

Development Alternatives in COP28 - 2023 in Dubai



**D**evelopment Alternatives team was a part of the COP28 convened under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), a multilateral treaty adopted in 1992 to combat "dangerous human interference with the climate system". COP stands for the 'Conference of the Parties' and is the main decision-making body of the UNFCCC, comprising 197 member states. The COP is "where the world gets together to discuss solutions to the climate catastrophe, such as limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius, aiding vulnerable populations in adapting to the effects of climate change, and attaining net-zero emissions by 2050." The team from DA comprised of CEO Shrashtant Patara, Kanika Verma, Associate Vice-President (Lead - Green and Inclusive Entrepreneurship), Dr. Soumen Maity, Vice President and Dr Debojyothi Basuroy, Program Officer - Technology Transfer.

Shrashtant Patara, CEO, Development Alternatives represented the organisation in numerous events during COP28 organised by UNFCCC in Dubai from November 30 to December 12, 2023. He was the moderator of the Panel Discussion on "Green and Inclusive Micro-Economies for Climate-Smart and Sustainable Futures." The panel featured insights from Dr Mao Amis, Executive Director, African Centre Green Economy and Ms Sofia Martinez, Global Policy Director, Green Economy Coalition. Their diverse expertise added depth to the conversation on partnerships and localised solutions to move forward to a Smart and Sustainable Future for Microeconomics. In this session, panellists also talked about exploring innovative strategies to build resilient economies while championing sustainability.



He participated in another session organised by Climate KIC where they talked about Trade In a Climate-Constrained World. Mr John Podesta, Senior Advisor to the US President was the key speaker for this session where he spoke on the bilateral commitment of India and the U.S. towards trade and cooperation on green energy transition. He highlighted the need for collaboration between the two countries on decarbonising the heavy industries in a way that promotes decent work and livelihoods for workers. Shrashtant Patara, also participated in the same session, bringing in a new perspective to the conversation by speaking about approaching green international trade through the livelihoods' perspective. In his closing statements, he urged the participants to look more closely at the future of jobs as the changing nature of both formal and informal work will have a cathartic effect on urban settlements.



The next session in which Shrashtant Patara participated was the discussion hosted by Climate Action Network South Asia (CANSA) on 'Enabling Just Energy Transition in South Asia- Challenges and Transformational Opportunities'. In the session, he mentions how "Just Energy Transition" denotes a deliberate and equitable progression from conventional energy sources to more sustainable and environmentally conscious alternatives. He talks about how the micro and small are not being addressed enough, particularly for climate adaptation, and that institutions at the meso level have a strong role to play for these large pools of capital that are available to reach, where it is needed the most. He concluded the session by stating that the issue doesn't arise from the transition itself, given India's ongoing progress towards those goals. The primary focus, he emphasised, is not only on transitioning livelihoods but, more importantly, on addressing the challenge of mitigating energy poverty.



DA along with BAIF Development Research Foundation and Terre Policy Research organised a panel discussion as a part of COP Side event on "Green and Inclusive Micro-Economies for Climate-Smart and Sustainable Futures." Kanika Verma, Associate Vice-President (Lead - Green and Inclusive Entrepreneurship) at Development Alternatives Group, highlighted DA's community-centered solutions and the need for making a transition from global flows to local chains thereby reducing carbon footprints and moving towards a sustainable future. She emphasised the need for meso-level policy frameworks as a critical step towards building a Green and Inclusive Micro-economy while prioritising social inclusion, environmental sustainability and economic growth.

Ms. Verma had participated in multiple sessions during the COP28 event. In a forum facilitated by the Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation, she discussed the empowerment of women through decentralized renewable energy (DRE) solutions. She highlighted that the DRE sector demands innovation that brings women to the forefront of solving the energy challenge and builds on collective action from a diverse set of actors. Shedding light on enhancing women's roles in the renewable energy sector, she emphasised that decentralised renewable energy systems, when co-created, owned, and managed by local women's institutions, become drivers of social and economic empowerment. She concluded the session by stating that the solidarity, social capital, and financial assets of women's groups are leveraged to attract green investment and innovative solutions can be taken to scale with carbon savings that cannot be ignored.

Kanika Verma also participated in a panel discussion organised by WSBI on 'Building Climate Resilience for Women Entrepreneurs through Digital Innovation and Women



Financial Empowerment'. The discussion delved into optimising climate adaptation financing for women farmers and women-led enterprises. She emphasised the importance of financial institutions in unlocking potential while supporting smallholders and other businesses. Kanika also talked about locally co-created solutions like Kaun Banega Business Leader (who will be the next business leader?), illustrating how such initiatives empower women to identify opportunity-driven enterprise prototypes. In conclusion, she highlighted that the establishment of "entrepreneurial ecosystems" has resulted in a remarkable fivefold surge in credit utilisation through various channels, showcasing an impressive repayment punctuality surpassing 97%. For instance, she cited the example of DA's peer-to-peer lending platform, RangDe which, in the last 18 months, extended loans ranging from USD 300 to 2000 to 1,900 entrepreneurs.



In India civil societies and think tanks play a pivotal role in building not only the narratives but also in providing evidence which leading to informed policy making. As a leading climate thinker, Dr. Soumen Maity (please give designation) represented Development Alternatives in sharing our practice to policy approach in the state of Bihar towards greening of the construction sector including the brick industry as part of the Energy Transition Planning at the Sub-National Level. This session was hosted at the Regional Climate Foundation Pavilion co organised by Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation.

The Development Alternatives exhibit at COP28 was undeniably successful in showcasing its pioneering interventions for sustainable development and climate change mitigation. By employing a multifaceted approach that combined effective communication, interactive demonstrations, and stakeholder engagement, the 3-day exhibit not only conveyed the significance of its work but also established itself as a key player in the global effort to address climate challenges. The positive outcomes, including increased collaborations and heightened awareness, position Development Alternatives as a leader in the field and set the stage for continued impact in the years to come.

