

Young People Commit to and Demand Action on Climate Change

COPENHAGEN, 4 December 2009 – Gathered from all over the world, 164 young people, aged 14 to 17, issued a Declaration in Copenhagen today committing to personal changes in their own lives and demanding that governments take actions to protect the world from the terrible effects of climate change.

“The battle against climate change is upon all of us. We are ready to act and we invite you to join us. Climate change is affecting our lives, our families and our future,” the document states. “We must act immediately and we are ready to fulfill our commitments. We are prepared to give all we have as long as there is the possibility of saving our planet,” it continues.

“We expect the same courage from you.” the Declaration concludes.

In the closing ceremony today in the City Hall, the young people presented their Declaration to the president of COP 15, Ms. Connie Hedegaard, who is expected to take the Declaration to the leaders present at the COP 15. Ms. Hedegaard restated the children’s statement that the time for talk is over.

“It’s so good that young people from the whole world are telling us – the politicians – that the time for action is now”, Ms. Hedegaard said, addressing the 164 young delegates.

“You must tell the Politicians that they cannot leave Copenhagen empty-handed two weeks from now. Because you, the citizens – the new generation – demand us to take action now”, Ms. Hedegaard continued.

The Declaration recommends that industrialized countries ramp up spending on adaption; cities be well planned and sustainable; safety standards, regulations and emergency protocols be established to prepare for climate induced disasters; better water conservation; education on sea level rise and flooding and biodiversity-related projects.

The young people also made recommendations to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, which include: new energy-efficient technologies; investments in sustainable transport infrastructure; establishing a carbon trading system; establishing new classifications for countries – 1) industrialized countries, 2) developing countries which pollute heavily and the 3) less polluting developing countries; national recycling plans; mandatory climate change education in schools.

The Declaration came on the heels a week-long Children’s Climate Forum, consisting of consultations between the young delegations, study and training focusing on local activities that young people can take in their home towns.

The Forum was held in Copenhagen’s City Hall and was organized by the City of Copenhagen and the Danish National Committee for UNICEF.

The closing ceremony was followed by the Danish band Alien Beat Club performing the Children’s Climate Forum anthem "It's My World" together with the young people. The song was written especially for the Children’s Climate Forum by Danish hitmaker Remeé.

Later this evening, the young people will be named Climate Ambassadors, formalizing the commitments embodied in their Declaration, including to commit to personal life style changes for the “common good”; to educate themselves and their communities to mitigate the changing climate; to engage with all generations and governments to combat climate change. Their commitment is for one year.

To better implement their promises, the young people have formed a social network so they can share their experiences and difficulties as they put into action what they have learned. This network, to read the full

declaration and the extensive reporting that youth journalists have carried out over the last seven days can be viewed at: uniteforclimate.org

The closing ceremony wrapped up with a press conference with five young spokespersons: Ulla Klint Heede, 17, Denmark; Mohamed Axam Maumoon, 15 Maldives; Bipra Biswambhara, 16 India; Travis Bruce Mills, 15, New Zealand, Cressida Mawdesley-Thomas, 15, UK.

Eight young delegates are staying on to participate in the COP 15, where they will bring the children's voices to the world leaders . They are: Toriqul Islam Momen,15 , Bangladesh; Darwin David Temo Pena,17, Bolivia; Marie Moise Louissaint, 16, Haiti; Lourine Millicent Oyodah, 15, Kenya; Mohamed Axam Maumoon, 15, Maldives; Khadidiatou Diop, 17, Senegal; Bridgette Cindy Makhubedi, 16, South Africa, Kondwani Joe Banda, 17, Zambia

The young people reported on their activities throughout the week, with special reports from a class of high school journalism students which is available at: uniteforclimate.org where the full declaration is posted.

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