

ESRAG CALL FOR COP 26 PROPOSALS:

UPDATED RESPONSE FROM D9350

FOLLOWING PROPOSAL DISCUSSIONS WITH ESRAG'S KAREN KENDRICK-HANDS & YASAR ATACIK

Preamble

In the light of the major historical roles that Rotary International (RI) has played in the establishment of the United Nations after World War II and the almost complete eradication of the health challenge of polio, we believe it is now time for RI to again play a major international role.

We propose that RI uses its world-wide presence, with its 1.2 million members in 37,500 clubs in over 200 countries, and its ethical Four-way Test of being fair and beneficial to all concerned, to lead and take action with a much greater international stand on the issues of Climate Change.

We believe the immediacy of the Climate Crisis requires RI to use its presence at the COP 26 Conference as a catalyst to begin to take relevant and significant action as the leading international Civil Society organisation it is and, thereafter, to further strategize actions which will indeed "change lives" as its 2021 motto encourages. This will, in fact, enable RI to save the lives of many more - especially the lives of future generations for whom the current Climate Crisis provides little hope of a positive future. Indeed the impact of an unresolved Climate Crisis could well nullify so much of the excellent work and huge financial contribution RI has made to life on Planet Earth over the past 116 years.

To enable RI to help the world be much more relevant and effective in dealing with the Climate Crisis, we propose that RI's COP 26 Delegation, and all future RI Environmental strategies, should include the following immediate and longer term goals:

Immediate goals for the RI COP 26 Delegation

1.Partnership approach

In the build-up to the November COP 26 Conference, the RI COP 26 Delegation should seek to establish and, where appropriate, strengthen RI's relationships with specific international organizations who are also committed to dealing with Climate Change, especially in light of the scientific evidence provided by the recent 6th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and to closing the 1,5°C gap. Failure to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement / Rulebook would ultimately undermine the achievement of just and sustainable global development that hopes to leave no one person behind. In such light, the RI delegation should plan to motivate these and possibly other organisations to work together with RI to find synergistic cohesive approaches for COP 26 and beyond.

To gain immediate traction in the next two months prior to COP 26, we propose that the RI Delegation should seek to establish links with the five organisations listed below. These organisations all have world-wide representation of diverse target groups, namely, economists, significant well-respected previous world leaders, legal, scientific and development experts, and importantly the youth. The goal would be to try to consolidate a common view and purpose with all five organizations together with Rotary to enable all to talk with a united cohesive voice at COP 26.

1.1.Commonwealth of Nations:

The fact that two of the four Rotary COP 26 Delegation, Judith Diment and Doug Wills, have formal links through RI to the Commonwealth of Nations, suggests that the place to start the proposed relationship-building is here, where the relationship already exists. In addition, D9350

Rotarian Prof Oliver Ruppel, an well -experienced COP delegate, also has an excellent working relationship with the Commonwealth Secretariat who deal with Climate Crisis issues.

2. **World Economic Forum (WEF):** In the past five years the WEF has effectively changed its priorities and elevated its entire Climate Crisis approach to be its top priority, promoting the common good, human dignity and stewardship of the planet. Acknowledging the long neglected value of nature, WEF Chairman Klaus Schwab proposes “a total reset” due to Climate Change. RI needs to learn from WEF how they pressed the reset button within their WEF organization. WEF Chairman Klaus Schwab can be introduced to the RI COP 26 Delegation by Stellenbosch University, respectively by its Vice Chancellor, Professor Wim De Villiers, its Vice Rector, Professor Eugene Cloete and Rotarian Professor Oliver Ruppel of the Faculty of Law’s Development and Rule of Law Programme (DROP) and/ or possibly through IPRIP Holgar Knaack who can be introduced to the COP delegation by D9350 IPDG Carl-Heinz Duisberg who knows IPRIP Holgar Knaack very well.
3. **The Elders:** This group of internationally well-respected previous senior world leaders is currently chaired by Mary Robinson, who is a past UN Special Envoy for Climate Change. The Elders organisation was set up by Nelson Mandela to work specifically on solutions for problems such as Climate Change. It was thought that either Doug or Judith may well know Mary Robinson, as they are based in the UK but, if not, the D9350 team would attempt to make the links as we met with Mary Robinson in late 2019 on the issue of Climate Crisis.
4. **Stop Ecocide International:** This organisation seeks to protect our ecosystems - the fundamental elements of life on Planet Earth - by establishing ecocide as an international crime in terms of the Rome Statute. "Ecocide" has been defined by an independent expert panel as meaning "**unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts**". Besides support from the United Nations Secretary-General, this vital organisation also works with "diplomats, politicians, lawyers, corporate leaders, NGOs, indigenous and faith groups ... , influencers, academic experts, grassroots campaigns and individuals". (See Addendum 3) Its campaign has gained traction in recent times - with decisions by several countries to include it in their legislative programmes as well as a decision in May 2021 by the [Inter-Parliamentary Union](#), representing 179 parliaments around the world, to adopt a resolution calling on all Member Parliaments to support making ecocide a criminal offence. Even if it takes a few years for the amendment of the Rome Statute to take effect, the fact that ecocide is being considered as an international crime will serve as a deterrent.
5. **Global Alliance of Universities on Climate (GAUC):** This structure consists of 13 world-class universities from all continents, including MIT, Oxford, Cambridge and Stellenbosch University from Africa. It is currently co-chaired by the French Science-Po and the Chinese Tsinghua Universities. Each of these 13 Universities already has or is currently establishing its own School of Climate Studies to advance climate change solutions through research, education, and public outreach, and to partner with industry, non-profit and government organisations to promote rapid implementation from local to global scales. As it is the youth for whom RI must encourage hope that the world will effectively deal with the Climate Crisis challenge, the GAUC could, in time, link to the over 25 000 universities and 250 million university students world-wide.

Professor Oliver Ruppel will be able to facilitate an introduction of the RI Cop 26 delegation to the current Co-chairs of GAUC. (See addendum one for Prof Oliver's August 2021 article on the climate crisis)

2. Suggestions for Rotary International Public Image Presence at COP 26

2.1. Booth space: Should RI manage to secure a booth at COP 26, we suggest display ideas in 2.2. Should RI not be able to secure a formal booth it could be worth requesting some space in the Commonwealth of Nations booth, but only if the allocated space is not too inconspicuous, or it would simply not be worth the while. Alternatively, or in addition we also suggest requesting RIBI to provide display space for RI's COP 26 display, preferably central to RIBI's main display of UK children's Climate Crisis COP 26 posters, which would provide an appealing drawcard, enabling RI to showcase itself in the ways proposed below through maps and photos.

2.2 Marketing Rotary's worldwide presence at COP 26: For any of the above booth options or with the poster display, it is proposed that ESRAG requests the help of the RI PI Team experts to create a very professional display which highlights through large professional world maps (or uses technology to flash onto a large screen) a large clear world map highlighting geographically throughout the world exactly where RI's 37,500 Rotary Clubs are based. If possible, and if not confusing, the map could also indicate where so many of our 534 Rotary Districts are, which include three or more countries in one District, which enables us to broker relationships across political geographic boundaries. We further believe it is important that RI displays and delegates do not focus on the fact that RI has only so very recently added Environment as a focus area but rather on RI's worldwide footprint and the excellent work RI has done in the humanitarian fields of peace and health so effectively in the past decades. If space is available, the RI Map should be surrounded by a few clear large photographs of work RI has done in terms of polio and the environment, big enough to be seen at a distance. We would like to stress that no small photos or fine print is used as COP delegates will have minimal time to visit the booth and, if COP 26 is hybrid, may have seconds to virtually visit the displays.

2.3 RI COP 26 Public Image message: Wherever we can get RI public image mileage at COP, we propose that our RI COP 26 message should focus on what RI has already achieved internationally, namely, the establishment of the United Nations and Polio eradication and a worldwide footprint and what RI is able to do because it is "super-globally and, at the same time, super-locally based".

2.4 Use of technology: If the final decision is to host a hybrid conference, we propose that all four RI COP 26 delegates have the same RI background (not ESRAG) on their computer screens so when they speak or ask questions, all delegates see the Rotary wheel on a blue background. We also suggest that, rather than a name on the Zoom screen, the RI delegates put their email addresses so those listening can easily contact our RI delegates, as relationship building is one of the main purposes of being at COP 26. It is RI's first formal delegation there and we need to maximize this opportunity.

2.5 Rotary Pins: All four RI formal COP 26 delegates and any other Rotarians attending in other capacities, should be encouraged to wear their Rotary pins at all times. They should also all be fully conversant with all the current and historical details of RI's world-wide presence and achievements and capabilities.

2.6 Business Cards: It is further suggested that the COP 26 Delegation has Rotary and not ESRAG business cards (so as not to confuse other delegates as ESRAG does not have the same worldwide footprint as Rotary does). The business cards should possibly use the reverse side to share the "socially just, economically viable and ecologically sound" goals listed below in 1. "Press the reset button."

2.7 In summary: We believe it is vital that RI sends a simple but very powerful public image message of a professional international organization with a world-wide presence, that is well-financed, trusted, effective, non-political and non-religious; has enormous international credibility and respect and the proven ability to effectively work together to address international crises.

Longer term strategic goals for RI

1. "Press the reset button"

The immediacy of the Climate Crisis requires the world to be on a war footing to address the existential threat to life on Planet Earth. We need a "Whole of Society" approach and we must position RI to help enable the world to "press the reset button". This should be done by, first, RI significantly intensifying its commitment and ability in-house to actively target the Climate Crisis and, then, to facilitate an international common purpose approach to deal with the Climate Crisis by motivating all to ensure that all their projects and actions are sustainable and focus for an indefinite period and with immediate urgency on being:-

- socially just
- economically viable and
- ecologically sound.

2. The RI focus should be on the Humanitarian aspects of Climate Crisis

(i.e. Protect Children and future generations and all life on Earth)

As Rotary is a humanitarian organization it is likely that focusing on the Humanitarian aspect of the Climate Crisis is the most likely approach to motivate those senior Rotary leaders still not convinced of the urgency of the climate crisis. In terms of the humanitarian dimension, RI needs to take cognisance of the UNICEF report on Child Rights where one billion children are now at risk from the impact of the Climate Crisis. All RI structures need to understand that the interplay between Human and Planetary Health - in particular the devastating international impact of COVID-19, has changed the goalposts for all. Humankind is as much an endangered species as all other forms of life on Earth. RI must promote the voices of women, children, indigenous and marginalised people, who are most affected.

3. Partnerships

RI's polio eradication campaign was highly successful because RI partnered with the World Health Organization and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. RI now needs to strategize to identify similar relevant environmental partners, with whom it can build and strengthen relationships as proposed as step one for the COP 26 Delegation above, but to strategically ensure RI is well-representing the wider world, not just the rich and powerful. Suggested partner groups to consider include all those linked to the United Nations (e.g. the following UN agencies in order of priority :UNICEF, UNFCCC, UNEP, UNDP, UNISDR, UNFPA, UNOPS, UNECA and UNGA, and WHO among others – see addendum two for clarification on these acronyms and who the Rotary representatives are on each UN organization). Additional suggested partners are international organisations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Trade Organization

(WTO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the International Geographic Union - to name just a few.

4. Strengthen links with the UN Secretary-General António Guterres

RI should build its Environmental Climate Change “reset” approach around the challenge that UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres raised which was that the country nation members of the United Nations are not effectively addressing climate change fast enough to prevent the imminent catastrophe by 2030. Guterres said that the world is now at “code red for humanity “ and that it now behoves Civil Society to take up this challenge. For RI to become a world leader in this field and to actively drive this approach, RI needs to build relations and work closely with Secretary-General Guterres (who holds Rotary’s highest recognition, the Rotary Award of Honour). RI should aim to achieve a greater RI presence, voice and vote for Civil Society within the United Nations' structures. It is proposed that the link to UN Secretary-General Guterres could come through Mary Robinson as she was the UN Special Envoy on Climate Change and Mary Robinson believes Rotary has a role to play in combating the Climate Crisis. It is further felt that, were the UN Secretary- General to approach the RI Board for assistance with the Climate Crisis, this could be the catalyst needed to shift RI leadership into high gear and effective action on the Climate Crisis.

It is also important to note that Rotary holds the highest consultative status offered to a non-governmental organisation by the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which oversees many specialized UN agencies. RI and ECOSOC should rise to the occasion, in the words of new ECOSOC President Collen Vixen Kelapile of Botswana, and wage “a spirited war against disease, poverty and inequality, impacts of climate change, as well as mobilise global action and resources during the Decade of Action to accelerate implementation of all the SDGs”.

5. Inside Rotary structures

Within all existing RI structures RI should dramatically encourage environmental awareness at every level - through speaker programmes at Rotary and Rotaract clubs , as well as with environmental talks, educational programmes, camps and projects at Interact and Early-act clubs so that RI encourages the youth to become involved. Through academic training, practice, and global networking opportunities, Rotary must urgently develop capacity to be a more effective catalyst, promoting sustainable peace and development through effective climate crisis actions.

All the above actions can significantly enhance and support the RI membership drive.

Addenda:

Addendum 1: Recent publication by Prof Oliver Ruppel:

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-08-18-hesitation-price-tag-the-humanitarian-cost-of-failing-to-act-on-the-climate-crisis-while-we-enter-code-red/>

Addendum 2. Rotarians who represent Rotary on UN structures:

<https://www.75yearsofaction.live/the-rotary-representative-network>

Addendum 3: ECOCIDE video and articles:

[ECOCIDE: the network, the news, the story \(stopecocide.earth\)](http://stopecocide.earth)