

**Conference in reverence of the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
of the United Nations Charter,  
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“YOUTH EXPECTATIONS REGARDING THE UNITED NATIONS ”**

**Panel 5, Dealing with climate change**

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In order to introduce us to the subject, Mr. Jaco Tavenier, Programme Officer for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), gave us a short overview of the tasks and functions of the UNEP as well as some basic information concerning climate change. The panel focused on how different actors handle climate change and what are the principal difficulties in this area of politics.

The main mission of the UNEP can be perceived as to advocate for their goal, to secure and promote coherence between the UN-System and the environmental conventions. They do as well encourage and support the environmental consciousness by informing and enabling nations and people in their respective needs for ecological progress. In order to facilitate our discussion, our moderator first introduced and clarified different concepts as well as some basic information concerning climate change.

First of all, Mr. Tavenier defined the principal actors in the fight against climate change. As a main actor, especially in the negotiation and decision making process, we can identify the State. However apart from the State, we can define nine other major actors in the system: Youth does play a key role as well as the scientific and technological community, farmers, workers & trade unions, business & Industry, non-governmental organisations, women, indigenous people and of course also local authorities. As the integration of states in the process is taking part on a political level, the realisation of the same is often slow and subject to many considerations. This is why it is essential to invest in the promotion of an ecological conscience by the different actors mentioned.

Our youth is a crucial actor in the whole system. Mr. Tavenier tried together with the participants to analyse why our generation is such an important actor? There are four main assumptions supporting that thesis. First, the youth of nowadays grew up with the whole thematic and is therefore developing a strong environmental awareness. Youth also does play a special role in information exchange as networking skills of an average young adult is much higher than the skills of its predecessors. We also should focus on capacity building since the generation sitting in today's classrooms will have to handle the climate change

issues of the future and they will be the actors who participate in future decision making processes.

Mr. Tavenier also provided us with some very interesting facts. Since 1900 the average temperature increased by 0.74 °C and if no action is taken, we will suffer a increase of 4 C° until 2050. As result of the global warming we will be subject to extreme weather phenomena as we can already notice in Europe. We are facing different dangers, such as floods, droughts, heat waves and extreme storms with all the terrible resulting consequences. A high number of economic fields will be affected by the change, such as fisheries, timber, tourism, travel and agriculture. There will be massive economic implications in the range of a 5 to 20% drop in world GDP if no action is taken.

After this excursus and theoretical approaches we could move on to the discussion, which was under a strong politico-economic influence. One of the major concerns of the discussion, was about the creation of a legal framework and a legally binding successor arrangement to the Kyoto-Protocol. Of course, the failure of the conference in Copenhagen (COP15) was one of the hot topics and we tried to understand the reasons for this failure and the obstacles blocking the way to an agreement in Cancun (COP16) this year. We discussed about the three major issues, which are preventing the conclusion of an agreement so far. First of all, the level of permissible emission in OECD countries and the time schedule to reach these objectives need to lead to a proper decision and an acceptable objective for all. Secondly, the question of technology transfer needs to be resolved. Currently, a lot of clean technology is patented and not free for use which makes the progression and development of green technology much more difficult and slow. Thirdly and the most essential issue is the financial contribution of States : who will be paying the price for the fight against climate change and how should the burden be shared?

Concerning this issue, Mr. Tavernier was asked what kind of actions the UNEP is taking regarding COP16. Our moderator answered on two different levels. Officially the UNEP is doing nothing, because the only thing the UNEP can do is helping the negotiation process but they do not have any influence on the content himself. The final outcome of such conventions are not in the hands of the United Nations but in those of the participating states. However the UNEP is doing a lot of lobbying and awareness-making events in order to work towards a successful conference. UNEP organizes various debates before, during and after the conference, as well as establishing concrete help by helping technological transfers and being a mediation partner. Nevertheless final negotiations take place between member states and not with the United Nations.

Another major question was the cooperation of private sectors like businesses and industries in order to restrict emissions and promote green economies. This topic gives much more cause for rejoicing than the precedent because the first results in green economy are very optimistic and a lot of subjects and testing enterprises can show and confirm that green economy pays off. It does not only protect the environment but also creates positive side effects as creating new jobs, developing an environmental awareness, reducing emissions and augmenting GDP. All in all, new green technology seems very promising. However, there is still a lot to do in this sector and more could be done many different options are still open and there is a need for stronger cooperation.

In conclusion the balance sheet remains ambiguous with the big burden of the still unrealized successor arrangement to the Kyoto-Protocol on the one hand, but on the other hand we can distinguish some positive tendencies in other areas, which give grounds for hope. This is particularly the case within the work of the other nine major actors, which confirms that efforts to include non-state actors in climate change programs is the way to go. However it is obvious that they cannot work alone, and the different actors need to cooperate to achieve a comprehensive solution to climate change, Youth is one of these actors, and its participation is essential in the whole process.



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