

# **UK, ITALY AND SINGAPORE ENGAGE WITH YOUTH TO TACKLE SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES AT THE SINGAPORE COP26 YOUTH CLIMATE DIALOGUE**

**SINGAPORE, 18 MARCH 2021**

Singaporean youth demonstrated their passion and commitment in shaping the environmental and sustainability agenda at the COP26 Youth Climate Dialogue.

Organised in partnership between the National Youth Council, British High Commission in Singapore, the Italian Embassy Singapore, and the National University of Singapore's Asia Pacific Centre for Environmental Law (APCEL) and Energy Studies Institute (ESI), the dialogue was aimed at driving youth action and understanding their concerns on issues of sustainability and climate change.

## **Forging partnerships to engage and connect youth to international platforms**

Such strategic partnerships with local and international organisations provide expanded opportunities for youth engagement in the environment and sustainability space, enabling young people to share their perspectives and ideas and connect with the larger global community.

Addressing the gathering via video, COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma noted how, across the world including in Singapore, young people were addressing the climate crisis with energy and passion. "I'm committed to young people's voices shaping the UK's COP26 Presidency. This is why we've established the COP26 Civil Society and Youth Advisory Council and we're co-hosting the Youth for Climate 2021 event in Milan with our COP26 co-hosts Italy."

Mr Sharma invited participants to share their thoughts on the four priorities for COP26: (i) Reducing carbon emissions, (ii) Strengthening adaptation and reliance to climate change, (iii) Opening up greater private and public climate finance flows, and (iv) Enhancing collaboration between government, business and civil society to tackle our shared climate challenges.

Ms Grace Fu, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment, in her opening remarks reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to engage partners, including the youth, on sustainability: "A sustainable future for Singapore is contingent upon the collective efforts of all stakeholders. Our youths have an important role to play in this journey of co-creation, with their greater stake in the future. The Government will co-create our nation's sustainability journey with youths to realise the Singapore Green Plan 2030."

## **Harnessing the energy of youth to drive sustainability efforts**

In her opening remarks, Her Excellency Kara Owen, British High Commissioner to Singapore highlighted the importance of international and all-of-society collaboration to combat the impacts of climate change. “COP26 is a chance to achieve something transformational. Green and growth go together. They are not, do not need to be, and should not be a choice of either/or. Securing our collective climate future is a priority for the UK – not just across multilateral platforms like the UN, the Commonwealth and in our G7 Presidency, but it is also central to the SG-UK Partnership for the Future. We have a real chance to harness young people’s ingenuity, creativity and passion to win this fight.”

Raffaele Langella, Ambassador of Italy to Singapore, also stressed the importance of the youth contribution to raise the awareness of people about environmental problems and to define a strategy to address climate change. For this purpose, Italy will host the event “Youth4Climate: driving ambition” from 28 to 30 September where young delegates and the ministries, will participate to the preparatory conference Pre-COP26, and will discuss together.

## **Providing a platform for youth have a say on sustainability issues important to them**

The dialogue saw representatives from partnering organisations engage in lively conversations with 20 youth participants comprising individuals in tertiary education, young professionals and youth advocates through panel discussions on the priorities and goals of COP26 and sharing sessions by organisations such as Singapore Youth for Climate Action (SYCA), which offered opportunities for youth to engage in proactive discussions with industry experts on the environmental plans for Singapore and the region. The event also saw Nigel Topping, the UK’s High Level Climate Action Champion, engage with the youth participants via a virtual set-up.

Discussions centred around key international and local priorities on sustainability and the environment and the importance of youth engagement in addressing these challenges. Issues brought up included:

- Role of Singapore youth in driving environmental change in the run-up to COP26 and how awareness could be translated into action
- Importance of multilateralism during climate negotiations
- Support for loss and damages especially towards vulnerable countries
- Importance of corporate governance to combat climate change
- Decoupling economic growth and carbon emissions

## **Supporting youth through providing opportunities**

## **for them to take action and create change**

Chief Executive at the National Youth Council, Mr David Chua encouraged youth to seize opportunities to take action in his opening remarks, “There are many opportunities for us to participate, to shape, and to educate. And institutions and governments cannot create all of the opportunities. A lot of it falls also on young people. And as leaders, we need you to create a suite of opportunities out there in different dimensions and different facets of what we want to achieve, and at the same time, be conscious about bringing the community along”.

Deputy Director of APCEL, Assistant Professor Tara Maria Davenport concurred with the sentiment, pointing out that the youth present at the event represent “the first generation to know, without doubt, that we are destroying our Earth and probably the last that can do anything about it” and urged decision-makers at the international and local levels to “bring youth onboard at the earliest possible stages of the policy-making and planning processes.” Asst. Prof Davenport affirmed APCEL’s commitment to furthering the goals of the Paris Agreement by partnering with other like-minded thought leaders in furthering the environmental rule of law, including through the Climate Change Litigation Initiative (CCLI), which will contribute to the discourse on climate change litigation and provide relevant tools to policymakers and wider stakeholders.

Deputy Executive Director of the Energy Studies Institute, Associate Professor Lee Poh Seng, also said that to further capacity building efforts among youth and educators in Singapore, the ESI hopes to launch a Sustainability Seminar Series that will adopt a coordinated and balanced approach to climate change and energy education and enculturation. He said the ESI looks forward to working with relevant ministries and agencies, industry, institutes of higher learning, and research institutes to mount this effort together.

## **Notes to editors:**

### **About COP 26**

COP refers to the decision-making body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In November 2021, the UK will be hosting the 26th annual session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, or ‘COP26’, in Glasgow. At the summit, delegates, including heads of state, climate experts, and negotiators, will come together to agree on coordinated action to tackle climate change. As well as the negotiations, there will also be space for countries, international organisations and other delegates to showcase climate action, highlight diverse climate change issues and share knowledge. See <https://ukcop26.org/>

### **About COP 26 Youth Climate Dialogue**

The COP26 Youth Climate Dialogue is a youth engagement session ahead of COP26. Organised in partnership between the British High Commission in

Singapore and the Embassy of Italy in Singapore, along with the National Youth Council and the National University of Singapore's Asia Pacific Centre for Environmental Law and Energy Studies Institute, the dialogue provides a platform for youth in Singapore to engage in climate positive transitions through the sharing of ideas, knowledge and resources. The event focused on understanding the key areas of climate change that are most critical to today's youth and encouraged discussions to draw out the relationship between local challenges and opportunities with the wider Commonwealth community.

-End-

For media enquiries, please contact:

Nandini Prashad  
Communications Manager  
The British High Commission in Singapore  
<nandini.prashad@fcdo.gov.uk>