

# Children and young people across the world unite online to address climate change

*Coalition of UNICEF, UN agencies, NGO, academia and private sector partners gives youth a voice*

**NEW YORK, 20th August 2009** - Children and young people across the world are joining forces to address climate change with a new initiative, *Unite for Climate*, launched today at the International Youth Conference in Daejeon, Republic of Korea.

UNICEF, together with UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, youth activists, academia and the private sector have developed an online space to enable youth networks, children, young people and experts to collaborate on climate change solutions using open-source technology.

Climate change affects the health, survival, education and equality of children and young people everywhere - especially the poorest and the most vulnerable. Around 45 per cent of the world's population is currently under the age of 25 years. Many are motivated to contribute to a better world and are already actively involved in the issue of climate change.

Through networking opportunities and social tools offered on the *Unite for Climate* site, young citizens can connect, share knowledge, learn, and engage in the issue of climate change. Their voices will also be heard through different channels to influence policy-making in the run-up to COP 15 in Copenhagen, the world leaders' meeting on climate change in December.

UNICEF and its civil society and private partners have been increasingly broadening the global scope of youth engagement through technological innovations.

The *Unite for Climate* initiative includes an online community of youth activists and experts and a website for information and resource sharing. It also compiles existing youth campaigns to guide young people on how to take action. Most of the tools are designed for locations where internet connection is slow, allowing children and youth of diverse socio-economic backgrounds to join *Unite for Climate*.

To expand the outreach to those who do not have internet access, a SMS component has been added to the initiative. Amongst other partners, Google/YouTube and FlipCam have been supporting Global Youth Climate Debates that will also be launched in South Korea as part of *Unite For Climate*. Partners, including the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) and the activist network 350.org, will help capture voices of hard-to-reach youth in rural and deprived urban areas through hand-held cameras to enable their participation in the debate.

This week over 800 children and youth from some 100 countries have been discussing the challenges of climate change at the UNEP supported TUNZA International Youth Conference in Daejeon, South Korea. An action plan will be produced and a statement delivered to world leaders urging them to take action at the UN climate change conference in Copenhagen in December.

*Unite for Climate* is supporting youth engagement in major global events, including: the UN General Assembly week on climate change in September, the Global Action Day organized by 350.org in October, the Children's Climate Forum in Copenhagen in November, and the COP15 meeting in Copenhagen in December.

In addition, *Unite for Climate* will connect at least 150 schools around the globe from September. The Connecting Classrooms project will foster dialogue on climate change between school children, and is supported by TERI, Earth Institute at Columbia University and the Mediterranean Center for Sustainable Development among other partners.

**Unite for Climate:**

Public website - [www.uniteforclimate.org](http://www.uniteforclimate.org)

Online Community - <http://myuniteforclimate.org>

Connecting Classrooms – Starting in September 2009

**About UNICEF:**

UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, safe water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.

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