

# How Can the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department Combat Climate Change?

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Termed by Sir David Attenborough as “humanity’s greatest threat” in millennia, climate change is set to affect certain regions of the planet more keenly than others in the imminent future. With its arid landscapes and scarce precipitation, the Middle East in general and the UAE in particular is especially susceptible to its ravages.

As a result, the Emirati government, state operations and other authoritative institutions have been taking the lead on the subject in a bid to transform the country’s environmental profile and prepare itself for the upcoming changes. The Abu Dhabi Judicial Department is just the latest organisation to follow suit, hosting a series of workshops, seminars and other events aimed at raising awareness around the issue.

## Community collaboration

Represented by the Abu Dhabi Judicial Academy, the Department has organised a number of conferences, forums and talks this spring in order to address the elephant in the room. As well as discussing the urgent action which must be taken to alleviate the worst impacts of global warming, the events also highlighted the importance of foregrounding human rights within the context of the topic.

That includes prioritising the needs of those members of society most vulnerable to climate change in the shape of storms, floods and drought. Any initiatives undertaken must incorporate basic considerations for human welfare into their strategizing, while businesses and institutions must also be held to account for their environmental performance.

As well as implementing rigorous monitoring and assessment protocols, the powers that be must ensure that any transgressions are taken seriously and dealt with appropriately by the judiciary. The body also has a responsibility for ensuring that the administrative and legislative frameworks are in place to guarantee that climate change is never neglected.

## Par for the Emirati course

The series of events is in keeping with the UAE’s 2023 ‘Year of Sustainability’ campaign, the culmination of which will see the country host this year’s COP28 conference in October and November. As part of the plan, the government has launched a number of projects and programmes such as this one geared towards transforming both its own approach to the most pressing issue of the day and also the perception of other nations towards it.

In 2021, the UAE became the first country in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region to announce a comprehensive plan to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. In the 15

years prior, the government had already funnelled \$40 billion into renewable investments, while a further \$163 billion is expected to be ploughed into green initiatives in the coming decades.

The drive comes at a crucial time when the UAE is competing with neighbouring Saudi Arabia to become the main commerce hub for the region. By placing such a heavy emphasis on environmental issues, the Emirati government are hoping to demonstrate their ability as a leader on the issue and attract the attention of overseas investment and ex-pat expertise in the process.