**NEWS ARTICLE**

Zutari to participate in key discussions at COP28 climate change conference in Dubai

**6 December 2023****:** A new synthesis report on Global Stocktake elements, published by the UN Climate Change, is expected to take centre stage at the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference [COP28](https://unfccc.int/cop28) from 30 November to 12 December, predicts **Thapelo Letete**, Director: Climate Change at [Zutari](http://www.zutari.com). Letete will represent the leading consulting engineering and infrastructure advisory practice at an important framework session on climate transparency in developing countries on the final day of COP28.

“Representation at the conference is important for us to be able to inform our clients about some of the latest developments and trends,” comments Letete. As a leader in the Environment, Sustainability, and Governance (ESG) space, he highlights it is vital for Zutari to be part of the debate and dialogue at COP28.

“It sends an important message to our clients and gives them confidence that we are at the forefront of the latest climate change developments, which are automatically incorporated in our co-created approach to infrastructure development, engineering design, and community empowerment,” notes Letete.

Since the ratification of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2016, Zutari has provided its specialist advisory services to a range of clients in Africa. Under Letete’s team, it has established strategic partnerships in the region and consolidated its expertise in carbon footprint analysis, climate change mitigation, climate risk and vulnerability assessments as well as adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

Commenting on South Africa’s commitment to a Just Energy Transition, Letete points out that load-shedding has effectively placed the country’s emissions goals on the back burner. “It is an unfortunate situation, that the country is faced with urgent energy security issues that are delaying the much needed energy transition towards a lower carbon economy.”

Letete adds that the outcome of COP28 is likely to determine the tenor of the climate change debate going forward. “I anticipate stimulating, robust, and important discussions. Global political buy-in is the key ingredient to avoid the tipping point. If that political will does not manifest at Dubai, we will probably never see it happen.”

While Africa’s contribution to climate change remains very small at under 4% of global emissions, it is a disproportionately vulnerable region globally. Africa continues to face some of the severest effects from climate change in a decade, from wildfires in Algeria to catastrophic flooding in South and West Africa.

Part of the Paris Agreement, the global stocktake is a key means to assess the world’s global response to the climate crisis. COP28 must contend with the realisation that climate action measures to date are inadequate to limit global warming to 1.5°C.

Letete says that engineers need to look beyond the traditional approach of a 100-year design scenario when it comes to climate resilient and futureproofed infrastructure. “We need to change the paradigm to acknowledge that what might transpire in the future could potentially be worse than anything we’ve experienced in the past.”

Looking at current trends in the climate change space, Letete says a major focus on the finance mechanisms included in the Paris Agreement, such as non-market mechanisms and carbon trading, has resulted in a need for such skills and experience on the ground.

Letete’s unit is divided into three main teams, namely a climate change mitigation team, a climate change adaptation team and a circular economies team. At present, Zutari is involved with numerous climate change projects, ranging from assessing financed Scope 3 emissions for financial sector clients, to conducting climate change risk assessments and developing net zero carbon strategies for cities and countries.

Transition climate risk assessments include considering the impact of a new European law on Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism that imposes the first-ever carbon border tax in the world, coming into effect in October 2023. It will be applied gradually over the next three years before being implemented fully.

In South Africa itself, the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) provides the overarching framework for managing environmental impacts and activities in the country. The Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE) has published a draft national guideline to consider climate change implications in applications for environmental authorisations, atmospheric emission licenses, and waste management licences.

COP28 is anticipated to attract more than 70 000 participants, from heads of state to government officials, international industry leaders, private sector representatives, academics, experts, and more. It follows in the footsteps of last year’s event at Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt, which set a precedent in establishing a loss and damage fund to aid nations particularly vulnerable to the climate crisis, an agreement on a global energy transition, and implementing Africa’s green infrastructure development.

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**Notes to the Editor**To download hi-res images for this news article, please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click the Zutari link to view the company’s press office.

**About Zutari**

As an infrastructure engineering and advisory practice, we believe infrastructure has unparalleled potential to create enduring impact. Never more relevant, this potential can be realised only if we plan, design, deliver, and manage infrastructure in ways that maximise its value. Our work in water, transport, energy, resources, and built-environment infrastructure does just this – helping to nurture thriving communities, growing economies, and healthy environments. At Zutari, we understand that radical impact does not just happen; it requires more of us to connect differently, work smarter, and stay rooted.

**We connect differently**. Our broad collective of in-house experts connects across traditional disciplines to provide integrated results. We collaborate with clients, partners, and end-users, leaning into diverse perspectives to create superior solutions - together.

**We work smarter**. Our people lead the industry. We draw from deep technical skills, accrued over decades, and embrace the transformative power of digital technology to find simpler, better, and more innovative ways to deliver value.

**We stay rooted**. Few can rival our local capacity and understanding. Building on solid foundations, now 90 years in the making, we are trusted to shape locally relevant solutions through our extensive footprint in Africa and the Middle East.

At Zutari our people connect differently, work smarter, and stay rooted. Working in this way, we reliably deliver impact through infrastructure, making the world a better place – one project at a time.

**Zutari Contact**

Malebusa Sebatane

Marketing & Communications Manager

Zutari

Tel: (012) 427 2000

Email: Malebusa.sebatane@zutari.com

Web: https://www.zutari.com

**Media Contact**

Rachel Mekgwe

Senior Account Executive

NGAGE Public Relations

Phone: (011) 867 7763

Cell: 074 212 1422

Email: rachel@ngage.co.za

Web: [www.ngage.co.za](http://www.ngage.co.za/)

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