

## **Summary: Youth Forum on Climate Change and Water**

On April 16 the **Environmental Coalition of Miami & the Beaches 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Miami and the Beaches Environmental Film Festival (MBEFF)** and the **Center for Communication Culture and Change at the University of Miami** hosted a Youth Forum on Water and Climate Change. The action-oriented event included expert presentations, a film screening, youth presentations and breakout sessions for youth representing several Miami educational institutions building strategies for addressing the realities of water and climate change in South Florida.

**Dr. Joakim Harlin**, Senior Water Adviser, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, **UNDP Stockholm** spoke to the attending audience via Skype about the United Nations' transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the forthcoming **Sustainable Development Goals** in the context of water and climate. **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** scientist **Dr. Ben Kirtman**, spoke about the hard evidence behind the inevitability of climate related change and the need for adaptation and mitigation strategies. **H.E. Mr. Philippe Létriliart**, the French Consul General in Miami spoke about the significance of the **2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 21/CMP 11)** to be held in Paris this December, noting that the responsibility for addressing climate change will vary according to a nation's capacity and that contributions are being sought to support the efforts of developing nations. **Elizabeth Wheaton**, Environmental Resources Manager of Miami Beach gave a presentation on how the **City of Miami Beach** is taking steps to adapt to the inevitability of sea level rise.

A new version of the film ***One Water (for Sustainable Development)*** produced at the University of Miami was screened at the event as part of the MBEFF.

The highlight of the evening were youth presentations made by leading young voices on climate change identified by the **Climate Leadership Engagement Opportunities (CLEO) Institute**. **Delaney Reynolds**, 10<sup>th</sup> grade student from Palmer Trinity School, **Rachel Lopez**, **Bianca Polini**, and **Ethan Rivero** from Florida International University, were youth presenters on various aspects of climate change and adaptation, including renewable energy, sustainable tourism, and campaigns to divest from fossil fuel. A group of youth from Germany representing **HLA Gernsbach** made a presentation on women's leadership in environmental activism via Skype from New York where they were on a visit led by **Jason Higgins** of the New York Metropolitan Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolence. Youth delegations from the **University of Miami**, **Florida International University**, **Gulliver Preparatory School**, **Palmer Trinity**, **Palmetto Senior High** and **North Western High School** were in attendance and participated in the strategy breakout sessions.

The 4-hour event was co-moderated by MBEFF coordinator and the executive director of World Council on Peoples of the United Nations, **Shamina de Gonzaga**, University of Miami professor and founder of mediaforchange.org, **Sanjeev Chatterjee**, and CLEO Institute founder and director, **Caroline Lewis**. Towards the end of the program, **Luiz Rodrigues**, executive director of the Environmental Coalition of Miami and the Beaches (ECOMB) presented CLEO founder Caroline Lewis with a certificate acknowledging her important work over many years in inspiring youth to engage with the implications of climate change.

The reception was sponsored by the **YY Green Environmental Corporation** and the **World Council of Peoples for the United Nations** with additional contributions from **Vita Coco** and **Eco Centric Depot**.

*The Youth Forum was co-convened by the Environmental Coalition of Miami and the Beaches 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Miami and the Beaches Environmental Film Festival, the University of Miami Center for Communication Culture and Change, mediaforchange.org, World Council of Peoples for the United Nations, United Nations Development Programme, CLEO Institute, Consulate General of France, City of Miami Beach, HLA Gernsbach (Germany), New York Metropolitan Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolence, UNA-USA Council of Organizations, Miami Waterkeeper, Coral Gables Museum, Florida International University and Urban Green Works.*