

31 December 2018

Mr. Artur Lorkowski,
Special Envoy - Climate Change,
COP24 Presidency

cc: Mr. Karol Templin,
Civil Society Liaison
COP24 Presidency

Sustainability of United Nations Climate Change Conferences

COP 24 Presidency

Dear Mr. Artur Lorkowski,

In the context of the 2018 United Nations Climate Change Conference (24th Conference of Parties, known as COP 24), we, as representatives of Youth Non-Governmental Organisations promoting sustainable lifestyles as a component of efforts to mitigate climate change, would like to draw your attention to the issue of sustainability of Conferences of the Parties. We believe that the sustainability of such events is vital if the COP Presidencies are to uphold the mandate of the UNFCCC and align its actions with its values.

We welcome all the efforts that have been made to reduce the environmental impacts of previous UNFCCC events including the 24th Conference of the Parties taking place in Katowice, Poland. We particularly appreciate the efforts to increase virtual participation at COP 24. We note the conference's registration with the Eco-Management and Auditing Scheme (EMAS) but would like to express our concern that this does not provide any specific minimum requirements. Therefore, we consider that another step could be made towards sustainability. If the ambitions of the UNFCCC are to be realized in full, we hope the Secretariat will address the following concerns at future meetings of the Convention.

First, we would like to express our concern regarding the energy consumption of the event. At COP 24, the inefficiency of the venue's heating system and poor thermal insulation,

notably in the corridors, was an issue that, we think, could have been easily tackled. A more efficient insulation system would have been welcomed to demonstrate the Conference of the Parties' concern for energy savings. It should also be ensured that lights, electric power strips and screens in meetings rooms are capable of being turned off when these rooms are not in use, which was not the case at COP 24. Broadly speaking, we hope that future UNFCCC conferences will aim at reducing energy consumption through sustainable building design, even in temporary facilities.

On waste, we consider that future conferences could minimize single-use packaging, particularly in food and drink containers. At COP24 single-use containers and plates were used by some food outlets, and also large amounts of plastic in the catering provided to pavilions. Use of compostable packaging should be contingent on the presence of appropriate disposal facilities. Composting bins would also allow for the sustainable disposal of food waste. Additionally, we would welcome even more efforts to support the digitization of information in pavilions and the reduction of distribution of flyers at events.

Further, the institution of a deposit-return scheme or provision of reusable cups to delegates could have eliminated the use of single-use coffee cups, including at pavilions. These single-use cups cannot be recycled and constitute a significant source of waste from the conference. Such a policy would have been aligned with the [COP 24 Environmental Policy by the Environment Ministry of the Republic of Poland](#) which emphasizes the use of reusable materials. We hope that these types of policies will be pursued at future conferences and more effectively implemented.

We ask that future conferences minimize and publicize the carbon footprint of food. A way of doing that would be to maximize the provision of more locally and seasonally sourced food and a variety of vegetarian and vegan options. As the UNFCCC stated, "eating vegetarian food on a regular basis reduces greenhouse gas emissions and is a key factor in helping to achieve the objectives of the Paris Climate Change Agreement". Providing varied local, seasonal, climate-efficient and also plant-based catering would demonstrate the UNFCCC's commitment to emission reductions throughout their operations and support the local agricultural sector with short transport distances. UN events such as the COP must act as a platform for the delegates to consume more plant-based food, which was a major drawback of COP24, due to the lack of availability of vegan and vegetarian food options, especially apparent during the Katowice Welcome Party on 4th December. UNFCCC must be a role model to initiate the process of promoting plant-based healthy lifestyles, and it is necessary to give utmost importance to this in

upcoming conferences. In a word, we think that the UNFCCC could promote more responsible behaviours for the COP visitors.

We also would like to recommend the use of sustainable and recycled materials in the COP buildings, especially by paying attention to the provenance of timber, for instance used in pavilions at COP 24.

Finally, while we welcome existing efforts to promote emissions offsetting for travel to the conference, we ask for increased and proactive promotion of more sustainable transport options, that would be prioritized as a necessity. Given how imperfect the offsetting system is, it should only be considered as a last resort.

As the entity responsible for enacting the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, we would like the Secretariat to take on its full responsibilities in this matter. Official and precise guidelines should be developed, that could be integrated in the administrative instruction ST/AI/342 and therefore be a compulsory part of future Host Country Agreements. We ask that the Secretariat hereafter requires organizers of UNFCCC conferences to systematically provide transparent and scientifically robust information on the scope 1, 2 and 3 greenhouse gas emissions produced as a result of the event, including all modes of travel to and from the conference. The effective eco-responsibility of the Conferences should be ambitious and should demonstrate improvements from year to year.

We sincerely hope that COP Presidencies will ensure that future conferences prioritize sustainability and responsible sourcing, and that this occurs with official oversight by civil society. We, therefore, offer our cooperation and support in increasing the sustainability of future UNFCCC events and call for the inclusion of youth voices and their valuable insights in these organizational matters.

Yours sincerely,
YOUNGO “Eco-Friendly-COP” Working Group

Aline Prévot, Aurore Grandin, Carole Meffre, Gaëlle André, Margot Duvivier , Yanis Nothias and Loïs Mallet (Président) for the REFEDD (Réseau français des Étudiants pour le Développement Durable) / France



Katia Mahery, for Maharithra NGO/GT-CC / Madagascar

Paulien Denis, UN Volunteer / Belgium

Rupert Stuart-Smith, Serena Bashal, for UK Youth Climate Coalition / United Kingdom

Amandine Gourchette, Université de Sherbrooke / Québec

Diana Rakotlehibe, for Young Leaders Fighting Climate Change / Madagascar

Andréanne Brazeau, from ENvironnement JEUnesse / Canada

Sam Opolot, for Go Green Hubi For Integrated Community Development / Uganda

Marie-Claire Graf, for Swiss Youth for Climate / Switzerland

Vaidehi Narsingh, for Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) / Switzerland

Laura Gauvrit, from the Collectif Démarqué (CliMates) / France

Lotta Velin, for UN Youth Delegate to COP / Sweden

Swati Mandloi, for Singapore Youth for Climate Action (SYCA) / Singapore

Saadiq Garba, for Swarthmore College/ United States

Thea Cheung, for CarbonCare InnoLab /Hong Kong China

Krishnee Appadoo, from University of Mauritius / Mauritius

Lavetanalagi Seru, for Alliance for Future Generations / Fiji

Valentine Huet, from KTH University / Sweden

Adelin Pierre, from Yes Akademia/ Haiti



Viktor Josa and Zoë Le Monnyer, for CliMates / France

Monika Skadborg, for Danish Youth Council / Denmark

Rodrigue Friaud, Nadia Seqat, Louise O'Connor, Johanne Lebrun-Thauront, Louise Galamez, Alexandre Barboni, Auriane Meilland, Nicolas Delaffon, Stanislas Bebin, Daniela Restrepo-Garcia, from École Normale Supérieure / France

Pramisha Thapaliya, for CliMates / Nepal

Rookayah Aumeer, from Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Scientific Research and Tertiary Education / Mauritius

Anna Gomes, from Young European Leadership / Sweden

MaryJane Enchill, from Climate Action Network-Ghana / Ghana

Dolphine Magero, from African Youth Initiative on Climate Change / Kenya

Emma Thornton, from Northeastern University / USA

Insaf Abdelmoula, GSCSY Scholar / Tunisia

Ineza Umuhoza Grace, from The Green Fighter / Rwanda

Rhiannon Wood, from World Alliance of YMCA / United Kingdom

Raeed Roshan Ali, from Alliance for Future Generations / Fiji

Tajiel Urioh, from The Green Icon / Tanzania

Aime (K) Lebon (Amehoenou), from Namibia Youth Coalition on Climate change (NYCC) / Namibia

Li Wah Wong, from EIT Climate KIC / European Union

Zoé Pincemaille, from ISF Compiègne / France



Alissa Tung, for CarbonCare InnoLab / Hong Kong

Marika Olsson, Amélie Dupuy-Seltmann, Sarah Nyberg, for PUSH Sweden / Sweden

Zhenglin Liu, from University of Toronto/ Canada

Joanne Groom, GSCSY Scholar / South Africa

Zoe Rasbash, from UKYCC / United Kingdom

Felix Heilmann, from Oxford Climate Society / United Kingdom

Bo Sprotte Kofod, from International Forestry Student Association / Denmark

Rachele Rizzo, for the Italian Climate Network / Italy

John Carl T. Alonsagay, from ATO-ClimatEducate Project / World

Rasmus Jeppesen, from World Alliance of YMCAs / Denmark

Nila Patty, from Nonanoplastic-Zero Waste Lifestyle/ The Netherlands

Miriam Candelas, from International Young Naturefriends / Czech Republic

Lisa Hofmann, from Naturfreundejugend Deutschland / Germany

José Manuel Gil Cruz, from The Climate Reality Project / Mexico

Anna von Zwegbergk, from 350 Finland / Finland

Ulysse Vassas, from Engineers Without Borders Provence / France

Irina Herb, from Green Economics Institute / United Kingdom

Annika Rummer, for JANUN Lüneburg e.V. / Germany



Jonas Kampus, from Swiss Youth for Climate / Switzerland

Kumar Abhishek, from Global Solar Food Processing Network / Germany

Nicholas Gerard-Larson, for Instituto Educacional Franklin Delano Roosevelt / Peru

María Rosa Servín Nasich, from Jóvenes para la Acción Climática / Paraguay

Tamoifo Nkom Marie, from REJEFAC - AJVC / Cameroon

Beatriz Tsunouchi Pagy, from Engajamundo / Brazil

Abdallah Emad Afify / Egypt

Serge Christophe Abouna, for Climate Network of Sub Saharan Youth / Africa

Niel de Jong, for the Water Youth Network / the Netherlands

Ayobami Alabi Ezekiel, for International Association of students In agriculture and related sciences. IAAS / Nigeria

Syaqil Suhaimi, from Malaysian Youth Delegation / Malaysia

Yugratna Srivastava, Plant-for-the-Planet International / World

Aashish Khullar, Children Youth International / World

