

UNFCCC COP 16 Mexico, 2010

Time: 5- 10th December, 2010

Place: Cancún, Mexico

IFSA Representatives / IFSA position:

- Julius Adewopo / sub- Head of UNFCCC,
- Cathrine Pater /President,
- Torge Brodersen /Executive Secretary and
- Metia Lembasi / Head of IPC

Introduction:

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) under the direction of UN Economic and Social Council (UN-ECOSOC) is saddled with the mandate to address global climate change issues through multilateral processes. The 2010 United Nations Climate Change Conference took place in Cancun, Mexico, from 29 November to 10 December 2010. It encompassed the sixteenth Conference of the Parties (COP) and the sixth Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP), as well as the thirty-third sessions of both the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), and the fifteenth session of the AWG-KP and thirteenth session of the AWG-LCA.

My Involvement:

My current position in International Forestry Students' Association (IFSA) as the UNFCCC Sub-Commission Head requires that I coordinate a student delegation to participate in UNFCCC events. IFSA's vision is to foster global cooperation among students of forest and related sciences (including Soil sciences) in order to broaden the students' knowledge and understanding, to achieve a sustainable future for global forested landscape, and to provide a voice for youths in international forest and environmental policy processes. IFSA is accredited with UNFCCC secretariat as an observer party and maintains a consultative status under the youth (YOUNGO) and environmental organization (ENGO) constituencies.

In line with my official duties, I coordinated the selected IFSA delegation constituted by students from different countries (mainly Germany, Columbia, Turkey, and Indonesia) during UNFCCC-COP16. I had three major objectives for participating in UNFCCC-COP16; The first one was to coordinate a side event co-hosted with a firm named "CarbonFix"; the second was to ensure the

active involvement and contribution of IFSA delegates to the daily deliberations of the YOUNGO constituency especially in developing an intervention/policy brief for UNFCCC “Article 6”; the third was to coordinate IFSA delegates volunteering for the organization of Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) Forestday4 events.

The Output:

My set objectives for participating in UNFCCC-COP16 were achieved despite time constraints occasioned by the impossibility of staying away from class for the entire 2-weeks duration of the event. Though I was selected by the YOUNGO constituency to be a part of the 5-man team designated to participate in the opening plenary session on Monday, Nov. 29th, 2010, I declined the nomination due to the need for me to attend class on the same day before departing for Cancun.

In collaboration with members of IFSA delegation, proper logistics were put in place for the successful organization of the side event which addressed technical and capacity-building issues on monitoring and verification of carbon trading projects. I was on the panel with five other speakers who made different presentations based on their areas of expertise/operation. I made a presentation (jointly prepared with IFSA delegates) on “Educational needs of Forestry students in climate change era” during which I highlighted the need to match academic and informal training of students with emerging approaches (especially, the rapidly advancing Voluntary Carbon Trading Scheme). The side-event was well attended and there were positive feedbacks received with quite a number of organizations showing a great deal of interest in accepting students for internships towards giving them first-hand experience with the evolving framework of voluntary carbon trading.

On a daily basis, before the commencement of the meetings of designated workgroups, the YOUNGO constituency meets so that all organizations in the constituency (Including U.K. Youth on Climate Change, Australian Youth on Climate Change, IFSA, SustainUS, etc) can have cohesive deliberations and develop concrete interventions. IFSA delegation, under my coordination, focused on YOUNGO constituency’s intervention on “Article 6”. UNFCCC “Article 6” is the only document in the climate change negotiation process which is developed to address education, training, and public awareness needs, and the document lies in the jurisdiction of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI). After several days of defining and refining the YOUNGO constituency’s standpoint, we submitted our intervention (Please find attached) to the SBI workgroup and this was largely incorporated in the “Final Article 6” draft document (also attached) which was ratified by the negotiators. The content of this document is expected to saddle the different parties (especially each country) with a responsibility towards investing immensely into formal and informal education.

CIFOR Forest day is an event geared towards addressing forestry and biodiversity related issues, and it has been held consistently for the past 4 years during the duration of UNFCCC-COP events. Forestday4 was held on 5th Dec, 2010 with the theme “Time to Act”, and geared towards addressing issues such as mitigation and adaptation, forest governance, optimizing multiple benefits of sustainable forest management etc. IFSA delegation volunteered for the co-organizing of this event which was attended by over 1500 participants and hosted by the Government of Mexico. I did not have the opportunity to fully coordinate the delegation or attend the sessions since my flight was scheduled to depart around noon on the same day (because I had an exam scheduled for the next day), hence, I took-up the responsibility of registering participants in the morning and participated in the poster viewing session before departing from Cancun.

Conclusion:

Though IFSA delegates were not (and cannot be) a part of the negotiating process (since we all had the observer status), the contributions made in form of interventions, side-event organization, and volunteering during Forest day 4 are outstanding opportunities that we judiciously utilized. UNFCCC-COP16 has been widely applauded as a great success due to the final emergence of Green Climate Fund and other plausible commitments of parties during the 2-week long negotiation, and I feel elated to be a part of this “long-sought” success story of the UNFCCC process. Furthermore, it was fulfilling that we were able to give IFSA an impressionable representation at UNFCCC-COP16.