

Words for Your World

Y9 winner: Sophia Stead, Putney High School

Dear UNFCCC secretariat

I am 13 years old and I have been worrying about this earth's future for over 5 years. Every year we have seen more and more people asking powerful governing bodies like yours to own up. I don't want to be like every other letter you get, asking why you aren't doing anything and that we need to do xyz.

I understand how many issues you are struggling to solve and how hard it is to create strategies and laws helping these. I know you can see what is inevitably happening to our planet and how worried I hope you are. But what I want this letter to do, is to present the facts that I think we all need reminding of.

To reiterate my knowing that our world has a lot of issues; I understand your reasoning for why some of them should come before making climate laws, such as banning single use plastic bags, however our future needs to be taken care of. I can't remember a day where I didn't think that when I'm older it's going to be down to my friends and I to fix what people can't be bothered to now.

In 2007-2016, terrorism accounted for 196,529 deaths (0.002% of the whole world population). This is in accordance of the website Statista. Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year (estimated by WHO). And terrorism is a very large issue that needs to be treated with extreme seriousness and these almost 200,000 deaths over a ten year period need to be addressed. But putting it into perspective with how dire and extreme anthropogenic global warming is going to be, new and ambitious climate laws need to be passed. In Denmark, a new law was passed saying that if the governing party had not met its climate laws at the end of the year, they would have to step down. This is a very drastic law which there are clearly many issues with and could lead to more harm than good. But it's a start nonetheless to get those in power to own up to their responsibilities. Climate ambitions can easily be tossed aside if the next parties representative doesn't support them. So how are we to make progress if it's down to people who seem to be more interested in seeing that they look the most charitable and environmental when in fact they are just part of a cycle.

What would I and the future generations, to whom everything seems to be being laid upon, like you to invest more in? We are at the stage where mitigation processes and adaptation will be a long but worthwhile process as it's a process we can no longer put off. WWF have stated that we have all of the resources and infrastructures to reach 100% renewable energy reliance by 2045. It will require a lot of time and money in terms of investment, but we need to prioritise the biggest problems that will cause the worst long-term repercussions. Also reducing our consumerist waste of food, clothes and plastic. Laws around these issues need to be made a law that can't be tossed aside or changed. I thank you so much for taking the time to read my letter and I hope it leaves you with thought. I realise that I don't understand how complicated making laws and creating schemes is, but I know that when I can, I want to do everything within my power to help our suffering population and planet.

Kind regards,

Sophia Stead