



CLIMATE JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT AND YOUTH AMBASSADOR TRAINING

JULY 18TH-27TH 2019
BRUSSELS · CORFU · EPIRUS

OUTCOME DOCUMENT

From July 19th to 27th, the **Center for United Nations Constitutional Research** held the **Climate Democracy and Justice Summit**. The third annual conference in its Climate Justice series, this year's edition included training for **Youth Climate Ambassadors**, 21 young activists from around the world who were already leaders for climate action in their own communities, but now wanted to learn more about importance of global governance to achieving real **system change, not climate change**. The ambassadors underwent special training on international environmental law and global governance in Brussels before the start of the conference, and then joined the rest of the attendees in Corfu and Epirus, Greece, to come up with ideas on how to crack the global governance puzzle.

BRUSSELS

Day One, 19 July in Brussels, the ambassadors learned about the history and current status of international environmental law, and the links between the environment and human rights. They also learned about the principle of international law as a whole, and why state absolute sovereignty poses such a barrier to effectively addressing global problems. The discussion turned to environmental solutions that could work in this framework, including the proposal to add ecocide as a fifth crime prosecutable by the International Criminal Court, as well as further discussions of the relevance of International Criminal Law to environmental issues. The day ended with a visit to the European institutions to learn about how governance can go beyond the nation-state.

Speakers:

- Dr. Margaretha Wewerinke-Singh, Leiden University (Netherlands) – “Introduction to International Environmental Law”
- Kelci Wilford, CUNCR (Canada) – “Public International Law – the Importance of Sovereignty”
- Jessica Miranda, Leiden University (South Africa) – “The United Nations Human Rights Council”
- Shirleen Chin, Green Transparency, Ecological Defence Integrity and the Institute for Environmental Security (Malaysia/Netherlands)



Day Two, 20 July of the Brussels training, the discussion of how to improve global governance overall continued, with consideration given to UN Charter Review, European Federalism, Omnilateralism, and the Earth Constitution.

Speakers:

- Dr. Shahr-yar Sharei, CUNCR (world citizen)
- Wolfgang Pape, lecturer on EU and Asian Affairs (European Citizen) – “EU as Stepping-stone to Global Governance?”
- Leonie Martin, Young European Federalists (JEF) (Belgium) - “The Federal Model”
- Dr. Maggie Ainley, LSE, CUNCR Fellow (UK/Kenya)
- Dr. Roger Kotila, Democratic World Federalists (DWF) (United States) – “The Earth Constitution”

CORFU

When the conference proper kicked off on **Day One in Corfu**, the focus was immediately put on the urgent need for change. Speakers spoke of the rapid deterioration of the environment while the UN did nothing, and of storms and other disasters that have been on the rise as the problems get worse. Some of the Climate Ambassadors also told their personal stories about facing climate change. The group also connected virtually with a parallel event that was set up in Yaoundé, Cameroon, hosted by the organization *Amis de la Planete Cameroune*. Participants in Greece had a chance to meet the 40 or so participants in Cameroon. That evening, there was a demonstration and march followed by a public rally for climate democracy, at which speakers shared their fears and hopes for future generations. All the climate ambassadors also spoke.

Speakers:(Morning Session)

- Dr. Sam Deese, Boston University (United States)
- Nnimmo Bassey, Climate Activist and Rafto Prize Winner (Nigeria)
- Daniel Schaubacher, CUNCR Board Member (Swiss/Belgium)
- Brando Benifei, MEP, European Parliament (Italy) – Pre-recorded Message
- Jean-Felix Ebo’o, Amis de la Planete Cameroune (Cameroon)

Speakers: (Rally)

- Nicos Giannis, EU Commission and Land Beyond (Greece)
- Maria Ivone Soares, Member of Parliament (Mozambique)
- Dr. Sam Deese, Boston University (United States)
- All Climate Ambassadors



EPIRUS

Day Two of the seminar took us to the Land Beyond in Vitsa, Epirus. This began a deeper look into how to crack the problem of global climate governance. Speakers presented research on the effectiveness of global efforts, the potential for national successes to be exported globally, and federalism was once again revisited.

Speakers:

- Dr. Jamie Sommer, University of South Florida (United States) – “The Great Green Transformation: Is it Working?”
- Dr. Otto Spijkers, Utrecht University (Netherlands)
- Shirleen Chin, Green Transparency, Ecological Defence Integrity and the Institute for Environmental Security (Malaysia/Netherlands)
- Sebastiano Putoto, Young European Federalists (Italy)

Day Three was conducted outdoors at the village square in Vitsa, where the search for solutions continued and became more global in scope, with discussions on the proposal for a UN Parliamentary Assembly and transnational deliberative and participatory democracy at a global level (proposal for a World Citizens' Initiative on the model of the European Citizens' Initiative). From there, however, it was up to the ambassadors to apply their knowledge and come up with their own solutions. The attendees broke into groups to brainstorm, working towards a unified document that summarized the values, intent, and demands of the group. There was some discussion about whether to call this document a “Declaration” or a “Manifesto” but after a close vote, it was determined that it would be called the “Epirus Declaration.” A further session that evening brought everyone back together to work out the details of the wording in this text, and what exactly the Climate Ambassadors were calling for. There was also a second conference call with the ‘Amis de la Planete’ in Cameroon, who created their own outcome document and then answered questions about their plans for climate justice going forward.

Speakers:

- John Vlasto, Democracy Without Borders (UK) – “Introduction to UNPA”
- Michele Fiorillo, CIVICO Europa, CUNCR Fellow (Italy) - "Transnational Deliberative Democracy and World Citizens' Initiative"
- Maria Ivone Soares, Member of Parliament (Mozambique)

Workshop: Brainstorming and hackathon on governance solutions



Day Four began very early for some participants, who created a working group to finish the important work of drafting the Epirus Declaration. The main session started with the two more speakers who inspired the Youth Ambassadors with presentations about the importance of non-state actors and bottom-up activism in effective meaningful system change. In that spirit, the participants once again split up into groups to come up with an action plan with concrete steps to strengthen the climate democracy movement and spread the word about the importance of global climate governance.

Speakers:

- Dr. Thomas Muinzer, University of Dundee (UK) – “Legal Activism and Climate Justice from the Bottom Up – The UK Experience”
- Wolfgang Pape, lecturer on EU and Asian Affairs (Europe) – “Rules beyond national borders towards *omnilateral governance*”

Workshop: Brainstorming and hackathon of action items and implementation plan

On the **final day, Day Five**, the focus shifted to appreciating the nature we are trying to protect, with a 17-kilometer hike through the Vikos Gorge, the deepest gorge in the world. It was an awe-inspiring and challenging experience for the ambassadors who took part. After the hike, the day ended with one final presentation from **Spanish MEP Domenec Devesa**, who reiterated the important link between climate justice and world federalism, and spoke to how the European Union can help to bring about closer integration leading to effective global governance and real climate action through the Green New Deal.

Speaker:

- Domenec Devesa, Member of European Parliament (Spain) – “Federalism and Climate Change”

Although after that, the Youth Climate Ambassadors, other attendees, speakers and panelists all parted ways, it was clear to all that this was only the beginning of what will be a very big movement. You are invited to read both the Epirus Declaration and the Action Plan to know more about what this extraordinary group of young people are working for, and how they plan to get it.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND PRÉPARATOIRE ON THE EPIRUS DECLARATION

- The Declaration was inspired by a CUNCR research proposal delivered by Dr. Sharei
- Later, there were change proposals made and it was decided that the proposal would be primarily decided by the youth climate ambassadors, who formed a taskforce. The substantive part of the declaration was adopted unanimously on 24 July, with a taskforce formed to finalize the text.
- A vote was conducted on whether to call the document “Declaration” or “Manifesto”. The majority voted for “Epirus Declaration”.



- A second vote was conducted on whether the Declaration should call for a UN Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA), or a UN Parliament (UNP). In the first scenario, a UNPA would be created as a subsidiary of General Assembly (Article 22), and have members either directly elected or, initially, appointed by states' governments or parliaments, and at first, with an advisory only function. In the second scenario, a peoples' parliament at the UN would be created under Article 109 Charter review, with direct elections, and environmental legislative powers. Both UNPA and UNP share the same goal of a World Parliament, the only difference being in how to get there - either directly (UNP, Article 109), or with an interim step (UNPA, Article 22). The two approaches should be complementary, and both should be supported. Since parliamentary assemblies do not always lead to a legislative parliament, the majority vote amongst the youth climate ambassadors was to include the more ambitious UNP in the Declaration, straight to a peoples UN parliament with legislative and binding powers."
- Military budgets, and specifically nuclear disarmament, to be diverted to climate finance, in CUNCR's original proposal, was voted down. However, recognizing the military as the biggest, and mostly unregulated, polluter, the wording was changed to reflect diversion of funds from "national security" to "global security".
- It was noted that no current UN international human rights conventions recognize the right to a healthy environment and climate, explicitly as human rights, therefore it was agreed that the text of the Declaration must include language to recognize global environmental rights and citizenship.
- On an international court system for the environment, both expansion of ICC competencies and the creation of a new court were discussed. The fundamental agreement was that the court's decision must be universally binding and be enforceable.
- Regarding an executive body to execute the UN Parliament's decisions, financing, and administration and monitoring, it was recognized that an executive branch will be needed. Possible models discussed included the expansion of the Secretary General's authorities and competencies, giving this task to the UN Trusteeship Council as the Trusteeship Council for the Environment, expanding UNEP's role, and other options.
- The taskforce met on 24-25 July to agree on the proposal for adoption and virtually on 27 July, chaired by Litia Baleilevuka (Fiji) and adopted the final text that day.
- In general, it was agreed that the Declaration, similar to constitutions, must stick to its paramount principles and ideals. The implementation and interpretation of these principles would be left to the legitimate forums and institutions to carry on. Further, the Declaration in the future summits may be subject to amendments and further clarification.

CARBON FOOTPRINT

CUNCR plans to calculate and offset the carbon footprint of all the youth activists and staff air travel associated to the 9-day Summit by planting trees in at least one country in every continent. Planting trees being one of the best options to counter climate change, with the costs to be paid by CUNCR, Climate Ambassadors volunteered in recommending and implementing this decarbonization scheme.



LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

(Climate Ambassadors, Speakers, Politicians, Academics, and other attendees)

Andreas Marazis – Greece	Litia Baleilevuka – Fiji
Anna Bryanchaninova – Russia/Germany	Maggie Ainley –Kenya/ United Kingdom
Anne-Laure Baldacchino – France	Mado Yannis – Greece
Blanca Trepas – Spain	Malika Valijon Qizi Kadirova – Uzbekistan
Camila López Badra – Argentina	Mamdouh Alqudsi – Syria
Christine Gonzales – Philippines	Manjot Kaur – Australia
Christine Leclerc – Canada	Margaretha Wewerinke-Singh – Netherlands
Christos Bezirtzoglou – Greece	Maria Ivone Soares – Mozambique
Daniel Schaubacher-Switzerland/Belgium	Maria Petsiou – Greece
Damien Yannis – Greece	Miao Wang – China
Domenec Devesa – Spain	Michele Fiorillo – Italy
Elsa Lagaron – France/Mexico	Nikos Yannis – Greece
Esmeralda Wirtz – Belgium	Nnimmo Bassey – Nigeria
Fani Tsaroucha – Greece	Otto Spijkers – Netherlands
Gator Halpern – United States/Bahamas	Panayota Balopoulou – Greece
Hanna Cordeiro – Brazil	Pendo Maro – Belgium
Jean-Felix Ebo’o, an Amis de la Planete Cameroune simultaneous attendees (Cameroon)	Rassa Ebrahim – United States
Jamie Sommer – United States	Roger Kotila – United States
Jennifer Uchendu – Nigeria	Ruby Sampson – South Africa
Jessica Miranda – South Africa	Said Barzegar – Iran/United States
Johanne Moore – Canada	Sam Deese – United States
Johannes Dellian – Germany	Sebastiano Putoto – Italy
John Vlasto – United Kingdom	Shabira Rogers – Belgium/Trinidad
Joyce Mendes – Brazil/Paraguay	Shahr-yar Sharei – World Citizen
Kathy Barzegar – United States	Shirleen Chin – Malaysia/Netherlands
Kelci Wilford – Canada	Shohreh Ramsey – Canada/Iran
Kristijan Gjorgjieski – Macedonia/Bulgaria	Thomas Muinzer – United Kingdom
Laura Lock – United Kingdom/Hungary	Wolfgang Pape – Europe
Leonie Martin – Belgium	Yana Prokofyeva – Russia/France
	Yasmine Sharei – United States/Iran