



# UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE CANCUN, MEXICO 29 NOVEMBER – 10 DECEMBER 2010

## A SPECIAL REPORT ON NYAA'S REPRESENTATION AT COP16, CANCUN, MEXICO

Almost a year since COP15/CMP5 was held in Copenhagen, Denmark in December 2009, the international negotiation addressing the issues related to Climate Change was once again brought up for discussion. Kenneth Wong, NYAA Gold Award Holder, Chairman, GAHA's Youth Environment Committee, and British Council Climate Champion, and Mark Cheng, NYAA Gold Award Holder, Representative of World Ocean Network and Executive Director, Avelife Foundation, attended the United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference – COP16/CMP6 in Cancun, Mexico held from 29 November to 10 December 2010.

The United Nations Climate Change Conference 2010 was officially opened by H.E. President Felipe Calderon of Mexico.

### Conference of Youth (COY6)

A prelude to the actual UN Climate Change Conference, Conference of Youth is the International Youth Conference on Climate Change where young people offer positive solutions and share experiences with one another to counteract the biggest environmental problem facing the world today. Held at the Universidad del Caribe from 26 to 28 November 2010, COY6 had gathered youth from around the world to listen and talk with pro-active people about the threats of altering weather patterns and other relevant topics.

During the closing session of COY6, Bill McKibben, environmental activist and co-founder of World 350.org, one of the most notable groups that have had extensive international outreach in rallying support on the need to effectively address climate change, discussed with the delegates on the roles young people have to play to combat climate change. He also provided the COY6 delegates with a thorough understanding of World 350.org and the campaigns it has organized to advocate for actions to be taken by governments in tackling climate change issues.



Mark Cheng, NYAA Gold Award holder, with the Head of Singapore Delegation, Ambassador Burhan Gafoor at Cancun, Mexico.



H.E. President Felipe Calderon of Mexico opened the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Cancun, Mexico.



H.E. Patricia Espinosa Cantellano, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mexico and President, COP16/CMP 6, addressing the conference.



Kenneth Wong, NYAA Gold Award holder, with H.E. Patricia Espinosa Cantellano, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mexico and President, COP16/CMP6, in Cancun, Mexico.

***"Tackling climate change should not only be done by the government but all sectors across the community (stakeholders of all ranges) including the youth should participate and play a vital role in advocating for positive changes."***

***H.E. Patricia Espinosa Cantellano  
Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mexico and  
President COP16/CMP6***

# United Nations Climate Change Conference – COP16/CMP6

With 194 countries represented in this Climate Change Conference, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres said in her opening address that governments had revealed a growing convergence and that a balanced set of decisions under both the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol could be an achievable outcome in Cancun. At the same time, she also noted that a number of politically charged issues need to be resolved in order to reach such an outcome.

Kenneth Wong, who is also a member of the Young NGO (YOUNGO) network, was delighted to see that the youth's efforts to lobby for an international agreement in this area had not gone unnoticed during the conference. The COP16 delegates reached an agreement on Climate Change. They passed Article 6 of the Convention, which focuses on Climate Change education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information and international cooperation. Article 6 was the first agreement reached by 194 parties during the COP16.

Kenneth was also selected to attend the High-Level Youth Meeting with H.E. Patricia Espinosa Cantellano, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mexico and President, COP16/CMP6. In the meeting, Minister Espinosa highlighted that every country has its own stand and political agenda on how it should tackle climate change; it is always difficult to compromise and come to a common agreement. Thus, she stressed that reaching an international agreement is not easy. Minister Espinosa said that tackling climate change should not only be done by the government but all sectors across the community (stakeholders of all ranges) including the youth should participate and play a vital role in advocating for positive changes.



H.E. President Felipe Calderon, Mexico, H.E. Patricia Espinosa Cantellano, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mexico and President COP16/CMP6 and Christiana Figueres, UNFCCC Executive Secretary at the COP16 Conference held in Cancun, Mexico.



Speakers sharing practical examples and lessons learnt at the conference.



UNFCCC Final Plenary, COP16, Cancun, Mexico.



Young people from the Asian Region sharing their views and experiences at a working group session at COY6.

A meeting between the High-Level NGOs and UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres was also conducted during the Climate Change Conference. Kenneth was selected to attend the meeting where Ms Figueres, like Minister Espinosa, admitted that coming to a common agreement among various countries is never easy. Ms Figueres also set a reality check with all the NGOs present by saying that "if we have unrealistic expectations, we will not get anything in the end."

One of the side events during the COP16 was a presentation on capacity-building as a driver of low-emission, climate-resilient development. It focused on the UN's approach, experience and readiness to support capacity development towards addressing climate change. Speakers shared practical examples and lessons learnt from different areas such as adaptation, mitigation, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) and finance, and discussed the "One UN" experience of capacity support.

***It was an enriching experience of a lifetime to meet and discuss with political and corporate leaders on their thoughts on climate change issues and finding a win-win solution in mitigating the threat of climate change in Cancun, Mexico."***

***Kenneth Wong  
NYAA Gold Award holder,  
British Council International Climate Champion and  
Chairman, NYAA GAHA's Youth Environment Committee***

## Climate Change Communication Forum

The Climate Change Communication Forum was held on 3 December 2010 in conjunction with the UN Climate Change Conference. It gathered distinguished speakers such as Juan Rafael Elvira Quesada, Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources, Mexico, Eileen Claussen, President of the Pew Centre on Global Climate Change, and Dr Rajendra K. Pachauri, Chairman of UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, to discuss about the importance of communication and the medium of communication used to bring the knowledge of climate change to the community to increase their awareness and encourage their involvement in this global issue.

Kenneth Wong raised an intervention during the forum, stressing that “no doubt that the new media is surging and has become one of the most important media tools to use but let’s not forget about the majority of the population who are still unaware of climate change issues. Most of them come from developing countries and do not even have sufficient money to make ends meet, needless to say about having no computer and internet access to online information. These populations are exactly who we need to reach out to. Thus, our challenge now is how do we bring the message to these people?”



Kenneth Wong with Christiana Figueres, UNFCCC Executive Secretary, in Cancun, Mexico.



Dialogues and discussions with distinguished speakers, Sir Richard Branson, Chairman, Virgin Group of Companies and Ted Turner, Founder, Cable News Network (CNN), at the World Climate Summit.



Attendees at the Dialogue with Heads of State panel: Keeping long term ambitions on the fight against climate change, at the Moon Palace venue.



Kenneth Wong with Dr Rajendra Kumar Pachauri, Chief of United Nations IPCC, at the COP16 Conference.

## World Climate Summit

The World Climate Summit is the business and finance conference that hastens solutions to climate change. This exclusive conference is a new open and collaborative platform where the most inspiring, influential and innovative business, finance, and government leaders convene to collaborate, implement, and scale solutions locally and globally for the next 10 years.

Kenneth Wong was one of the few youth leaders selected to attend the World Climate Summit to have dialogues and discussions alongside distinguished speakers such as Sir Richard Branson, Chairman of the Virgin Group of Companies, Ted Turner, Founder of the Cable News Network (CNN), and Lord Nicholas Stern, Chairman of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, London School of Economics, and many more.



At the closing plenary, a round of applause for the President of COP16, UNFCCC Executive Secretary and Deputy Executive Secretary.

# Climate Change Village

As part of the Mexican Government's initiative to promote community initiatives, Climate Change Village was organized for the local citizens to participate and receive information about the latest issues relating to climate change.

Many locals seized the opportunity to bring their families and friends to visit the Climate Change Village and pledge their support to combat climate change.



Félix González Canto, Governor of the State of Quintana Roo, Mexico, gave a speech in the inauguration of the Climate Change Village.

***"We are indeed grateful and thankful for the opportunity to participate in such an important conference on climate change at Cancun, Mexico. As we represent the next generation of leaders, we feel that we are now more equipped with the knowledge to play a more active role in environmental protection."***

***Mark Cheng  
NYAA Gold Award holder,  
Executive Director, Avelife Foundation and  
Representative, World Ocean Network***



Kenneth Wong with Nolana E. Lynch, British Council Climate Champion, Trinidad and Tobago, at the Youth Forum.

## Youth & Climate Change

Kenneth Wong and Mark Cheng were very encouraged that youth leaders like them were provided an opportunity and platform to be engaged with Environment Ministers and key players in mitigating the threat of Climate Change.

They have shown that the youth can certainly play a role in providing inputs and raising the level of awareness on climate change in their respective countries.

***"The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow, therefore it is imperative to provide our outstanding youth leaders with the opportunity and platform to be engaged at the national and international levels on issues that are close to their heart. Climate Change is one such important issue, wherein youth leaders can play a pro-active role as it will affect them in the future."***

***James Soh PBM MBE  
Executive Director  
National Youth Achievement Award Council Singapore  
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Kenneth having fun with the Climate Change Mascot at the Climate Change Village.



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