



Youth Involvement in the UN Climate and Technology Sphere

(Topics: policy activities, UNFCCC, Technology Mechanism)

This article is about how young people can be involved and make a change at the UN climate conferences and in the UNFCCC Technology Mechanism. It has been written by Sara Nyberg who is active in YES-Europe and in the Swedish youth network PUSH Sweden.



Some Climate Regime Basics

There are many special and complicated words in the UN climate regime, so we will start with some basics for you to understand the rest of the article.

The UNFCCC which stands for United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, was adopted in 1992, and since then the parties (mostly countries, although the EU is also a party) have met for two weeks twice a year, to discuss how to stabilize GHG concentrations “at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic (human-induced) interference with the climate system”. Each year, the parties meet in late spring at the so called Intersessionals (always in Bonn in Germany) and in early winter during the COPs (Conference of the Parties). To these conferences, both official party delegations and observers come. As an observer, you don’t only observe what is happening - many environmental organisations are there to advocate for higher ambitions, or there are e.g. women, youth and indigenous peoples’ organisations who want to make sure that their interests are being included in the negotiated texts.

Extra Resources 

If you want to read more about the topic, this website gives you a good overview written in understandable language:

<https://unfccc.int/resource/bigpicture/>

Youth Influence at the UN Climate Conferences

Many young people have a higher sense of urgency than older people, and are calling for higher ambitions. Due to the continuous growth of youth participation in the UN Climate Change sessions, in 2009 an official youth constituency was formed, becoming one of the representatives of non-party stakeholders. The YOUNGO (Youth+NGO) serves as an umbrella structure that gathers youth NGOs from all over the world at the climate conferences to coordinate their work and be able to speak with one common voice. It gathers around 120 organisations, with more than 6000 members in the facebook group. The formal outing/speaking of YOUNGO mainly happens during the UN climate conferences, twice a year, but it also sends out representatives for other UN and climate related meetings. YOUNGO has two focal points, responsible to establish communication with the UNFCCC secretariat, and a bottom lining team, to help with the operations. It is organized in over 15 policy working groups, covering topics such as Renewable Energy, Conflicts of Interest, Gender, Health, Finance and Agriculture.

On a longer time horizon young professional can work for more youth inclusion. During the UN Climate Conferences, young volunteers’ role is to both understand what is happening and communicate it to the people in their country in the local language, as well as to engage with the UN agencies to provide inputs from the youth side.

Extra Resources 

[YOUNGO Facebook Page](#)

HOW DO YOU HAVE AN INFLUENCE?

The most concrete way is to do actions in the venue itself with e.g. banners and chants (yes, it's usually allowed!), hoping that the passing-by negotiators will pick up the message and work in line with it.



A second way is to have meetings with the country delegations. For example, the representatives from PUSH Sweden have a meeting - usually two times during the two weeks of each conference - with the Swedish delegation together with other people/ organisations from the civil society. Then, there is a possibility to ask the country delegates questions, and raise what is important for young people in Sweden and (politely) ask them to act in a certain way.

A third way to hold interventions, ca 3-minute speeches, at certain occasions. Those are written together with other youth organisations in the constituency YOUNGO. There are also eight other constituencies, representing e.g. women and gender, indigenous people, business & industry and research & independent organisations.



Youth Involvement in Technology Development and Transfer

In smaller fora of the UNFCCC it is easier to have a larger influence. This is because it's easier to approach the delegates or country representatives since there are much fewer participants. This is for example the case within the two bodies of the Technology Mechanism. The purpose of the Technology Mechanism is to develop and transfer climate smart technologies to developing countries. It consists of the Technology Executive Committee (TEC), which gives policy advice to the COP, and the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN, based in Copenhagen), which matches countries with certain technology needs with companies and organisations that provide certain technology or service. Climate smart technologies can address both climate change adaptation and mitigation (reduction of CO₂-emissions), with many of the projects being related to renewable energies. The TEC meets twice a year, and the CTCN has an advisory board which meets twice a year.

Representatives from YOUNGO have the possibility to attend those meetings as observers. They cannot vote, but they can understand what is happening, give comments and opinions and talk to the board or committee members during the breaks. During such meetings, youth representatives can network with the meeting participants (both coun-

try representatives and observers) to promote more meaningful youth involvement in the bodies. In particular the YOUNGO representatives can have a speech about why youth should be more involved.

Young people have a sense of urgency which can push the older generation for faster action, while also contributing with new innovative ideas, fresh thinking. In addition, many young people



Meeting with YOUNGO and the communication and outreach responsible at CTCN to discuss future collaboration.

(among which, YES Europe members) are highly educated, work in the field and have a passionate interest in climate technology. This makes them resources for meaningful contribution to the discussions and work of the Technology Mechanism.

There is no doubt that we could contribute to more and faster technology development and transfer!

Extra Resources
If you want to know more about the
UNFCCC Technology Mechanism read here:
[Brochure](#)
[Website](#)



About the Writer

Sara is the Swedish country representative in YES-Europe. She is involved in the Swedish youth sustainability organisation [PUSH Sweden](#) ([PUSH Sverige](#)). Since the UN climate conference COP21 in Paris in 2015, PUSH has accreditation to the climate conferences as an observer organisation. Sara has attended the last five climate conferences (two COPs and three so called Intersessionals), where she represented young people in Sweden. Sara also attended the last two meetings of both the CTCN advisory board and the TEC as an observer, representing youth - in March in Copenhagen and in mid-September in Paris and Bonn. Sara started a collaboration between YOUNGO and the CTCN staff, to organise activities together, and facilitate the participation of young people in the task forces of the TEC.

