

# YOUTH CLIMATE AMBASSADOR

## Climate Justice News

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**Epirus Declaration**



- 1 “System Change NOT Climate Change” was being shouted, when I participated in the Brussels climate strike, earlier this year. Dr. Sharei.
- 2 In his article “Federalism and Climate Change”<sup>1</sup>, Mr. Deveza promotes the idea of Dr. Sharei on the reformation of UN Charter party. CUNCR team.
- 3 “Climate change affects us all. One in four species in the world is in danger of extinction; the oceans are warming; there is an increase in noise, air and water pollution and there is a growing neglect of the environment.” Camila Lopez.
- 4 Up until now, there is no cost-efficient man-made technology to store CO<sub>2</sub> in the soil but there are very effective natural mechanisms. Plants for example can act as a CO<sub>2</sub> storing super-machines. Fani Tsaroucha.
- 5 Addressing the global challenges humanity is facing is the reason that brought all these stakeholders together in one place to discuss. Blanca Trepát.
- 6 Over the past few months, I have learnt a lot about the environment and the effect humans are having on the ecosystem. One of the main topics I have been focusing on is how the average human effects the environment with what they buy and which companies they support in doing so. Maiya McLean.

**BECOME A VOLUNTEER**

[HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/HGHUVBVMTXQKD7BQA](https://forms.gle/HGHUVBVMTXQKD7BQA)

# A Message to YCAs from CUNCR

S.M. Sharei, CUNCR Executive Director



“System Change NOT Climate Change” was being shouted, when I participated in the Brussels climate strike, earlier this year. The 30,000 demonstrators of all ages, but mostly youth had very specific demands, but when it came to what type of climate governance they wanted, they would pause and ponder. This is when we at the Center for UN Constitutional Research decided to take the challenge of our dysfunctional global governance, which is often incapable of dealing with global challenges, such as the climate crisis. In addition to the academics, politicians, practitioners and experts in the field, that we typically invited for brainstorming to our previous seminars, this summer we invited at least 2 prominent youth activists from each continent as well as representatives from the sinking islands to our annual Summit, at the global village at the Epirus mountains in Greece.

The 9-day journey started in Brussels with teachings on the United Nations, international environmental law and the institutional requirements beyond states. On the latter, we concentrated on the federal models and the only union of states in existence—the European Union of 26 countries, and how they deal with transnational problems that know no borders.

With raised awareness, surrounded by the beautiful summits of the Epirus mountains, we found out that the neither UN, or UNFCCC have the mandate, nor is it the non-binding Paris Accords, that govern the climate. We learnt that there is no international legislation, no sustainable budget, no court system, and no enforcement, at the global level to deal with the climate crisis. If the monumental challenge of climate crisis essentially lacks governance at the international level, then what is to be done? What type of governmental and institutional reforms does it take to deliver?

With these questions in mind, the youth activists, with the support of a panel of experts, set out to solve the mystery at the hackathon sessions of the Summit.

In seeking answers, the complex governance problem was reduced to its simplest form and the basic component identified as missing, was the peoples direct or parliamentary representation. That the decisions were only made by states. Where the states are recognized as absolute sovereigns, denying their citizens from a world parliamentary representation, and often making decisions based on short-term self-interest, without any international accountability and no judicial oversight.

The fundamental principles derived at and enshrined at the Summit as the Epirus Declaration, are simple principles but yet pillars of good governance which have been ignored and suppressed by powerful states. Recognizing a global citizens right to a healthy and sustainable environment, a UN parliament that can represent us and be empowered to legislate and make co-decisions with states, and a court system to ensure and protect environmental justice are the conceptual requirements of the Declaration, which are always found in national democracies, but are lacking in the UN constitution. In short, the international youth activists, the panel of experts, and concerned world citizens representing 28 different countries in Epirus asked for CLIMATE DEMOCRACY.

Climate Ambassadors, in just four months, you have done a remarkable job around the world. Keep up the good work and be aware of many, especially officials representing states who will tell you, that your proposal is too “idealistic”, that states will never agree to a world parliament or world court, but we can tell them “you are being too naive” thinking that with the dysfunctional or indeed no governance of the climate, the climate crisis will go away.

# CUNCR's partnership with MEP

Fani Tsaroucha, Youth Climate Ambassador and Research fellow



On the 10<sup>th</sup> of October, Dr. Shahr-Yar Sharei and a small YCA committee (Blanca Trepas and Fani Tsaroucha) met with Mr. Domenec Ruiz Devesa, at the premises of the European Parliament for an interesting dialogue which enriched CUNCR's agenda for 2020, and which could eventually turn out as a milestone among CUNCR's activities. Mr. Devesa is a Member of the European Parliament, federal politician of the Spanish Worker's Socialist party and supportive "friend" of the ideas CUNCR for "world federalism" and for the UN Charter reform.

In his article "Federalism and Climate Change"<sup>1</sup>, Mr. Devesa promotes the idea of Dr. Sharei on the reformation of UN Charter party, as well as the formation of the UN Parliamentary Assembly over the UN General Assembly as solutions to go beyond voluntary intergovernmental cooperation which can address climate crisis more effectively.

His interest in the concept of the "San Francisco Promise" can make Mr. Devesa the very first advocacy point of CUNCR's ideas about global governance inside the European Union Parliament. In this regard, Devesa and CUNCR will organize the first event on the EU annual resolution report on the UN in the European Union Parliament on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of May, 2020 and will introduce the idea of UN Charter reform. Considering the potential importance of EU as a model on inter-regional democracy and EU's role within the global Green Deal, CUNCR's ideas on global governance and climate policies may find several allies in the EU parliament forum.

Among the future plans, Devesa is assigned as one of the potential keynote speakers at the event "UN Charter Review: From Cosmetic Reforms to United Nations Renewal", a CUNCR event organized for the time of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations, in June 2020. In a longer term, the continuation of the "How to Assemble Parliamentary Assemblies II" will invite regional parties to connect inter-regional integration actions towards global climate governance and other global crises. Devesa puts this initiative in perspective, by taking into account the mandate for Commission to function as a model of regional democracy and further support inter-regional integration into the global arena<sup>1</sup>. <sup>1</sup>See: [Link](#)

## Model UN Explores Next Generation Governance

Camila Lopez Badra, Executive Director, Democracia Global & Youth Climate Ambassador



"Climate change affects us all. One in four species in the world is in danger of extinction; the oceans are warming; there is an increase in noise, air and water pollution and there is a growing neglect of the environment." — Camila Lopez Badra

As promoters of the UNPA Campaign, Democracia Global organized a model UNPA with students of the Departments of International Relations and Political Science at the Universidad de Belgrano in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Participating in the Parliamentary Commissions were National Deputies Brenda Austin, Alejandro Echegaray, Carla Pitiot, Fernando Iglesias, and UN Officer Cristian Gimenez Corte. The Assembly session took place at the Argentinean National Congress. Federico Pinedo (provisional president), Esteban Bullrich, (senator), and Fernando Iglesias, (national deputy), coordinated the session.

See the world's first Model UNPA: [Youtube link](#)

# Debrief session by UNEP on Nature based solutions

Fani Tsaroucha, Youth Climate Ambassador and Research Fellow



On the 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2019, UNEP invited NGOs and civil society to a “De-briefing session” on the Climate Action Summit and developments on Nature-Based Solutions (NBS). The session was led by the Head of the UN-REDD Programme Secretariat, Mario Bocucci and by the head of Environment and Development of UNEP, Mrs Veronika Hulst. Mr Bocucci as the main coordinator of the discussions, created an open and receptive space for all participants to be listened to and influence the direction of the discussions. Mr Bocucci emphasized the importance of listening to others in collaborative spaces which can be a key for the success and the effectiveness of discussions and to a higher extend of international agreements.

Up until now, there is no cost-efficient man-made technology to store CO<sub>2</sub> in the soil but there are very effective natural mechanisms. Plants for example can act as a CO<sub>2</sub> storing super-machines. However, individual trees alone are not so effective comparing to fully functioning forests and other natural ecosystems. Studies have shown that NBS alone can deliver 12.8 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> mitigation potential which accounts for the 1/3 of the entire Climate Change mitigation efforts. That is why NBS held a big part of discussions to address Climate Change. China together with New Zealand, as leading countries to promote NBS, invited more countries (Portugal, Monaco, Poland, Fiji, Costa Rica, Tajikistan) to co-ally with them. It is the first time that China is participating so actively in the UN actions For Climate. This new level of engagement of China is critical considering the double role of China as the biggest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub> and at the same time the biggest green investor. New Zealand, on the other hand, can serve as a good counterpart on NBS and in prioritizing agriculture-food agenda.

On another note, it was stressed how international agreements and conventions do not hold enough strength to keep countries accountable for their emissions. The power lies upon every country to design a political agenda that will acquire their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and their National Development plan based on Paris agreement. Under the eye of the Standing Committee of Finance of UNFCCC, every country needs to define a strategy to deliver the promises, shift to sustainable finance, build the political capital for NBS sensibilization and education.

Another point that was stressed was that the focus of NBS should not only concern mitigation but also adaptation measures. From that holistic approach on solutions and NDCs, the Standing Committee of Finance of UNFCCC, opens big financial flows towards research on NBS and further tries to set the architecture for payments. The Business Case for Natural Capital is also recruited to engage all the important actors of the market to “green” investments, the supply chain, businesses, cities and infrastructure.

Overall though, the importance of civil society in this effort was the most important element of NBS during the Climate Action Summit in New York and during our de-briefing session at the premises of UNEP in Brussels. Climate Change cannot be combatted without a massive peoples’ movement. And there’s no time for the amplification of the civil society movement to cut through the curve between biodiversity loss and the current economy. Now more than ever, the role of the Youth in creating a vocal and loud movement of young and future voters is crucial.

# Paris Peace Forum on global solutions

**BLANCA TREPAT**

**COMMUNICATIONS & EXTERNAL RELATIONS OFFICER, CUNCR**

On the 12th and 13th of November, our CUNCR team travelled to Paris to attend the Paris Peace Forum. The team was composed of Dr. Sharei, Mamdouh Alqudsi, Blanca Trepata plus two Youth Climate Ambassadors that we met there; Anne-Laure Baldacchino from France and Dalia Marquez from Venezuela.

The Paris Peace Forum is a global platform where this year more than 6,000 participants presented their initiatives and projects to reinvent cooperation for real change. The event brings together high-level policy makers with civil society organizations to focus on sovereignty, gender equality, development, arts and most relevant to CUNCR; for global governance. Addressing the global challenges humanity is facing is the reason that brought all these stakeholders together in one place to discuss.

The event was initiated by French President Emmanuel Macron followed by Ursula Von Der Leyen, president of the EU Commission together with other prominent politicians. Both Macron and Von der Leyen underlined the lack of efficiency of the current system and the need for more cooperation between countries. However, a United World still seems like a long-term project.

For CUNCR, this was a great opportunity to present our proposal for UN reform as a way to better global governance, together with our Youth programs: the Youth Climate Ambassador program and the Model UN Charter Review. In order to do that, we organized two braindates, which is the concept that refers to small group discussions on a topic decided by the host. We had one on UN Security Council Reform and one on Who governs the climate? In both cases participants were very involved and were constantly proposing ideas on how to achieve a more democratic UN or how climate governance can be implemented. However, there was some uncertainty among them on what the path should look like to get to those objectives.



*CUNCR team (left to right): Dalia Márquez, Blanca Trepata, Anne-Laure Baldacchino, Dr. Sharei and a participant of PPF*

Our partners from South Africa, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), also attended the PPF. Their booth was present both days of the conference and they were advocating for a Security Council reform. The decreasing legitimacy of the United Nations and the UN Security Council are the key challenges in today's interconnected world. Getting rid of the system of permanent members and veto rights could allow countries to be elected to represent regions on the UN Security Council on a proportional basis.

The Forum was the perfect opportunity to find partners for our developing projects and specially to connect with potential funding sources such as the Qatar Foundation or UNESCO. Both showed especial interest in our Youth Climate Ambassador expanding network and their mission in promoting climate governance. UNESCO was especially interested in our project of developing educational material in the field of climate governance and asked us to reach them later out. Other remarkable contacts we made are Mo Ibrahim Foundation focused on African governance and Microsoft who are developing a tool for a more transparent democracy.



*Anne-Laure Baldacchino, Dr. Sharei, Blanca Trepata and Mamdouh Alqudsi at PPF*

Also, we took the opportunity to find partners for our Carbon offset project, which we are planning to develop in all the continents starting with Africa. In conclusion, the experience was intense and a continuous source of learning and networking. We are sure that our presence at the Forum will pay off with the launch of our projects and the support of our new contacts.

# School Strike for Climate

Maiya McLean, Youth Climate Ambassador from Australia



Dear Reader,

My name is Maiya and I'm a 16-year-old CUNCR Youth Climate Ambassador from Melbourne, Australia. The topic that I will be discussing is on climate strikes and how they inspire today's youth.

Over the past few months, I have learnt a lot about the environment and the effect humans are having on the ecosystem. One of the main topics I have been focusing on is how the average human effects the environment with what they buy and which companies they support in doing so.

Social media has come to play a big role in educating people all around the world on climate change and it has been a source of communication to organize rallies and strikes. Late in 2018, a Swedish teenager named Greta Thunberg decided that something had to be done. Just prior to her country's Parliamentary election, she went on a strike and sat on the steps of the parliament building in Stockholm. Following this election, she chose to miss classes and sat on the steps of parliament in protest. She called out to other young students around the world, asking them to join her. This soon became a massive campaign called Fridays for future, and the movement inspired and educated thousands of people around the world, including myself.

On March this year I attended my first school strike for climate, and only then did I realize how big of an issue this climate emergency is. I walked into my city to be met with hundreds of students raising their voices to catch the attention of our government and other leaders around the world. Back then, there were 150,000 students and workers that took to the streets all around Australia. The number of people, chants, placards and overall positive attitude inspired me to further educate myself on how I can reduce my carbon footprint, speak up for my future and take action.

Since the strike earlier in the year, social media has become a place for connecting with environmental experts and climate activists all over the world, making it easier to organize global climate strikes. The most recent global strike was on September 20 this year, where people all over the world stopped what they were doing and joined the large crowds gathering all over the globe. I walked into the city expecting around the same number of students to be striking as there were in March but no, this time it was much bigger! Melbourne alone had over 150,000 students, workers and businesses uniting and there was a total of 300,000 in the whole of Australia!

Often there is concern around safety with marches and dealing with such a huge crowd, the possibility of violence is very real at these events. However, the march was extremely safe and full of positivity, peace and passionate people with which I made quite a few friends. All of this made me smile. People who are driven and passionate for the hope of a better future collaborating to stand up to our governments and say enough!

Many people have asked me how a strike would make a difference what with how leaders are responding, particularly given they are ordering us to stay in school where we should be more educated before speaking facts. All I must do is point towards the many differences and decrees that are being made all over the world. Countries are banning plastic bags, people are changing their diets, the way they shop, how they travel, what they write about and what they believe in and support. Those little changes many people are making are contributing to a bigger change, to a healthier planet and society. Yes, most world leaders are fighting back but the good news is we've got their attention, right? The strikes not only catch attention but make today's youth feel.

independent, empowered and heard. Governments need to remember that the students striking will be our world's future voters. Collectively we can make a difference.

See you at the next march!

# CUNCR visits Madrid soon

BLANCA TREPAT

COMMUNICATIONS & EXTERNAL RELATIONS OFFICER, CUNCR



Next week, between the 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of November, the Conference of Youth (COY) will be taking place in Madrid. COY is an event addressed to Youth that takes place in multiple cities every year before the COP. It serves as a preparation session of youth NGOs to develop position papers, network and meet new members, and hold strategic discussions on climate change solutions. The fact that COY is held prior to the dealings in COP to unify the opinion and experience of young people during the year and enforce them at that meeting.

CUNCR team will be arriving in Madrid on the 28<sup>th</sup> to held an event at COY. We will invite youth to participate in a Climathon

dialogue on the current Global Climate Governance systems, simulating a general assembly in a peace village. CUNCR will present three examples that showcase Global Governance loopholes that are the cause of jeopardizing the application of democracy in several cases of climate emergency. The discussions will take place around these three topics divided in three different tables in the form of a “World Café”. All participants will be joining all discussions and get to know the three climate emergency topics. After completing the activity, participants will be invited to join our Youth Climate Ambassador training that will be held in Brussels.

Our initial purpose was to have this event both in COY Chile (under the supervision of our Latin American YCAs) and COY Madrid. However, after cancelling COP in Chile because of the country’s instability, COY Chile followed the same example.

COP Madrid will take place from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> of December where CUNCR will also held a side event within the so-called Blue Zone, space provided for civil society organizations’ conferences. We will present together with two other organizations both based in Latin America; The Millenials Movement and América Solidaria. Due to the last-minute change of venue from Santiago to Madrid and the lack of space in the latter one, the organizational team had to merge the events of different organizations. Fortunately, when having the meeting with our side event partners, we quickly got along and came up with a proposal of event that fits everyone’s interests. The topic will be “Youth: Action and governance for the climate” and will make a total of 6 youth climate activists the protagonists of the conference. They will share their experience, how they got involved, how they organize in the network they are part of etc. The objective is to give voice to the future generations at COP, which this year will mostly focus only on the negotiations, reducing the importance of civil society participation.

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