Climate Change Education and Participation
From Mainstreaming to Negotiating the Matter!

Education Day is a great opportunity for all actors to exchange information on best practices and to define the next steps to enhance partnerships for climate education.

Climate education is not just a Bonn Zone topic. It is also something to be found in the Bula zone. As education is highlighted in the Paris Agreement under Article 12, along with training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information, and international cooperation. To discuss these elements, the Action for Climate Empowerment group (ACE) was created in 2015, and meets every year during COPs and SBs to work on climate change and on the five other elements.

This year, the informal consultation group on ACE, focal points, and observers met several times to develop conclusions, which were presented in front of parties during the SBI’s closing plenary. ACE has now been officially recognised as part of the UNFCCC negotiations due to the 6 elements of ACE being formally recognised as fundamental to the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

ECO is pleased that both parties and observers can provide submissions. This year, the informal consultation group on ACE, focal points, and observers met several times to develop conclusions, which were presented in front of parties during the SBI’s closing plenary. ACE has now been officially recognised as part of the UNFCCC negotiations due to the 6 elements of ACE being formally recognised as fundamental to the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

ECO is already brainstorming. These submissions should include topics that will feed the next workshop at the SB meeting in April/May 2018. Actions that ECO supports include: implementing climate education and public participation in NDC implementation and planning; highlighting the importance of civil society engagement for achieving successful policy outcomes; and increasing linkages between ACE and similar work by UNESCO on climate change education for sustainable education. Also, ACE could consider life-long learning and what the different target groups might be that could benefit from climate education, as this is not just for the young. We are inviting parties and focal points to make their submissions early to ensure that solutions identified can feed into the development of a strong ACE agenda in 2018. Multiple submissions with different solutions can help negotiators develop a list of concrete actions to enhance the Paris Agreement’s implementation through ACE activities.

We look forward to seeing concrete actions for climate education and public participation coming from the Bula Zone as an addition to the discussions in the Bonn Zone. The exchange during Education Day between delegates and non-party stakeholders is more than welcome, but the outcomes of these discussions are still not reflecting the priorities and solutions outlined by non-party stakeholders. ECO encourages observers to take advantage of this opportunity to present ideas and concrete proposals for climate education and enhanced participation. Mark your calendars with the deadline and submit your ideas early on!

“It’s Not That We Don’t Trust You But…”

ECO senses that Parties got stuck in the narrative: “it’s not that we don’t trust you… but” and haven’t been able to get past the “but.”

How can we move towards more ambition if there is no trust among parties?

ECO believes that a common sense of trust is the only way that parties will be able to move forward, toward a successful COP23. At COP18, developed countries were asked to submit information, alongside their strategies and approaches, on how they intended to respect their commitment of scaling up finance to reach the US$100 billion per year goal by 2020. The following year, they agreed to communicate bi-annual ex-ante qualitative and quantitative information on how they would provide funds from 2014 to 2020, further confirmed in 2015 via Article 9.5 of the Paris Agreement.

In Marrakech, Parties were asked to identify as many possible matters related to the implementation of the work programme of the Paris Agreement they thought were not properly addressed — one of which was Article 9.5 of the Paris Agreement.

In Paris, under COP, all countries agreed “to initiate, at its twenty-second session, a process to identify the information in accordance with Article 9.5 of the Paris Agreement”. The mandate under the APA is clearer; it reflects on the creation of possible modalities to communicate this information. ECO has noticed the issue, under the APA and under COP, is not moving forwards.

Countries in need of support need to know what financing they can count on. Essentially, it’s a “let me know what you’ll provide and I’ll be able to tell you what more I can do, beyond what I already have planned”. To ensure predictability, a process needs to be established allowing developed countries to provide quantified estimates. Such a process needs to be discussed and agreed upon. ECO wonders why developed countries are afraid of speaking about this properly. After all, transparency is in everyone’s interests.

ECO would like to propose one way forward. The APA could consider life-long learning and what the different target groups might be that could benefit from climate education, as this is not just for the young. We are inviting parties and focal points to make their submissions early to ensure that solutions identified can feed into the development of a strong ACE agenda in 2018. Multiple submissions with different solutions can help negotiators develop a list of concrete actions to enhance the Paris Agreement’s implementation through ACE activities.
The Lofoten Declaration: A Call to Tackle Fossil Fuel Production

While ‘fossil fuels’ somehow managed to escape mention in the text of the Paris Agreement, there is a growing call in these halls for Parties to confront the primary driver of climate change head-on. The bottom line is that we have more readily and economically available oil, coal, and gas in already operating fields and mines than we can afford in any carbon budget that keeps us below two degrees, let alone 1.5.

To start with, about two thirds of all existing fossil fuel reserves — more from coal, less from gas — need to be left in ground. To prevent the worst effects of climate change, we need to call an end to the fossil fuel era and embrace the 100% renewable energy epoch.

Yesterday, high-level delegates called on wealthy fossil fuel producers to make the first move and quickly put an end to new fossil fuel exploration and expansion. They also called for ‘producing countries’ to begin a managed decline in production, while planning for a just transition for affected workers and communities.

Gender Day — Pacific Women Speak!

Tuesday Nov 14 was Gender Day and ECO attended several events highlighting the work of Pacific Women in climate change. Diverse activists shared voices, views, actions and campaigns. Pacific women have also worked as part of the broader Women and Gender (WGC) constituency group, ensuring all Parties and Observers are heard and are taking into account the WGC’s key demands at COP23.

At a Pacific women-led Gender, Ecological and Climate Justice speak-out session on Monday, November 13, ECO engaged in frontline conversations with Pacific Women. Speakers travelled from Fiji, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Tokelau, Vanuatu, and other Pacific island states and territories to share their urgent climate justice messages with the world. These messages include: the need to do more of this work at every climate change intergovernmental space from national to global; to stop coal production and ensure a safe, just and urgent transition to low-carbon renewable economies; to finance loss and adaptation funds; to ensure a strong and resourced Gender Action Plan to be taken seriously by every Party; to call for ambitious mitigation and adaptation goals; and to hear, affirm and resource gender-just climate solutions in every region and across the UNFCCC.

ECO invites you to join in calling for this leadership by signing The Lofoten Declaration at www.LofotenDeclaration.org, which is already supported by almost 500 organisations, including Climate Action Network.

Pacific Voices

In this “Pacific Voices Issue”, ECO has incorporated poignant and highly relevant quotes from Pacific climate leaders into its articles. We feel it is essential to highlight these voices as we come to the end of our first Pacific COP.

If you’re going to open another coal mine, then you’re not transitioning, you are lying to us.

-Pacific Voices

As long as we live there will always be hope ... Help us save our home. Because we are not drowning, we are fighting.

-Pacific Voices

“Don’t tell us you don’t have the money, we’re not interested because you can move money from the military industrial complex to just, safe, and urgent climate action.”

-Pacific Voices

It’s clear that climate leadership is being redefined. Self-proclaimed climate leaders cannot approve the exploration and expansion of fossil fuels, cannot pour billions in public money into dirty energy subsidies, and cannot pretend that the world can continue to produce oil, coal, or gas for decades to come.

True climate leaders must successfully transition from a dependence on producing last century’s dirty energy to thriving in today’s rapidly growing clean energy economy.

As a first step, they should look into including a commitment to significantly reduce fossil fuel production within their NDCs to demonstrate that they understand what it is really going to take to close the ambition gap.

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The Fossil Oil companies US$300 billion in subsidies to drill its offshore reserves. You heard that right, US$300 billion. Let’s think about that for a minute – that’s roughly the value of one Eiffel Tower or six Towers of London. Basically, an insane amount of money. It’s also about 360 times more than the entire world provides in annual support for climate and disaster resilience financing in Small Island Developing States, highlighting how minuscule current climate finance flows are in comparison to massive fossil fuel subsidies.

Brazil: the South American green giant, the land of sustainable biofuels, and the proud bearer of a low-carbon energy mix, is the newest victim of oil fever.

An emergency bill sent to Congress by President Michel Temer, to be voted on in the next few weeks, opens up the country to an oil frenzy, by giving companies a package of tax breaks that could give oil companies US$300 billion in subsidies to drill its offshore reserves. You heard that right, US$300 billion. Let’s think about that for a minute – that’s roughly the value of one Eiffel Tower or six Towers of London. Basically, an insane amount of money. It’s also about 360 times more than the entire world provides in annual support for climate and disaster resilience financing in Small Island Developing States, highlighting how minuscule current climate finance flows are in comparison to massive fossil fuel subsidies.

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