

1st Prize

WE CAN BEAT CLIMATE CHANGE BY 2030

by Aninthitha Nath, aged 16 (India)

My generation came into being somewhere between 2 worlds.

Too young to experience the laps of the sea but too old to forget the waves getting bigger and bigger everyday.

Too young to have camped in a forest but too old to draw a blank on trees falling.

Too young to have breathed the sweet smell of spring but too old to not gag at artificial substitutes.

Too young to have seen a tiger in the wild but too old to forget these majestic beasts dying, all for our selfish needs.

We are the generation of oddballs, the generation of innovation, the generation of change, Mr. Secretary General. If anyone can combat climate change, it is us.

It's absolutely crucial to rope in youngsters of today to battle climate change.

How do we go about this? How do we bring this CHANGE?

Create green media

Frosty the snowman

Has melted into goo

The nights too warm to build him 'gain

For there is no snow left

55.5% of the consumer base are youth, ranging from ages 16 to 21. Music on climate change by Neil Young and Radiohead have had a huge impact on listeners, driving us to see this urgent problem. Movies on climate change such as Wall E and The Arctic tale strike a chord within us, to be the change, to build a better world by 2030.

Harnessing renewable energy

Researchers predict that fossil fuels are only going to serve us till 2088. Converting over to renewable energy ensures remarkable savings for you, and the environment. Electric cars from Tesla, wind farms in Norway, window's which harness solar energy to power your homes, are all ways to do so.

Adopt digital means

Every time we pick a fresh sheet of paper, we pick up a blood-stained one. The blood of the dying songbirds, the blood of the starving animals, the blood of the trees themselves, all for our morning newspaper. After recycling; it's time for the digital revolution, where everyone's connected within a screen's distance. Using digital media is greener, more efficient and long-lasting.

Neutralising the carbon footprint

Every day, due to our nonchalant activities, 54000 sq. kilometres of arctic ice melts. Preserving nature, untainted by human greed, as in Bhutan; eating local food; reducing consumption of bottled water and living in sustainable homes are all ways in which we can offset carbon.

Green areas

In today's fast paced world, a tree is hardly missed, until, one starts suffering. Temperatures rise, vehicles smother you with smoke, green blends into sickly grey. In a world where every inch of space is crammed with desks and chairs, is there room for greenery? Vertical gardens are the primary solution to all our concerns. Occupying minimal space, these gardens can be created both indoor and outdoor, calming the surroundings and giving us the breath of life that we crave but rarely get. Designed by Klaus Lackner, synthetic trees which absorb carbon dioxide from the air are viable solutions. By adopting these concepts, we can beat climate change before 2030.

Educate citizens on sustainability

3% of scientists don't believe in climate change, and obviously with ordinary citizens, it increases tremendously. There's no meaning implementing policies when citizens don't believe in them. Sustainability is an essential tool to be adopted by all, and this is only possible through educating the youth to lead more sustainable lives.

In the words of Morgan freeman Mr.Secretary General, we need to realise that beyond our doubts and differences, a good future can actually exist. We can make today the day we stop pointing at each other in blame and instead chart a new course. We have never faced a crisis this big, but we have never had a better opportunity to solve it. We will either be remembered as the generation that destroyed its home or finally came to respect it.

2nd Prize (joint)

We Can Beat Climate Change by 2030

by Aween Muhammad, aged 16 (Iraq)

"Global warming is not only the number one environmental challenge we face today, but one of the most important issues facing all of humanity. We all have to do our part to raise awareness about global warming and the problems we as people face in promoting a sustainable environmental future for our planet."

The concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has increased by 30% over the last 50 years, trapping more heat in the lower atmosphere. Some changes in climate are inevitable, but an effort to combat human-caused changes can mitigate impacts. Harnessing renewable human energy, and increase in vegetation, deployment of low-carbon technologies and communication and journalism are effective actions that could lead the way to making an effort.

Plants absorb carbon dioxide and vegetation is the easiest way to start. One solution is domestic gardening. It takes little space and many edibles seem to lend themselves to the option. Community gardens are another technique. As many ideas are involved, community

gardens could help people plant smarter.

In addition, automobiles emit many greenhouse gases. Cars could be replaced with bicycles; however, in extreme weathers, riding a bike would be detrimental. Electric cars can replace traditional cars as it's clear that oil won't last forever. Ironically, local grids burn carbon to produce the electricity; the outcome isn't much better than of a traditional car. One solution is placing solar panels on car roofs, traffic, and charging units.

Moreover, conservation of natural renewable resources such as nuclear, solar wind, and hydro is plain good sense. However, harnessing human energy seems like one big plausible step, and if done properly, seems like good business. Firstly, availability and use of Energy Power Gyms is a good way to start. Furthermore, companies can create machines that use less electricity, which are capable of generating their own energy and storing them in small battery packs. Another good step is creating bikes in a way with a small battery pack attached to one part, storing all the energy emitted by the cyclist. In Brazil, for example, the prisoners are given the chance to lower their sentence by exercising on bikes that are attached to batteries that charge as they pedal. Those batteries are used to power the street lights of the plaza.

The final crucial step is having governments and the community involved. There is no one solution that would fit all nations, different approaches will be required in different regions and nations. The problem needs to be explained to the people. Many people may not understand the term climate change, but they do feel the impact. Giving solutions and preparing people from a social angle is fundamental. People need to be motivated to send their own messages and communicate their own desires. Next is highlighting economic benefits. New renewable technologies are also financial tools; energy filled battery packs, electric cars and so on improve trading and create new jobs and businesses, leading to economic growth. Finally, if education helps people understand better, climate change should be taught in schools.

No one person can prevent climate change, but we can get a successful outcome if everyone works together. People need to understand that actions need to be taken before things go haywire. If not, we will be gone in a second.

2nd Prize (joint)

We can beat climate change by 2030

by Emma Short, aged 16 (United Kingdom)

On 12th December 2015, world leaders achieved a tremendous success in the advancement of actions to combat global warming. Although they pledge to accomplish this by the end of the century, devastating consequences will have already surfaced, affecting each and every one of us.

I believe that we, the common man, can accelerate their efforts. We can beat climate change by 2030. This collective responsibility and obligation has been handed down to the individual. Firstly, we need to zoom in from the macrocosm of the world stage towards the microcosm; our solution resides in the mindset of man. The key to unlocking these ambitions? Social media.

In combatting climate change, we cannot underestimate the power of trend. Increasing the desirability of the eco-movement will have direct influence on our aspirations, outlook and

therefore futures. In the western world, a reformed capitalism is born, an attitude which is already surfacing in my generation. This fresh attitude is invaluable to our efforts in combatting global warming. Social networks are the ideal platform we need to affect every one of us, to cut across all ages, genders and agendas. In reaching each one of us, national and cultural barriers are broken down into insignificance; our identity as global citizens is reinforced. A global disaster such as climate change requires a global response. This response can only come from a passionate, inspired world population.

But, ultimately, a truly climate resilient future requires action. Social media can be used as a foundation of education that can influence our actions and then the steps we take. To make sure each of our nations exceed their INDCs outlined in the Paris Agreement, we first need to influence our national governments. To go above and beyond our goals, policy must be stricter. The required emission reduction in each sector, namely agricultural, transportation and industrial, must be transparently calculated and then enforced. An eco-friendly lifestyle must also become accessible to all the economic classes; in my home country the UK, for example, property developers must face stricter environmental standards when building affordable housing.

The parliamentary body exists to represent the people; an environmentally focused population means an environmentally focused government. The following of new, harsher policy therefore ensures long-term success, despite immediate economic reverberations. In the wise words of the 'Stern Review', 'the benefits of strong, early action considerably outweigh the costs'.

Our own lifestyles equally require reformation. However, this once daunting cultural shift has never seemed so attainable! New aspirations absorbed from social media filter naturally into our daily lives; the evidence is already here. Just look outside: non-fossil fuel powered vehicles glide along our recycling-bin lined avenues and above, solar panels grace the multitudinous domestic roofs.

So, 2030. Just 56 months, 9 weeks and 1 day from now. To utterly conquer climate change by 2030, our intentions need to happen. And fast. This urgency has never seemed so significant; a recent rise in nationalism around the globe, augmented by a President elect of the United States to whom climate change is merely a 'hoax', have created larger obstacles than we could ever have imagined.

Click by click, post by post, our society will become environmental warriors. I invite everyone to join me in spreading the message on each and every social platform. Global leaders and officials such as yourself shall do your bit in influencing international cooperation; we will do ours to exceed your wildest expectations.

3rd Prize

Let There Be Hope

by Yasmine Tohme, aged 14 (Lebanon)

Dear Mr. UN Secretary General,

I would like you to cast your mind forward to 2050. Picture me, Hope, a refugee from the tiny island of Paradise. Part of my beautiful island has been swept away by hurricanes and the rest of it is now drowning into the sea. My island is dying, killed by salt water, and I have had to leave. Losing my island has meant also losing my culture and my identity. I am not alone. I am one of 200 million climate refugees around the world fleeing severe droughts, strong storms, rising sea levels, or scarce freshwater. But where should we go? Which country will

welcome us? Which community will embrace us as one of their own and not as the enemy, competing for energy, food and water? Who would have ever imagined that global warming would tear communities apart and lead to conflict? Luckily, we are still in 2016 and mass migration is not a reality yet. However, climate change is. It is the result of human action and it is the single most dangerous problem facing our planet today. The good news is that 'We Can Beat Climate Change by 2030', but we need to act collectively and with a sense of urgency. We are told to consume less and waste less. This is definitely important at the individual level; however, putting the lights off before leaving a room, or closing the tap while brushing your teeth is not going to reverse global warming. For that, we need to change our whole economic system. Our world economy today is ruled by globalization, which is the uncontrolled movement of capital, goods, services and workers. Because of a system of subsidies and deregulation, goods from across the world cost less than goods produced locally. This has allowed an increase in the distance between producers and consumers, and has had severe consequences on our ecosystem. Goods are zigzagging the planet in every direction, burning fossil fuels and increasing CO2 emissions to levels that are melting polar ice sheets and raising sea levels. In grade 8 Geography, I remember studying about the journey of a t-shirt across the globe. I was surprised to learn that it starts in a cotton field in India, is turned into yarn in a factory in Indonesia, knitted into cloth in Bangladesh, assembled in Mexico, and finally printed in NY. All this so the consumer can buy it for a small price, but what a heavy cost for our environment! I was shocked also to learn from the award winning documentary "The Economics of Happiness" that "apples are sent from the UK to South Africa to be washed and waxed then shipped back to British supermarkets. Tuna is caught off the coast of America, flown to Japan to be processed, and then flown back to the US to be sold." To me this is a global tragedy. Globalization is accelerating climate change. We need to reverse that trend and start encouraging localization instead. Our economy should be concerned with local needs and investing in local production. Let us join hands across the world and write laws that help local businesses rather than the huge Multi-National Corporations, invest in local renewable energy rather than in fossil fuels, and subsidize local farming instead of huge industrial monocultures. Local alternatives will shorten the distance between producers and consumers and thus reduce CO2 emissions. Local alternatives will create jobs and restore traditional ways of life. Local alternatives will mean survival for Hope, her island, the polar bears, and our planet.

Sincerely yours,

Yasmine Tohme

4th Prize (joint)

We Can Beat Climate Change by 2030

by Audrey Isabel Pe, aged 15 (Philippines)

As of 2015, the global temperature has risen 1.7°F since 1880 due to enhanced greenhouse gas emissions. 65% of greenhouse gases come from man made CO2 emissions from fossil fuels, transportation, and industrial processes. Not only are high CO2 emissions harmful to the atmosphere, but also health. Overexposure to CO2 can lead to respiratory illnesses through carbon dioxide toxicity.

Stephen Hawking said, "this is the most dangerous time for our planet." He stated that "we face awesome environmental challenges: climate change, food production, overpopulation..." With the ongoing release of greenhouse gases detrimental to the Earth's climate, there is a need for a unified effort to beat climate change. Unfortunately, based on a poll of people from 40 nations, only 54% believe that it is a pressing problem.

This lack of belief and support in eradicating the issue is evident in the views of some world leaders. For instance, USA's newly appointed EPA head is a fossil fuel supporter and climate change skeptic. With the USA being the second highest greenhouse gas emitter, how will this political decision affect the nation and ultimately the world?

Although the 2015 COP21 showcased unity of 190 nations in recognizing that climate change must be addressed immediately, there is still more that needs to be done. A problem as vast as climate change shouldn't be tackled solely by the political higher ups. The issue should have the responsibility of everyone around the world - not just the politicians, academe, and scientists. In order for that to become a reality, there needs to be a deeper and wider kind of cognizance of climate change by the majority. After all, climate change isn't a political problem - it's a human one.

My proposal, ACT (Awareness, Competence, and Treasury), is a framework that enables action to end climate change through the following:

Awareness

According to a Gallup World Poll and study published in the Nature Climate Change journal, 40% of adults have never heard of climate change. To combat this, awareness can be raised through the power of media, primarily a dedicated media company that will handle the research and delivery of information pertaining to climate change. My vision is for it to be a CNN dedicated to climate change awareness.

Competence

Education is the root of competence, and essential in inspiring the youth to combat the problem. For that to happen, climate change studies must be integrated into schools' curriculums through interdisciplinary courses (i.e. climate change and technology courses).

Treasury

To enable the elements of awareness and competence, money is needed to sustain the aforementioned initiatives. I propose for the funding to come from a World Environmental Bank. The bank will take ownership of the media channel and fund for other projects that enable environmental consciousness. Additionally, the World Environmental Bank can empower the governments, industries, small businesses, and individuals through programs and financial support.

"We now have the technology to destroy the planet on which we live, but have not yet developed the ability to escape it," said Hawking. Ironically, we have the intellect and resources to solve climate change, yet it is still a present issue. Through ACT, citizens from all walks of life will be able to involve themselves in the eradication of climate change through awareness, competence, and treasury. By ACTing now, humanity can beat climate change by 2030.

4th Prize (joint)

We can beat climate change by 2030

by Ilinca Rusu, aged 15 (Romania)

Dear Mr/Mrs UN Secretary General,

We can stop climate change by 2030, by implementing some simple ideas and laws that have a big impact. Climate change is not a problem that can be solved in a few days, but an issue that requires small changes in everyone's daily life.

First of all, let us point out why climate change is such an important topic in any political agenda. Earth is the one that sustains life. Natural resources are essential to our economy. On top of that, the diversity of animal and plant species depends on the well-being of the natural habitats. Climate change is slowly messing it all up. So why are not people more concerned about it? Because it happens slowly and it has not affected all of us yet, but we must action and change something before it is too late. We cannot destroy the only planet that sustains life.

The first step in stopping climate change is raising awareness. A lot of people have no idea of what is happening because it is not a highly promoted subject. I think an easy, cheap and interesting solution would be to launch a free app in each country about climate change, that downloads automatically, for everyone, but can be deleted later on (like search engines, for example). It could be available on IOS, Android, Windows, for smartphones, tablets, laptops and computers. Nowadays, everyone, rich or poor, possesses at least one of these devices. It should have videos, articles, photos and interesting facts about this topic in each country's language. It is very important that everyone can afford to access the information this app provides. For the schools with computers, teachers can add an hour a week for one or two months dedicated to this. Any school can give students some homework about this topic, and students can do their research using this app. Educating the young generation is the main target, even though grownups will also learn from it. Also, encouraging young people in pursuing a career linked to environment is a key thing in stopping climate change.

Another important reform should target transport, the energy sector and industry which are two of the main reasons so many greenhouse gases are emitted. Public transport must be improved in each country, the prices of monthly subscriptions should be lowered and the taxes for using a car that is not electric should be raised. For the energy production, electrical energy is terribly wasted everyday everywhere. A solution to this would be lights with movement sensors, as well as bathroom appliances with sensors. It sounds funny, but just picture that for one day, no one would forget to turn off the lights or no one would leave the lights on. So, each dwelling, school, office building, hospital must be equipped with these kind of things, otherwise they should have to pay a tax. Also, it shouldn't be legal to sell appliances that don't have this kind of sensor anymore. For industry, it can't be easily changed, and surely cannot be closed - because goods production is essential, but it can be better regulated and controlled, so that unnecessary factories and those that do not follow the legislation should be shut down.

I know these rules might seem extreme at the first sight, but there is plenty of time until 2030 for people to get used to it, and without a change in our lives, our beloved planet cannot be saved.

Yours faithfully,
Ilinca Rusu

5th Prize (joint)

Climate is Changing

by Adam El Morsy, aged 13 (Saudi Arabia)

For every problem, there is a solution. The problem needing a solution is climate change. One's age, race, or gender does not matter for he/she can always make a difference. That difference could be by walking, driving, or even sitting down. By using innovation to produce renewable and sustainable energy, relying on fossil fuels for energy will become a solution of the past.

Fifteen year old Angelo Casimiro designed and built a fully functional shoe that generates electricity by walking, hiking, running, or playing sports. Millions if not billions of steps are taken every second, which made him think to himself, "Why can't we generate electricity from walking?" He then designed and built a fully functional electricity generating insole. He placed two piezoelectric generators on each side of the insole, resulting in twice as much energy generated while still using the same surface area. When pressure is applied on piezoelectric generators, the generators immediately generate electricity. He also stated that by jogging for eight hours he could fully charge a 400 mAH battery. Everybody has to slip on shoes. Just by slipping on shoes and tightening the laces, the foot naturally pushes weight into the sole. Furthermore the introduction of insoles that generate electricity would motivate people who are trying to cut down the electricity bill to walk more while still providing health benefits. By wearing these shoes we do not have to rely on burning fossil fuels for energy, instead we rely on walking, which is a sustainable and renewable type of energy. Furthermore, using piezoelectric generators doesn't harm the environment. If these shoes become more popular, by 2030, we would have a higher chance of mitigating climate change.

Road generating systems can generate electricity from car's weight. But these road systems are very costly, therefore, not common around the world. But entrepreneur Hector Ricardo Macias Hernandez designed an ingeniously simple mechanism that can generate electricity not just by cars on roads, but also by pedestrians walking and biking. Unlike the other systems which use piezoelectric materials which generate electricity from weight stresses, Hernandez's system uses a series of small ramps protruding about five centimeters from the road. When a car pushes down these ramps pressurized air is forced down through a tube below the ramp, that air continues and turns a wind turbine generating electricity. Hernandez's idea could greatly impact climate change because it does not harm the environment in installing these ramps, and these ramps are cheaper than other piezoelectric road systems. Since this system is cheaper than other piezoelectric road generating systems, countries that didn't want to imply piezoelectric generators under roads now do. With more countries using the new system, climate change could decelerate by 2030.

Chairs are used everywhere--in work, school, and at home. This resulted in rocking chairs becoming more favorable for not keeping the seated person idle. Igor Gitelstain wanted a source of renewable energy from being seated; hence, the idea of the Ortarky chair. A rocking chair generating electricity from the rocking motion. A magnet inside of a copper coil is installed in the base of the rocking chair. When the chair rocks magnet inside the copper coil generates electricity. This chair could generate electricity for houses that have constant power outages, which are common in many countries worldwide. For the counties which don't, have power outages, he hopes that the Ortarky chair could decrease the electricity bill. Igor also hopes that he could implement this concept in doors, swings, and other chairs. With the Ortarky chair, you don't need to be old or young, you just have to sit. Just by sitting down, by 2030 climate change would grind to a halt.

Every act no matter how small makes a difference. Don't wait until it's too late. Don't wait for

change; be the change.

5th Prize (joint)

We are part of the solution

by Manuela Gutierrez, aged 12 (Colombia)

Global warming is not a myth; Is a reality we are experiencing and not only brings about melting of the poles and snowfalls, but also floods, natural disasters, droughts, intense summers, water scarcity, air quality deterioration, biodiversity loss, and emergencies around the world.

Those problems get worst with overpopulation that requires large amounts of food, using livestock and intensive agriculture, uncontrolled industries, and aggressive mining that ends quickly with our ecosystem and create more GHG emissions.

We are destroying forests looking for vegetable oil and coal, drilling oceans and causing forest fires to obtain oil, and despite knowing all the ways to get clean energy, we keep using the most pollutant energy. By destroying our natural ecosystems, we are eliminating an important source to mitigate GHG.

There are many other issues we should address when discussing climate change, one of them is our individual responsibility. We usually blame corporations or politicians for the wrong paths they have put humanity, but as citizens and inhabitants of this planet we are also responsible of climate change.

As a child, considering that our generation must assume all the mistakes that humanity has made though history, I worry very much on how my friends, my family, and even my professors in the school don't care about this incredible challenge of our society, and in most of the cases they don't even know how their daily activities contribute to the problem.

For example, recycling is a very easy activity that we can all carry out, both in industries and in homes, we must raise awareness not only on separating waste in different containers and then reusing it, but also reducing the consumption of useless things. We must understand our responsibility in the generation of waste. Starting from the basis where purchasing unnecessary items is minimized

Water is an essential element to maintain life on the planet. Unfortunately, water is being polluted by many human activities such indiscriminate use of agrochemicals and the lack of treatment of wastewater from homes and industries. A conscious use of our water must be our priority.

Another example is the importance of promoting renewable energies such as solar, wind or marine energy. I would like to see children of my generation studying, researching, and creating new and cheap ways to produce renewable energy for our developing countries where renewable energy is very expensive.

The use of vehicles that do not require fossil fuels, such as electric cars or massive transport systems, should continue to be promoted, however in our daily lives we can contribute to emission reduction using public transportation, cycling or even walking. Telling our family, the reason why a private car is contributing to climate change, is also a good way to sensitize.

Despite all the evidence we have about climate change and the consequences we are living and we will live in coming years, there are many political and industrial interests that have not allowed to solve the problem. Additionally, people aren't aware enough of the problems and how they contribute with their daily behaviors.

Therefore, I feel responsible for spreading the word to make other children recognize there is only one chance to do something to ensure our survival on planet earth. Climate change is here and it is up to us changing our behaviors to avoid a catastrophe for humankind.

The only hope is to raise awareness in our generation. I am sure if we lead the change from different parts of the world we can do something together. Through our ideas, and sustainable behaviors we can save our planet.