



COP28 UAE

— Changemakers Majlis —

COP28 UAE CHANGEMAKERS MAJLIS IN AJMAN

Municipal Climate Action to Embed Sustainability

Venue: The Oberoi Beach Resort (Al Naseem Hall 1), Ajman, United Arab Emirates

Date: 6 November 2023

Time: 11:30am – 1:00pm (11.30am – 12:00pm socializing; 12:00pm – 1:00pm official majlis)

Host: Her Excellency Mariam Almheiri,
UAE Minister of Climate Change & Environment

Background

What is a Changemakers Majlis?

In the weeks leading up to COP28, several Changemakers Majlis will be held domestically and abroad, including across the UAE. Rooted in Emirati long-standing traditions and values, a Changemakers Majlis is **an inclusive way of hosting a curated group of climate leaders** to discuss a specific climate change challenge, and to **co-design clear and actionable solutions**.

The objective of the UAE Changemakers Majlis stream is to bring together a small group (maximum 25) of local climate leaders and innovators from government, private sector, industry, education, and other key sectors, **to discuss solutions-oriented issues in climate, sustainability, and Net Zero leading up to, during, and after COP28.**

As one of a small, curated group of experts, you have been invited to join this event because of the important perspective that you have to offer on climate change opportunities and challenges in the UAE. As such, we request that you attend having thought of bold, honest ideas on how we can collectively build a more prosperous and resilient future for all.

Topic

With less than a month until COP28, Her Excellency Mariam al Mheiri, UAE Minister of Climate Change and Environment, will host and chair a Changemakers Majlis in Ajman on the topic of **Municipal Climate Action to Embed Sustainability**. The COP28 UAE Changemakers Majlis in Ajman will focus on the important role that municipalities and local government entities play in



embedding sustainability and climate adaptation priorities across their planning, design, and programming priorities.

Given municipalities play a critical role in local governance and are at the forefront of climate action, they have the power to implement policies and initiatives that directly impact the communities they serve. This high-level discussion delves into some of the best practices previously adopted and identifies pathways for innovation and creative policy and program design to address climate challenges at the local level.

For this Majlis, we have 3 objectives:

- 1) Highlight municipal innovations in sustainability;
- 2) Identify design and policy gaps that can be closed through adoption of best practices from other sectors or countries;
- 3) Chart 2-3 clear pathways for collaboration across the group to strengthen sustainability at the local level across the UAE, and ways to connect moving forward, including during and after COP28.

Context

Around the world, municipalities play a crucial - and influential - role in combating climate change due to their proximity to communities, their relationships with national-level government, and their ability to implement localized solutions. Globally, some 56% of the world's population - 4.4 billion inhabitants - live in cities. This trend is expected to continue, placing added pressure on local governments to take on more responsibility over portfolios that have historically been with federal governments, including in areas of innovation, economic forecasting, and increasingly, the development of mitigation strategies for climate change challenges. From implementing sustainable urban planning and investing in renewable energy sources to creating robust waste management and recycling programs, the actions of municipal and local governments have a major impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting sustainability, and enhancing the resilience of their communities.

In the UAE, municipalities are local government bodies responsible for the governance and administration of specific geographic regions within the Emirates. Serving as the closest level of government to the people, municipalities are essential for the efficient functioning of local communities. With oversight of various local matters including urban planning, infrastructure management, public and community services, and law enforcement, UAE municipalities perform a variety of functions to enhance the well-being and development of our local communities, ensuring the needs of local populations are met.

Municipalities can design localized solutions for localized climate problems. The opportunity to leverage on-the-ground knowledge, engage stakeholders, and develop bold, nimble solutions is unique to municipalities and cities. Particularly for urban centres, the concentration of innovators, experts, and entrepreneurs offers a unique opportunity to think differently about specific climate change and sustainability challenges and how to address them in more creative ways than may be possible at the federal or regional level.



The Emirate of Ajman has taken steps to promote sustainability and climate preservation, in alignment with the UAE's national efforts to combat climate change. The objective of this conversation is to amplify best practices from Ajman as well as other municipalities and cities, and to identify new ways to collaborate to further embed sustainability at the city level across the UAE.

Discussion Questions

- What policy, programs, and design activities are in place at the local, municipal, and city-level in Ajman and the broader UAE municipalities that are addressing climate change and advancing sustainability?
- What challenges exist at the municipal level for advancing Net Zero and sustainability? What strategies or legislation can be considered to overcome these challenges?
- What can we commit to doing today to support deeper cross-sector partnerships to advance climate mitigation and sustainability across UAE cities?