



United Nations
Climate Change Secretariat

Executive Secretary

Nations Unies
Secrétariat sur les changements climatiques

Secrétaire exécutive

YOUNGO
Youth non-governmental organizations

Date: 9 November 2013
Reference: CF/

Dear YOUNGO friends,

I appreciate your concerns regarding my participation at the upcoming World Coal Association meeting. Please be assured that I take my responsibilities as an international civil servant, as enshrined in Article 100 of the United Nations Charter and regulations, 1.1 and 1.2 of the United Nations Staff Rules and Regulations very seriously. Indeed, in accordance with the UN Oath of Office that I took on my appointment as Executive Secretary I am enjoined not to seek or receive instructions from any other authority external to the United Nations. I have always respected that undertaking and intend to continue to do so, fully committed to Article 2 of the Climate Change Convention.

However, it is also with some sadness that I have received your message. I would have expected you to know by now that I am just as passionate about addressing climate change as you are. I would have expected you to know by now that I am deeply committed to this challenge precisely because of you, the next generation. I would have expected you to know that I am painfully aware of the fact that if we are unable to curb GHG emissions in a timely manner it is your generation, and the ones after you, who will bear the burden. That is not a life that I want for my daughters or my grandchildren, it is not a life that I want for any of you or any of your children.

I would also have hoped that after years of working on this issue, you would have realized that we do not move forward by only “preaching to the choir”. Fortunately we do have a group of people in all walks of life and in all countries who are deeply committed, including yourselves. However, I would have hoped that by now you would have realized that this is not enough. We need much, much more engagement; we need to build bridges beyond our circle of friends, in particular we need to engage those who could and should contribute in big ways to the solution. In our fight to reduce global emissions we must be prepared to engage in open debate with those whose views and actions have, up to now, not been in the spirit of Article 2. It is only through such engagement that a global consensus on the critical problems of our times, and the options available to address them, will emerge.

I am committed to the broadest possible engagement because the transformation we are working toward needs the active participation of all. That is why I have reached out to women, youth, religious movements, other civil society groups, cities and regions, energy sector, finance sector, corporations, legislators, and many more. I am committed to inviting, encouraging, prodding one and all to do their very best in the shortest time possible. For it is only with that maximum effort that we can meet the exigencies of science. It is therefore



Page 2

precisely because I stand with you and future generations, that I reach out to engage in a frank conversation with the coal industry, laying out how they must transform the industry in order to contribute to the solution.

I am sad that I won't see you this weekend, but I wish you a productive Powershift Central and Eastern Europe.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christiana Figueres'.

Christiana Figueres