



UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE COPENHAGEN, DENMARK 7 TO 18 DECEMBER 2009

A SPECIAL REPORT ON THE NYAA'S PARTICIPATION AT COP15, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

James Soh, Executive Director, National Youth Achievement Award (NYAA) Council, Aileen Yap, Deputy Executive Director, NYAA Council and Hon Advisors of the United Nations Environment Programme – South East Asia Youth Environment Network (UNEP SEAYEN) attended the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark from 7 to 18 December 2009. Also at the conference was Kenneth Wong, an NYAA Gold Award holder, British Council International Climate Champion and Co-ordinator for British Council East Asia.

Klimaforum09

During the conference in Copenhagen, the NYAA team attended the Opening Ceremony of the Klimaforum09, which was known as the People's Climate Summit held at the DGI-byen Copenhagen. At the event, Mr Soh held talks with Tony Anderson, Chairman, Organising Committee of the Klimaforum09 on how young people can play a key role in influencing political leaders on issues related to climate change. At the Klimaforum09, a workshop was conducted by writer and environmental activist Bill McKibben to allow participants to gain a better understanding of 350, the safe upper limit for carbon dioxide (measured in parts per million) in our atmosphere. Also at the workshop was H.E. Mohamed Nasheed, President of the Maldives who said his country is very much aware of the threat of rising sea levels. He urged everyone to unite in mitigating the threat of climate change.

In Copenhagen, Mr Soh also met Prof Katherine Richardson, Chairperson of the Danish Government's Climate Commission to discuss the establishment of a bi-lateral youth environmental exchange programme between Denmark and Singapore. Prof Richardson supported the idea.



COP15 Meeting held at the Bella Centre, Copenhagen, Denmark.



James Soh, Executive Director, NYAA Council with Tony Anderson, Chairman, Klimaforum09.



Mr Soh with Prof Katherine Richardson, Chairperson of the Danish Government's Climate Commission at the University of Copenhagen.



Kenneth Wong, Singapore's youth representative at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

Earth Day Network

The NYAA team also attended the Earth Day 2010 Networking Session and Earth Day 2010 Official Press Conference at the Bella Centre. Mr Soh and Ms Yap held discussions with Kathleen Rogers, President of Earth Day Network regarding future partnerships and collaboration between the NYAA Singapore and Earth Day Network, which is based in Washington D.C. The Earth Day Network will be celebrating its 40th Anniversary in 2010, and the NYAA Singapore has accepted the Earth Day Network's invitation to organise a major event in Singapore to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day in April 2010.



James Soh, Executive Director, NYAA Council and Aileen Yap, Deputy Executive Director, NYAA Council with Kathleen Rogers, President of Earth Day Network and Nate Byer, Global Director, Earth Day 2010.

Seal the Deal Campaign

The NYAA's Seal the Deal Campaign banners were displayed at the giant Climate Maze in Kongens Nytorv Square in the centre of the COP15 host city of Copenhagen, Denmark organised by the UNEP. The Seal the Deal Campaign was the brainchild of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon which aims to galvanize political will and public support in reaching a new climate agreement during the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. The NYAA Singapore supported the UN Secretary-General's call and the Seal the Deal Campaign in Singapore was officially launched by Mah Bow Tan, Minister for National Development and Co-Chairman, Inter-Ministerial Committee on Sustainable Development on 2 October 2009.

The Climate Maze and its accompanying Hard Rain photographic exhibition were officially opened by the Copenhagen Mayor for Technical and Environmental Administration, Klaus Bondam, the UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner, and Hard Rain project creator, Mark Edwards.



H.E. Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary-General addressing the delegates at the United Nations Climate Change Conference.



Mayor Klaus Bondam and UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner at the opening of the Climate Maze and Hard Rain Project at Kongens Nytorv Square, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Meeting with Minister

In Copenhagen, the NYAA team also took the opportunity to brief Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources on the NYAA's contributions at the conference. Minister Yaacob was very pleased to hear about the NYAA's participation and contributions.



NYAA's Seal the Deal banners at the Kongens Nytorv Square Climate Maze.



The NYAA's team with Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources in Copenhagen.

Climate Summit for Mayors

The NYAA team was also invited to the Climate Summit for Mayors at the Copenhagen City Hall. At the Climate Summit for Mayors, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, World Bank President Robert Zoellick and Virgin Group Chairman, Sir Richard Branson encouraged mayors to run their cities like 'great companies'. They also advised local governments to work with the private sector and look for gaps in the market place, and for cities to find opportunities for retrofitting existing buildings to make them more energy-efficient.

The NYAA team also took the opportunity to share with mayors on Singapore's strategies for sustainable growth. The NYAA Council will be sending the book entitled *A Lively and Liveable Singapore: Strategies for Sustainable Growth* to the mayors who have expressed their interest to learn more about Singapore's experiences and strategies for sustainable development. The Ministry of National Development has kindly provided the NYAA Council with the books.



Mr Soh with Robert Doyle, Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Australia.



Mr Soh with Gregor Robertson, Mayor of Vancouver, Canada.



Mr Soh having a discussion with Klaus Bondam, Mayor of Copenhagen, Denmark.

At the various NGO-related events, the NYAA team took the opportunity to share about Singapore's 3P (People, Public & Private) concept and many NGOs were very impressed with how the Singapore government works in partnership with community-based organisations and corporations to tackle the issue of climate change.

"The conference was a good experience for me especially working alongside very passionate youth leaders who also care about the environment. I am inspired to contribute more towards the environmental cause."

***Kenneth Wong
NYAA Gold Award holder and
British Council International
Climate Champion***



James Soh, Executive Director, NYAA Council, Aileen Yap, Deputy Executive Director, NYAA Council with Becky Anderson, CNN Anchor at Copenhagen.



Mr Soh and Ms Yap with the Danish university students campaigning for ACTIONAID.

The NYAA team also benefited from the various sideline meetings with political leaders, senior government officials, international NGOs and corporations during the COP15 Summit. The event provided an excellent platform for networking with like-minded organisations that are also passionate about protecting the environment.

Although countries represented at Copenhagen missed the opportunity to make significant progress towards a global agreement, we expect continuous efforts by governments to forge such an agreement in the coming months, based on the Copenhagen Accord.

Singapore has committed to cut its carbon emissions by 16 percent below business as usual levels by 2020. This is not a light commitment, and achieving this target will require all levels of society, from households to firms, to make significant adjustments. The NYAA Council will work with its youth leaders to support Singapore's commitment through various youth environmental projects.



A forum on Building Asia Network for Responding to Climate Change at the Bella Centre.



Dr Rajendra Kumar Pachauri, Chief of UN IPCC addressing the United Nations Climate Change Conference.



Kenneth Wong with former British Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott at the Bella Centre, Copenhagen.



Aileen Yap and James Soh with international action superstar and Founder of One Foundation Jet Li in Copenhagen.



CNN Debate on Climate Change hosted by Becky Anderson, Anchor, CNN in Copenhagen.

“Even though no formal agreement was reached in Copenhagen, I am confident that youths around the world will continue to play a key role within their community and do their part to help mitigate climate change.”
James Soh PBM MBE
Executive Director
National Youth Achievement Award Council
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