

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It's an honour to return to the Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Development and join you here today.

For 19 editions now, DIHAD has convened people capable of shaping the humanitarian landscape.

This room represents a collection of inspirational leaders. Leaders who continue to deliver incredible global progress. Leaders who always offer those in need a crucial helping hand. Leaders who remain committed to strengthening nations and economies by empowering the people who drive them. And this the root of our collective cause: people.

And it is through this humanitarian lens that we must look at the energy transition.

I am often surprised by a common misperception that many people hold about the energy transition.

The assumption is often that we must take climate action and accelerate the shift towards an energy system powered by renewable solutions because we are trying to save the planet.

This is simply not true.

We must pursue the energy transition not because we must save our planet, but because we must save our people.

If emissions continue unabated, whatever damage we do to our planet in the pursuit of growth at all costs, it will recover. It is us, the people on this planet, that will not.

And so, when I thought about what I wanted to say to everyone gathered here today, I wanted to remind us all of the human cost of inaction.

I want to underscore the necessity of a **people's energy transition**.

Climate change – and the just energy transition we must deliver – is not just a scientific necessity. It's not just an economic prerequisite for sustainable growth. And it's not just an environmental imperative.

It is a humanitarian crisis. One that is disrupting, displacing and dislocating people around the world. Especially those in frontline, climate-vulnerable communities.

By 2050, there could be up to 1.2 billion climate refugees. One point two billion.

That's the beginning of the human cost of inaction, in less than three decades.

By 2030 alone, projections suggest that there will be half a billion more people living on this planet – each needing access to energy to live meaningful lives.

The latest IPCC report tells us that temperatures continue to rise 0.2 degrees each decade.

The impact of this trend is clear to see. Rising sea levels. Growing food and water insecurity. Developing economies struggling.

And it is communities, across the global south, who are the most vulnerable to these changes. The communities who contributed the least to climate change are suffering the most from it.

To correct the current course we are on, we must cut emissions by 7 percent each year to keep 1.5 degrees within reach.

That's a 43 percent in less than seven years.

This year, at COP28, the international climate community will evaluate exactly where we are when it comes to climate progress, with the first global stocktake.

We do not expect a good result. We expect a wake-up call.

The stakes are high. But the human risk is too great, and the evidence is clear.

Currently, over 800 million people lack access to electricity, and over two billion people rely on traditional biomass for cooking and heating, leading to indoor air pollution that causes four million premature deaths each year.

The world needs to invest \$4.4 trillion annually in clean energy infrastructure by 2030 to reach net-zero emissions by mid-century.

This may seem like an insurmountable challenge, but it is also a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

The energy transition has the potential to create millions of jobs, boost economic opportunity, and improve the health and wellbeing of people across the globe.

In the UAE, we are putting our foot to the floor and accelerating towards the energy transition. We are embracing the transition,

because we see now it will make the world a more sustainable and more secure place.

To date, the UAE has invested more than 50 billion US dollars on clean energy projects in more than 70 countries across four continents across the world.

And our leadership has pledged to invest 160 billion US dollars in renewable and clean energy solutions in our pursuit of net zero by 2050.

But we recognise that there is always more to be done.

We remain firmly committed to working closely with the international community to address the most urgent challenges related to climate change and mitigating its impact on humanity.

Our ongoing collaboration with IRENA the International Renewable Energy Agency is a point in case.

One recent example of our collaborative efforts is the Empowering Lives and Livelihoods initiative launched by IRENA and UAE, which seeks to raise 1 billion US dollar towards a COP28 Initiative on 'Renewables for Adaptation'.

This initiative aims to connect people and livelihoods through renewable energy solutions in agri-food and health sectors.

The agriculture sector is a key driver of development and livelihoods for over 2.5 billion people worldwide. That's almost a third of the global population.

However, energy poverty affects agri-food systems in developing countries, causing significant food losses and impeding improvements in yields and value addition.

By integrating renewable energy solutions, the demand for energy in this sector can be sustainably met without hampering food security.

Similarly, health facilities in low- and lower-middle income countries are facing a significant challenge due to unreliable electricity supply.

In fact, an estimated 1 billion people rely on health facilities without electricity, with rural healthcare facilities being the most affected.

This is a big obstacle in the way of ensuring adequate healthcare, particularly during an ongoing health crisis.

The Empowering Lives and Livelihoods initiative aims to strengthen the resilience of both the agri-food and health value chains by adapting the use of renewable energy in least developed economies and small islands and developing states.

It is important to note that the initiative focuses on equity benefits, particularly for women who are highly impacted by climate change, lack of clean energy, access to resources, and opportunities.

Studies by IRENA and the Food and Agriculture Organisation have shown that women produce between 60% and 80% of the food in most developing countries, yet they face increasing difficulty gaining access to resources such as water, land, capital, and productivity-enhancing tools, technologies and services.

These limitations make women farmers more exposed to climate risks. The Empowering Lives and Livelihoods initiative seeks to address this

gender gap by providing access to clean and sustainable energy, thereby improving the livelihoods of women and their communities.

There are further critical areas of humanitarian work where the energy transition has a crucial role to play. For instance, peacekeeping missions – the very peacekeeping missions that enable the work at the heart of this event.

There are significant untapped opportunities around Peacekeeping's transition to renewables.

UN missions are large and stable customers that can anchor local power systems and attract finance. They represent a rare foothold for new or enhanced infrastructure in last-mile settings.

By relying on generators using expensive, imported diesel, they have a high baseline cost of energy, making them ideal candidates to sustain fees from renewable energy projects.

This could even include paying higher fees than the local off-takers, reducing the investor's financial risk while still securing cost savings.

Additionally, producing renewable energy locally enhances the safety and security of UN peacekeepers by reducing the need for fuel convoys and shipments that are often vulnerable to interceptions and supply disruptions.

In turn, peacekeeping can provide security protection to the energy infrastructure and facilitate logistics of project developers.

Lastly, the implementation of host countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the UNFCCC often relies on climate action by missions.

Peacekeeping missions are frequently among the largest single sources of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in their host countries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we move forward, we must remember that the energy transition is not just about reducing carbon emissions, it is about building a better future for all of humanity.

We must ensure that the transition is inclusive, just, and benefits everyone, especially the most vulnerable communities.

It is our duty to act now, before it's too late.

Thank you.