



2014 Oxford Fellowships and Seminar

TESTIMONIALS

Having participated at this seminar, the discussions proved to be particularly innovative in addressing some of the more complex issues involved in the climate change negotiations, and arriving at promising solutions, as we strive to a new climate change agreement. As the ADP co-chair, though having not participated in that capacity, I was struck by the candour and out-of-box thinking that can only augur well for arriving at consensus and full agreement. This seminar has proved once more, and even more so this year, its critical role in bringing some of the major individuals in a common format to arrive at greater understanding in the climate change negotiations.

Mr Kishan Kumarsingh
Co-Chair ADP
Multilateral Environmental Agreements,
Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources,
Trinidad & Tobago

I was very grateful to attend this year's ecbi Oxford Fellowship for climate change negotiators. I am convinced that this has been a very valuable exercise, both for its intellectual appeal and its practical implications in the negotiation process. The focused issues, the small number of participants and the provocative facilitation of the discussions contributed greatly to go beyond the already well-known concepts and national positions. On some issues, I believe the dialogue produced ideas which could be usefully brought to the formal negotiating settings. Of course, the casual, week-long interaction with colleagues from developing countries has also strengthened confidence among us. Furthermore, the discussion with our European counterparts has also allowed us to identify some emerging convergences. Clearly, as a Peruvian, representing this year the Presidency of COP20/CMP10, the seminar has provided me with a timely and valuable capital of new insights and friendships

Mr Rómulo Acurio
Deputy Representative of Peru for Climate Change,
Peru

The ECBI Fellowship provided a unique opportunity for the participants to share ideas and be creative. Having time to think and to share proposals informally contributes not only to progress in the negotiations at the conceptual level, but to build stronger trust relationships between negotiators, which are at the core of achieving ambitious agreements. The Fellowship provided a privileged space for achieving this objective, both with fellow colleagues from developing countries, and with colleagues from European countries. It can contribute to positive outcomes in the negotiations.

Ms Isabel Cavelier Adarve
Independent Association of Latin America and the Caribbean – AILAC
Colombia

For someone like me, being involved in the UNFCCC process for a decade now and experienced the coordination of G77 and China and now chairing the AGN, I found it may be the most appropriate setting to discuss some of the key issues in the climate change negotiation and build understanding on their technical aspects. Now I understand why the Fellowship has contributed to shaping some of the issues under the negotiations (finance). I also found it a very unique opportunity for us as group (AGN) to improve other parties' understanding, and get some critical feedback on some of our key proposals (e.g. adaptation goal, adaptation INDCs). Finally, I would like to commend your leadership and ability to stimulate and facilitate the discussion all the time, even during coffee and meal breaks. I think you should continue this programme till we safely managed to achieve our 2o C global temperature goal.

Mr Nagmeldin Goutbi Elhassan
AGN Chair
Climate Change Unit,
Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources (HCENR),
Sudan

Once again I wish to thank and congratulate you on having organized such a successful and fruitful seminar. It not only provided the participants a platform to exchange views, but also a unique occasion to inspire each other. At a time when every person is working hard for the success of the negotiation of the 2015 new agreement, undoubtedly, the excellent discussion we have had in Oxford will leave its footprints. During the whole process, the unique role you have played was not only making us sit and talk together, but even more importantly, steering the discussion and putting our ideas together. I believe that every colleague in the seminar was highly impressed by your rich knowledge and experience on the climate change issues as well as the excellent skill of leading the discussion.

Mr Zhang Xumin
Director of Climate Change Office, Department of Treaty & Law,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
China

It was my great pleasure to participate in the climate seminar at Oxford. The ecbi did a remarkable job in getting together exactly the right people in the right ambiance talking about the right subjects. It is with the help of this ecbi seminar that we, who are working on a global climate agreement, were able to express our thoughts and opinions, discuss our differences and explore possible common positions. And all of this in a safe environment, outside the formal negotiations. The ecbi seminar is therefore an important element in reaching global agreement on climate change.

Mr Michel Rentenaar
Climate Envoy, Kingdom of the Netherlands

Another excellent meeting organised by ECBI: well attended by many key players; a genuine exchange of innovative ideas; and a uniquely convivial and non-confrontational atmosphere. A very worthwhile event.

Mr Peter Betts
Director for International Climate Change,
Department of Energy and Climate Change,
United Kingdom

Attending the Oxford seminar is an opportunity for negotiators from all groups and regions to focus discussions on opportunities rather than barriers, on solutions rather than problems. It is a forum where delegates attend and listen to each other with an aim of understanding the underlying reasons for respective positions. Negotiations is to a large extent about managing expectations and the Oxford seminar plays a vital role in allowing for delegates to meet and to work towards the same level of expectation and it does so in a context and an environment which allow for negotiators to in spite of different position seek a way forward towards a common goal.

Ms Johanna Lissinger Peitz
Head of Section,
Division of Eco-management and Chemicals Ministry of Environment
Sweden

The Fellowship sessions provided a fantastic opportunity to speak candidly among ourselves and to brainstorm. Ideas which we developed during the more formal sessions were further refined during breakfast, lunch, supper and the evening coffee. The idea of keeping the group together was very fruitful. The venue was also intellectually stimulating. The Seminar was equally successful. We were able to exchange ideas candidly yet without rancour. The ideas were not rebuffed but were debated. At the end of the session, I believe everyone appreciated and understood each other's concerns.

Mr. Carlos Fuller
Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre,
Belize

Throughout the last years the ECBI capacity building seminar has been providing an excellent opportunity to understand each other's positions better and to learn more about the rationale behind them in an open and conducive environment. The mixture between facilitated substantial debates on the most important and pressing climate change issues on the one hand and social events on the other hand constitute the unique character of the ECBI seminar. Therefore the ECBI forms an important input to move the international climate change cooperation and negotiations forward which should not be underestimated.

Ms Ilka Wagner
Senior policy advisor, Deputy head of the German delegation to the UNFCCC climate talks,
Division for International Climate Policy,
Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety

ECBI provides certainly an important space for both developing countries and European colleagues to better understand their views and to test new and innovative ideas to advance the negotiation process. The richness of the discussions has often been proven relevant to craft proposals that advance the negotiation process in many ways. More than that, the unique selling point of this program that surpass any of the others that could aim at building capacity for negotiation is that it places the human perspective at the heart of its agenda. This is obviously an important dimension that could not be neglected, if one is expecting to find a consensus on climate change issue. Happy 10th anniversary!

Ms Sandra Freitas
Technical advisor to the LDC group,
Delegation of the republic of Togo

The Oxford Seminar 2014 was a great occasion to better understand developing countries' views and concerns based on an informal and frank exchange. Interesting new ideas were raised and discussed, and it was encouraging to see some potential common ground emerging. The timing of the Seminar in the beginning of the autumn and the run-up to Lima-COP in December was excellent!

Mr Harri Laurikka
Chief Negotiator for Climate Change, Finland
Chair of Nordic Working Group on Global Climate Negotiations (NOAK)

In the process of climate change negotiations, fundamental positions are, generally, sufficiently established by the Parties. But between the different positions are substantive differences, so it is crucial to look for ideas that are innovative, but also balanced, to contribute to the necessary consensus.

The main space for it is the negotiation itself, but it is especially helpful to have other moments like this Seminar, where the seeds of some ideas can be fed in an objective and transparent manner, using these ideas as bridges, not barriers, without prejudging positions on the negotiating process.

The ecbi Seminar is a creative space, a respectful forging of ideas, allowing a fluent and flexible mood of work that does not negate the different visions, but facilitates talking frankly, and being able to move from the dialogue to the design of elements that can be considered in the negotiation.

Personally, I watched this process develop in the edition of the Seminar in 2010, with the developments of ideas around what would become the Standing Committee on Finance. I know, from the history of the Seminary that other initiatives have been also originated here. The fact that happens in the course of a week, attests the climate so conducive that the Seminar provides, the transparency with which it operates and the real commitment of the organizers and participants.

This becomes all the more important at the gates of a new climate agreement. Since this agreement is to be adopted in its general architecture in 2015, but will require a deeper understanding and development of specific aspects, between 2015 and 2020, the role of the Seminar, far from diminishing, increases, and I hope that it can continue to contribute to our common goal, on fighting climate change.

Mr Orlando Rey Santos
Member of Compliance Committee
Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment,
Cuba

ecbi has been a welcoming and safe space to jointly nail down areas of discord or contention and look at them under magnifying glass. The atmosphere created by ecbi leads to a deepened understanding and deepened friendships and trust - all key factors for any success in global negotiations.

Ms Kasia Snyder
Head of Negotiations Team, Department of Sustainable Development,
Ministry of the Environment,
Poland

As always, the ecbi seminar brought together a range of key negotiators from developing and European countries to exchange freely, enabling us to understand each other's ideas and needs for the 2015 Paris Agreement, to start to explore ways we might recombine proposals as we work towards an agreement. The seminar dinner took place in the Ashmolean Museum,

surrounded by classical statues. We learnt that despite initial appearances, many had been patched up over the years, repaired more or less well, sometimes with pieces from other works like a statue of a man with a woman's feet. I guess that illustrates quite well the nature of ecbi, to take apparent opposites, things that you might not expect to find together, pieces from here, pieces from there, and realise that they might, in fact, work together. Now we need a sculptor!

Mr Paul Watkinson

Chief negotiator, Head of Climate Negotiating Team,
Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy,
France

The ecbi Fellowship & Seminar provide a unique space for fruitful exchanges among negotiators and scientists. Usually, negotiators find themselves in rigid settings that are unfortunately often not conducive to finding common ground among a diverse set of countries. The ecbi seminar overcomes this problem by promoting innovative, at times daring, thinking and open discussions. The ecbi Fellowship & Seminar 2014 will certainly not be the last of its kind to leave a lasting impact on climate negotiations by promoting common ground and forward-looking solutions that are in the interest of us all.

Mr Stefan Ruchti

Head, Environment and Sustainable Development, Sectoral Foreign Policies Division,
Directorate of Political Affairs, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs,
Switzerland

Climate change negotiations are about finding effective pathways to a low-carbon future. The hereby implied global transformation requires intense cooperation, which again is based on mutual understanding and the development of common strategies. Bridge-building among negotiating parties to the convention is therefore of unquestionable importance. In this context, Benito Mueller's initiative succeeds not only in bringing together many of the key individuals to the UNFCCC negotiations in a common setting, but to have them working together on possible innovative solutions. As a first-time participant to the ecbi seminar, I can only highlight the outcome-oriented atmosphere between participants as well as the frankness of the discussions. With many crucial climate change negotiations still ahead of us, innovative thinking and cooperation will be two key elements of success, making the seminar an event not to be missed in the future.

Mr José Delgado

Senior Official,
Federal Ministry of Finance,
Austria

The outcome of the talks this year were particularly satisfactory, and I believe that it is to a very large extent due to the right atmosphere and the right issues for a deepened discussion. I think the ecbi has created an "ecbi method and atmosphere" based on sound scholarship, positive search for solutions, and the perfect mix of pleasure and seriousness. So I congratulate you once more and wish to express my warm thanks once more for some quite unforgettable days in Oxford.

Mr Bo Kjellén

Co-chair ecbi Advisory Committee
Senior Research Fellow, Stockholm Environment Institute,
Sweden