COP28 Director General meets with Fiji’s Prime Minister, underscores Presidency’s commitment to Pacific Island nations’ climate priorities and needs

- COP28 Director-General Majid Al Suwaidi visited Fiji for the Pacific SIDS High-Level Climate Dialogue, organized together with the Pacific Islands Forum. The Director-General recognized the existential threat climate change poses to Pacific islands and reiterated the COP28 Presidency’s commitment to support the most vulnerable.
- Al Suwaidi underscored the COP28 Presidency’s commitment to delivering on the Global Goal on Adaptation and efforts to unlock climate finance as key benchmarks for success that would benefit Pacific islands.
- Al Suwaidi praised advocacy by Pacific nations in the area of Loss and Damage, and called on countries to continue advocating for operationalization of the fund and funding arrangements at COP28.
- Al Suwaidi also called for Pacific nations to use their moral leadership to help shape the global response to the Global Stocktake at COP28.

Suva, Fiji, 21 August 2023: COP28 Director-General and Special Representative Majid Al Suwaidi visited Fiji to meet with Fijian Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka and distinguished leaders of Pacific Island nations.

In his remarks at the Pacific SIDS High-Level Dialogue on Climate Change in Fiji, Al Suwaidi underscored the COP28 Presidency’s commitment to delivering for vulnerable countries at the upcoming climate summit. Al Suwaidi also recognized that climate change is an existential threat to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and emphasized the COP28 Presidency’s intention to keep 1.5 degrees Celsius within reach.

Al Suwaidi said: “Communities here, on the frontlines of climate change, are facing sea level rise, salination of drinking water, coastal erosion, and the increasing severity of storms. These threats, coupled with the fact that the most vulnerable have done the least to contribute to the
challenge, have made the Pacific Islands, and SIDs worldwide, moral leaders on climate action.”

Al Suwaidi outlined the four pillars of the COP28 Presidency’s Action Agenda which includes fast-tracking a just and orderly energy transition; fixing climate finance; focusing on people, lives and livelihoods; and underpinning everything with full inclusivity.

“These priorities are all interlinked and mutually reinforcing. And we need all stakeholders working together to ensure we all move forward, together. No one, no country, no region, no group can be left behind,” Al Suwaidi said.

Discussing the COP28 Presidency’s priorities that affect SIDS the most, Al Suwaidi reiterated the need to operationalize the Loss and Damage fund and funding arrangements and deliver early capitalization. He also discussed the expectation that COP28 will adopt a framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation and reiterated that the framework “must be comprehensive and include ambitious targets to drive enhanced action on adaptation by all parties to build resilience and protect lives, livelihoods and ecosystems.”

Al Suwaidi called on Pacific nations to maintain pressure on the international community to raise its climate ambition, help resolve political bottlenecks, and ensure that there is a robust global response to the first Global Stocktake at COP28. Al Suwaidi said, “We need you at COP28 to make all of this possible. COP28 has the potential to reshape climate action for years to come. It is essential that Pacific Islanders are represented in whatever response there is to the Global Stocktake. That Pacific Island concerns help shape the pace and direction of the energy transition. And that Pacific nations continue to lead the discourse on adaptation, finance, and loss and damage.”

During his visit to Fiji, the COP28 Director General also engaged with the Cook Island’s Minister of the Crown Vaine Mokoroa; Marshall Islands’ Minister of Natural Resources and Commerce John Silk; New Zealand’s Minister for Climate Change James Shaw; Tonga’s Prime Minister Hu’akavemeiliku Siaosi Sovaleni; Tuvalu’s Minister of Finance and Economic Development Seve Paeniu and Henry Puna, Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum.

The COP28 Director-General stressed that Pacific Island communities on the frontlines of climate change must be at the forefront of the climate decision-making process.

During his trip, Al Suwaidi also engaged with Fiji-based COP28 International Youth Climate Delegate, Reshma Ram. The COP28 International Youth Climate Delegate Program of 100 young delegates represent the world’s least-developed countries, small island developing states, Indigenous Peoples, and minority groups.

The Program was designed to provide a platform for the needs and policy proposals of youth in global climate decision-making, build climate capacity, knowledge, and networks among youth, and establish a model for equitable youth inclusion in all future COPs.