

ECO

INCLUSIVE ISN'T JUST A BUZZ WORD

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Ducking and Diving: the Case of the COP27 Hotel Heist

It was nice of the Egyptian Presidency designate's logistics team to invite us to go diving in Sharm el-Sheikh, but ECO is interested in a different kind of deep dive at this point. So let's take a deep dive into how delegates planning to attend COP27 are being [gouged] [exploited] [shafted] by the Upper Committee in charge of organizing COP27 and by the Egyptian Hotel Association (Sharm el-Sheikh).

The issue is that the Upper Committee organizing COP27 issued several decrees, directing the Egyptian Hotel Association (EHA) to cancel all existing reservations if the room rates are NOT what they have just designated to be the appropriate fee. This is regardless of whether there is a contract in place, or if payments have been made or not, ECO notes!

The EHA circular 26 (dated 28 April 2022) and titled, "Cancellation of all reservations done with prices different [from] the settled prices for COP27" states in part that *'the Upper Committee that is preparing for the UN COP27 conference made a decree on 12/4/2022 that the hotels prices during COP27 are settled during the conference and any reservations done with lower prices should be cancelled and can be rebooked with conference prices.'*

THE UPPER COMMITTEE IN CHARGE OF ORGANISING COP27 PRICING FOR HOTELS

Category	Price	All-inclusive supplement
5 stars	\$500	\$50
4 stars	\$350	\$40
3 stars	\$200	\$30
2 stars	\$120	-

The EHA circular 84 (dated 6 February 2022), calls on hotels to set minimum prices according to the above table, noting *"All hotels should amend their online prices accordingly: Online rates should be higher' and that 25% of the rate 'is for the conference."* (ECO understands this means 25% of each room's daily rate will go to the Hotel Association) and that *"any booking for participants outside the [official] portal will be subject to the 25% of the conference"*.

At the in-person logistics briefing held on Friday (June 10th), led by various private-sector suppliers and a smattering of staff of the incoming COP27 Presidency, it was disturbing to see that while there was a lot of hand-wringing about *'trying to resolve this,'* no details were actually given, despite this being raised with the relevant officials prior to the meeting. Further, Sherif Salem,

chairperson of the Global Conference Management (GCM) – apparently appointed to manage all the COP logistical issues, claimed *'it was normal'* for prices to increase around a big event, and simply swotted away serious questions with a *'send me an email, and I'll help you.'*

Parties and civil society raised serious concerns about the exclusionary impact these price hikes would have. They pointed out that these actions exacerbated an already creeping trend for logistical issues to block the participation of many voices (like those from civil society) who attend COPs to fight for the rights of people who have diminished voices, to fight to save our planet, and make the voices of the vulnerable heard.

ECO notes that on the official COP27 website, the chairperson of the COP27 Higher Committee is listed as Dr Mostafa Madbouly, Prime Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt. In his remarks, published on the website, he says, *"Egypt is **fully committed to hosting an inclusive Conference** where all parties, youth, civil society and the private sector can showcase their action on implementation and delivery and further enhance their ambition towards a just transition based on the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities"*. (Emphasis added by ECO).

ECO notes the HUGE disconnect between what is being said and what is being done. The danger is that chasing windfall profits instead of *'hosting an inclusive conference'* will do no one any good. The reputation of Egypt as a tourism destination will suffer, as will the most vulnerable people on the planet, whose governments may only be able to participate virtually, and whose civil society delegates will be considerably thinned out, if they are able to send anyone at all. That still says nothing about the damage to Egypt's reputation as a country which does not abide by basic rule of law principles like observing signed contracts.

ECO implores Dr Mostafa Madbouly and the COP27 Presidency leadership to consider this matter much more earnestly. Parties and observers are going to COP 27 to get climate action and make sure that the future tourists don't dive into the warm waters of Sharm el-Sheikh and see bleached corals and dead or dying fish. Similarly, delegates coming to the COP cannot miss the next step in the fight for climate justice, so those people whose lives and livelihoods depend on a healthy planet can be assured that when they dive into the warm ocean waters in their countries, they will see healthy corals and schools of fish.

Tinder for Climate Action

Landing a match can be hard in these times. It's hard to know what you're looking for without a supported and coordinated platform that can effectively facilitate quality matchmaking. After all, even Tinder has staff on the back-end helping to structure key information everyone needs to make a great match. We hear that a few countries have some concerns with an overbearing matchmaker, so here's ECO's take on what an Article 6.8 Matching Facility is and isn't.

What it is:

A matching facility: a well organized database of ambitious [projects][or actions] that Parties have submitted detailing their need for that [action]. Think of a detailed project description or concept note which includes how it reduces emissions and/or increases resilience, and how it upholds rights and promotes sustainable development, so that supporting countries or other non-Party actors can look at and then connect to in order to develop and mobilise that action, via funding, technological support, technical assistance, and capacity building.

Accessible: with the right guidance, technical assistance, and flexibility, it can help facilitate a flow of support to local-led action.

Transparent: [projects][or actions] would have information

about what it is, where it is, and how it respects human rights; including the rights of indigenous peoples, gender equality, public participation, ecosystem integrity, a just transition... and how it promotes sustainable development.

Monitorable: [projects][actions] should continue to be listed once a match has been made so that the public can monitor its implementation.

What it is not:

A financial mechanism: a 6.8 matching facility does not obligate any party to contribute financing.

A compensation mechanism: only Parties receiving support can have the emissions reductions acknowledged and reported as mitigation towards their NDCs.

Only a list of cooperative activities that are already taking place: merely having a list of activities that are already taking place through cooperative approaches is a wasted opportunity. Then, it's just aggregating information. A list of existing cooperative approaches could be a part – but not the whole part.

ECO knows that you know we need more climate action, and we need it urgently! And an Article 6.8 matching facility can help bring that about. Let those who want to provide support swipe right on rights-based, people-centred climate action.

The Growing Health Movement For Climate Action Continues to Gain Momentum

Remember how last year was the first time in UNFCCC history where health was recognized as a scientific priority by a COP Presidency? In a way, the silver lining of an otherwise devastating pandemic has been an increased awareness of the fragility of our health systems in the face of global crises – and no crisis is more daunting or puts human health at a greater risk than the climate emergency.

In a side event that took place yesterday, the climate community got an update on the COP26 Health Programme. The Health Programme is an innovative initiative that addresses both sides of the coin in the climate and health nexus: the significant climate vulnerability of global healthcare delivery and the fact that the health sector represents almost 5 per cent of net global GHG emissions. Convened last year by the UK government, the World Health Organization (WHO), Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) and the UNFCCC Climate Champions, the Programme calls on countries to commit to developing climate resilient, sustainable and low emissions health systems. The decarbonisation initiative, in particular, calls for action plans to consider human exposure to air pollution which, according to WHO estimates, is responsible for over 7 million premature deaths each year. Fifty-nine countries have so far joined the Programme, out of which nineteen have set a target date by which their health systems should reach net-zero emissions (with the Global South taking the lead as fifteen of these targets have been set by developing countries).

This is the latest in a series of expressions of the growing engagement of the health community in the UNFCCC process. We are seeing health organizations actively participating in some negotiation tracks, with actions that range from presenting a submission to the Global Stocktake – requesting that the GST track the health outcomes of climate action – to advocating for the COP27 work programme to urgently scale up mitigation, ambition and implementation (MWP) to have a sectoral approach, and for healthcare to be considered in

it. Underpinning these efforts are thousands of health systems and facilities that are walking the talk by carrying out climate vulnerability assessments and adopting mitigation plans. For many health sector stakeholders, especially in the Global South, some decarbonisation strategies are actually crucial to building resilience, such as installing renewable energy sources in healthcare facilities to decrease dependence on unstable grids, or building pandemic preparedness by investing in sustainable cold chains for vaccines.

The side event was also an opportunity to promote an open letter to universities and education stakeholders with “a call for strengthening climate change education for all health professionals”, and to hear about the Health Community Recommendations submitted to SB 56. On the latter, it is worth recognizing that health professionals from all around the world are turning up in unprecedented numbers to the climate negotiations, providing a much needed push to non-Party demands for ambitious climate action and climate justice by wielding a powerful health argument. As Health Care Without Harm's representative Anna Fuhrmann stated in the event, “thanks to the trusted voice of nurses, doctors, and all other allied healthcare professionals, we are starting to see a broader societal shift towards an understanding that we need to take care of our planet to be able to live in a healthy and just world.”

The side event started the drum roll for the official launch of the Alliance on Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACh), an international mechanism to support delivery of the COP26 Health Programme which the WHO will host on June 27th. Through Health Care Without Harm, and other partners like the Global Climate and Health Alliance and the International Federation of Medical Students Associations, civil society will have a seat at the table. ECO will follow this alliance closely to make sure that the first health-focused process born out of the climate negotiations delivers on its promise for healthy people on a healthy planet.