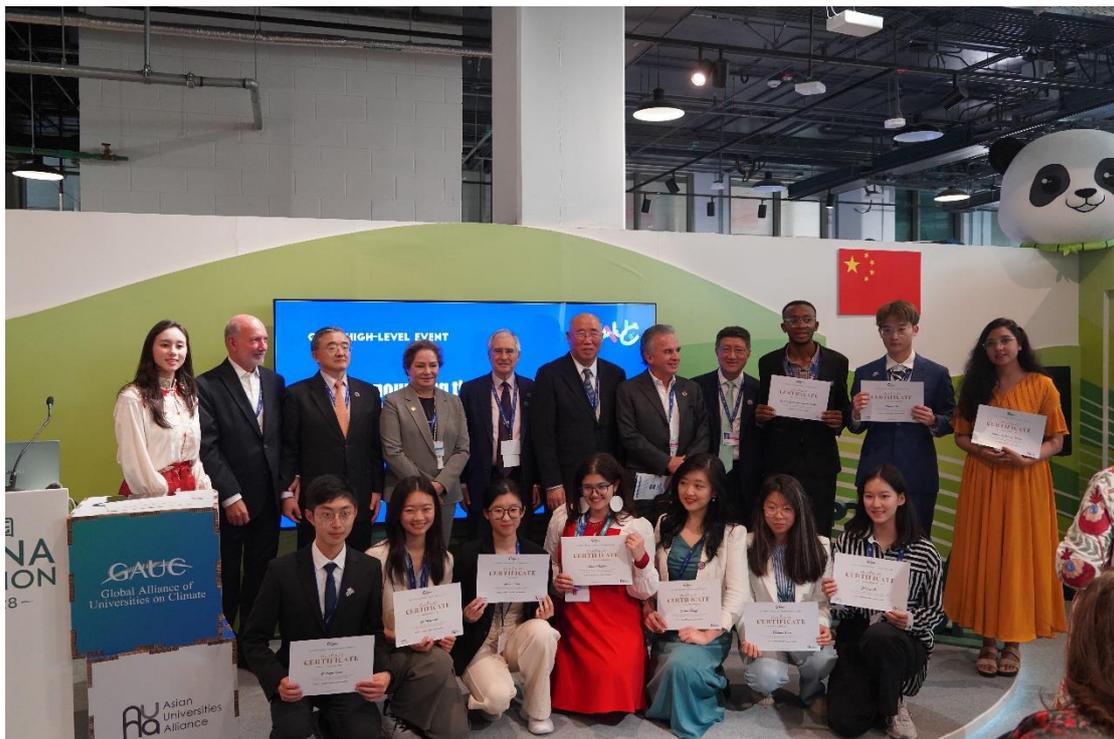
P3: Panel with UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) Sustainable Energy Division Youth Representatives, we discuss the potential of how the young professional can empower the energy transition in a more innovative and sustainable way.



P4: Panel with IEEE (the world's largest technical professional organization dedicated to advancing technology for the benefit of humanity), Sri Lanka Pavilion

At COP28, I hosted the Sri Lanka Pavilion side event, which catalyzed impactful collaborations, particularly involving young professionals. This platform enabled connections between youth and organizations like IEEE, Global Renewables Alliance

(GRA), Clean Energy Solutions Center of the Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM) , and International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). Most importantly, IEEE past president Prof. Saifur Rahman was also present with us to amplify the impactful engagement. These partnerships are poised to drive significant advancements in renewable energy integration and efficiency, especially in developing countries. The involvement of young professionals in these collaborations ensures fresh, innovative approaches are brought to the forefront of the climate change battle, enhancing the global response to this critical challenge. Also, the members in our task force have been engaged in other activities like the negotiations part, Global Stocktake preparation, coalitions between leading Universities, etc.



P5: Being granted as the Global Youth Ambassador at the China Pavilion.

Proudly being recognized as the PhD student adding to the Global Alliance of University on Climate to be the ambassador. I'm committed to contribute in expanding our school's network with the leading University around the world.



P6: Presenting the youth voice at the conference of the youth at Dubai before the official launch of COP28

COY18UAE where our Resource Management Young Member's Group provided concrete examples of how young people are engaging with the decision-making processes in resource management and advocating for sustainability. Packed rooms and eager participants.



P7: Discussing the future way of including indigenous knowledge in the climate change agenda, with the UN Indigenous head.

COP28 has placed a strong emphasis on including indigenous voices, acknowledging them as knowledge holders given they safeguard 80% of the world's cultural and biological diversity and inhabit 20% of the global land surface. Indigenous Peoples'

longstanding wisdom and practices contribute to sustainable landmanagement, conservation, and climate resilience. The conference has provided platforms for indigenous representatives to engage in dialogues, share traditional knowledge, and raise awareness about the impacts of climate change on their communities.



cop28uaeofficial Championed by the COP28 Presidency, the 'Accelerating Urban Resilience: Innovative Finance for Urban Water Utilities' event today focused on innovative partnerships and solutions for financing climate-resilient water utilities.

The event showcased transformative initiatives to provide universal access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene services in urban areas.

P8: COP28 hosted high-level session on 'accelerating urban resilience: Innovative Finance for Urban Water Utilities'. Having been invited to this panel, I deeply recognized the importance of water in combating the climate change. Utilizing the water capacity to empower the future mitigation and adaptation pathway to climate change. In Ireland, the offshore wind technology is of great importance in playing this role.



P9: A concluding remark by me at the end of COP28

Youth engagement has been a key focus at COP28, with dedicated dialogues and panels aimed at involving young people from around the world. By incorporating the voices of young people in these discussions, COP28 aims to inspire and mobilize the next generation to become educated and take meaningful action on climate change. In the UAE, where demonstrations are typically not permitted, limited demonstrations took place within the blue zone with prior approval from the UNFCCC. Youth voices calling for an equitable phase-out of fossil fuels were expressed outside the negotiation rooms before crucial plenary sessions.

Characterizing COP28 as solely either successful or unsuccessful would oversimplify its outcomes. Each COP marks progress, albeit incremental. While some portions of the agreement may lack clarity, the incorporation of terms like "transition away from fossil fuels" and countries' commitments to sign declarations and provide funding are notable steps forward. Addressing the climate crisis requires collaboration across diverse fields and inclusive decision-making. By fostering ownership, empowerment,

and shared responsibility for climate action across generations and cultures, we collectively advance towards meaningful solutions.