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Zoï Environment Network  
Annual Report 2018

# editorial - The Rift

Within the circus of international environmental conferences, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) is probably closest to the mission of Zoï, or as a blogger<sup>1</sup> has put it: “The most important environmental meeting that most people have never heard of.” This year’s edition - UNEA4 held in Nairobi in March - attracted almost 5,000 participants from 179 countries; and besides the 157 ministers and deputy ministers also five Heads of State. This edition’s theme was “Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production.”

Even with this large number of participants, the meeting held in the beautiful - mostly outdoors - campus of the UN in Gigiri, Nairobi remained compact and manageable. As a ‘free roaming’ participant one had the luxury choice of following the negotiations (with a record number of 29 draft resolutions and decisions); to attend one of the many highly interesting side- popup- press- events with high carat speakers and if one was lucky also free food; the third option was to occupy an outdoor table at the Safari café together with our friends from CEOs and OLISTIC to hijack widely available VIPs for bilateral talks. With this street-wise approach to UNEA, one issue became increasingly visible: the striking contrast between the innovative, motivational, colorful events on sustainable fashion, financial instruments, food systems, marine litter etc. and the highly sobering discussions around the resolutions using the complete set of ‘langue de bois’ available “take into consideration, take notice” was so manifest that even seasoned bureaucrats made remarks about<sup>2</sup>. All this with the backdrop of alarming data and information from the global assessments<sup>3</sup>, calling for urgent action. It was almost bizarre how these parallel worlds were moving in the confined and highly secure space the UN Gigiri campus in Nairobi, totally unperturbed by ‘gilet jaunes’ or other street action.

With the geographical closeness of Nairobi to the Great Rift Valley, the term ‘Rift’ is quite appropriate to use for this gap between those who are seeking reasonable solutions to today’s environmental problems and those sabotaging them. This rift is even more pronounced in the ‘world out there’ going all across global, national and local politics. Despite the urgency to act, denial and short-sighted populist politics are commonplace and there seem to be irreconcilable bubbles or planets happily floating in space but in essence drifting apart.

Using the ‘kosmonaut’ theme of Zoï’s 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, our role as ‘space cadets’, translating information from one bubble to another, and communicating solutions becomes ever more important. Thus, instead of falling into depression about the rift, we soberly continue our mission, shuttling between the various poles and planets in the firm belief that we actually can change things by informing and talking - in the hope of course that we are not permanently preaching to the converted.

*Back home I was confronted by my daughters walking the streets for climate action and wondering why their dad took an airplane to Africa producing 2.5 t of CO<sub>2</sub>. My mumbled response about leverage, global engagement, raising awareness, innovative solutions did not really strike: “We take no sh\*\* man”. Good.*

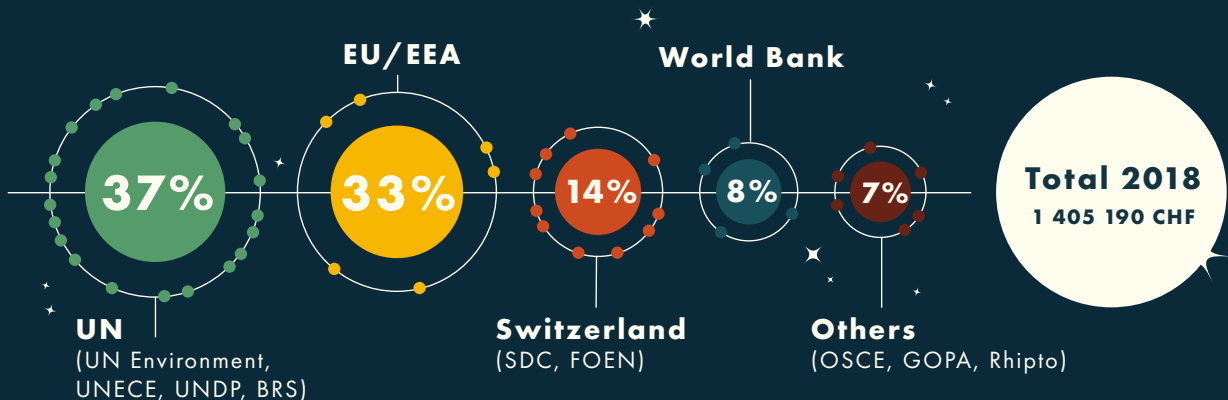
Otto Simonett, Geneva, March 2019

- 1 Olli Brown, Associate Fellow, Chatham House
- 2 Janez Potočnik, Co-Chair of the International Resource Panel
- 3 Three UN ‘flagship reports’ were launched at UNEA4: The Global Environment Outlook (GEO), the Global Chemicals Outlook (GCO) and the Global Resources Outlook (GRO)

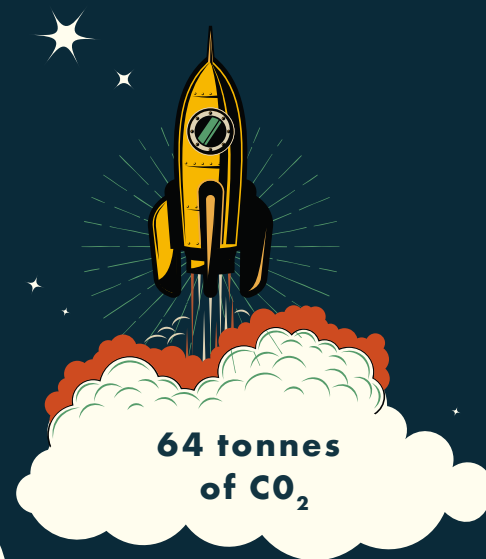
# financial statement

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
operating revenues	1'179'934	1'097'966	1'441'364	1'392'613	1'405'190
project work in progress	-110'278	-88'239	7'208	162'165	82'752
<b>operating expenses</b>					
project expenses	548'218	460'998	642'670	459'123	564'764
personnel costs	662'592	611'309	678'205	656'537	631'166
other operating expenses	79'402	113'897	113'281	114'788	126'508

## Funding sources 2018



## CO<sub>2</sub> emissions due to project-related air travel in 2018



As per Zof's environmental policy, an offset contribution was made via MyClimate.

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