



Speaker Bios

Towards COP28: Unlocking climate finance flows to Arab region projects

6 NOVEMBER 2023

Sara Lemniei is the CEO at SLK Capital, an advisory boutique focusing on Climate in Emerging markets. Before founding SLK Capital, Sara worked internationally at various institutions as an investor, investment banker, and consultant. She also currently serves on the board of the Liquidity & Sustainability Facility designed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to support the liquidity of African sovereign Eurobonds and incentivize SDG-related investments. Sara graduated from ESCP Europe in Paris, with a Master's degree in finance. She is experienced in conducting business in English, French, and Classical Arabic.



Welcome

Master of Ceremony



Sara Lemniei

CEO, SLK Capital

As the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the DIFC Authority (DIFCA), Alya is responsible for setting the strategic direction of DIFCA's operations and client experience. She brings more than 20 years of experience in developing and delivering technology-driven business services and solutions, providing outstanding client service, and driving internal efficiency through policy, process and digital transformation.

Prior to her appointment as the COO, Alya assumed multiple roles across different functions in DIFCA and has led the transformation of DIFC services since 2010. She has been serving as a board member of Hawkamah: The Institute for Corporate Governance for over three years and led the DIFC Academy since its inception until 2022.

In terms of her education, Alya was at the top of her class and earned both her BSc in Computer Science and MBA from the American University of Sharjah. She has an LLM in International Business Law from the University of Paris II Pantheon Assas (Magna Cum Laude). She is a graduate of the prestigious Mohammed bin Rashid Center for Leadership Development, completing both the Young Leaders Programme and the Dubai Leaders Programme.



Welcome Remarks



Alya Al Zarouni
Chief Operating Officer, DIFC

Dr. Mahmoud Mohieldin, is an economist with more than 30 years of experience in international finance and development. In February 2022, Dr. Mohieldin was appointed by the Egyptian Government as the UN Climate Change High-Level Champion for Egypt at the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27), with aims at enhancing the communication between the Egyptian presidency of COP27 and businesses, the private sector and, international funding institutions working in climate change-related fields. Since February 2020, Dr. Mohieldin has been the United Nations Special Envoy on Financing the 2030 Development Agenda. He is the former Minister of Investment of Egypt from 2004-2010, and most recently, served as the World Bank Group Senior Vice President for the 2030 Development Agenda, United Nations Relations and Partnerships. His professional experience extends into the academic arena as a Professor of Economics and Finance at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University and as a Visiting Professor at several renowned Universities in Egypt, Korea, the UAE, the UK and the USA. Dr. Mohieldin holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Warwick, United Kingdom; a Master's in Economics and Social Policy Analysis from the University of York, United Kingdom; a Diploma of Development Economics from the University of Warwick; and a B.Sc. in Economics from Cairo University.



Keynote Speech



Dr. Mahmoud Mohieldin

UN Climate Change High-Level Champion for COP27, Egypt and UN Special Envoy on Financing the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda



Keynote Speech



Her Excellency Razan Al Mubarak
UN Climate Change High-Level Champion
from the COP28 Presidency and President of
the International Union for Conservation of
Nature (IUCN)



Panel 1

Towards COP28: Unlocking climate finance flows to Arab region projects

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Panel 1: Bridging the gap: Navigating complexities and future-proofing climate finance in the Arab region



Moderator: Mazen Soueidan
Emerging Markets and Developing Economies
Lead, Finance, Climate Champions Team



Carol Chouchani Cherfane
Director, Arab Centre for
Climate Change Policies, ESCWA



Sufyan Al Issa
Global Head of Business Development
and Client Coverage, International
Finance Corporation



Zoe Knight
Managing Director and Group Head
of the HSBC Centre of Sustainable
Finance, HSBC



Sanjeev Gupta
Executive Director, Financial Services,
Africa Finance Corporation



Priyanthini McNair
Group Co Head of Corporate Coverage,
Corporate and Institutional
Banking, Emirates NDB



Gerard Foguet
Executive Director, Sustainability Asset &
Project Finance - Global
Corporate Finance, First Abu Dhabi Bank

Mazen is The Climate Champions' Emerging Markets and Developing Economies (EMDE) Lead - Finance, responsible for supporting efforts to accelerate the mobilization and scale-up of capital in support of the climate change agenda in these countries. A senior banking executive with over 20 years of coverage and product experience across the UK and MENAT, Mazen is seconded full-time from HSBC, where most recently he was Regional Head of Wholesale Portfolio Management, MENAT responsible for overseeing all regional corporate and institutional lending activity and associated governance. Immediately prior to this as Regional Head of Leveraged and Acquisition Finance, MENAT he was responsible for leading the origination and execution of event and flow financing across loan and bond capital markets.

Mazen holds a BSc. Economics from Royal Holloway, University of London. He has recently successfully completed Cambridge University's Institute for Sustainability Leadership, Sustainable Finance course.



Panel 1 Moderator



Mazen Soueidan

Emerging Markets and Developing Economies Lead, Finance, High-Level Climate Champions

Carol Chouchani Cherfane directs the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies and leads the Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability Cluster at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in Beirut.

Her work supports inter-governmental and inter-agency engagement on water, energy, food security and biodiversity under a changing climate, as well as thematic work on climate mainstreaming, climate finance, multilateral agreements, negotiations and geospatial analysis for informing climate action. This includes coordinating the Regional Initiative for Assessing the Impact of Water Resources on Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR), the Arab Initiative for Mobilizing Climate Finance for Water and supporting ESCWA's Climate/SDG Debt Swap-Donor Nexus Initiative.

Her 25 years of experience in natural resource management are complemented by studies in development economics, law and international environmental policy at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (Boston) and Georgetown University (Washington, DC).



Panel 1 Context Framing



Carol Chouchani Cherfane
Director, Arab Centre for Climate
Change Policies, ESCWA

Sufyan AL-Issa is a Global Head of Business Development and Client Coverage based in Dubai at the International Finance Corporation (IFC), member of the World Bank Group. Before assuming this position, Sufyan served as the Regional Head of Operations for MENA and head of mission for the UAE at IFC. Prior to this, he was a principal investment officer and regional program leader at IFC, covering both investment and advisory services, with a focus on skills, education and entrepreneurship in MENA, and a track record of working on strategic initiatives and in conflict-affected states. Al-Issa has more than 20 years of experience in the global financial sector, including dealing with economic policies and issues, and connecting finance with investment opportunities and fund mobilization. Prior to joining IFC, he was a Senior Advisor to the Dean of the Board and Executive Director for the Middle East at the World Bank Group, following positions at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and University of Oxford. Sufyan is a certified public accountant and holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of London.



Panel 1 Speaker



Sufyan Al Issa

Global Head of Business
Development and Client Coverage,
International Finance Corporation

Zoë Knight is Group Head of the HSBC Centre of Sustainable Finance and Head of Climate Change MENAT. Zoë joined the Global Research business of HSBC in 2010 to provide institutional investors with climate change analysis and recommendations. Since then she has produced insights on low-carbon opportunities in bond and equity markets, long-term carbon and water risks and managing financial stability in relation to climate change. She has been advising global institutional investors on equity investing and climate change for over 25 years.

In 2018, Zoë set up the Centre of Sustainable Finance at HSBC to provide climate insight across the group. The Centre provides thought leadership about transforming the real economy and strengthening the financial system response to climate change.

Prior to HSBC, Zoë worked in both a major European and US investment bank. An economist by academic background, her initial career was focused on providing equity ideas to investors focused on European Small and MidCap markets.



Panel 1 Speaker



Zoe Knight

Managing Director and Group Head
of the HSBC Centre of Sustainable
Finance, HSBC

Mr. Sanjeev Gupta is a Board member and Executive Director for Financial Services at Africa Finance Corporation. He is responsible for Treasury, Trade Finance, Syndication, Country Relations and Advisory lines of business within AFC.

Mr. Gupta has over 30 years' experience in Investment Management, Private Equity and Corporate Finance. His forte has been to blend together global and indigenous corporates, financial investors, and governments to develop commercially viable businesses and development models that leave a sustainable impact on emerging economies.

Prior to joining AFC, Mr. Gupta was the Managing Partner of Emerging Markets Mergers and Acquisitions Center of Excellence at Ernst & Young. He has also been the Chief Executive Officer of Sanlam Investment Management Emerging Markets operations and a Founder & Managing Partner of Emerging Opportunity Consulting, a boutique advisory firm specializing in SME financing.



Panel 1 Speaker



Sanjeev Gupta

Executive Director, Financial
Services, Africa Finance
Corporation

Pri is responsible for the Group's international corporate coverage activities alongside parts of UAE. Over the course of a career spanning over 20 years, Pri has developed extensive international banking experience across a range of practices including leveraged finance, structured financing, auditing, corporate coverage and origination. Her global expertise is borne out of experience in various markets including the UK, Europe, Middle East, North Africa and Turkey (MENAT), and Asia.

Since joining Emirates NBD, she has overseen a revamping of the corporate business's international markets strategy. In the UAE, Pri manages the coverage of a diverse portfolio encompassing Large Local Corporates, Mid-Market Corporates, and Dubai and Northern Emirates clients. She is also responsible for the Commodities and Retail sectors.

Pri joined Emirates NBD in 2022, having previously held the position of Managing Director & Regional Head of Corporate Banking for HSBC in the MENAT region. During her 20-year tenure at HSBC, Pri held a number of senior roles across the bank, including Global Head of Business Development in large corporates and UK Head of leveraged corporates in the UK.



Panel 1 Speaker



Priyanthini McNair

Group Co Head of Corporate Coverage, Corporate and Institutional Banking, Emirates NBD

Gerard is highly-driven and experienced Executive Director in Investment Banking & Finance with a demonstrated history of working in the banking industry.

Gerard has over 8 years of Corporate and Investment banking experience having worked across number of banking divisions and regions such as Europe and Middle East. Prior to moving to the Middle East, Gerard worked at BBVA where Gerard started his journey in Sustainability by advising clients back in 2018.

Gerard holds a Double degree in Economics and Business Administration from Universitat Pompeu Fabra, a Master's degree in Corporate Finance from Barcelona University and is a CFA Charterholder.



Panel 1 Speaker



Gerard Foguet

Executive Director of Sustainability
Asset & Project Finance - Global
Corporate Finance, First Abu Dhabi
Bank



Panel 2

Towards COP28: Unlocking climate finance flows to Arab region projects

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Panel 2: Turning Ideas into Action: Pragmatic Solutions for Climate Financing in the Arab Region



Moderator: Sagarika Chatterjee

Department Director, Climate Finance, High-Level Climate Champions



Vamsi Duraibabu

Regional Investment Lead, Middle East & Africa, Global Green Growth Institute



Martin Nagell

Director, Mergers and Acquisitions, Masdar



Lina Osman

Managing Director & Head - Sustainable Finance, Standard Chartered Bank



Sud Chantralingam

Lead Structured Credit and Political Risk, Marsh



Robert Ansari

Head of Investments and Retirement IMEA, Mercer

Sagarika is a sustainability professional with 15+ years' experience in climate change and responsible investment. Led the PRI's global climate change programme and UN-convened Net Zero Asset Owner Alliance secretariat co-head. Launched Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero with COP26 Private Finance Hub while seconded to UNFCCC High-level Champions. From May 2022, UNFCCC Champions Finance Lead and GFANZ secretariat leadership team. Her board positions have included: Director of the UK Sustainable Investment & Finance Association, Charity investment sub-committee and trustee experience, and UK-China Green Finance Task Force member. Sagarika has worked in institutional investment for over fifteen years, including ten years on the UK's first sustainability fund range at F&C (previously Friends, Ivory and Sime), on secondment to Aviva Investors and on the Joseph Rowntree Foundation investment committee.



Panel 2 Moderator



Sagarika Chatterjee

Department Director, Climate Finance,
High-Level Climate Champions

Vamsi Duraibabu is the Regional Investment Lead at Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) and has nearly 20 years of private and public sector experience in investment planning and development of financing strategies to help achieve national goals related to climate change and net-zero transition. As a climate finance advisor to GGGI member countries in Middle East & North Africa (MENA) region, he leads the origination and development of climate resilient infrastructure projects and specializes in bridging public finance with capital markets and investors to drive transformation to a low-carbon and climate-resilient future.

Prior to GGGI, he held senior leadership roles in the power and renewable energy industry, where he led the development of utility scale clean energy projects and successfully raised equity and debt finance from institutional investors and development finance institutions.



Panel 2 Context Framing



Vamsi Duraibabu

Regional Investment Lead,
Middle East & Africa, Global
Green Growth Institute

Martin Nagell has well over two decades of experience in global capital markets and green infrastructure investing in both developed and frontier markets. He has since 2009 in various roles contributed to the growth and development of Masdar, an Abu Dhabi owned investment and development company that is spearheading Abu Dhabi's global development of sustainable energy and green hydrogen, with extensive focus on bankability topics and regulatory levers to de-risk projects. Previous to joining Masdar, Martin spent 10 years in management consulting and investment banking, supporting energy companies and financial institutions in the development and execution of their strategies. Martin holds an MBA from Instituto de Empresa, and a MSc in Finance from the Norwegian School of Economics.



Panel 2 Speaker



Martin Nagell

Director, Mergers and Acquisitions,
Masdar

Lina is the Regional Head of Sustainable Finance, West at Standard Chartered Bank, which encompasses the regions of the Middle East, Africa, Europe and the Americas. She has over 16 years of banking experience in Corporate Finance primarily and in investment banking, delivering innovative deal origination and execution across various industries and regions. Lina has also developed key relationships with clients and governments in the region, and has been part of several working groups to identify solutions to mobilize capital towards green, social, and transition projects. In her role, she continues to advise clients on sustainable finance solutions and transition opportunities and is a board member of the MENA Clean Energy Business Council (“CEBC”). Lina holds a bachelor’s degree in Accounting and Finance (Magna Cum Laude) from the American University of Sharjah, and an MBA with distinction from London Business School.



Panel 2 Speaker



Lina Osman

Managing Director & Head -
Sustainable Finance, Standard
Chartered Bank

Sud now leads the Political Risk and Structure Credit (PRSC) practice for the MENA region for Marsh Specialty, managing clients based across the region.

Sud began his career in insurance with AIG, where he worked as EMEA Claims Adjuster, servicing major clients, adjusting trade credit and political risk claims. He then moved to Aon Risk Solutions where he worked with Large Corporate clients, in various sectors, providing innovative risk solutions until August 2019. With Marsh, Sud worked for Credit Specialities team in London as a Vice President working with international clients on advisory, structuring, placement and claims recovery. Sud handled clients from a range of sectors from commodities to banking before relocating to Dubai in December 2020 to lead the PRSC initiative for the Middle East & Africa region.

Sud is leading the PRSC practice for the MENA region, with a focus on business development, building a client base made up of local & international banks, non-banking financial institutions, traders and major corporates - across a wide range of sectors.



Panel 2 Speaker



Sud Chantralingam

Lead, Structured Credit and
Political Risk, Marsh

Rob Ansari is a Partner and the Head of Investments and Retirement, IMEA. He is based in Dubai and is responsible for setting and driving the Wealth strategy and initiatives, specifically the delivery of retirement services, investment consulting and investment solutions throughout the region.

Prior to joining Mercer, Rob was the Head of MSCI for the Middle East, responsible for all aspects of coverage and business strategy for the MSCI business.

Rob joined MSCI in 2005 as a member of the Client Coverage team in London. Given Rob's background on the sell-side he initially served the UK Sell-side Banks and Broker community for MSCI as the Head of Index Sales for MSCI prior to his move to Dubai in 2012.

Rob has 20 years of experience in a variety of roles. Prior to joining MSCI, Rob held various positions in London at Barclays Capital in rates and in equity derivatives at Dresdner Kleinwort. Rob started his career at Deutsche Bank on the graduate program.

Rob is a regular speaker at global conferences, industry events and round tables. Rob has published articles and has undertaken several live TV broadcasts on topics related regional capital markets and market classification. In 2015 and 2016 Rob was ranked by MENA FM as one of the top 30 influential people in the fund management services industry in the Middle East.



Panel 2 Speaker



Robert Ansari

Head of Investments and Retirement - IMEA, Mercer