



UNFCCC MODEL NEGOTIATIONS 2015

ABSTRACT

THE CEMS MODEL UNFCCC NEGOTIATIONS WERE HELD IN ST. GALLEN, SWITZERLAND IN MAY 2015. MASTER LEVEL STUDENTS FROM LEADING EUROPEAN BUSINESS SCHOOLS GATHERED TO PARTICIPATE IN A MODEL CLIMATE CHANGE NEGOTIATION.

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General Information

The CEMS Model United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held on May 15 - 16, 2015 at the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland. St. Gallen is a one-thousand-year-old city in eastern Switzerland and is a UNSECO World Heritage Site. A place of such history and hope provided a very unique place to host the negotiations.

The model UNFCCC brought together a group of Master-level students from leading business schools across Europe. The model UNFCCC was the culmination of a climate change policy course, which was offered at 7 universities¹ across Europe. The goal of the model negotiations was to broaden students' understanding of climate change and climate policy.

More than 120 delegates participated in this year's UNFCC model negotiations. During the workshop, each student was assigned a role, which aligned with the innovative three-sector approach of the course. Each student represented a governmental representative, a non-governmental organization, or an industry lobbyist. All delegates maintained their individual role and were also part of a small team or delegation.

The three main negotiation groups in the workshop were:

- **Mitigation:** negotiations focused on measures for future commitments by Annex I and non-Annex I² countries to reduce carbon emissions
- **Trading:** talks focused on the future of the Clean Development Mechanism
- **Adaptation:** discussions concerned funding and adaptation-related technology transfers for developing countries

^[1] University of St. Gallen, Corvinus University Budapest, ESADE Barcelona, Rotterdam School of Management, University of Cologne, WU Vienna, Bocconi Milano.

^[2] The Convention divides countries into three main groups according to differing commitments: Non-Annex I Parties are mostly developing countries. Annex I Parties include the industrialized countries and Annex 2.

Thursday, May 14th

The University of St. Gallen hosted a plenary dinner on the night before the negotiations, where the UNFCCC Chair, Hans Christoph Curtius began the evening with opening remarks to set the tone for the negotiations. The structure of the dinner was very informal, but like any real negotiation, students enthusiastically used this opportunity to talk to other negotiators and began to seek out coalitions and find common points of interest. The COMAC (Coalition of Most Affected Countries) coalition, which represented more than sixteen developing countries, was a result of the plenary dinner.



Delegates presenting during the plenary



India talks with other delegates

Friday, May 15th

The first day began with an opening plenary session. Each delegate made a short formal opening statement (one minute maximum), which provided everyone with an indication of parties' standpoints on key issues. After the opening plenary, workshops began and continued on throughout the day. The workshops were a series of working group sessions covering three agenda items (mitigation, trading, and adaptation). NGOs and industry representatives also offered two side events for delegates. Although the NGOs and industry representatives had no voting rights, they tried to maximize their contribution and influence in the negotiations through informal means.

“The most valuable part of the model was meeting with students from different backgrounds and discussing common challenges, information and discussion stemming from speakers.”



Delegates used the session to rethink their focus.



Make the last day count!

Saturday, May 16th

The second day began with a plenary session and a media update from the day before. The Chair also reviewed the outcomes and agreements made by the delegates during Day 1 of the model negotiations. The negotiations continued while government representatives tried to reach consensus on the three main agenda items, mitigation, trading, and adaptation. Fortunately, the delegates were able to come to an agreement on all agenda items by the end of the negotiations.

“We were impressed by how well students were prepared for the model and how serious they played their respective roles. The delegate’s determination toward finding a solution for climate change was admirable.”



Final voting



Mitigation group

Media Coverage

The workshop was covered by the Media Team, which included one of last year's media team members, one of last year's delegates, and two UVic representatives. The Media Team provided coverage of the working group sessions, plenary sessions, and side events. The delegates frequently checked the media resources (the Media News Blog and Facebook Group) to stay informed about ongoing negotiations and receive updates from other groups. The importance and reliance of the Media Team demonstrates the importance of the media and social media in present-day negotiations.



Group photo



Media Team announcing best negotiators.

Conference Outcomes

- The conference provided students with a practical and hands-on approach to learning how real negotiations work at the United Nations.
- The model negotiation allowed students to recognize the challenges and complexities of multinational negotiations.
- The students experienced first-hand how certain personalities often play a large role in the negotiations and the importance of teamwork and cooperation.
- The model UNFCC provided a unique opportunity to knowledge-transfer between students at leading business schools across Europe

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our special gratitude to Professor Monika Winn and the Centre for Social and Sustainable Innovation (CSSI) for their generous financial contributions and support for this trip. We would like also to thank everyone who contributed to the success of this event, especially the dedication and hard work of the workshop planning committee.

Related Links:

- Event website: www.modelunfccc.org
- Live blog of this year's fictitious media team: <https://unfcccnegotiations2015.wordpress.com/>
- Photos of this year's role play: https://www.dropbox.com/s/pdg3cjns1fn3w47/Selected%20Pics_Model%20UNFCCC2015.zip?dl=0
- Journal Article of Prof. Rolf Wuestenhagen on the course concept: https://www.alexandria.unisg.ch/Publications/citation/Rolf_Wuestenhagen/61082