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An individual’s article is the opinion of that author alone, and does not reflect the opinions of all stakeholders.

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“Our Islands are Drowning”

Noah Idechong is doing everything possible to protect Palau’s people and environment from the ravages of climate change. He has come to Copenhagen to remind leaders that the survival of small island developing states is at stake. A strong climate agreement is necessary, he says, because Palauans “don’t want to get to the stage where we have to prepare for our own extinction.”



Photo: Jason O’Donnell Creative Commons license

By: Christie Kneteman, Islands First

Mr. Idechong has dedicated his life to marine conservation in Palau. As former Chief of the Division of Marine Resources, Mr. Idechong re-invigorated Palau’s strong conservation traditions, known as *bul*, and enhanced them with new scientific knowledge. His work is considered to have spawned some of the most important conservation measures in the Pacific in recent history.

In 1994, Mr. Idechong resigned from government to co-found and direct the Palau Conservation Society - the nation’s only environmental NGO. Currently, he serves as Speaker of the House of Representatives of Palau’s Olbiil Era Kelulau, and is a Member of the Executive Board of the Clean Development Mechanism. Mr. Idechong has received the Goldman Environmental Prize and a Pew Centre Fellowship in recognition of his conservation efforts.

Palau is one of the most biologically rich marine areas on earth. It consists of 340 islands in the Pacific Ocean, which are located 1,000km east of the Philippines. Its territory contains approximately 700 species of coral and more than 1,400 species of fish. Palau also recently declared itself a shark sanctuary. It has banned all commercial shark fishing in its territory and called for a global moratorium on catching sharks exclusively for their fins. Palau’s waters have been ranked #1 among the Seven Underwater Wonders of the World.

However, Palau is suffering from the effects of climate change. Warming ocean temperatures have caused widespread coral bleaching. Mr. Idechong remembers how, during the El Nino/La Nina event in 1997/8, 30-90% of coral species died in some areas surrounding the islands.

Continued on page 2...

This level of coral bleaching was unprecedented. And, as a result, important fish and jellyfish populations were severely diminished, and local livelihoods were compromised.

In addition, rising sea levels have caused coastal erosion and salt-water inundations of low-lying agricultural land. Palauans have become increasingly dependant on food imports and are frightened for their future. Some have been tempted to “give up” because they cannot win against climate change alone. However, Mr. Idechong has worked to persuade Palauans to protect their local environment as best they can while their representatives appeal to the international community to take strong action on climate change.

Mr. Idechong has worked tirelessly to “get our voice out to the global community – what is happening to our islands, our coral reefs, and our way of life.” Since “we can’t go to war, Palau and other small island states must persuade the major countries to take strong action on climate change.”

By the end of the 21st century, the IPCC’s Fourth Assessment Report projects that climate change will raise sea levels by 0.19 to 0.58 m. The Report notes “sea-level rise will exacerbate inundation, erosion and other coastal hazards, threaten vital infrastructure, settlements and facilities, and thus compromise the socio-economic well-being of island communities and states.”

The resulting inundations will adversely impact coastal settlements, agriculture and water resources in islands like Palau. In the Pacific and Caribbean islands, more than 50% of the population lives within 1.5 km of the shore and nearly all major roads, airports and capital cities are sited along the coast. Island settlements can be displaced and vital infrastructure destroyed by climate change’s effects on sea-level rise, high-energy waves and storm surge. Some islanders believe that it will be impossible to adapt to these changes if climate change continues unchecked. For small islands, one young person remarked, “adaptation means buying a boat.”

Climate change also threatens food and water security on islands like Palau. Soil salinization is particularly worrisome for Pacific islands that are heavily dependant on local subsistence food production. In Palau, for example, there have been large crop failures of *taro*, a local staple, following inundations. Dependence on food imports is becoming increasingly common in the region. In addition, the IPCC predicts that reduced rainfall and saline intrusion into freshwater lenses could lead to water shortages for some Pacific islands.

The IPCC Report highlights the risks of climate change to the long-term viability of small island states like Palau. It concludes “the potential abandonment of sovereign atoll countries can be used as the benchmark of the ‘dangerous’ change that the UNFCCC seeks to avoid.” Because climate change is an existential threat for these islands, the Pacific Islands have tabled a resolution at the United Nations General Assembly to acknowledge that climate change is a security issue.

In Copenhagen, Mr. Idechong has worked to spread awareness that the fates of island nations like Palau are at stake in the negotiations. He has been impressed by the energy and activism of groups with similar goals. “NGOs,

women, youth, are all putting the message across,” he says. “Now it is up to the leaders.” Palau’s fate rests “at the mercy of strong countries, whose decisions can make everything better or worse.”

He hopes that an agreement in Copenhagen will significantly advance the fight against climate change. It is extremely costly for Palau to send delegates to the COP, and it takes these experts away from their responsibilities at home. Mr. Idechong emphasizes that Palau “can’t continue to lobby” for another 20 years of climate negotiations - “we don’t have the stamina for this.”

He remains optimistic, however, that change is happening. He remembers that “10 years ago no one was even listening.” While some leaders today remain constrained by domestic legislation, he believes that many are more sensitive to small islands’ plight.

Mr. Idechong has come to Copenhagen because Palau is running out of time. A strong international agreement is essential to the fight against climate change. He wants to remind world leaders that “our islands are drowning.” ❖



Photo: Naturenet Creative c

Procedural Realities

**By: Richard Sherman,
Stakeholder Forum**

Wednesday morning's plenary session of the COP was the scene of a protracted debate on establishing a formal, open, inclusive and transparent process to deal with submissions on proposals for new agreements under the Convention. The plenary met to discuss agenda item 5, which relates to the five submissions from Parties (Japan, Tuvalu, USA, Costa Rica, Australia) under Article 17 of the Convention. In their opening statement, Tuvalu said the future of the planet rests on the Copenhagen talks and noted that the country had proposed a legally binding protocol under the Convention. Continuing with his statement, he went to lengths to explain that the proposal was not a replacement of the Kyoto Protocol, but in fact compliments the Protocol's ongoing implementation by strengthening the Convention, and explained Tuvalu's complimentary proposal to amend Annex B of the Kyoto Protocol thereby establishing a second commitment period. In order to take forward the debate, Tuvalu with other Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) said the establishment of a formal contact group was the only way to ensure the proposals could be formally addressed. He said a contact group was the only mechanism to ensure an open, inclusive and transparent process, which would he stressed must include observer constituencies, such as the youth, in discussion around future agreements that so many of the world's people have demanded from the Copenhagen talks.

The ensuing debate, however, pitted one side of the Group of 77 and China with the other, namely, small island states with some support for African Least Developed Countries, versus the emerging economies and oil producing states. Annex 1 countries were afforded the opportunity to remain silent while developing countries openly highlighted their tenuous solidarity in the climate change process, which is clearly now

hanging by a fragile thread. China, India, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait and others were insistent that no contact group should be established, preferring rather that the COP Chair conduct informal consultations on the issue. From the tone of their statements, these countries fear that opening up a discussion on the formal applications under Article 17 would undermine the ongoing work under the AWG-LCA, which they said could send a 'death-blow' to the Kyoto Protocol. Furthermore they fear that such a discussion may introduce new emission reduction obligations from some developing country parties. India argued that to begin discussions on a new protocol, while still engaging in negotiations under the Bali Action Plan (BAP) would be premature, and would also prejudice the outcome of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long Term Cooperation (AWG-LCA). China, while expressing some sympathy for the small island development states (SIDS), said the most important task was to focus, as much as possible, on how to give effect to the BAP and not spend too much time discussing Article 17 submissions. Following a lengthy debate, the item agenda was suspended and informal consultations on how to take the issue forward were scheduled. When the plenary reconvened in the afternoon, major groups packed the entrance hall

to protest in support of Tuvalu and the SIDS. By the time of writing no consensus had been achieved on the issue.

However, focusing merely on the internal tensions of the Group of 77 misses the point. Today, the Meeting of the Parties (CMP) to the Protocol will have to address almost the same procedural issue. Under the Protocol's Article 20 and 21 procedures, eleven countries have submitted proposals for legally binding amendments to the Protocol. These range from amendments to Annex B to a number of other Article amendments. In both cases (Convention and Protocol) several of the identified issues proposed for amendment are being addressed under the Ad Hoc Working Groups (AWGs).

So the following questions arise: how will the COP Chair deal with the procedural issues resulting from the consideration of these agenda items?; how will discussions on these submissions be aligned with the ongoing work of the AWGs, in particular to ensure policy coherence?; and how to manage the proliferation of negotiating texts; and finding time and space for negotiating session on an already overloaded agenda? ❖



SIDE EVENT COP15

Thursday 10 December 2009

18.00— 20.00

EU Pavilion, Room Schuman

“Gender, Cities and Climate Change”

Co-hosted by

GenderCC — Women for Climate Justice

UN-HABITAT

Water Security - Our Great Challenge in a Changing World

**By: Emma Rose,
International Water Association**

Within the next 15 years over 60% of the world's population of 8 billion are expected to be living in cities. This urbanisation will place increasing pressure on our cities as additional infrastructure is built to support these people and provide them with an acceptable standard of living. Simultaneously, the standard of living for those in low and middle income countries will inevitably increase. These developments, together, will place greater demands on the supply of food, water and energy.

To cope with this we need to switch to a new paradigm of urban design which integrates planning, water and energy, and creates behavioural change allowing us to adapt to the challenges of climate change. There needs to be legislative and policy support on national and international level to integrate these, sometimes competing needs into coherent approaches. Developing and transitioning to new ways of operation will take time. In the meanwhile, we can however make immediate and substantial savings of water and energy usage within the urban environment.

No water = no energy

Energy and water are essential for economic development and vital to city function. They are physically linked and cannot be separated, for example:

- water is essential for fuel production including ethanol and hydrogen - biofuels require water both in biomass growth and the conversion process;
- water is required during the extraction and refining of fuels, including oil and gas;
- hydropower obviously requires water; and
- water is required for cooling thermo-electric power plants (such as coal and nuclear power)

The latest predictions indicate that climate change will lead to more extreme events, including drought, and the securing the supply of water for energy production will

become more critical even in developed countries. A foretaste of this was felt in 2003 when low summer flows of major rivers in Europe led to insufficient water for cooling many power plants in France, Germany and Spain forcing stoppages to energy production in these countries.

No energy = no water

The recent floods in England illustrate the interrelationship between energy and water supply. Without energy, water and wastewater services cannot be provided to houses, and one of the first requirements for emergency services is to ensure safe drinking water. Consider the following:

- all urban areas require secure supplies of water and safe wastewater disposal which, in turn, depend on a secure energy supply;
- energy is needed to transport water from its source, treat it and distribute it to households;
- energy is required to collect, treat and dispose of wastewater; and
- energy is used in our homes when we use water, particularly to heat water.

Policies that are developed holistically, that recognise the link between water and energy and provide incentives for conservation and efficiency gains, are needed.

Water and wastewater utilities are increasingly becoming more energy efficient and some are even beginning to generate renewable energy. If, however, we look at the whole water-energy cycle our greatest returns can be achieved through focusing on our homes.

Bringing it home

The UK Environment Agency calculate that, of the total energy usage for water in the UK, only 10% of greenhouse gas emissions

are generated by drinking water and wastewater utilities while 90% is generated by households. If, therefore, we are looking for more effective ways to save energy and water we should focus on the 90% and devise smart ways to achieve efficiency gains. Even small scale savings through reduced use of hot water or more efficient heating systems can produce substantial overall savings, the Water Services Association of Australia announced that an efficiency gain of just 15% of hot water use would offset the total energy requirements of all the water and wastewater utilities. This is equivalent to turning down the hot water system by just 4 degrees. This is just one, among many, simple examples of household products can be made more water and energy efficient.

How can we encourage lower demand and greater efficiency, or sustainability, in our daily use of water and energy? Communication campaigns to raise awareness and change behaviours are important, but will not solve the problem and probably not at the speed we need. Policies that are developed holistically, that recognise the link between water and energy and provide incentives for conservation and efficiency gains, are needed.

Utilities, both water and energy, have a direct link with their individual customers, and with the right policy guidance can actively promote and encourage conservation strategies, allowing massive gains to be made on a scale that makes economic and environmental sense. This has been demonstrated in Australia where water utilities actively promote water conservation (the product they are meant to 'sell') through a range of measures including financial rebates for more water efficient appliances. A company encouraging and helping consumers to use less of its product!! It is like a petrol company handing out money to help buy more fuel efficient cars.

The future will require us to look at things differently. Population growth will require us to make the resources we have go further, including water and energy. We need to base our decisions, including business models, on a future where we strive to do more with less.



Leaders Can't Afford to Ignore Women

Statement from Inés Alberdi, Executive Director of UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women)

The UN Climate Change Conference has opened with an unprecedented sense of urgency to act on climate change. World leaders seeking a political framework agreement should use this momentum to find a way to balance diverse histories, perspectives and priorities in order to move forward. By anchoring the issues of adaptation and mitigation within the right to development, such an agreement could provide a framework for implementation, enhancing the capacity of countries to adapt to existing climate change challenges, and supplying the needed technology and resources to do so. As such it has the potential to revitalize the partnership for development envisioned in the Millennium Declaration and give new hope to achieving international development goals, including gender equality and women's empowerment.

Such an agreement requires acknowledging a shared interest in mitigating the impact of climate change, while recognizing the widely different degrees of responsibility for making it so urgent. It requires garnering the trust of the wider public in all countries, including those most removed from the cause and those who have little voice in decisions to address it. If an agreement can be reached among countries at all levels of development, and widely different resources, to work together to halt this destructive progress, it can begin to make development meaningful for those still at its margins—including women in various communities of rural producers, urban slum dwellers, indigenous communities, poor households, refugees from natural disasters and other vulnerable groups.

Over the past few months, as women's groups have successfully put gender equality concerns on the agenda, they are often asked why they see reaching

an agreement such a priority. They answer in terms of its effect on their everyday lives. As providers of household needs, including fuel and water as well as food, women are on the front lines of climate change, and experience its impact most immediately. As farmers, entrepreneurs, managers of household resources, scientists and activists, they are also poised to drive positive change and contribute to a global response. They have participated in the environmental justice, human rights and development coalitions that have helped build the political momentum for an agreement. They understand that the longer an agreement is delayed, the more drastic the measures will have to be to address them, the more difficult they will be to take, and the less likely that the concerns of the most vulnerable will be viewed as priorities.

An agreement reached in Copenhagen will provide a template for next steps by a multitude of actors to mitigate and adapt to climate change — actors whose decisions and actions will impact women's lives for generations. The Global Gender and Climate Alliance, a network of civil society organizations and UN partners, including UNIFEM is working to ensure that the Shared Vision for long-term cooperative action acknowledges the gender specific impacts of climate change and recognizes women as equal stakeholders in agreements to address them. Because the agreement aims not only to *outline* goals, but to



set-up the mechanisms and processes to *implement* them, it is important to ensure that women are full participants in all of these processes, from adaptation and mitigation to technology transfer and finance.

If we are to develop the far-reaching climate change cooperation needed for effective development, world leaders cannot afford to ignore the potential contributions and needs of half of the global population. The resiliency of families, households and communities will depend on the strength and resiliency of women. ❖

United Nations Development Fund for Women



Environment & Renewable Energy Training Courses

What are trade unions already doing to meet the required workplace transitions and adaptations to new environmental challenges? The Argentinean Construction Workers' Union dedicates time and hard work to the protection of the environment and part of their sustainable approach to our climate involves the development of training projects to generate renewable energy trades, for example in solar energy.

By: UOCRA-Argentina

The current global crisis clearly shows that we need coherent and ambitious policies to deal effectively and sustainably with the challenges of today and tomorrow. We need a paradigm shift in the way production is carried out throughout the world. According to UOCRA, it is necessary to make our societies and working environments sustainable in order to ensure the survival of decent and genuine work. And employment has to be sustainable in the assembly line, in production, in developing new technologies and in the use of resources.

In Argentina, UOCRA provides tools to the construction industry that can help change unsustainable habits. This contributes to building a more friendly work environment through an efficient, rational use of natural resources, water care, energy conservation and the implementation of proper waste disposal management on site, thus favouring the preservation of the environment.

Training of workers is key to adapt to climate change

This new reality that we all live in – a reality of changing environments and scarce energy resources – requires research and development of new technologies and techniques to realise the potential of green investments.

But unless education, training and skills development are prioritised, workers are not able to absorb the required changes at the workplace and vital advantages could be lost. For this particular reason, the Argentinean construction workers' union UOCRA promotes workers' training in the field of renewable energies, providing workers with certified skills for biogas production installations, solar water heaters, solar and wind power installers.

Education and training come as an added

value to the required workplace changes in the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy. But why is it that skills upgrading remains an overlooked policy in most debates? UOCRA has found that training gives workers a competitive advantage that helps ensure productive efficiency and competitiveness and allows them with the opportunity to “fit” into a changing labour environment.

In addition, the active involvement and consultation of workers have gradually improved their quality of life and health and safety at their work places.

Education and training come as an added value to the required workplace changes in the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy.

Promoting a sustainable construction industry

A sustainable construction industry is achieved through the following: education and training of all actors, adoption of techniques that improve the efficiency of the construction processes and application of occupational safety, health and environmental management standards. The goal of the Argentinean construction industry and its workers is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and find ways to adapt to the impacts of climate change. That is partially done by providing workers with the tools and capabilities they need to work with environmental management and quality standards.

Environmental Training Actions

During in 2009, more than 500 workers were trained in the construction industry, on issues relating to proper management of construction and demolition



waste, renewable energy, environment and climate change.

A guide has been published to provide easy, environmentally-friendly tips and policies for construction sites, on rational use of resources, energy conservation, waste management, toxic materials substitution and the implementation of sustainable construction practices.

UOCRA has been responsible for the construction of 60 solar ovens for cooking and drying of spices and the building of 20 solar water heaters for sanitary hot water generation, under the Draft ECO-LEDGE.

In addition, two biogas digesters have been installed by UOCRA to produce biogas and organic manure in protected areas to avoid burning the native forest in the northwestern and southern part of Argentina.

The Argentinean experience has inspired a similar project in the northern region of Cajamarca, Peru, wherefrom 40 trade unionists have received technical training on the installation and maintenance of solar panels.

In sum, training environmental delegates helps to ensure a proper transfer of knowledge, and it provides workers with the tools and knowledge to promote and assist in the generation of green jobs that will allow a just transition in the energy matrix change and promote the fight against global climate change. ❖

To learn more, please visit: www.fundacion.uocra.org

Protect the human right to water and sanitation in climate strategies!

A UN call for action

By: Ann-Mari Karlsson, Stockholm International Water Institute

Something we do know is that climate change means either too much or too little water for humans in the future: floods in some areas, drought in others. Water will be scarcer, more polluted, more expensive, and aging water pumps and pipes will break under increasing water flows or dry up where water will be scarce. We also know that the consequences for human health and development are potentially disastrous. Climate change obviously poses a new, big threat to these human rights, as well as the right to health, to food, to housing – rights that are already difficult to fulfil. But what exactly should States do to fulfil the human right to water and sanitation in times of climate change?

The Mandate urges States to ensure that the rights to water and sanitation are protected in all adaptation plans and programmes at global, regional and national levels.

A new field of policy and research is emerging, combining expertise in climate change and in human rights to highlight that human rights can actually help reinforce and achieve sustainable mitigation and adaptation. The *UN Mandate of the Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation* (henceforth the Mandate), held by Catarina de Albuquerque, released a position paper last week, calling for States to protect the right to water and sanitation in all climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. The Mandate specifically points out how a human rights framework offers

opportunities for informing and supporting policymaking in the area of climate change.

The position paper set out the following recommendations for COP-15:

The Parties to the UNFCCC must

- Recognise the pivotal role of water, including its human rights dimensions, in adapting to climate change in order to increase resilience and achieve sustainable development.
- Recognise the adverse impact of climate change on the enjoyment of human rights, especially the rights to water and sanitation, and ensure that future strategies and plans integrate human rights principles.
- Ensure that human rights standards and principles inform and strengthen policymaking in the area of climate change, promoting policy coherence and sustainable outcomes.
- Establish a sectoral focus, or develop a ‘mechanism’ within the Nairobi Work Programme specifically mandated to bring together experts and implementers on adaptation in the water sector under the Nairobi Work Programme. In this regard special attention should be given to safeguarding the human rights to safe drinking water and to sanitation.
- Integrate a human rights based approach in the National Adaptation Plans of Action and give special attention to the duty of States to guarantee the human rights to safe drinking water and to sanitation.

Through these recommendations, the Mandate urges States to ensure that the rights to water and sanitation are protected in all adaptation plans and programmes at global, regional and national levels. One way that the human rights perspective can help inform decision making in times of increased competition for water between sectors, is that it clarifies that access to water for essential domestic purposes and for sanitation must be prioritised. It also highlights the need to ensure the resilience of water and sanitation infrastructure as a major climate adaptation measure. As an overall conclusion, the core principles of human rights contribute to climate policymaking by stressing the need for participation of concerned communities and stakeholders in local and national adaptation efforts, and for building on local and traditional knowledge to increase the likelihood of adaptation measures to ensure adequate access to water and sanitation. ❖

You will find the position paper on <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/water/lexpert/>



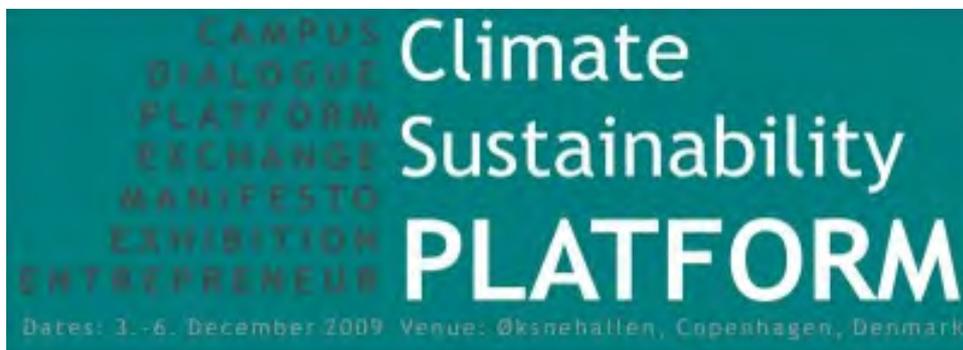
To be Hungry and Negotiate Climate Change

At the end of my presentation on "Right to Development in a Climate Change Agenda" at the Copenhagen University yesterday, a young student asked me what I really wanted, and I said "happiness for my daughter and hers".

By: Uchita de Zoysa, Convener,
Climate Sustainability PLATFORM

The Climate Sustainability PLATFORM convened at the Centre for African Studies of the University of Copenhagen yesterday. Prof. Stig Jensen, director began the discussion by asking what happiness means to different communities. Dr. Simron Singh from India showed how people of Nicobar Islands have lost their traditional way of life after the Tsunami due to the rapid influx of development aid. He said "these people lived simple and content lifestyles of very low economic activities, the development aid regime has now brought them the status of debt and have to engage more and more hours to earn. The social structure has been changed for ever. Mr. Souleymanne Bassoum says, development aid has made us hungrier. The more the aid, the more our people are trapped in debt. The simple possessions that made us happy are no longer in our own control. The system has complicated our lives. Money cannot bring our lost values back, and economic aid hasn't brought us happiness. In Senegal, we were homogenous society, which has come under strain because of the strains of modernity. We want to develop in our ways and not the way the western development aide agencies want."

Ms. Ameset Haile, from Mekelle University Ethiopia, said with all this big talk on sustainability for the past many decades, the people still remain hungry. While we are talking here in Copenhagen, people in Ethiopia are dying from hunger. For us it is simply about survival. In Ethiopia, we have seen temperature actually rise, and diseases like malaria increase. People are becoming homeless because of changing climate and weather patterns. It's only a matter of time that rest in the world too will be dragged into the same climate plight."



Dr. Faiz H. Shah from Responsible Business Initiative Pakistan says Equity is a human aspiration that has been translated into principles of faith and fundamental human rights. Climate sustainability can be addressed through equity. Equity is shaken when powerful business interests take advantage of powerless consumers. There is hope for climate sustainability if we can somehow make trade equitable.

Mr. Gopal Kumar Jain, coordinator South Asia Youth Environment Secretariat in India started with a quote from the Bhagawad Geeta. he said, "we should begin with ourselves in creating a better world. There are many examples from the Tsunami where aid delinked people from their environments close to the sea. You try to take people away from their natural habitats and place them in artificially designed environments, the social fabric is destroyed."

Mr. Ali Rilwan, Director of BluePeace Maldives said; "less than a meter above sea level, our hope for climate sustainability is low. Even with effect of climate change felt, we still have the will survive. Our people, not governments bring us this hope. Information through the internet, facebook, twitter, and other new media is empowering us, and will help us rise above the tide. Climate change has no boundaries. If the world cannot save Maldives, then no one else will be saved as well."

Even though the negotiators from the South at the Bella Centre may not be hungry, people they try to represent are hungry and destitute. If they do not feel the hunger of their people, then they may not be able represent their aspirations for climate sustainability. That worries the members of the Climate Sustainability PLATFORM! ❖

(send comments to uchita@sltnet.lk)



The Youth Generation - YuFuGe Day

By: **Gabriel Teo, ECO Singapore**

Today, my world is gradually, but noticeably crumbling. My generation's climate is under severe threat. Around us, sea levels are rising, threatening to submerge my lands; the increasing heat from the rising temperatures upset my planet's climate and its ecological balance. All these are happening, beyond my actions, beyond my control.

It is not fair. I am a youth, yet equally as much a citizen of this Earth as those supposed adults. Stripping them of their celebrated positions and casting aside their decorated experiences, they are no more an equal as I am in our role on this Earth. What they have, I similarly possess. Yet what they lack: energy, will power, unity and one sole direction channeled towards survival, I am well equipped with. These are simple yet true qualities and beliefs that we as youths hold dear, that those adults seemingly lack despite their wordy, politically correct statements.

Today is my day. A day to celebrate my role as a youth, in climate negotiations and on this Earth. YuFuGe Day (Youth and Future Generations Day) promises to portray us as a credible stakeholder in this climate negotiations, by demonstrating the significance and value of youth participation in these climate change talks. Today, youths decked in orange will flood Bella Centre. Today, numerous activities will be organized by youths on various topics like intergenerational equity, youth education, youths expectations and more!

In fact, the topic of intergenerational equity has been a pertinent issue that we concern ourselves with extensively. It is not fair for my generation to pay the price for a sin that we are innocent of, to suffer the consequences for something we did not contribute to or had much of a say in. We are the ones who will suffer the adverse effects of the present bad decisions made by negotiators and the brunt of all the selfish interests of the apathetic and disinterested people.

Yet for youths to really make a significant contribution towards negotiation talks, they have to possess the relevant knowledge capacity on climate science and be granted the opportunity to engage governmental delegates to channel their requests and hopes. Through YuFuGe Day, we hope to empower fellow youths with a holistic understanding of the global movement against climate change through learning more about policy aspects and understanding the activities that fellow youths across the world are immersing themselves with. On a broader platform, we hope to inform the governmental delegates and all parties involved in the negotiation talks of the activities and stance of the International Youth Climate Movement (IYCM) through the various sessions organized by us. Indeed, for youths to substantially influence the negotiation talks, stakeholders of the discussion need to be aware and informed on what IYCM does.

Going further, YuFuGe day provides a platform for interaction between the youth and the various delegates. Youths have the opportunity to invite their national governmental delegation to the Climate Rescue Station for a networking session, where they can exchange ideas and opinions over the discussion talks. Such a healthy sharing between both parties will aid in exposing youths to concerns from a governmental level, and further enable the country's official

delegation to discover more about their local youth's demands. Thus the youths' request is for the official delegates to attend the above session, and engage the youths in a meaningful and fruitful discussion.

Recalling the rallying question of "How old will you be in 2050?" issued by young people to negotiators many times over the past year, youth are the key stakeholders at these negotiations. My generation will be the leader and the people in 2020, and in 2050, and we have every right to decide how the world then should be. Instead of a mere "Yes we can", we should indeed say "Yes we can, Yes we must and Yes we will."



YuFuGe Day Programme

Press Conferences

1500, Asger Jorn - Youth Expectations from Copenhagen

Events

0900, Niels Bohr - Role of Education in relation to Climate Crisis

1030, Room Monnet - Education for Sustainable Development

1100, Niels Bohr - Youth, Forest Protection and Survival

1130, Room Monnet - Children in a Changing Climate

1300, Niels Bohr - Intergenerational Inquiry on Climate Solutions with Yvo de Boer

1300, Room Monnet - Leadership: Youth Initiatives Worldwide

1445, Niels Bohr - The need for bold mitigation targets and the changes they will create

1630, Niels Bohr - Intergenerational Equity



Photo courtesy of ECO Singapore

Food for Thought...

Felix Dodds, Stakeholder Forum

Rio+20

This week the United Nations General Assembly agreed to the G77 and China resolution, calling for a new 'Earth Summit' in 2012. While preparations for Copenhagen have been taking up most people's attention, energy and at times it seems their lifeblood, something else has been taking place.

In September 2007, President Lula of Brazil in a speech to the UN General Assembly called for a new Earth Summit in 2012 to address the critical issues that have developed since 2002 and that Brazil would be prepared to host such a Summit.

In September 2008, the G77 and China endorsed Brazil's call and on the 4th of November tabled a resolution in the UN GA calling for a Summit. A week later, stakeholders and governments and intergovernmental bodies discussed the idea in San Sebastian in Spain and put forward some suggestions for the Summit.

Developed countries were not ready in 2008 to commit to a new Earth Summit but during 2009 they did come on board, helped by the suggested focus of the Summit put

forward by Brazil. This was to put the green economy issue as the major focus perhaps, reflecting the recognition that the present financial crisis is likely to be the first of many if the economies of the world are not refocused in a green direction. The second area they suggested was to review what had been achieved in relation to previous summits and to look at what the roadblocks have been. The third was a focus on sustainable development governance; not just reform of UNEP but possibly also a review of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and other bodies dealing with sustainable development. Finally they suggested water.

What has been unique about the discussion around Rio+20 has been the leadership role that developing countries led by Brazil have taken. All the other Summits in this area: Stockholm, Rio and Johannesburg were initiated by the developed countries. This is the first initiated by developing countries. Not only that, but they have put the transformation to a green economy as the central discourse.

The General Assembly resolution

adopted this week looks very much like those early suggestions from Brazil. The four areas adopted for the Summit are: the Green Economy, a review, sustainable development governance, and emerging issues.

Having the green economy at the centre of the discussion does enable for the first time an opportunity to bring back together the chapters of Agenda 21 and the JPoI into a more coherent and impacting discussion. What it also does is enable the climate change discourse to be seen as only part of what we need to address, albeit an important part. Changing the economy into a green one will not be easy, particularly as it is an undefined term, but it will be much more fruitful than carrying on working in silos, which is where we have largely ended up, 40 years from Stockholm, twenty years from Rio and ten years from Johannesburg. It also allows a positive space for innovation and creativity...more the 'Spirit of Rio'. ❖

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