

UCLA African Studies Center and Earth Rights Institute present...

AFRICA'S READINESS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE (ARCC) FORUM 2021

April 19-23, 2021

Zoom Webinar

Registration to attend ARCC is now open: [RSVP HERE](#)

Visit [OUR WEBSITE](#) for more information

Keynote Speakers

Nnimmo Bassey

Ousmane Aly Pame

HE Ambassador Sidique Abou-Bakarr Wai

Elizabeth Wathuti

About Africa's Readiness for Climate Change (ARCC)

Virtual Forum, April 19-23, 2021

The UCLA African Studies Center and the Earth Rights Institute invite you to engage with us in the 2021 virtual ARCC Forum. The inaugural forum will expand an integrated vision of “Green Development” in Africa that is both ecologically and economically sustainable, emphasizing local solutions to climate change developed by African stakeholders in urban and rural communities. ARCC 2021 will assemble interdisciplinary panels of scholars, scientists, industry leaders, climate change innovators, youth activists, and policy-makers to discuss cutting-edge research and the most successful sustainable development projects unfolding on the ground. Participants will identify priorities for research and implementation and collaboratively develop a five-year action plan.

Co-Sponsors

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Nnimmo Bassey



Director of Health of Mother
Earth Foundation, Nigeria

Director of Nigeria-based ecological think-tank, the Health of Mother Earth Foundation, 2010 Right Livelihood Laureate, and Time Magazine's Hero of the Environment, Bassey will speak on environmental activism in Africa.



Ousmane Aly Pame

President of Global Ecovillage Network
Africa and REDES, Senegal



President of Global Ecovillage Network Africa and Network for Ecovillage Emergence and Development in the Sahel, Pame will speak on solutions for climate refugees and regenerative programs for communities.



His Excellency Ambassador Abou-Bakarr Sidique Wai

Sierra Leone Ambassador to
the United States



Founder of the United African Congress, UN delegate, diplomat, and Secretary General of ECOWAS, His Excellency Ambassador Wai will speak on emerging economic opportunities for a green Africa.



Elizabeth Wathuti

Founder of Green Generation Initiative and Head
of Campaigns at Wangari Maathai Foundation,
Kenya



Environmentalist, climate activist, and a recipient of the Wangari Maathai Scholarship, Wathuti will speak on African youth mobilization for climate action and conservation.

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

FEATURING...

- Panel Discussions with Local and International Experts
- African Regenerative Initiatives (eco-cities and ecovillages)
- Climate Adaptation and Global Impact on Public Health
- Virtual Exhibitors Hall showcasing Innovative Solutions
- Breakout Rooms for Design Thinking Jam Sessions



Opportunities for Students

- Dialogue with leading experts on climate change in Africa
- Collaboration with U.S. and African students on climate action strategies
- Networking with representatives from African institutions addressing climate resilience
- Work and research opportunities in African Regenerative Sites
- Carbon reduction innovation exchange/data collection training
- Rapid prototyping workshop



ARCC Keynote lectures will be delivered by four incredible climate champions: Nnimmo Bassey (Nigeria), Ousmane Aly Pame (Senegal), HE Ambassador Sidique Abou-Bakarr Wai (Sierra Leone), and Elizabeth Wathuti (Kenya). This special edition newsletter features articles on Wai, written by William Saturno, and on Wathuti, written by Alia Elyas. The conference schedule, vol. 1 of the ARCC special edition with profiles of Nnimmo Bassey and Ousmane Aly Pame, and more information can be found on [our website here.](#)

"Towards a Collaborative Approach to Fighting Climate Change: Ambassador Sidique Wai and The Importance of Coming Together to Solve Global Issues

William Saturno, Graduate student at UC Berkeley

Sierra Leonean Ambassador to the U.S. and ECOWAS Chair, Sidique Wai serves as an example of how important building relationships can be in addressing the world's largest, most complicated issues, such as climate change. He has always viewed diplomacy through this lens. Even before he was an ambassador, Wai tried to practice a collaborative approach to problem-solving. As President of the United African Congress (UAC), he developed partnerships across the African diaspora, hoping to "create a meaningful and impactful relationship with the friends and the networks that we have developed, to bring about fundamental changes, to improve the quality of life, and opportunities for our people and continent."



When people come together, they are able to more effectively work towards solving some of society's most pressing concerns. Wai's work as chair for ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) provides evidence of this philosophy. Knowing that its member states would be more effective as a bloc than as smaller individual countries, they were able to buy personal protective equipment, medicines, and medical equipment together. Considering how climate change is a global issue that requires collective action, tackling it will also require smaller countries to express their needs and interests to the world. Doing this alongside other similar states gives them a larger platform. Considering the potential impact climate change could have on sectors like agriculture and fishing in countries like Ambassador Wai's home country, Sierra Leone, it is critical that the countries most vulnerable to climate change, that feel the reverberations of those effects, are still being heard and their needs are being addressed.

This approach has led to Wai crossing paths with a number of climate activists over the years. When those conversations happen, he listens and asks how they can address the issue together. As ambassador, he sees the importance of listening to how people see problems and what can be done about them. He sees his job as giving “people the space and the participation to say, 'hey, they know how to do this. We don't know how to do this, how do we work with them?'”

Amb. Wai credits much of the knowledge and skills he's learned to his relationships with organizations like Earth Rights Institute (ERI), recognizing the role of collaboration in activism. "We've learned a lot from [ERI President Annie Goeke], and I'm hoping that whatever way I could continue to learn from [ERI] to contribute in a little way to be engaged in whatever she wants me to do, in spreading this message, even recruiting people. I'll be very happy to do that."

"Elizabeth Wathuti"

Alia Elyas, undergraduate political science student at UCLA



Elizabeth Wathuti is a powerhouse in the world of environmentalism and climate activism. She is the founder of the Green Generation Initiative (GGI) and the Head of Campaigns and Daima Coalition on green spaces Coordinator at Wangari Maathai Foundation. Her work has a strong emphasis on sustainability, educating the youth, and providing efficient and ethical solutions to modern problems. During the Earth Rights Institute interview in February of 2021, Wathuti stressed the importance of educating the youth on environmental issues and discussed the accomplishments and future of her workshops and her organization.



Wathuti's passion for nature began at a young age. Eventually, her devotion to this passion grew into a hunger to take the initiative and work towards aiding the environment and inspiring others to get involved in action. Much of Wathuti's work is directed towards students because she recognizes the importance of communicating and connecting with people at a young age on issues involving the environment and climate change. Because future generations will be the most affected by climate change, Wathuti believes young people should understand how they can be solution providers. She describes how small acts can make a huge difference, emphasizing that one should never "underestimate the power of collective action."

In her workshops, Wathuti states that the intention is to "nurture young environmentalists" by getting them to love nature, making them conscious of environmental issues, and inspiring them to be changemakers. Her efforts in these sessions focuses on the climate crisis, encouraging a tree growing culture, and changing the culture and narrative of environmental matters. Wathuti also explained that these workshops emphasize five key thematic elements; forestry, wildlife, climate change, energy, and waste management. By highlighting these topics, the workshops teach the students valuable lessons with the hope that they will use the knowledge they gain and apply it to their communities and their lives.



Not only does Wathuti conduct workshops, she also has a very successful and accomplished organization called the Green Generation Initiative. GGI inspires young changemakers and provides resources for students to raise environmental consciousness, developing many projects that shine a light on the importance of the environment to youth. In fact, Wathuti affirms that they have now reached out to over 20,000 school children in Kenya.

Wathuti also believes that it is essential to challenge current educational systems that often present contemporary environmental and climate-related issues as being entirely theoretical. She encourages implementing practical environmental education and believes that it is necessary for students, and people in general, to understand the root causes of modern issues to be a part of the solution. Currently, the GGI is focusing on identifying and creating 'green school models' in the future and is looking to expand around Kenya. Although the GGI is based in Kenya, people from all over the world are welcome to get involved, actively participate, and support the theme by sharing their message with others, visiting their website, and by connecting and collaborating with Wathuti and the GGI community.

Overall, Elizabeth has already accomplished so much, especially when it comes to environmental education and inspiring people to take action in their local communities. Her continued impact in the world of environmental and climate change activism is inspiring and we look forward to following Elizabeth Wathuti's future endeavors.