

Communicating about Climate Change

The C3 Award winning project: Communicating about Global Warming



Jill Peeters, the winner of this year's C3 Award
© Filip Neven

Engaged in an extraordinary number of diverse activities to fight global warming, Jill Peeters won this year's C3 - Climate Change Communication Award (read more about the Award in the adjacent box). The Belgian meteorologist, who presents weather reports on TV and radio, wrote a book on global warming in 2007, is involved in educational projects in schools and gives lectures for economical and political decision makers. She takes her role as a weather presenter very seriously and is aware of her responsibility: *"As weather presenters we understand the science behind climate change and can translate it to the public: people believe us and trust us."* To increase awareness on climate change and incite people to change their daily behaviour, she has also joined the Climate Broadcasters Network-Europe - a network of 'climate ambassadors' set up by the European Commission in 2007.



CBN-E and the C3 Award

The Climate Broadcasters Network – Europe (CBN-E) connects media meteorologists and weather forecasters from all over Europe. The members of the CBN-E use their public profiles and personal credibility to raise awareness of one of the greatest challenges facing our world today: climate change.

Arising from the initiative of the CBN-E core group, DG Environment and the CBN-E Secretariat launched a competition called the C3 Award, the Climate Change Communication Award, aimed at promoting best communication practice on awareness-raising activities undertaken by members of the CBN-E.

Please visit the network's website at www.cbn-e.eu and the website dedicated to the [C3 Award](#).

Aqua Afrika

One project in which Jill Peeters is especially involved is the 'Aqua Afrika Foundation', focusing on a part of the world where global warming already presents a big threat to people's lives. The El Molo, a fishermen tribe, lives at the borders of Lake Turkana, in northern Kenya. The lake is losing about 60cm of water a year due to a lack of rain and the damming of the Omo River, coming from Ethiopia. The tribe has sufficient water, but the water contains too much natural salt and fluoride, due to significant evaporation. 'Aqua Afrika' helps the El Molo get access to drinkable water. Good water is available in the Ngobole oasis, but the source is too far away to go and fetch the water for food preparation. In the beginning, Aqua Afrika bought some donkeys that brought water every two days to the El Molo people. Currently, a pipeline is under construction which will transport water from an oasis to the village. Jill Peeters has said that people who assist the presentations she is holding about Aqua Afrika *"are really touched and get convinced that global warming is a reality."*



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Conference during the WCC-3 © Jill Peeters

WCC-3

The World Climate Conference-3 took place in Geneva from 31 August to 4 September 2009.

The main outcome of the Conference was the decision to establish a Global Framework for Climate Services through which the developers and providers of climate information, predictions and services, and the climate-sensitive sectors around the world will work together to help the global community better adapt to the challenges of climate variability and change.

To know more about the outcome, please visit the [WCC-3's website](http://www.wcc-3.org).



Conference during the WCBF © Jill Peeters

This newsflash is issued by the EECN which is DG Environment's support structure for European Environmental Communication Networks.

Visit the website of the EECN on:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/networks/index_en.htm to learn more about the activities of the networks and read newsflashes previously released.

It was Eddy van Gestel, a photographer of African tribes, who told Jill Peeters about the El Molo and put her in contact with the tribe. The foundation is so far mainly financed by Jill Peeters' lectures to 'service clubs' such as round tables, the Lions and Rotary clubs and by selling toy donkeys, but contacts are currently being made with some private companies who will support the Foundation financially, allowing two new water projects in Kenya to be launched in October, one near the border with Ethiopia, one near the Masai Mara.

The Big Ask again

Another project to which Jill Peeters is very committed is the 'Big Ask again'. First appearing in 2008, as 'The Big Ask', this initiative mobilises as many people as possible to help make a video clip on the beach "calling on the world's decision-makers to take action to save the world's climate". Jill Peeters was a host of the event - she made a clip, together with other weather presenters from the main Belgian TV channels, to encourage their viewers to come to Ostend beach. Bono, lead singer of the band U2, was also very enthusiastic about the initiative and gave his permission to use the band's song 'Magnificent' for free to accompany the video. In 2008, 6000 people took part in the initiative and in 2009, the number of participants increased to 11,000. Jill Peeters is very pleased about the success of the initiative: *"It supported me in my battle to put as much attention as possible on this Climate Change issue"*. To know more about the initiative and see the videos, please visit www.thebigaskagain.be.

World Climate Broadcasts Forum

The first annual World Climate Broadcasts Forum took place in the framework of the WCC-3 (see adjacent box) in Geneva on September 2nd 2009. The forum was convened by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) on the initiative of professional weather presenter associations.

Besides CBN-E, other associations and organisations were present at the event (please see adjacent box) to lead fruitful discussions. These exchanges showed in particular the big differences in the perception of climate change in the different regions of the world. John Morales from the American Meteorological Society reported that only 29% of American climate broadcasters "agree or strongly agree" with the existence of climate change, while 26% are "neutral" and 45% even "disagree or strongly disagree"

The participants of the Round Table 'Communicating climate change' came up with a final [conclusion](#) dealing with the challenge of successful communication on climate change, suggesting for example to improve the dialogue between scientists and communicators. Participants of the World Climate Broadcasts Forum also issued a [statement to the press](#), reminding them *"that time for society to take effective action is short, that our window of opportunity is closing rapidly"*.

*2008 Survey of AMS Member Broadcasters,
(Wilson, 2008) Opportunities and Obstacles for Television Weathercasters to Report on Climate Change

Some weather broadcasting associations and other organisations

- [WMO](#)
- [International Association of Broadcast Meteorology](#)
- [Forum International de la Météo](#)
- [American Meteorological Society](#)
- [National Environment Education Foundation](#), providing material on climate change and an interesting initiative [Earth Gauge](#)
- [Environmental media Forum](#)
- Latin America weather presenters
- African Broadcasters