

“We are all climate diplomats”

By Marlies Blom and Ida Rademaker

Marcel Beukeboom, climate envoy for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, waits patiently for everyone to take their seats. Today we have a lecture on climate change at the Development Bank FMO. He starts right at what will be the theme of this lecture; we don't have the luxury to sit around and wait, **climate change is an urgent problem and affects us all.**

Beukeboom reminds us of the Paris Agreement; a historic agreement to combat climate change and unleash actions and investment towards a low carbon, resilient and sustainable future, agreed by 195 countries in Paris in 2015. To tackle climate change, the Paris Agreement stipulates three aspects; mitigation, adaptation and financial flows.

Mitigation

In the Agreement is agreed to keep a global temperature rise in the 21st century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The [IPCC Report](#) of 2018, recently published, shows there is a big difference between the 2,0 and 1,5-degrees pathway. Beukeboom explains that we do not act fast enough on the 1,5-degree pathway in the Netherlands, however he points out that we currently do have a green coalition that substantially aims to tackle climate issues.

Adaptation

The Paris Agreement stresses the need for adaptation; to be prepared for tropical storms, flooding, shore erosion, desertification etc. All parties are required to engage in adaptation planning and implementation to enhance adaptive capacity and resilience, and parties should be transparent in actions taken. The [OECD data](#) shows that the Dutch are good in climate adaptation but do short on creating public awareness of climate change issues. The [Global Risk Report \(2018\)](#) highlights



environmental degradation as most important as that can cause sudden and dramatic disruptions for which we need to prepare.

Financial flows

Climate finance is much needed to meet the transformative agenda set by world leaders in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris climate Agreement. The private sector will play a major role in funding this greener future through their investments. Financial flows accelerate climate action. The [\\$8 billion Climate Investment Funds](#) empowers climate transformation and action, and its funds are additional to existing Official Development Assistance to enable countries' development path to reach the global development goals.

Beukeboom states we all have a role to play in mitigating climate change, but also in adapting to the damage that is already reality. Therefore, he calls upon all of us, because **“everyone is a climate diplomat”**.

During his talk, Beukeboom offered insights that we can use to act as climate diplomats (see toolkit below).

TOOLKIT

for Climate Diplomats



Zooming in and zooming out. Realize there are different perspectives on the climate change issue all the time. Everyone has his/her own short-term and long-term interests. Do you have a decision on the table? Pause a moment, and think what the impact will be on the bigger picture. Keep in mind that climate change is the issue whereby long-term perspective should always be considered.



Speak the language of your target group. Taylor-made messages to your target group will help to get your points across. Try to understand through which lens your target group is analyzing the world and see what is of interest of the other. Are you talking to a banker? Talk about assets. Say that investments that will mitigate or adapt climate change will give him/her higher investments in return on the long run. Are you talking to a health officer? Say that climate investments will have a positive effect on health.



Consider your own role. There are different roles: the role of scientist, politician, business people. In the Netherlands we have the tendency to sit together at climate tables with people with different roles (“polderen”). Respect each other’s roles. See where people are coming from. Be mindful where you sit because that means what your argument is.



Think about economic growth and climate change as synergies instead of trade-offs. More people start to realize that economic growth over time is only possible with climate action. Before, we saw economic growth and climate action as trade-offs. Now there is some progress, and we think that economic growth can be consistent with climate action. We are slowly getting there that economic growth over time is prerequisite for climate action.



Challenge the idea of growth. Revise the old idea of climate change described as externalities in the ecosystem as done by Heertje in all Economic text books. In this line of thinking, economist consider climate change not as a concern that affects a functioning society. In her book “**Doughnut Economics**”, Kate Raworth writes that we can’t rely on the processes of growth to redress climate change issues.



Get inspired by social enterprises. What happens if we see economic growth and climate action not as trade-offs but something that can give synergies? There are already so many entrepreneurs coming up with innovative solutions to create a sustainable world. For example, enterprises that make our food supply chain more efficient and use ‘waste’ as something that has value.

- **Rotterzwam** uses coffee residue to grow mushrooms.
- Harvard students launched **Lazy Bear** from coffee cherry that is treated as waste by others.
- **BAST** that created charcoal for the bbq from coconut skin, which was waste in Indonesia and now has been given