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Headline: Governments need to raise climate targets by September, COP28 president says

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Sultan al-Jaber, head of state oil giant ADNOC and UAE "COP28" president, speaks at the inaugural UAE Climate Tech Conference in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, May 10, 2023. REUTERS FILE PHOTO

Sultan al-Jaber, head of state oil giant ADNOC and UAE "COP28" president, speaks at the inaugural UAE Climate Tech Conference in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, May 10, 2023. REUTERS FILE PHOTO

BRUSSELS — The United Arab Emirates president-designate of the upcoming COP28 climate conference urged governments on Thursday to raise their climate targets within the next two months ahead of the gathering.

"I call on all governments to update their NDCs by September of this year, ensuring alignment with the Paris Agreement," Sultan al-Jaber said at a meeting in Brussels of climate ministers and representatives from around two dozen countries, among them Brazil, China and the United States.

NDCs refer to Nationally Determined Contributions, emissions-cutting pledges that serve as countries' national contributions to meeting the 2015 Paris Agreement's goals to curb climate change.

This month, the UAE updated its own national pledge saying it was committed to cutting emissions 40% by the year 2030, an increase of almost 10% over its previous target.

The UAE, a major OPEC oil exporter, is hosting the COP28 summit which is scheduled to take place at the end of this year.

The event is the first global assessment of progress since the landmark Paris Agreement in 2015 to limit global warming.

"We are at the midway point between Paris and 2030, but we are nowhere near close enough to our destination," Jaber said about the upcoming assessment, often referred to as the global stocktake.

"We must be brutally honest about the gaps that need to be filled, the root causes and how we got to this place here today," he said.

The Paris Agreement commits countries to limit the global average temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to aim for 1.5 degrees Celsius, a level which if crossed could unleash far more severe climate change effects, scientists say.

On Thursday Jaber repeated calls for a "phase down" of fossil fuels.

"As I've said many times, the phase down of fossil fuels is inevitable."

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