

HOW COP28 CAN PULL OFF A MIRACLE FOR COMING GENERATIONS

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Towards the end of 2023, as UAE gears up to host the biggest climate meeting on earth, the burden of expectation falls squarely on the shoulders of the Presidency and Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber. This will be the first time in history of COP that health as an agenda is tabled. From this day, policy makers globally must be inspired to push forth a movement that will safeguard our world, not just to protect our shared interests, but to also let coming generations know that we took the time to care.

This obviously comes at a time when countries are at war, when democracies around the world face its most stringent tests, when men and women of all backgrounds, have their voices mixed with hope, hatred, emotion and possibilities.

COP has survived over the years and decades, not because of some individuals, or particular organizations, rather COP survived because we have people who invested. Those well meaning folks who invested in cash and kind, in logic and reason, in science and safety, in philosophy and ethics, in morals and ability. Through these investments, people of various sectors became foot soldiers for justice, foot soldiers who spoke meaning, who floated ideas that have the mountain moving ability to protect the future we so desperately crave to achieve.

Today, I believe we will gather at COP28, because many who came before us showed the resilience

to stand firm in the face of the fiercest resistance, to put life and liberty ahead towards achieving an extraordinary legacy of climate justice.

With barely hours remaining for COP28 to get underway, global leaders, policy makers, activists are scrambling to come together and move last minute conversations that matter in shaping a more secure world.

But this is what I recommend country governments around the world to pursue in broad strokes moving ahead, to make sensible commitments, filled with hard bargains and empathetic outcomes:

Revise all National Public Health Policies & Programmes

We need to remap all previous public health policies and national programmes that put climate action at the forefront and address the risks that health systems, health workers and patients will continue to face. The health risks that climate change brings is obvious and, on the record, but the pace at which governments need to revise them remains critical to secure planetary health.

Build food security, address malnutrition and galvanize farmers for future

Recently I was holding series of interactions with seed growers and trying to understand their issues. The two major pressing issues that surfaced was extreme weather events that is causing farm disruption of unimagined proportion which most urban elite and city dwellers fail to figure out and the other is the lack of human resources wanting to work in farms. With this trend, it means, we have barely another 20-30 years left before the farm community begins to disappear which will cause a global food catastrophe.

The Disaster – Climate – Public Health Nexus

Extreme weather events such as floods, cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts are disrupting normalcy faster than we can imagine. Addressing the nexus with integration of line ministries is important to meet climate action centric goals.

Loss and Damage

Climate financing around loss and damage must gather serious steam as a multiplier from COP27. To prevent watershed moments in developmental narratives, absolute clarity on loss and damage funding is needed, which will further strengthen risk informed planning.

Corporate – Civil Society Partnership

Broadening of corporate vision to align with field actors on ground will fast track social impact and social responsibility professionally which factors in climate desired outcomes. A public health in all-policy approach requires foresight, requires political will and sustained vision. This can be achieved in part with corporate-civil society integration.

The last word

Largely, COP28 remains a choice. A choice of re-positioning the clock in time which has the power to safeguard environmental destinies for humans and animals alike, which has the ability to strengthen the hands of kingdoms, democracies and the likes of it, to build better climate pluralism without enhanced disagreements which largely can be resolved with peaceful negotiations.

COP28 is currently an event, can be make this an event in history to be remembered for generations? Only weeks ahead will tell.