

R20 Highlights



Geneva, Switzerland, March 6th to 8th, 2012

The R20 Founding Chair, Arnold Schwarzenegger inaugurates the R20 (Regions of Climate Action) Headquarters in Geneva, through a series of events focused on the Green Economy and Climate Change.

The R20, based on Arnold Schwarzenegger's legacy in California, is aimed at helping subnational governments develop, implement, and communicate low-carbon and climate resilient projects. It is a global coalition of forces where public and private partners worldwide can match political commitment with appropriate technologies and investments.

March 6th, 2012

State of Geneva Welcome



Pierre-François Unger, President of the State and Canton of Geneva extends a warm welcome to the R20 – Regions of Climate Action – and to its Founding Chair, former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. The welcome reception took place in the historic Alabama Room, at the Geneva City Hall.

R20 Governing Board

The R20 Governing Board met in the R20's offices on March 6th, 2012.

The meeting endorsed Ms. Michèle Sabban as the new President of the Board, succeeding Ms. Linda Adams. The position of legal advisor was filled by the Geneva lawyer Pierre Depreux, while four new members were also endorsed: the Association of North East Asia Regional Governments/NEAR, EGIS/Caisse des Dépôts, Impact Economy and Mozaic Communications. As of 2012, the R20 Executive Committee and staff will develop an election process to fill the vacant or rotating seats.



The R20 Founding Chair welcomes Michèle Sabban, President of the Assembly of European Regions (AER) and the newly elected President of the R20 Governing Board.

The SUSTAINIA Initiative



Sustainia is a new concept for building and communicating a sustainable future based on available technologies and the collaboration of all sectors of society. *"The Sustainia initiative and the awards that recognize innovative people and technologies can help our campaign to make communities healthier, wealthier, and more sustainable for generations to come"*, - said Arnold Schwarzenegger, who accepted the position of Honorary Chair of Sustainia. Other Sustainia Award Committee members include Connie Hedegaard, Gro Harlem Brundtland and Dr. Pachauri.



***"The R20 is all about one thing: to go in the direction of subnational governments – there is so much power at the level of states, provinces, cities, and this power has not been utilized. And there is also the power of individuals: we should be working from the bottom-up because every great movement in the world has started at grassroots level. Ultimately, it is all about people's power."** – said the R20 Founding Chair, Arnold Schwarzenegger.*

March 7th, 2012

Conference "The Road to Rio: Regions Building the Green Economy"

The event, attended by some 300 participants, stressed the crucial role of sub-national governments in the transition towards a sustainable Green Economy.

Organised by the R20 and the Association of European Regions (AER), the conference brought together regional leaders from Europe, the Americas, Asia and Africa, joined by practitioners and business leaders from around the world. Emphasis was put on action, with concrete examples from European subnational governments. This was the opportunity to send a clear message to the upcoming UN Rio+20 Summit, to take place in Brazil, next June: *"tomorrow's growth will be green growth or there will be no growth at all, and it will rely on our Regions, which are the main actors of change in the field"*, stressed Michèle Sabban, President of AER and President of the R20 Board. A number of concrete green projects were presented at the conference, some of which have resulted in partnerships for action with the R20.



Among the most prominent, the "Mediterranean Action Plan for renewable energy" was launched by Nicola Vendola, President of the Puglia Region (Italy), during a signing ceremony with Michèle Sabban and Arnold Schwarzenegger.



In the presence of Arnold Schwarzenegger, Reta Jo Lewis, Special Representative of Hillary Clinton, invited President Michèle Sabban to come to Washington with a delegation of European regional leaders, to bring together the U.S. States and Europe's Regions to work together on sustainable development projects.

March 7th, 2012: Lunch with the Investment Strategists of Geneva

The R20 Founding Chair, Arnold Schwarzenegger was a special guest of the Investment Strategists Association of Geneva (ISAG) that brings together the top investment strategists professionals of the Geneva based banks. Sharing experiences and knowledge on the green economy as well as Californian debt management have been the subjects of this opened discussion in the attic of the WMO.



March 7th, 2012

Grand Public Conference on the Green Economy and Climate Change



Organised by the University of Geneva, the event gathered over 2000 people, including academics from all disciplines, students and teachers, scientists, the Geneva international community and Geneva citizens.

Jean-Dominique Vassalli, Rector of the University of Geneva and Michel Jarraud, Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), addressed the topic of climate change from a scientific perspective. Recalling the unprecedented threats posed by global warming, they stated that as much as two thirds of the current global greenhouse gas emissions must be eliminated by 2050 in order to stabilize the global rise in temperature to a maximum of 2°C and thereby avoid the catastrophic impacts of climate change.

On the evening of 7th March, the R20 Reception, organized by the University of Geneva at the Swiss Television Tower, accommodated some 200 invitees.



The Reception was an opportunity for the R20 Founding Chair to thank the sponsors – here with Ms. Wang and Mr. Jiang, Westech Solar, China.

The stage was set for the EU Commissioner for Climate Change, Connie Hedegaard and Arnold Schwarzenegger to step in and make concrete proposals. One essential step, in their view, is to take a positive stance to solving the problem, looking at how much we have to gain from the transition to a green economy. Introducing the Sustainia initiative, Connie Hedegaard explained: *“Sustainia is a fresh and much-needed approach to communicating sustainability, engaging key stakeholders, and inspiring tangible action”... It is a clear articulation of **the future we want** and aligns well with the message the UN wants to convey in Rio and beyond: we can build a desirable, sustainable future”.*

The conference concluded with a keynote speech by Arnold Schwarzenegger who stressed that solutions to climate change are within our reach. He urged the audience to embark on a worldwide green revolution: *“The era of talk is over. It is time for action – and the companies, institutions and persons who represent green solutions are the new breed of action heroes whose efforts we should celebrate and encourage... I won't stop until we've spread our green revolution everywhere”* – he added.



On the evening of 6th March, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Special Representative Reta Jo Lewis were invited to a gala dinner organised by the “Fondation pour Genève”. Next to the Geneva authorities, some 50 high level representatives of the Geneva international community were present. In his speech, Arnold Schwarzenegger emphasised the need for international coordinated action in order to build the new green economy and combat climate change.

March 8th, 2012

Arnold Schwarzenegger visits the Green Pavilion of the Geneva International Motor Show



On 8th March, Arnold Schwarzenegger visited the Geneva International Motor Show Green Pavilion to highlight the importance of green cars as part of the solution to combating climate change. After years of challenging automakers to reduce harmful emissions as California's Governor, Schwarzenegger is now pleased to celebrate the great strides that have been made in recent years: there are over 100 different green cars on the road today. He is proud to actively promote green vehicles as a central role in overall energy efficiency and reducing reliance on fossil fuel.

Before leaving Geneva, Arnold Schwarzenegger stops over for lunch at the American International Club of Geneva

More than 300 American expatriates came to greet the former California Governor and green crusader at a lunch organised by the American International Club of Geneva (AIC). *"It was a remarkable success and participant feedback has been more than positive. Governor Schwarzenegger's presentation was exceptional; informative, stimulating, witty and very timely. He has a gift for delivering the R20 message and the participants were mesmerized."* – said Kirsten Stromstad, Executive Director of the AIC.



March 8th, 2012

R20 General Assembly

The R20 Members and Partners reviewed and approved the R20 2012 Action Plan and discussed project implementation, finance, policy and communication.

After thanking the R20 staff for organizing the series of Geneva events, Michèle Sabban, President of the Board, recognized the enthusiasm that exists among R20's committed partners, members and team. She insisted that this enthusiasm be applied towards the creation of a green economy, a cleaner environment, sustainable jobs and better living conditions for all. After a number of presentations about projects underway in member regions and deliberations on methodology, finance, policy and communication, the R20 Action Plan for 2012 was approved. Terry Temminen, Special Advisor of the R20 Founding Chair, closed the General Assembly by thanking the R20 Executive Director for his constant effort and dedication.

For more information please visit the R20 website: www.regions20.org

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