



EVENT REPORT

Global Climate Alliance (GCA) Collaborative

White Paper Launch and Engaging Discussion with Youth Climate Leaders

Saturday, 17 June 2023, Zoom

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On Saturday, the 17th of June, the Global Climate Alliance (GCA) Collaborative launched a white paper series detailing its conceptual and empirical work, as well as the [official GCA website](#). The launch was led by Shri Jayant Sinha, member of the Indian parliament and Chair of the Indian Standing Committee on Finance, who gave an insightful keynote address on the importance of a global climate alliance. His speech was followed by an engaging discussion with three youth climate leaders: Maxime van Hove, G7 EU youth head delegate for Climate and Environment; Caillum Hedderman, G20 EU youth head delegate for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction; and Jessica Ndlovu, G20 South Africa youth head delegate Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction. The launch and the discussion were moderated by Karin Jancyková, Program manager for Energy and Climate at the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung's Multinational Development Policy Dialogue (MDPD), and was co-hosted by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung together with the T20 Secretariat¹.

In his keynote address, Shri Jayant Sinha explained that the Global South had to become committed to net zero² and decarbonization and addressed three main points: First, he spoke about the need for the Global South to accelerate climate action, then he elaborated on institutional and practical obstacles preventing Global South countries from achieving net zero, and lastly, he presented concrete policy recommendations to foster Global South-North collaboration emphasizing that achieving 'net zero is net positive'. Mr. Sinha defined Global North countries as the 38 OECD member states and China, while the Global South was comprising all other states.

¹Think20 (T20) is an official Engagement Group of the G20. It brings together think tanks and high-level experts to discuss policy issues relevant to the G20. T20 recommendations are synthesised into policy briefs and presented to G20 working groups, ministerial meetings, and leaders' summit to help the G20 deliver concrete policy measures. Find more information here: <https://t20ind.org/>

² Net zero means cutting greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible by achieving an overall balance between greenhouse gas emissions produced and greenhouse gas emissions taken out of the atmosphere.



Currently, all countries in the world collectively emit between 59-60 billion tons of greenhouse gases per year³. According to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere is 50 % higher than in pre-industrial times, averaging at 424.0 parts per million (ppm)⁴ in May 2023. Mr. Sinha warned that CO₂ levels are estimated to increase up to 500-600 parts/million in the atmosphere in the upcoming years. Acting as a catalyst, greenhouse gases in the atmosphere precipitate an increase in the global average temperature, with drastic implications for life on Earth.

Through the Paris Agreement⁵, the largest greenhouse gas emitters, including the 38 OECD countries, such as the US, Japan, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand, have committed to reaching net zero by 2050 and to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius. China, the currently largest emitter, has promised to peak emission and achieve net zero by 2060. However, as many Global Southern economies continue to grow, their emissions are increasing, with the largest GHG emitters being India, Brazil, and Indonesia⁶. As a result, global greenhouse gas emissions are at risk of decreasing by only 10 billion tons per year until 2050⁷, instead of achieving net zero. The combined effect of current Global North emissions and future Global South emissions will likely lead us to exceed the 1.5-degree threshold. In its 2022 Emissions Gap report⁸, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) estimates that under current policies the global average temperature is likely to increase by 2.8 degrees Celsius by 2100. This number is a global average and accounts for the average temperature increase of the oceans, which make up two-thirds of the world's surface. Consequently, land temperatures stand to increase by up to 5 degrees on average. When temperatures exceed a threshold of 50-55 degree Celsius, life becomes extremely difficult for humans, with heat-related deaths increasing drastically. In most developing countries, access to electricity and electricity supply is very limited, which prevents people from adapting to extreme weather conditions. Furthermore, unconstrained global warming will lead to the melting of ice shields and the permafrost, causing sea levels to rise by up to 70 cm⁹, while extreme weather events, such as strong cyclones or large wildfires, will occur more frequently.

³ United Nations Environment Programme (2022, October 27). Emissions Gap Report 2022, p. 33. Available online: <https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2022>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ See United Nations Climate Action (n.d.). For a livable climate: Net-zero commitments must be backed by credible action. Available online: <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/net-zero-coalition#:~:text=Put%20simply%2C%20net%20zero%20means,oceans%20and%20forests%20for%20instance>.

⁶ UNEP (2021): State of the Climate: https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/climate-action/what-we-do/climate-action-note/state-of-climate.html?gclid=CjwKCAjw_aemBhBLEiwAT98FMlOk3NsgRUsghrIkljqU10XSUzTHbSw53Sr3ewCKf0Zj-Izu2BNCOhoCcMEQAvD_BwE

⁷ United Nations Environment Programme (2022, October 27). Emissions Gap Report 2022, p. 35. Available online: <https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2022>

⁸ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: U.S. Department of Commerce (2023, June 5). Broken record: Atmospheric carbon dioxide levels jump again: Annual increase in Keeling Curve peak is one of the largest on record. Available online: <https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/broken-record-atmospheric-carbon-dioxide-levels-jump-again#:~:text=Scientists%20at%20Scripps%2C%20which%20maintains,onset%20of%20the%20industrial%20era>.

⁹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2019). Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5°C. Available online: https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/06/SR15_Full_Report_High_Res.pdf



Despite being most vulnerable to climate catastrophes, Global South countries face many practical and institutional challenges to achieving net zero, which would require access to large financial and technological resources. Mr. Sinha explained that countries of the Global South do not generate sufficient domestic savings and fail to attract enough investments from the Global North while lacking the technological capabilities to be able to reach net zero by 2050. According to Mr. Sinha, an estimated \$4-5 trillion investment¹⁰ in various industries of Global South countries over the next 30-40 years would be needed. Furthermore, Global South countries require access to various technologies, such as green hydrogen or innovative battery chemistries. According to Mr. Sinha, increased Global North-South collaboration was urgently needed to address these issues.

To work on achieving net zero, Mr. Sinha presented three concrete policy recommendations. Firstly, industry-per-industry assessments of required investments and technologies was needed. The Global North would have to collaborate with the Global South to provide them with the necessary bottom-up analysis and planning. Secondly, investment risks would need to be addressed. Global North countries demand very high returns on investments for projects in the Global South due to the risks that investors face, such as long-term currency hedging. In order to enable capital flow from the North to the South, policy measures addressing investment risks would have to be provided. Lastly, Mr. Sinha spoke about the need for Global North countries to assist the Global South with the technologies necessary for a green transition and decarbonization. Examples of such technologies are small nuclear reactors or hydrolyzers for green hydrogen. Mr. Sinha stressed that we would need to build up technical capabilities in the Global South, as well as the necessary engineering expertise to usefully apply the technologies.

Following Mr. Sinha's keynote address, Karin Jancyková introduced the GCA Collaborative white paper series, as well as the new GCA website (link [here](#)). The Global Climate Alliance Collaborative is a network of sixteen experts from around the globe that put together recommendations for policymakers on how to accelerate climate action and stay committed to the objectives set out in the Paris Agreement. Ms. Jancyková invited everyone to contribute to their work by submitting ideas and thoughts on new proposals inspiring policymakers to take concrete climate action through the GCA website. She then opened the panel discussion, including Mr. Sinha and the three young climate leaders.

Panel discussion

The panel started off with a discussion on local actions that may inspire systemic change to address climate change. While Jessica, Maxime, and Caillum found that people's actions, such as sorting waste, reusing and repurposing items, or having a vegetarian or vegan diet, all panelists agreed that political action was urgently needed to address a systemic change. Maxime furthermore spoke about the importance of climate advocacy and peer-to-peer exchanges with counterparts from both the Global North and South to work together on finding solutions to this global issue. Caillum added that Global North countries rely on certain privileges and have a responsibility to ensure that everyone can take appropriate climate action.

¹⁰ See International Energy Agency (2021). Net Zero by 2050: A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector. Available online: <https://www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-by-2050>



He expressed that small actions in local communities helped to bridge the gap, saying that **‘there is a fundamental intersection between social justice and climate action, which takes the form of climate justice’**.

Mr. Sinha then asked the panelists about inspiring climate initiatives that the young panelists would like to advocate for.

Maxime said that it was critical to include the perspective of persons experiencing the effects of climate change in the policy-making process, which was of high priority to her when drafting the Y7 Communique to the G7¹¹. Jessica agreed that a bottom-up approach, which included underrepresented voices in the policy-making process, was necessary to successfully combat climate change. Jessica presented two local projects that caught her attention and strongly inspired her: The first initiative¹² was installing solar-powered water filtration systems in Rwanda to purify water, which not helps to tackle waterborne diseases, but also conserves energy and reduces carbon emissions. The second project tackled the pervasive issue of plastic waste in South Africa by converting it into building materials¹³, offering an innovative and sustainable solution. Jessica emphasized that this approach would be highly commendable, with the potential to make a significant impact.

Caillum strongly emphasized the role of education as a tool for climate advocacy and raising awareness. He highlighted that non-formal education plays a significant role in shaping young people’s values and inspiring them to take action for the community and referred to the inspiring story of Boranka¹⁴: When wildfires ravaged Croatia in insert year, young people took action to combat the fires and then collected the ashes from the burnt trees to make crayons out of them. Teaming up with Croatia’s national newspaper, they distributed a piece of paper and an ash-made crayon with each daily newspaper. People could draw their own pictures of a tree and upload them into an app, where for each digital tree, a real tree was planted on their behalf. This innovative approach not only raised awareness about the climate and environmental crises but also encouraged small actions that benefited the local environment.

Mr. Sinha’s last question pertained to the role of climate advocacy and raising awareness about climate change among young peers.

Caillum said: ‘Young people don’t need to prove their worth in political spaces. They bring unique creativity, innovation, energy, and perspectives to the table. While young people are leading social movements around the world, we are not the decision-makers of today. We are the decision-makers of tomorrow.’ Maxime stressed that **while global climate summits are**

¹¹ Y7 Summit 2023 Japan Communiqué. Available online: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rCW-HULxfDRnzVnETebOe-5X8rYKttq3/view>

¹² See Water Access Rwanda: <https://www.warwanda.com/>

¹³ See Nick Perry (2022, March 29). ‘Trash has value’: Kenyan inventor turns plastic into bricks. Available online: <https://phys.org/news/2022-03-trash-kenyan-inventor-plastic-bricks.html#:~:text=Gjenge%20Makers%2C%20a%20Kenyan%20enterprise,into%20sustainable%20bricks%20and%20pavers>

¹⁴ See <https://www.boranka.hr/en>. Find more information about Boranka: <https://sdgs.scout.org/post/boranka-croatias-largest-volunteer-wildfire-site-afforestation-action-has-kicked>



significant to reflect on the progress made and to set more ambitious goals, an impact can be made in many places in which young people can constructively contribute by bringing new perspectives and innovative solutions to the table. That is what she has been actively promoting during her work with the Y7. Ultimately, the collaboration between the Global South and the Global North requires a collective effort, where young people can play a crucial role in inspiring change.

Lastly, Jessica spoke about her experience working with communities in South Africa through United People Global. She said that while some people were aware of climate change and eager to take action, others had little to no knowledge about climate change and its implications. Despite the willingness of many young people to get involved and **‘while climate programs are available, they’re not necessarily accessible’**. She stressed that the enhanced accessibility and transparency would greatly benefit youth engagement in climate action initiatives. In his concluding remarks, Mr. Sinha said: **‘As you know, all revolutions have been led by young people. And we really need a revolution right now.’**

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