

## **NGOCS D General Meeting Minutes: Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup> 2015, 11:30 -12:00AM**

Bahai International UN Office, 866 UN Plaza, Suite 120

Submitted by Modou Cham, Secretary

**1PM:** Co-Chairs Margo LaZaro and Yvonne O'Neal welcomed everyone to the meeting and elucidated that this month's theme for our meeting is: "Climate Change: On the Road to Paris & Beyond". They thanked Ms. Sheima Sweiss for her kind donation towards the refreshments for the meeting & they thanked the Bahai International UN Office Staff for the kind consideration.

- The Co-Chairs asked the members to approve the October Meeting Agenda and September Minutes – all approved.
- Secretary Modou Cham gave his Report.
- The Co-Chairs called for a Motion to Accept the Secretary's report – all approved.
- Treasurer Martha Kebalo gave her report –
- The Co-Chairs called for a Motion to Accept the Treasurer's Report – all approved. .

**General Meeting 1:15 – 4:30PM:** Co-Chair Margo shared some reflections of her having been at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit when we were focused on and how the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development had a focus on the environment and now the 17 SDGs & 169 Targets have changed the agenda.

**Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne introduced via video Ms. Rachel Kyte, World Bank Group Vice President and Special Envoy for Climate Change. Ms. Kyte will become Special Representative of the Secretary-General and CEO for Sustainable Energy for All as of January 1st, 2016.** She is a leading advocate for action to combat climate, because of its intrinsic link to poverty and development, Ms. Kyte is the leading figure for the World Bank Group in efforts to campaign for an ambitious agreement at the 21st Convention of the Parties of the UNFCCC this December. She thanked everyone for their work and elucidated the importance of Civil Society in the implementation process of the SDGs. Moreover, she explained that SDG7 must be frontloaded because it will be difficult to achieve other goals such as health, gender equality and education. We will need Sustainable Energy to deliver on the political promise but we will leave no one behind as we move to a lower carbon pathway of growth. She explained that the three targets: 7.1 By 2030 ensure universal access to affordable, reliable, and modern energy services; 7.2 Increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030; 7.3 Double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency by 2030; are interconnected and they will bring the three goals together. Additionally, with the price of solar panels going down, it is not impossible to imagine increased electrification with the off the smart technologies that can power household items such as cell phones, TVs, air conditioners etc. This will be affordable through some of the new financial platforms that have been created. In ending her statement, Ms. Kyte quoted the Secretary General and stated "We are the first generation that can put an end to poverty and we are the last generation that can put an end to climate change, so we must address climate change." For the SDGs to be successful, we need an ambitious agreement in Paris.

**Next, Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne introduced Mr. Dan Shepard, Leads the UN Secretary-General's Climate Change Support Team.** He was the point person on sustainability issues for the UN Department of Public Information, and has been involved on communications for sustainable development for the UN at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and Rio+20. In his statements, he explained that the road does not end in Paris, it is the beginning of the decisive turning point for commitments to climate change. Further, the climate change support team brought the Climate Change Summit last year which was a major milestone along the road to Paris. Additionally, he explained that the success of the Summit is due in large to Civil Society, because world leaders noticed that 400,000 people marched in support of climate action. Due to this, Paris will not be another Copenhagen, because we live in a world that is different from the one we used to live in. From a communication standpoint, the whole debate has shifted, in Copenhagen, climate denial was still an issue we had to deal with. The numbers are much lower because people are experiencing the impacts of climate change in a much larger scale. All sectors, public, private and civil society have an agreed understanding that the issues cannot be ignored.

**Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne introduced Professor Jan W. Dash, the NGOCS D Lead Expert Adviser on Climate Change and Managing Editor of the Climate Portal website for the Unitarian Universalist UN Office.** He is the Editor of the Climate Statement: Summary and Recommendations to Governments of the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development, delivered to leaders at the Copenhagen climate conference and updated yearly. Mr. Dash showed a PowerPoint presentation and elucidated that the global warming forecast depends on human behaviors and now disasters are worse due to climate change: Increase conflicts (wars/national insecurity), water shortages, crop failures, intense fires, droughts, flooding, species extermination, extreme weather, rising sea levels, heat waves, precipitation changes, and economic and financial disruptions. He further elucidated the concept of climate justice, which acknowledges that although the poor and most vulnerable have had the smallest effects on the climate, they will hurt the most from climate issues. Next, he explained that the road to a climate agreement is extremely rocky and the Issues include: Cumulative vs. Current emissions, Energy equity, Funding for technological assistance to poor countries, Climate damage compensation for poor countries, Legal status (binding or not), Extent of MRV – Measurement, Reporting, and Verification, Support for adaptation, NAMAs (Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions), Putting national/local self-interests above climate impacts.

**Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne introduced Mr. Jamil Ahmad, Deputy Director of UNEP and Secretary for the Governing Council/ Global Ministerial Environment in the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN Environmental Programme.** Mr. Ahmad directs, manages and coordinates the work of the Secretariat and leads the organization of the sessions of GC/GMEF. In his statements, he explained that climate change is a problems for human beings due to human action. UNEP was involved in the SDG process in multiple fronts and raised the capacity of multiple organizations. UNEP will release the next gap emission report before the conference in Paris. Additionally, now is the time for us to act together, civil society has been working with UNEP from its concept and one important aspect of Agenda 2030 is the involvement of civil society and that will have an effect from now on in the UN system. Further, UNEP will revise its role during the Second Meeting of the UN Environment Assembly to give civil society more of a role in the decision making process. Cop 21 and beyond has few important aspects: common vision, finding a way forward, implementation on the ground (requires funds and finances) and capacity at local level. Mr. Ahmad ended his statements by explaining that the UNEP has done a lot of work to make sure that the international financial market are aligned with the need of Sustainable Development.

**Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne introduced Mr. Roberto Borrero, Indigenous Leader; UN Programs Coordinator, International Indian Treaty Council.** Mr. Borrero is an internationally renowned and respected member of the indigenous Taíno community of the Caribbean. He has a long history in cultural, environmental, and human rights advocacy working at the local, national, and international level. Roberto is currently the chair of the NGO Committee on the United Nations International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples and a global organizing partner focal point representing the International Indian Treaty Council for the Indigenous Peoples Major Group. Roberto also has extensive experience working with non-profit and for-profit entities. He explained that indigenous people are part of the SDGs because there is a Major Group dedicated to indigenous group. When we talk about Sustainable Development and Climate Change, indigenous people need to be brought in, from an indigenous peoples perspective, human rights is something that should be on the text of the climate change document, an alternative to the Human Rights language that was used was "Rights to Life." Furthermore, the agreements will not change lives for the better if the human rights perspective is not respected and added to the document, also it should say "human rights including the rights of indigenous peoples."

**Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne introduced Ms. Harriet Shugarman, Founder & Executive Director, of Climate Mama, Climate Educator & Mentor, the Climate Reality Project,** an organization working to educate and inspire and families to understand climate change and empower them to take tangible steps to build a healthy world for themselves and future generations. Previously, she has worked as a policy analyst and economist with the Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario governments in Canada, and later with the International Monetary Fund as the Special Assistant to the Director of the United Nations Office in New York. In 2007, Ms. Shugarman was selected to participate in a training program led by Former Vice President Al Gore and sponsored by The Climate Reality Project to educate the public about the climate crisis. She gave several examples of her important advocacy work for Climate Justice around the country which has a far reaching impact.

**Co-Chairs Ms. Eleanor Blomstrom, Program Director/Head of Office, Women Environment & Development Organization.** As Program Director at WEDO, Ms. Blomstrom manages internal and external relationships and partnerships, including with staff, funders and coalition and project partners. She works closely with program staff in strategic development, implementation and monitoring of WEDO programs and projects. With a particular focus on sustainable development, climate change and urbanization, her work incorporates research, capacity building, and global-level advocacy at multiple UN fora, including the UNFCCC and related to the post-2015 development agenda. Ms. Blomstrom explained that as a global women's advocacy organization, WEDO envisions a just world that promotes and protects human rights, gender equality and the integrity of the environment. The organization also aims to contribute toward its vision for the world, WEDO's mission is to ensure that women's rights; social, economic and environmental justice; and sustainable development principles-as well as the linkages between them-are at the heart of global and national policies, programs and practices. Further, Ms. Blomstrom further explained that the women agenda constituency which has the agenda as the women major group, do not want an agenda that will have a policy with women on it without action for climate change. Overall, the organization has been working with different organization such as the Climate Reality Project which is currently focused on the road to Paris – The Women's Global Call for Climate Justice - #womenclimatejustice & womenclimatejustice.org

**Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne introduced Ms. Natalia Vega-Berry, Founder and CEO of The Global Brain and Executive Director of The People+Planet Project.** The Global Brain was launched on April 11, 2014, during the Media 4 Social Impact Summit at the United Nations. Ms. Vega-Berry is currently supporting the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General's Post-2015 Development Agenda and Climate Change Support Team, through the development of a global campaign "The People + Planet Project" (P+PP) to foster the UN Sustainable Development Goals and new Climate Agreements post-2015. Ms. Vega-Berry explained that The People+Planet Project is a new digital community that will convene the world's leading initiatives around sustainable development in one easy-to-use platform. The platform is designed to support new relationships and provide ways for the The People+Planet Project community to become actively involved with the initiatives that match their values and interests. The initiative will accomplish this mission by forming diverse partnerships that work synergistically to promote and co-create this robust, global platform. Collective action is the only way to bring about the universal transformation necessary to achieve the Global Goals. Ms. Vega-Berry showed a powerful short video of an Indigenous Mother giving her promise to her infant daughter to save their homeland from Climate Change during the 2014 UN Climate Summit with Heads of State present.

**Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne (via video) introduced Ms. Kehkashan Basu, NGOCS 15 year old Youth Adviser on Climate Change and Founder of Green Hope,** a youth organization which seeks to provide a networking platform to children and youth in the region to carry forward the Rio+20 legacy through several environmental workshops and ground level projects on biodiversity conservation, waste segregation and reversing land degradation. Ms. Basu has been spreading the message of peace and sustainability since she was only 8 years old working tirelessly to enlist the support of children and youth across geographical boundaries. In 2013 at the age of 12, she was elected for a 2 year term, as UNEP's (United Nations Environment Programme) Global Coordinator for Children & Youth and a member of its Major Groups Facilitating Committee making her *the youngest person and the first minor, ever, to be elected into this position in the history of UNEP.* Ms. Basu advocated for the support of the 17 SDGs. Moreover, she also spoke of importance of involving young people in the implementation process of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Co-Chairs Margo and Yvonne introduced Mr. Juan Elias Chebly, Lead Adviser, to the UN Environment Programmes' Secretariat of Governing Bodies; Founder and CEO of voipebox.com.** He elucidated that UNEA is the world congress on Environment convened by UNEP and MY UNEA is a new opportunity for multi-stakeholder engagement with UNEP and UNEA. The main objective of the organization is to increase peoples' participation in the United Nations Environment Assembly. Further, they also aim to provide a space for accountability and transparency by disseminating information and allowing stakeholders to track the formal UNEA process, real-time data from UNEP LIVE, and other UNEP platforms. In his closing statement, Mr. Chebly explained that it does not matter what organization you spoke with during the sustainable development summit, whether it's the private sector, public sector or civil society. In the end, they all said "we can't do this alone". The UN stands for peace, sustainable development and human rights, there is interdependence between all the things we do. Further, he explained that in looking forward to COP21, please know that you have allies within the UN system.

The Co-Chairs welcomed a number of reflections from those attending the meeting and there was a Q & A session. Meeting was adjourned at 4:20pm.