Track 0 in New York: Climate Week & More!

National leaders, business and civil society groups, members of the public – and the Pope – were in the United States in September to attend Climate Week 2015, the UN Sustainable Development Summit 2015, as well as meetings of the Major Economies Forum and the UN General Assembly.

And Track 0 was there, too!

There is growing momentum for the inclusion of a long-term goal in the Paris climate agreement that would operationalise the globally agreed 2°C average temperature rise limit.

Here are some of the key developments in September:

1. Track 0 was in New York to support a number of youth and NGO events during Climate Week 2015.

2. The United States and China issued a Joint Presidential Statement on Climate Change outlining the shared vision of President Barack Obama and President Xi Jinping for a Paris climate agreement that recognises the need for a global low-carbon transformation during the course of this century.

3. World leaders voiced support at an informal working lunch on climate change – which was held on September 27 during Climate Week in New York City – for a Paris climate agreement that translates the globally agreed 2°C temperature increase limit into a common long-term goal for collective action.

4. The Major Economies Forum met in New York on September 29-30 with a discussion about the inclusion of a long-term goal in the Paris agreement featuring as a priority of the meeting agenda. Track 0 CEO Farhana Yamin was in attendance to provide support for the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

5. Track CEO Farhana Yamin wrote an article that was published in the Huffington Post, exploring the links between the achievement of global sustainable development goals and strong climate action.

We invite you to read on to learn more about the details of these developments.
Track 0 participated in two major youth events to activate youth voices on the long-term goal in New York during the UN Sustainable Development Summit 2015 and Climate Week 2015.

The UN Major Group for Children and Youth to the sustainable development process showed their support for #zeroby2050 during their 'Youth Blast'. This mirrored YOUNGO's actions in the September Bonn ADP session where youth painted black and white circles around their eyes to show their support for the inclusion of a long-term mitigation goal in the Paris climate agreement.

At the Youth and Mayors Forum on Climate and Sustainability – organised during Climate Week by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), which brings together over 1,000 cities, towns and local governments internationally – youth again highlighted their support for a long-term goal of #zeroby2050 by painting circles around their right eye and explaining the significance of the symbol to the audience.
On the 25th of September, the United States and China issued a Joint Presidential Statement on Climate Change describing a common vision for a new climate agreement to be concluded in Paris in December.

President Obama and President Xi agreed on the importance of concluding an agreement that ramps-up ambition over time, includes an enhanced transparency system that builds mutual trust and confidence, promotes effective implementation including through reporting and review of action, and that makes progress on the issue of differentiation between developed and developing countries. They also emphasized the need to achieve a low-carbon transformation of the global economy during the course of this century.

In addition to a shared vision for the Paris climate negotiations, the Statement also contains significant domestic policy announcements, including China’s intention to launch a national emission trading system in 2017 and commitments to global climate finance.

The Statement builds upon an earlier US-China bilateral announcement, made in November 2014, which set new emissions targets for the two countries.

The timing of the announcement ahead of Climate Week in New York and meetings of the Major Economies Forum is significant – the US and China are now demonstrating clear signs of leadership on climate action and a shared commitment to ensuring that a successful global climate agreement is concluded in Paris in December.
At an informal working lunch on climate change, held on September 27 during Climate Week in New York City, world leaders voiced their support for the conclusion of a Paris climate agreement that translates the globally agreed 2°C temperature increase limit into a common long-term goal for collective action.

The lunch was hosted by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, French President François Hollande and Peruvian President Ollanta Humala Tasso, and was attended by 35 world leaders from a representative group of countries. Leaders who attended expressed a shared commitment to work closely to address and resolve all major impediments to reaching an ambitious agreement in Paris.

One of the key conclusions from the co-chairs was the need for a Paris climate agreement to operationalise the globally agreed 2°C temperature increase limit and to keep open the option of limiting average global temperature rise to 1.5°C.

Leaders suggested three options for a collective long-term goal:

1. The progressive decarbonisation of the global economy over the course of the century
2. The shift towards 100% clean energy systems; or
3. Green low carbon transformation during the course of the century

They also recognised the importance and usefulness of formulating and making available national mid-century strategies for the transition to low emissions economies.

You can download and read the full list of conclusions here.
The Major Economies Forum (MEF) met in New York on September 29-30th to discuss key issues that need to be resolved at the Paris Conference of Parties (COP21) in December. Track 0 CEO Farhana Yamin was in attendance to provide support for the Republic of the Marshall Islands, who have been invited to the MEF for the last 2 years.

There was a lengthy discussion about the inclusion of a long-term goal in the Paris agreement that would translate the 2°C threshold into an operational target that was more easily and clearly understood. The MEF was able to consider the placement and language that might best give operational effect to the 2°C temperature limit: some options included ‘decarbonisation’; ‘net zero’, ‘climate neutrality’ and ‘low emission, green economies’.

Track 0 in the Huffington Post

Track CEO Farhana Yamin wrote an article that was published in the Huffington Post exploring the links between the achievement of global sustainable development goals and strong climate action that can result from Sustainable Development Goal 13 on climate change.

The piece was part of a series of blog posts focusing on the Sustainable Development Goals. Read it here.
Thanks for reading. As part of the build up to Paris, we are publishing weekly countdown blogs and are providing monthly newsletters to keep you updated.

Don’t forget to follow us on Twitter!

– Ana, Isabel and Farhana