

Press Release

Cairo Climate Talks experts: “The world needs a wakeup call!”

Cairo Climate Talks (CCT) held its 5th monthly event on the topic “Climate Change - How vulnerable is Egypt?” on the 12th March 2012 at Sawy Culturewheel. The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Cairo and the Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs hosted this special event on the occasion of the EU-Egypt Year of Science and Innovation in special cooperation with The British Embassy Cairo.

Prof. Wolfgang Cramer, Lead author of IPCC Reports, Professor for Global Ecology, Research Director at the Mediterranean Institute for Ecology and Biodiversity, clearly stated “the world needs a wakeup call.”

Climate change is highly relevant for Egypt, according to Prof. Cramer.

“Linking development and climate change promises better living conditions and solving many daily

problems for Egypt’s population”. Thus, we need regional knowledge to make developing countries “climate-proof“, so Cramer. Development includes implementing modern transportation systems, clean solid waste management and greening up cities. “Climate Change offers a win-win solution for Egypt if tackled accordingly”, Prof. Cramer stated.

He fended off the counter-arguments against climate change studies. “Yes, climate has always changed, and history of climate shows that nature and humans have adapted.” But the problem is that today changes occur faster, and exceed the average changes of the global ecosystem. Our modern societies are extremely complex and sensitive to climate change. “The real question is not if the worst case scenario will happen or not, rather do we want these risks to happen?”

Dr. Kirsty Lewis, principal climate change consultant at the Met Office’s Hadley Centre and co-author of the British Study „Climate: Observations, Projections and Impacts - Egypt“, explained that increases in temperatures leads to decreases in crop yield in Egypt. Major crops like wheat and rice will be affected. Dr. Lewis and Prof. Cramer agreed that climate change impacts are adverse for Egypt.

“Egypt shows high level vulnerability”, so Dr. Lewis. Opposed to other countries in the Northern hemisphere like Canada and Siberia, Egypt shows “no positive impact”, the British expert concluded. Prof. Cramer reminded the audience of the impacts of sea level rise on the coastal regions and the Nile delta.

Prof. Magdy AbdelWahab, Professor and Ex-Head of the Department of Astronomy and Meteorology, Faculty of Science, Cairo University, highlighted the importance of climate change



Panellists Prof. Wolfgang Cramer, Dr. Kirsty Lewis, Prof. Magdy AbdelWahab, Julia Gerlach (from right to left)

issues to the Egyptian society and economy. The reduction of cereal production can lead to problems in agriculture for example.



Audience at the panel Climate change-How vulnerable is Egypt?

“Yet, the Egyptian government is not aware of the topic and its impacts on Egypt’s future, it appears”, Prof. AbdelWahab maintained that It is not only a matter of clean air, but also can be linked to developmental issues of climate change like solid waste management. The public needs lots of awareness work, because climate change is a slow long term process.

Prof. Cramer pointed out that science is the answer to face climate change. “We need knowledge on living in hot and dry weather, and

on how to produce clean renewable energy.” To provide policy makers with a sound scientific basis for decision-making, the Intergovernmental Panel Climate Change (IPCC) was born. The IPCC reports need a political response from all countries of the world, including Egypt, Cramer stated.

The audience included distinguished guests. Hossam Badrawi, professor of medicine at Cairo University and politician, thinks that Cairo Climate Talks is important because it establishes the link between the public and science. Yet academia needs to offer concrete suggestions for the governments and the public instead of the abstract level of discussion. “The political parties need a clear programme that is based on science and knowledge”, he added.

Mohamed El-Sawy, Member of Parliament and Founder of El-Sawy Culturewheel, expressed his appreciation that this Cairo Climate Talks event is taking place in Culturewheel. “We need to recognize the importance of the environmental issue we are facing. Climate change is about the right of our unborn children who are not there to defend themselves. We need more rationality of consumption, and stop being selfish and senseless”, El-Sawy confirmed.



Guests at Sawy Culturewheel before the start of the event

Cairo Climate Talks is a series of monthly events meant to provide a platform to exchange experience, raise awareness and foster cooperation between policymakers, the business community, the scientific community as well as civil society. It is held in cooperation between the German Embassy in Cairo, the Egyptian Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA), the German Academic Exchange service (DAAD), the Deutsche



Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Egyptian German High Level Joint Committee for Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Environmental Protection (JCEE).

The next Cairo Climate Talks panel discussion will take place end of April 2012, at 7 pm at DAAD, the premises of the German Academic Exchange Service office in Zamalek. It will discuss urban planning and climate change.

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