

Press Release

Empower reinforces partnership with UNEP through a strategic meeting with the Cool Coalition team at ADSW

Dubai, UAE, 14 January 2026: H.E. Ahmad Bin Shafar, CEO of Empower, Chairman of the District Cooling Operators Association, Special Advisor on District Cooling to the 'District Energy in Cities' global initiative of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and Member Emeritus of the Board of Directors of the International District Energy Association (IDEA), met with Lily Riahi, Head and Global Coordinator of the UNEP's Cool Coalition, along with the Coalition team. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week (ADSW) 2026.

During the meeting, extensive discussions were held on several key topics, including strengthening cooperation to promote district cooling globally, supporting various events and initiatives of UNEP, and exploring ways to raise awareness of sustainable cooling solutions and advisory for national and state-level policies on efficient cooling. The meeting also addressed prospects for cooperation in technical support, including expertise contributions for establishing district cooling systems in cities, technical feasibility assessments, training and development, information exchange, validation of district cooling systems, and operational advice. In addition, the two sides discussed sustainable business models for district cooling services, particularly the 'utility-service' model, and Empower's integrated end-to-end service model, covering design, build, operation, maintenance, metering, billing, and customer service.

These efforts align with the framework of the Cool Coalition's Global Cooling Pledge, launched at the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference-COP28, hosted by the UAE.

The two sides also discussed ways to expand and accelerate the adoption of sustainable cooling solutions in countries that have joined the pledge, which has attracted 72 countries and more than 80 partners within just 18 months. The meeting further focused on collaboration to achieve the objectives of the pledge through support for international mechanisms, including the adoption of EPIC (engineering, procurement, construction, installation, and commissioning) contracts for cooling facilities and the wider implementation of the 'cooling as a service' concept.

During the meeting, Bin Shafar stressed the importance of international partnerships in accelerating the adoption of sustainable cooling solutions, noting that district cooling is among the effective solutions supporting global efforts to address climate change challenges and achieve Net Zero.

"We work within the framework of the wise leadership's forward-looking vision, which places strong emphasis on district cooling within national plans to enhance energy efficiency and build a sustainable, carbon-free future. The Global Cooling Pledge represents a practical embodiment of these efforts and serves as a key driver of international initiatives in the district cooling sector. Through this framework, efforts are focused on translating global commitments into concrete actions on the ground and advancing the transition to innovative and sustainable cooling solutions aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate action," said **Bin Shafar**.

“Based on Dubai and the UAE’s leading position in the global sustainable district cooling sector, Empower is keen to build bridges of constructive dialogue, enhance cooperation and joint efforts with global partners, and lead initiatives to advance the district cooling sector and promote its wider global adoption,” he added.

Empower has previously participated in several international events within the framework of the Cool Coalition, including the District Energy conferences in Chile and Colombia, and has actively taken part in the COP28 held in the UAE. Empower also participated in global virtual seminars on sustainable district cooling solutions and hosted technical study tours for international delegations to showcase real-time district cooling operations in the UAE. These engagements form part of Empower’s efforts to support the Cool Coalition’s initiatives to promote the adoption of sustainable solutions, facilitate the exchange of expertise and best practices, and highlight the vital role of district cooling in reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency, and achieving global sustainability goals.

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