



IFSA
Gembloux
- Belgium
@ COP25
Madrid

#TIME FOR ACTION

BY SARAH WERTZ

My highlights into COP25?

COP 25, or the 25th year of the Conference Of the Parties* took place from Monday 2nd of December to Friday 13th of December in Madrid. I attended the second week of COP25 as an IFSA delegate.

(*The countries and territories that have ratified/approved the Convention are called Parties to the Convention. [See list](#))

During that week there were plenty of conferences and side events to attend. Hereunder you will find extracts of events or quotes I thought were interesting to share with you.



COP 25 took place in the Feria de Madrid, a huge building with several halls. It is without saying that we were fit after 5 days walking around!

I was quite surprised to see a Burger King inside the building. Nevertheless, there were other options to fill our stomachs (quite expensive though).

There was also a possibility to register for free Vegan Meals, which I did (see picture above).

"Each time we eat and drink we can vote for the world we want to live in." (Danone's vision)



You can learn more about SustainaClaus at:

- [ExtinctionSolution.com](#)
- [SDGchallenge.com](#)
You can listen to:
- Panic song by Lauren eyton-Jones

I met SustainaClaus, a Sustainable Santa who asks parents and presents givers to think sustainable at this time of the year. Christmas is about being together and doing things from the heart. Everyone can be part of the solution!

SusatinaClaus carries around "LCP", the Low Carbon Panda for him to share 3 things:

"1. **Smile** and make other people happy|2. **Change** something about yourself because you can't change others.|3. **Unplug**"



The executive director of Greenpeace International, Jennifer Morgan (see picture above) shared her view of COP25 on human rights' day:

"The Climate crisis is a human rights' crisis. On this human rights' day, countries should be declaring a climate emergency and coming forward in the negotiations to immediately increase their ambitions. But in the 25 years that I have been at every COP, I have never seen the gap bigger between the inside of these walls and the outside, as it is right now [...]."

YOUTH



Fridays For Future & Greta

On Monday, "Fridays For Future" and Greta Thunberg organized a press conference, moderated by Luisa Neubauer from Germany. It had such a big media attention that only people from the press were allowed inside the room. I then watched the conference live from my phone, through the COP25 app.

- The conferences and side events have been recorded and are **available on the app** (available through Play Store)!

During the press conference, 6 Youth Climate Activists from the Global South and indigenous communities shared their stories. Among them, **Carlton Zackhras**, from the Marshall Islands.

"We've been told that if we want to stay in our islands, we'd have to adapt and elevate; with migration as the only plan B. [...] The Marshall Islands' contribution to climate change is only 0.00001 % of the world's emissions."

On Friday, "Fridays For Future" organized another conference where Xiye Bastida, from Mexico, said :

"People who are at COP are privileged enough to be here; because we can make the climate crisis our immediate need. With that privilege we have a responsibility: speaking up about climate injustice; building partnerships; expressing our worries and hopes for the future. [...] The Youth of the world are uniting behind the same goal, and now we need intergenerational cooperation to solve it."

20%

Youth are 20% of the present

100%

But we are 100 % of the future."



Meeting with the IFSA delegates in the morning to debrief each other's impressions so far

CLIMATE COLLAGE



©<http://climatecollage.org/>
<https://fresqueduclimat.org/>

Cédric Ringenbach is a French climate expert and teacher. One day, while teaching climate change, he proposed to his students to classify graphs of IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), which illustrated the causes and effects of climate change. Students discussed, exposed their point of view and took team decisions on the logical succession of activities (causes) and effects (consequences). Year after year, Cedric improved his method and designed a 42dynamic cards-game, based on collective intelligence and creativity.

Last year, Cédric set up an association in France, whose aim is to spread the game widely and raise awareness on climate change. He already trained about 100 moderators and with them reached more than 20 000 people. Their goal is to reach 1 000 000 people! The game can be downloaded freely and printed all over the world (available in 14 languages!).

Good to know

The Climate Collage is protected by Intellectual Property, by the **Creative Commons license BY-NC-ND**. Which means:

- If you want to use it FOR FREE**
it's completely free of use, as long as you use it for free yourself.
- If you want to use it FOR PROFIT**
It is also possible to go into companies for trainings as a moderator and ask for money. In that case, you must give 10% of the amount to the association.

There are 2 versions: kids' (7-14 years olds) with 21 cards and the standard version for adults (42 cards).
Enjoy!



WINNER OF CAN'S COP25 COLOSSAL FOSSIL

During UN climate change negotiations, members of the worldwide environmental network, the CAN*, vote for the country judged to have made the worst input to the negotiations. 1, 2 or 3 Fossil-of-the-day awards are presented each conference day, depending on the number of countries **with outstanding efforts to block progress at the negotiations** in the last days.

- Brazil** is the winner of CAN's COP25 colossal fossil

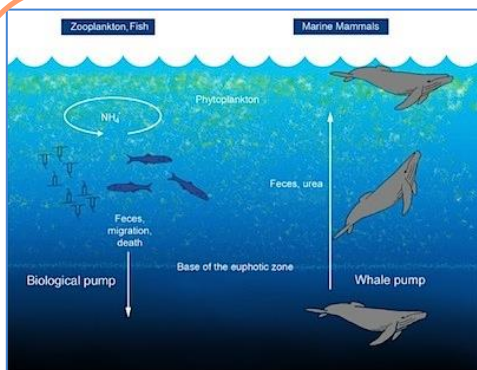
"Cradle of the UNFCCC and widely praised for impressive emission cuts in the last decade, Brazil has become a climate pariah. [...] Brazil had some bizarre behaviors in Madrid, such as blocking mention to human rights on article 6.4 and opposing language on "climate emergency" in the COP decision."

- Ray of the Year goes to **Indigenous People** and the **Youth**

"Despite exclusions and silencing, **Indigenous People** continue to safeguard environmental and cultural diversity and integrity." [...]

The resilience of the **young people** around the world, their courage and determination to never let politicians get away with destruction of their hopes and dreams that is truly inspiring."

*CAN, CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK
https://m.facebook.com/FossilOfTheDay/about/?ref=page_internal&mt_nav=0



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THE MARINE ARCTIC PEACE SANCTUARY (MAPS)

"For millions of years, the ice of the Arctic Ocean has kept our planet cool. It regulates the global weather patterns that we rely on so that we have food and the resources that that we need to survive. Not only is the Arctic Ocean a key habitat for rare and vulnerable species like the polar bear, it's also a habitat for 17 different species of whales, 3 of them live there full time. Seals, sea birds, hundreds of species of fish, deep sea coral (vital to our oceans) also live there.

whales bring nutrients from the ocean's depths, to fertilize the tiny phytoplankton that live at the ocean's surface. The phytoplankton then feed krill which feeds small fish, which feed big fish benefiting the entire ecosystem; and actually forming the foundation for the global food chain.

In addition, phytoplankton are responsible for **50% of all oxygen** produced globally and they **absorb +- 40% of global CO₂** production. It is equivalent to the absorption of CO₂ of 1.7 trillion trees per year." (Vandana Erin Ryder, Parvati.org's General Counsel and Communications Manager)

Many people don't know the key role whales play in regulating our entire global climate system. It is known as the **whale-pump effect**:

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE



-International Indian Treaty Council
December 13, 2019 @ 13:30

On the COP25 app's Webcast, you'll be able to view all the different conferences that were organized by indigenous people.

At the COP, I had the feeling that the organizers really enabled youth and indigenous people to express themselves. Then, let's hope that the countries and governments take the right decisions on this basis.



Asian Region representative, Naw Ei Ei Min has received the "Women of Change Awards" in 2017. She is the director of **POINT** (Promotion Of Indigenous and Nature Together, Myanmar); she is an executive council member of **AIPP** (Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact) which advocates for sustainable environmental and economic policies for all people in Myanmar, regardless of gender and ethnicity.

"Highlight from the perspective of our Asia region. First of all, for indigenous people, we think forests are our supermarket, mountains are our home, culture is our life, and rivers are our blood. The way we live is already the solution to this climate change problem. The way we're living can mitigate the emissions [...]."



North American Region representative, Janene Yazzie, on behalf of the International Indian Treaty Council where she is program manager of sustainable community development.

«It's so frustrating, because the States are still indicating that they do not understand the gravity of the situation that we're in. [...] We cannot buy our way out of this situation; we cannot trade the solutions by bidding a price on carbon and on the way that we reinvest and reestablish our responsibilities to our world. When we're advocating for the rights of our peoples, and for spaces and visibility in these events, we're advocating for everyone; for all of our vulnerable communities; for humanity and for all forms of secret life.»

But, what exactly is COP & where does it come from?

UNCED* and UNFCCC

It all started in Rio de Janeiro, in June 1992 during the **UNCED***, or the "Earth Summit". The purpose of this conference was to rethink economic growth, advance social equity and ensure environmental protection (reliefweb, 2012). In other words, reconcile worldwide economic development with protection of the environment (Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.).

(*United Nations Conference on Environment and Development)

The conference delivered 2 major types of outputs.

First, three major agreements were adopted:

Agenda 21 (21st century), **the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development** and **the Statement of Forest Principles**.

Second, two Conventions were created and opened to signature. The **CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity)** and the Global Warming convention or more commonly known as the **UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change)**.

These conventions are legally binding instruments (UN, n.d.).

It means that for CBD, Nations need to take inventories of their plants and wild animals as well as protect their endangered species. As for UNFCCC, Nations need to reduce their emission of carbon dioxide, methane and other greenhouse gases thought to be responsible for global warming. Nevertheless, the later Convention did not set binding targets for emission reductions (Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.).

UNFCCC, a convention and COP, a conference

The UNFCCC is the international response to climate change, establishing a framework with broad principles, general obligations, basic institutional arrangements for the 197 Parties to combat climate change (UNSCN, n.d.; UNFCCC, n.d.b). It was signed by the Parties in 1992 but came into force in 1994.

The objective of the UNFCCC is to **“stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system”** (UNFCCC, n.d.b).

The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the supreme decision-making body of the UNFCCC. It is the time of the year when the Parties meet to review progress and consider on-going efforts as well as take further steps to enhance them (UNFCCC, n.d.b).



The first COP took place in 1995 in Berlin and since then, COPs have been organized in different countries of the world, making it the 25th organized COP this year (2019) in Madrid.

COP and the Paris Agreement

As mentioned previously, targets for emission reductions were not established in the UNFCCC. They were eventually negotiated through a protocol to the Convention, the **Kyoto Protocol** (in 1997, Japan). It was later improved and replaced by the **Paris Climate Agreement***, at COP 21 (in 2015, France) (Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.).

(*In full, the **Paris Agreement Under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**)

If the Parties don't implement their commitments, moral pressure and trade sanctions can be applied (Newell P., 2015).

COP21 was one of the most important and most ambitious global climate meetings ever assembled. The Paris Agreement's central aim is **to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by designing a universal agreement to limit greenhouse gas emissions to levels that would prevent global temperatures from increasing more than 2°C above the temperature benchmark set before the beginning of the Industrial Revolution** (UNFCCC, n.d.a; Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019). The Agreement opened for signature on Earth Day 2016 and came into force in November that same year. See the status of Ratification [here](#).

COP25 and IFSA

Beside the discussions of the Parties, civil society and non-governmental organizations organize many events such as workshops or roundtable conferences to raise awareness about climate change (climate collage, n.d.). Fourteen (14) IFSA delegates were at COP25 as **observers**. This status enabled us to enter the building and attend all events that were public. Furthermore, IFSA was represented by a delegate on the Panel of The High Level Meeting on Forests Organized by the Presidency of COP25 themed "inclusive and sustainable actions for forests." This was mainly to promote the mainstraming of especially youth in the academia.

What about Madrid?

THE CITY OF MADRID

Madrid is a modern and very well connected capital city.

I found people very friendly, very animated streets and shops opened until 8 to 10 pm.

I would definitely recommend you to visit Madrid!



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Being part of the IFSA delegation, I found myself very lucky to attend such an international conference. **Thank you** to IFSA members who make these opportunities possible. Let's all work on growing this amazing Association. I am motivated to continue on growing our LC back home and taking part in other meetings and activities. I wish you all a great and fruitful year 2020! **Cheers!**

References - for you to go further

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