



COP28
UAE

PRESS RELEASE

World religious leaders come together to mark inauguration of first Faith Pavilion at COP28

- Held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, the inauguration of the first ever Faith Pavilion at a COP was attended by His Excellency Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence; His Eminence Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State, representing His Holiness Pope Francis; and other global political figures and religious leaders.
- His Eminence the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar and His Holiness Pope Francis both gave virtual remarks to the audience.
- The Faith Pavilion underscores the COP28 Presidency's commitment to inclusivity, bringing together religious leaders, officials and scientists as well as encouraging intergenerational dialogue with youth and indigenous representatives.
- Many of the speakers in attendance at the inauguration were also signatories of a joint statement released following the Global Faith Leaders' Summit, held in Abu Dhabi on 6 and 7 November.

Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 3 December 2023: World religious leaders, scientists and global political officials came together for the inauguration of the first-ever Faith Pavilion at a COP, on the fourth day of COP28, to discuss the role of faith communities and religious institutions in addressing the climate crisis.

Held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, the inauguration was attended by His Excellency Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence and His Eminence Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State, representing His Holiness Pope Francis.

His Eminence the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar and His Holiness Pope Francis both addressed the audience virtually via video, wherein they each highlighted the urgency for urgent action against climate change.

The first-of-its-kind Faith Pavilion, which is co-hosted by the COP28 Presidency, the UAE Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence, the Holy See, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Muslim Council of Elders, and a coalition of faith partners, is dedicated to the engagement of faith communities and will host panels with religious

leaders, scientists, and political leaders, as well as encourage intergenerational dialogue involving youth and indigenous representatives.

In his video address, His Holiness Pope Francis said: “Today, the world needs alliances that are not against someone, but for the benefit of everyone. Let us, as religious representatives, set an example to show that change is possible, to demonstrate respectful and sustainable lifestyles, and let us fervently ask the leaders of nations to preserve our common home”.

In his video address to be shown at COP28, His Eminence the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar said: “The exceptional initiatives undertaken by the Muslim Council of Elders - firstly, inviting diverse religious figures to sign the Abu Dhabi Interfaith Statement for COP28 and secondly, establishing the first-ever Faith Pavilion at COP28 - are precious opportunities in making the voice of religious leaders heard in the face of global challenges - especially advancing the protection of our common home from irreversible destruction, which looms larger every passing year.”

For his part, His Excellency Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence in the United Arab Emirates added, “We welcome you to the Faith Pavilion, a collaborative initiative led by the Muslim Council of Elders in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme and the Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence. We also affirm that the United Arab Emirates, under the wise leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, stands as a nation dedicated to peace, embracing it both as a means and an end. The UAE also prioritizes tolerance, harmony, and human fraternity as fundamental principles and plays a pivotal role on the global stage by diligently working towards protecting the environment and achieving sustainable development. The UAE is also deeply committed to cooperation and collective action, firmly believing that the progress and stability of the world depends on such collaboration”.

COP28 President Dr. Sultan Al Jaber said: “COP28 President Dr. Sultan Al Jaber said: “Climate change cares little about our politics, our borders, or our differences in religion. Our success depends on our ability to come together as one global community to solve it, and global faith communities play a significant role in instilling awareness of the shared social responsibility of all people worldwide towards environmental protection. Faith communities have come together in a truly historic moment of hope, peace, and optimism, uniting around a shared commitment to protect our planet.”

The Faith Pavilion builds on the success of an earlier gathering of more than 200 religious leaders, scientists, youth, academics and environmental experts in Abu Dhabi at the Global Faith Leaders' Summit on 6 and 7 November. During the Summit, 28 faith leaders signed the 'Confluence of Conscience: Uniting for Planetary Resurgence' also known as 'The Abu Dhabi Interfaith Statement for COP28', which expressed their “shared concern” over escalating climate impacts, as well as a joint commitment to address the crisis. The Statement is on display in the Faith Pavilion, which is located in the Blue Zone at COP28.

Recognizing that over 84 percent of the world’s population identifies with a religion, the Faith Pavilion seeks to unite religious representatives, communities, and institutions in support of climate action and the goals outlined in the Paris Agreement.

In October, Dr. Sultan Al Jaber was received in audience by His Holiness Pope Francis. He praised the Pope’s unwavering advocacy for positive climate action, following the release of *Laudate Deum*, the Pope’s Apostolic Exhortation, which contained an appeal to address the climate crisis.

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Notes to Editors COP28 UAE:

- COP28 UAE is taking place at Expo City Dubai from November 30-December 12, 2023. The Conference is expected to convene over 70,000 participants, including heads of state, government officials, international industry leaders, private sector representatives, academics, experts, youth, and non-state actors.
- As mandated by the Paris Climate Agreement, COP28 UAE will deliver the first-ever Global Stocktake – a comprehensive evaluation of progress against climate goals.
- The UAE will lead a process for all parties to agree upon a clear roadmap to accelerate progress through a pragmatic global energy transition and a “leave no one behind” approach to inclusive climate action.