



Press Release,

70th Cairo Climate Talks

October 14, 2020

On the 14th of October 2020, the 70th Cairo Climate Talks (CCT) took place virtually via Zoom on the topic of: “Keeping the Momentum Up: How do we activate young people to save the planet?” during which young experts from Germany and Egypt discussed how they became active in the field of climate change, environmental politics as well as awareness-raising.

Efforts to strengthen youth activities and opportunities to engage with climate protection is a priority on the Egyptian government’s agenda, according to Ambassador Mohamed Khalil, Advisor for External Affairs and Multilateral Agreements at the Ministry of Environment of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

The 70th CCT coincided with the 30th anniversary of German reunification, when East and West Germany became one country again. In his opening remarks, Philippe Maupai, Head of the Science Department at the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Egypt, drew the connection between youth and this anniversary. “The day the wall came down the atmosphere was very euphoric because people thought a better future was possible,” Johannes Herrmann who is an activist with Fridays for Future said, “we should keep this optimism when it comes to climate action”.

Shady Khalil, Co-Founder and Managing Partner at Greenish, pointed out “that we need to adapt our messaging to build cooperation,” because making sure everyone understands how they are affected and how their actions affect the others is key in changing behaviors and mindsets. “What happens globally, affects us all so we need to unify now” said Manar Ramadan, Co-Founder and Head of R&D at Alexandria-based Banlastic, who aim to ban all plastic in Egypt.

Moderator Noor A. Noor set the discussion in its momentary context emphasizing that “as the international community tries to recover from a global pandemic, it also braces itself for monumental challenges facing people and nature in the 21st Century.” “People in the South should not feel guilty for the state of the planet” said Shady Khalil, rather the North needs to take on full responsibility in moving towards climate protection, mitigation and adaptation to which all panelists strongly agreed. Mutual learning and listening in this process is key for its results.

“Today’s environmental movements have a new understanding of themselves: they are globally active, intergenerational, decentralized and inclusive” said Philippe Maupai. Ensuring representation, equality and justice is a heavy responsibility for young people working in the field, as they seem to be addressing a multitude of intertwined themes at the same time. Asked how they keep the momentum up, the panelists recommended connecting with one’s reason why, recharging, to be a possibilist who creates possibilities for a better future and last but not least to be inspired by the people one works with.

Background Information:

The Cairo Climate Talks are conceived, organized and hosted as a cooperation between the German Embassy in Cairo, the Egyptian Ministry of Environment, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ).

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