

Submission from Citizens' Climate Education on ways to enhance participation of non-Party stakeholders in the implementation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement.

23 February 2017

This proposal is built around the same core structure as our submission made 21 May 2016, at request of the Secretariat, for inclusion in the Facilitator's Report on the Informal Consultations on Article 6 of the Convention. That submission was delivered by Joseph Robertson, Global Strategy Director at Citizens' Climate Lobby and Citizens' Climate Education¹, speaking for IAAI² and the Citizens' Climate Engagement Network³.

We would like to thank participating Parties and the Secretariat for supporting full implementation of all aspects of Article 6, including engagement of lay citizens in policy process.

We are working to build an always-active worldwide Citizens' Climate Engagement Network, with coordinated local leadership from NGOs, volunteers and civic leaders. Partners⁴ in the CCEN provide coordinating advice, access to leaders in their networks, and substantive strategy for implementing local engagement in working sessions supported by an evolving CCEN Toolkit⁵ for Local Meetings.

We see four key concepts and actionable priorities as central to success of UNFCCC Article 6, Paris Agreement Article 12, the universalizing of serious, ongoing ACE engagement, and to the success of a timely global transition:

1. **Citizen participation** in national, regional, and global processes
2. **An ACE platform** (similar or linked to NAZCA) for active collaboration and mutual empowerment among non-party actors engaging citizens
3. **Universal stakeholder status**, as under the Aarhus Convention
4. **Principle of mutual education** (governments to citizens, and citizens to governments)

¹ Citizens' Climate Education: <http://citizensclimateeducation.org>

² International Association for the Advancement of Innovative Approaches to Global Challenges: <http://glocha.info>

³ Citizens' Climate Engagement Network: <http://engage4climate.org/about>

⁴ CCEN Advisory Coalition: <http://engage4climate.org/coalition>

⁵ CCEN Toolkit for Local Meetings: <http://engage4climate.org/host>

Each of these should support active, ongoing, stakeholder-to-policy engagement, as laid out below:

1) Citizen participation in national, regional, and global processes

- As the experience of the Aarhus Convention⁶, and of the Post-2015/SDG consultations⁷, show: the bias that wider, or even universal participation is an impediment to rapid progress on ambitious intergovernmental work is unfounded.
- Wherever there is open, routine, well-designed, and locally led citizen participation in policy design, there is likely to be: a lower-cost political pathway to action, with better, more relevant design, and greater resilience for policy efficacy over time.

2) An ACE platform (similar or linked to NAZCA) for active collaboration and mutual empowerment among non-party actors engaging citizens

Where the NAZCA portal focuses on the commitment of non-state actors to direct reductions in overall climate-forcing pollutants or to the active building of resilience, citizens, communities, stakeholders, innovators, educators, policy advocates, and infra-national governments, should be able to convene, connect, share information, learn together, and collaborate for the planning of enhanced climate change mitigation and resilience strategies.

Key goals for this kind of connective-conductive shared learning platform:

- Best practices, adaptive strategies, and replicable solutions are readily available to everyone.
- For the benefit of those facing challenges or needing better ways to engage people locally, nationally or regionally.
- And to better achieve an action-oriented user-friendly curation of relevant work of many networks and processes.⁸

An interactive resource library and convening space is already in development:

⁶The Aarhus Convention: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/aarhus/>

⁷Visualizing People's Voices on the World We Want platform, detailing how more than 8 million individual responses helped inform the 2030 Global Development Agenda: <http://millionvoices-data.worldwewant2015.org/>

⁸A global interactive resource library that facilitates citizen participation in globally networked policy design need not be funded and maintained exclusively or primarily by the Secretariat. Civil society organizations, non-party stakeholders, and others working to facilitate climate education and policy engagement, can provide the framework, the human resourcing, and the operational support to ensure the platform is sustainable and performs at the level and with the reliability required to expand the space for ACE activity around the world.

- Through the Citizens' Climate Engagement Network—which connects people, organizations, and policy analysis, to facilitate more active local engagement on climate policy design and implementation—we are supporting the development of the ACCESS to GOOD⁹ platform.
- ACCESS to GOOD is an interactive resource management and discussion tool¹⁰ that will allow anyone with an internet connection to make substantive contributions relating to their own local knowledge or policy-design priorities, to global discussions, research reporting, and more.
- The aim of this engagement is always to add insight and accelerate progress in the planning and implementation of locally relevant policies that achieve the most good for the most people, never to interfere with high-level deliberations or to add complication to multilateral negotiations.
- Non-expert local insight is needed to support the action-focused building of political will for long-term implementation of the central mandate of the Convention—to avoid dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system—in a way that is fully consistent with durable inclusive environmentally sustainable economic opportunity and prosperity.¹¹

3) Universal stakeholder status, as under the Aarhus Convention

- All people are climate stakeholders.
- The climate system is a physical manifestation of our ethical entanglement with all other people and life-support systems on Earth.
- We cannot afford to continue commercial, national and economic strategies that privilege and reward externalization of harm and cost.
- All people are affected; all people have a role to play.
- Capacity-building assumes education is actionable, and engaged citizens are immediately relevant to both policy design and implementation.
- We should not require evidence of qualification for public participation.
- We should instead aim to honor the principle that all people have value — as this is essentially the moral and legal underpinning of the UNFCCC process, and so success is not ultimately achievable if we do not actively honor this principle.
- Stakeholders' sense of "ownership" of the policy process was a consistent subject of the 4th ACE Dialogues on 18 and 19 May 2016.

⁹The ACCESS to GOOD Project is an open, collaborative, ongoing reporting process, aiming to identify observable levers of action for adding value, momentum, and scope to investments in climate action and resilient human development. It will serve as one of the UN-registered partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals. More information is available at <http://access2good.info>

¹⁰ A video demonstration of the basic infrastructure of this global interactive resource library is available at <http://un.readandnote.com>

¹¹ When citizens have a role in shaping leading-edge climate policy design, we see an enhanced focus on the political wisdom of sustainable practices: engage4climate.org/cocreating

4) Principle of mutual education (governments to citizens, and citizens to governments)

- Full implementation of Article 6 is not only about education and information distribution, but also about active participation of citizens.
- We achieve more progress on building local technical, policy design, and engagement capacity, by involving citizens in direct relationships with officials.
- We should move toward the standard that “education” and “empowerment” imply an ongoing two-way exchange.

Building on the Insights and Progress Achieved in the 4th ACE Dialogue

- In the closing session of the 4th Dialogue on Action for Climate Empowerment, in May 2016, participants called for a focus on lay citizen participation and ongoing collaboration.
- A commitment to facilitation of lay citizen engagement, as integral to implementation of the ACE agenda, was endorsed.
- It was decided a platform should be created to allow non-party ACE leaders to collaborate across the world.
- This initiative was supported directly and explicitly by then Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC Secretariat, Christiana Figueres.

Ultimately, we should be moving toward an open engagement standard for intergovernmental negotiations, where the process is party-driven but where non-party actors—including lay citizens, communities and other stakeholders—can serve as active collaborators in sharing of best practices, coordinating of ambitious policy planning, coordination of outreach, engagement and efficient effective integration of citizens and affected parties into the process.

A shorthand way of saying this would be:

Governments, intergovernmental agencies, non-governmental organizations and businesses can work as equals in the abstract realm of policy design and solutions implementation.

Our brief for partners in the ACE Dialogues is online here: engage4climate.org/civics

Contact and follow-up

For further information on the content of this submission and ongoing engagement activities, contact Citizens’ Climate Education Global Strategy Director, Joseph Robertson, at: jr@citizensclimate.org