



Quaker United Nations Office Geneva Geneva Reporter

What is an NDC? Elements for a New Climate Agreement

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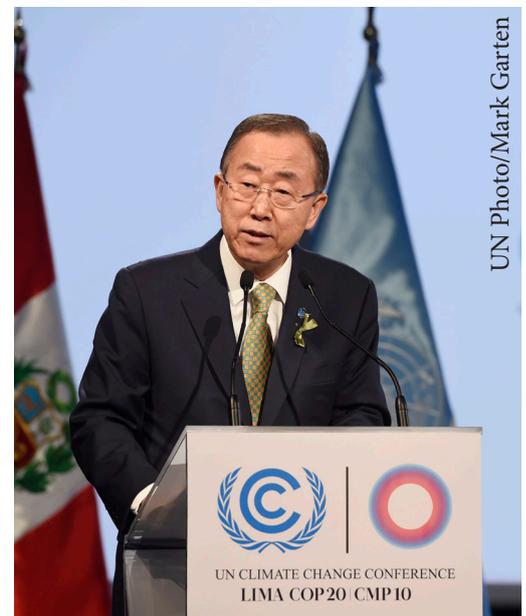
QUNO supports an ambitious, transparent and just climate agreement

Nature does not engage in political compromise, which makes it an extraordinary partner at the UNFCCC negotiations. Climate science is an unusual negotiating platform, with its clarity on the rate and rise of global mean temperature due to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Then there is the human factor, and the extent of personal and political responsibility that we are willing to take in facing this crisis.

Negotiators at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are working toward drafting a legally binding agreement, this December at the Conference of Parties (COP) 20 in Lima, Peru. The aim is to adopt the new agreement at the COP 21 in Paris, with an implementation date of 2020, the same year that GHG emissions must peak if we are to ensure the global mean temperature increase does not rise above 1.5°C to 2°C. Temperatures have already risen 0.8°C since 1880.

Within the draft agreement are “nationally determined contributions” (NDCs), intended to identify each country’s mitigation and adaptation contributions. Transparent, verifiable and legally binding NDCs would enable the global community, including decision makers

and civil society, to ensure everyone is on target to protect the most vulnerable now and future generations, from catastrophic anthropogenic climate. However, there is deep concern that NDCs will not become legally binding targets, and will result in a “grab bag” of low emission ambition.



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addresses the UN Climate Change Conference in Lima, Peru.

The negotiations around NDCs are also a debate about justice. How do we face up to our role in creating, and exacerbating, this climate crisis? These questions are debated through the concepts of equity, historical responsibility and “common but differentiated responsibilities” and respective capabilities. Leadership from industrialised countries in mitigation and finance would greatly help to heal the anger, mistrust and disappointment embedded in these debates, addressing what is termed “climate justice.”

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Drones: Transparency and Protection

As civilians continue to represent the vast majority of casualties in armed conflicts, and new weapons technologies present fresh challenges for civilian protection, QUNO chaired a discussion in Geneva addressing the psychological impacts of drone warfare, and the challenges of casualty recording.

In November, QUNO chaired an event of the Geneva Forum entitled *New Warfare Challenges: Drone Operations and Protection of Civilians*. Baher Amzy from the Centre for Constitutional Rights and Kate Hofstra from Every Casualty Worldwide led the discussions, and the panel attracted over sixty State and NGO representatives to address these underexplored issues.

Examples were given of the effects on communities living under sustained drone presence and how the fear of becoming the next victim of a drone strike

affects people's willingness to attend cultural events, public gatherings or even school. Impacts include post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, stress, emotional breakdowns, and physical ailments that can also have long term effects on societies.

The discussion addressed how lack of transparency in the use of drones presents a significant obstacle to measuring the civilian impact of drone strikes. For example, the three countries currently using armed drones (Israel, the United States, and the United Kingdom) do not conduct any public, systematic casualty recording. It became clear that NGOs provide most of the data for casualty recording, although they face significant challenges in accessing dangerous areas. Without the recording of casualties, it is not possible to have an informed debate about the use of drones and their moral and legal legitimacy.

I Belong: Eradicating Statelessness

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has launched a campaign to eradicate statelessness within 10 years.

Statelessness describes the status of a person without a recognized nationality. There are believed to be at least 10 million stateless people in the world today. People who are stateless are often unable to exercise their rights. They may not be able to access State services (such as healthcare or education) or State protection from violence, discrimination or crime. Where statelessness results from ethnic or religious discrimination, these risks are exacerbated.

UNHCR's campaign aims to end statelessness altogether. To achieve this ambitious goal, UNCHR outlines straightforward steps like ensuring that women can transmit nationality and guaranteeing

birth registration. The campaign is designed as a "tool box" with which States can design National Action Plans appropriate to national contexts.

QUNO has been raising issues of concern about stateless people since the 1990s when Rachel Brett first became aware of the issue in the context of her work on child soldiers. Seeing the impact and the lack of attention being paid to the issue QUNO has sought to support UNHCR's work in this area ever since.

QUNO continues to encourage States to make recommendations to ratify the two Statelessness Conventions in the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review process, and from now on will also be encouraging States to adopt their own national action plans to eradicate statelessness.



Biological Diversity, Food Security and Small-Scale Farmers' Innovation

QUNO broadens the focus of its intellectual property work to ensure that the importance of small-scale farmer innovation is recognized and promoted in international policymaking.

The world's 1.5 billion small-scale farmers are at the frontlines of figuring out how to respond to accelerating and unpredictable global environmental change. One component of small-scale farmer innovation is genetic resource innovation: maintaining and developing agricultural biological diversity for changing conditions (such as increased soil salinity or more frequent and/or prolonged drought). This provides the evolutionary basis for food security for the planet. But small-scale farmers' innovation systems reach beyond genetic resource innovation and include innovative and evolving management practices that provide critical ecosystem services, direct health and nutritional benefits and the foundation to improve local livelihoods.

The use of intellectual property (IP) in agriculture has a relatively short history, and the impact of IP on

biological diversity, food security and public health is not yet clear. It is an open question whether some form of intellectual property is either necessary or the most appropriate tool to support the dynamic and essential genetic resource innovation and management systems of small-scale farmers. The challenge is how to design a coherent legal regime that supports all types of innovation and management systems, including those of small-scale farmers.

However, small-scale farmers are poorly represented in key international fora such as the World Trade Organization and the World Intellectual Property Rights Organization, so their concerns are often unheard. To address this problem, QUNO has launched a project geared towards putting small-scale farmer innovation firmly back on the international agenda. Our objectives are threefold: to identify drivers and motivations for small-scale farmer innovation; to understand schemes and instruments that promote such innovation; and to assess the use and impacts of flexibilities in existing multilateral IP and innovation frameworks.

In 2015, QUNO will convene a broadly representative group of experts to identify key research themes in these areas. In addition to publishing briefing and research papers, QUNO will develop an interactive policy decision tool. This tool, based on a collaborative 'Wiki'-style model, will help support understanding of these issues and promote their practical operation. This project is part of our programme examining the multilateral agreements on trade, investment and intellectual property and seeking to ensure that food security objectives are addressed.

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Martin Kunz/QUNO



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However, support for climate financing initiatives has been shockingly low; recent pledges are encouraging but remain just one third of the promised amount. Similarly, while recent mitigation targets set by the European Union, the United States and China are politically significant (GHG emissions from the three combined amount to 50% of the global total), they are unfortunately not sufficient to limit the average global temperature increase to 2°C or below.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reminds us that we have the means to limit climate change, to build a better future, and that the costs of taking action are nothing compared to the cost of inaction. Nature will not compromise, science has done its homework; we now seek leaders with the courage and political will to ensure a future for all.

Highlights from QUNO New York

The recent months have been exciting here in New York. We welcomed former Programme Assistant Rachel Singleton-Polster back as our first QUNO Fellow, participated in the Peoples' Climate March with other Quakers and people of faith, hosted a photo exhibit at Quaker House highlighting the Peacebuilding work of African Friends, and continued our work on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

In November, QUNO New York Director Andrew Tomlinson spoke on an expert panel as part of a four-day seminar entitled *Freedom from Violence: Peace, Security and Conflict Prevention in the Post-2015 Development Agenda*. Hosted by the World Federation

of United Nations Associations (WFUNA), and joined by representatives from Beyond2015 Campaign and Save the Children, QUNO New York shared a series of insights and reflections with participants representing United Nations Associations from Armenia, India, Uganda, Rwanda, South Africa, and Venezuela. A lively interactive discussion followed the initial presentation, as participants shared national perspectives and priorities for the year ahead.

As we look ahead to the holidays and the New Year we are saddened to say goodbye to long-time New York Representative Sarah Clarke, but we are excited to welcome a new staff member in January.

News in Brief

In December we bid farewell to **Claire Rodgers**, Project Officer, Food & Sustainability. Claire joined us in September 2013 as a Programme Assistant, and is now going to work with the land rights movement Ekta Parishad in India, before beginning a Masters programme at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.

Our sincere gratitude goes out to Claire, and we wish her all the best with her future plans.

Meanwhile, work has commenced on the renovation of Quaker House, Geneva, starting with the conversion of the first floor bathroom into much needed office space.

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