



Report: Team Europe South Africa Climate Action Coffees – session 1

SAIIA-WESSA coffee: youth climate actions

Date: 19 March 2021

Time: 1pm to 2pm (SAST)



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Facilitator: Thrishni Subramoney, Flow Communications

A total of 20 participants joined the call including:

- EU and Member States Counsellors, working together under Team Europe RSA approach
- Representatives of WESSA
- Representatives of SAIIA Youth

Topics covered:

Why EU Climate Action Coffees?

The purpose of the “Climate Action Coffees” sessions is to build bridges between organisations implementing climate action initiatives in South Africa and Team Europe counterparts, both in South Africa and in Europe.

As outlined by Ariane Labat from EU Delegation in this augural session, these sessions will help the EU team get a sense of the work being done in South Africa, and understand how it can play a more effective role in South African initiatives to tackle climate change.

Summary of the presentations

Presentation 1: Climate diplomacy work by Youth@SAIIA

Youth@SAIIA’s presentation was made by Desiree Kosciulek, Itumeleng Mphure, Ditebogo Lebea and Sibusiso Mazomba. To view the slides please [click here](#).

Youth@SAIIA is working towards meaningful youth participation in climate action. This includes programmes to provide the skills young people need to play a meaningful role, such as training in negotiation and debate simulations; a young researchers programme; the Youth Policy Committee; a young leaders’ conference (and virtual conferences); special

programmes and exchanges; capacity-building initiatives for civil society organisations and youth groups; and research on youth participation.

Youth@SAIIA has taken part in several events as part of its Climate Diplomacy Programme supported by EU and Germany Ministry for Environment in the context of the SPIPA program, including Team Europe Climate Diplomacy Week, the Youth Researchers Symposium and Mentorship Programme, compiling the Youth Climate Action Plan, the Young Reporters for the Environment programme, and podcast and social media engagement.

Of particular focus were programmes for young researchers that included a research-skills workshop in February. The aim of the research-focused initiatives is to get young researchers' work published in some form and to have youth-led research included in South Africa's national Climate Action Plan.

An exciting, consultative project is the work being done around the Youth Climate Action Plan (YCAP), which is being put together ahead of COP26. [Y-CAP](#) is a youth development programme that empowers, skills and motivates new generations of active citizens.

Activities included a Youth Climate Action conference, roundtable discussions between young representatives and key bodies such as the Presidential Climate Commission, and an exchange with other groups such as [We are TMRW](#) and [UK Youth for COP26](#).

Presentation 2: WESSA's work on Young Reporters for the Environment

WESSA's Nobuhle Zulu presented the organisation's work around Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE). The global programme has some 360 000 young reporters in 45 countries. In South Africa, the YRE programme is active in four provinces: Free State, Gauteng, the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. The initiative encourages young people (11 to 25 years old) to investigate environmental issues in their own communities. There are three priority topics: climate change, loss of biodiversity and pollution. The process involves young reporters investigating issues, researching solutions, reporting on the issue and then disseminating the report.

This year the WESSA team has facilitated workshops to equip young reporters to pick up topics to investigate. The reporters' work will tie in to the work being done by SAIIA as part of the Young Researchers Symposium.

Q&A segment

Emma Boekee, political counsellor at the Netherlands Embassy in South Africa, was the first respondent to the presentations. Boekee told the meeting that working on climate with South Africa is a priority theme for the embassy for the next five years. She outlined the various ways the team is tackling the issue, from political aspects and working with the youth, to issues around water, agriculture and renewable energy.

Boekee said engaging young voices is particularly important amid growing pressure, particularly from young people in the Netherlands and Europe, on governments to act on climate change. Over the past few years the power of young voices has been highlighted through protests and school strikes.

In South Africa the embassy wants to amplify young voices, particularly those from communities that aren't affluent and therefore often don't get a platform. A key project in this regard has been the YCAP.

While the embassy is funding work around YCAP, it takes care to ensure that the direction and contents of the document are developed independently by young activists. There is a strong sense that YCAP can be an influential document as South Africa prepares for COP26.

Closing off the meeting, Ariane Labat from EU Delegation encouraged youth groups to communicate with Team Europe about how European partners can help.

She suggested virtual study tours as an option to pursue, and also raised the interesting idea of learning from European experiences like a reverse-mentoring programme through which young people mentor policymakers at a local level on how to keep climate action on the agenda.

Next steps

Milan - 28-30 September 2021 - "Youth4Climate: Driving Ambition"

<https://www.minambiente.it/pagina/youth4climate-driving-ambition-young-people-all-around-world-can-now-apply>

Milan - 30 September-2 October 2021 - PreCop26

Glasgow - 1-12 November 2021 - COP26

Should you wish to engage further on this topic, please contact Desiree Kosciulek at Desiree.Kosciulek@wits.ac.za