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Corresponding Author : River Bennett
Sauvons Le Climat – Save The Climate
+34 617 615 370
+1 508 680 4706 (whatsapp)
river@generationatomic.org

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Nine countries selected by Save the Climate to receive “Climate Champion Award”
Climate Award goes to nine countries that have made huge strides in decarbonization with a combination of clean energy technologies.

Sweden, Norway, and Finland

The Climate Champion Award is designed to recognize countries that are making large leaps forward in reducing their carbon emissions by developing and deploying a variety of low carbon technologies. Conceived in response to the “Fossil of the Day” award (which shames countries that are blocking climate progress), the Climate Champion Award highlights success stories in decarbonization. There will be a performance of the Climate Champion Song (a parody on Queen’s “We Are the Champions”) to celebrate the honor.

Sweden was the first country chosen, as they decarbonized their electricity sector decades ago with vast amounts of hydroelectric and nuclear energy. Now, with the highest price on carbon in the world, they’re making serious progress in the industrial and transportation sectors. Their excess hydro capacity is often used to balance the demand of neighboring countries with more intermittent power systems. Their grid’s carbon intensity hovers around 50 gCO₂/kWh, making it among the cleanest in the world.

Norway was the second country chosen. Endowed with tremendous hydroelectric resources, Norway has one of the cleanest grids of any country. They also continue to sit comfortably on the cutting edge of utility-scale generation innovation by employing not only carbon capture but sea-bed tidal technologies. All of these things provide exemplary charging opportunities for their growing fleet of electric cars. They are well on their way to complete decarbonization, as their electricity currently only generates around 40gCO₂/kWh.

Finland, the third country chosen produces roughly 2 to 3 times CO₂/kWh that Norway and Sweden do, but they’re taking concrete steps to put an end to fossil fuel consumption. To do this, they recently passed 20-year lifetime extensions for Olkiluoto 1 and Olkiluoto 2 to keep churning out low-carbon power over the coming decades. Knowing that they’ll have another nuclear unit coming online in the next few years has given them the confidence to ban coal for energy use after 2029. Politically, many Finnish political parties, including the Green Party, have taken notice of nuclear energy’s contribution in the fight against climate change. The Greens recently decided to take a technology-inclusive stance on nuclear energy, citing the “wellbeing of humanity” as their highest priority.



United Arab Emirates

Save the Climate organizers are also pleased to present the Climate Champion Award to the United Arab Emirates.

The UAE is deserving of this award for taking immediate action on the commitments it's made for a 50% clean energy mix by 2050. This is notable not only because the country currently runs almost entirely on gas, but because it's already showing more progress than many other countries with even higher clean energy targets. This can be primarily attributed to the construction of four APR-1400 units, unique for being the first investment of this type in the UAE. Especially notable is the timely nature of these builds as well as the relatively low cost and adherence to budget the projects have had.

The UAE also continues to set an impressive pace for both photovoltaic and concentrated solar power, often with some of the lowest prices for renewable energy in the world. This has helped it build impressive utility-scale solar parks with the world's largest - at 5GW installed capacity - expected to be commissioned in 2030. Save the Climate commends the UAE for its demonstrated progress and leadership in the transition to a clean energy mix.

Canada

Save the Climate organizers are pleased to give the Climate Champion Award to Canada. Canada is deserving of this award for several reasons.

Canada is the first nation to institute a national carbon fee and dividend program. It applies in all provinces that don't have a CO2 emissions program of their own. Under this policy, a fee is placed on all fossil fuels (thus raising their price and creating an incentive to reduce their use), but all the collected money is returned to residents in the form of equal dividend checks. There is widespread agreement among economists that such a policy is the most effective and lowest cost means of achieving emissions reductions. Such policies that give equal incentive to all (existing and potential) means of emissions reduction and thus let the market decide how to reduce emissions, ensure that the lowest cost ways of reducing emissions are used. The policy also protects lower income families from cost of living increases due to increased fossil fuel costs.

Canada is also a world leader in the field of non-CO2 emitting nuclear power. It has decided to refurbish most of its existing nuclear plants, which will allow them to operate for several more decades. Canada is also taking a leading role in the development and commercialization of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs). Such reactors can give us lower cost and more flexible nuclear energy that we can use to decarbonize both the power and the heating market cost effectively and rapidly.

Several Canadian provinces, including Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia have no coal generation and only a small amount of gas generation, due to the extensive use of non-fossil sources, mainly hydro, nuclear and wind. Canada's most populous province of Ontario closed its last coal plant in 2017. Coal-fired power generation is more prevalent in other provinces but the new carbon fee policy should reduce its use.

Costa Rica

Save the Climate is pleased to present Costa Rica with the Climate Champion award. Over 98% of its power is cleanly delivered each year. They are able to do this, thanks to tremendous hydroelectric and geothermal resources, which have contributed to 65% of its power coming from hydro, 15% coming from geothermal, and the balance coming from a mix of wind, solar, biomass, with some hydrocarbon backup. This gives Costa Rica a major leg up in beating climate change and reducing air pollution since it can focus on the harder to decarbonize sectors and rely on its clean electricity as much as possible.

China

Save the Climate is pleased to give its Climate Champion award to China. Although China still burns large amounts of fossil fuels, including coal, it is also taking enormous steps to develop and deploy a multitude of clean, low-carbon energy sources.

China is, in part due to their large population, the world leader with respect to installation rates of every one of the major non-CO₂-emitting power generation sources, including solar, wind, nuclear and hydro. With respect to most of these clean sources, China's rate of installation (GW of new capacity per year) dwarfs that of every other country.

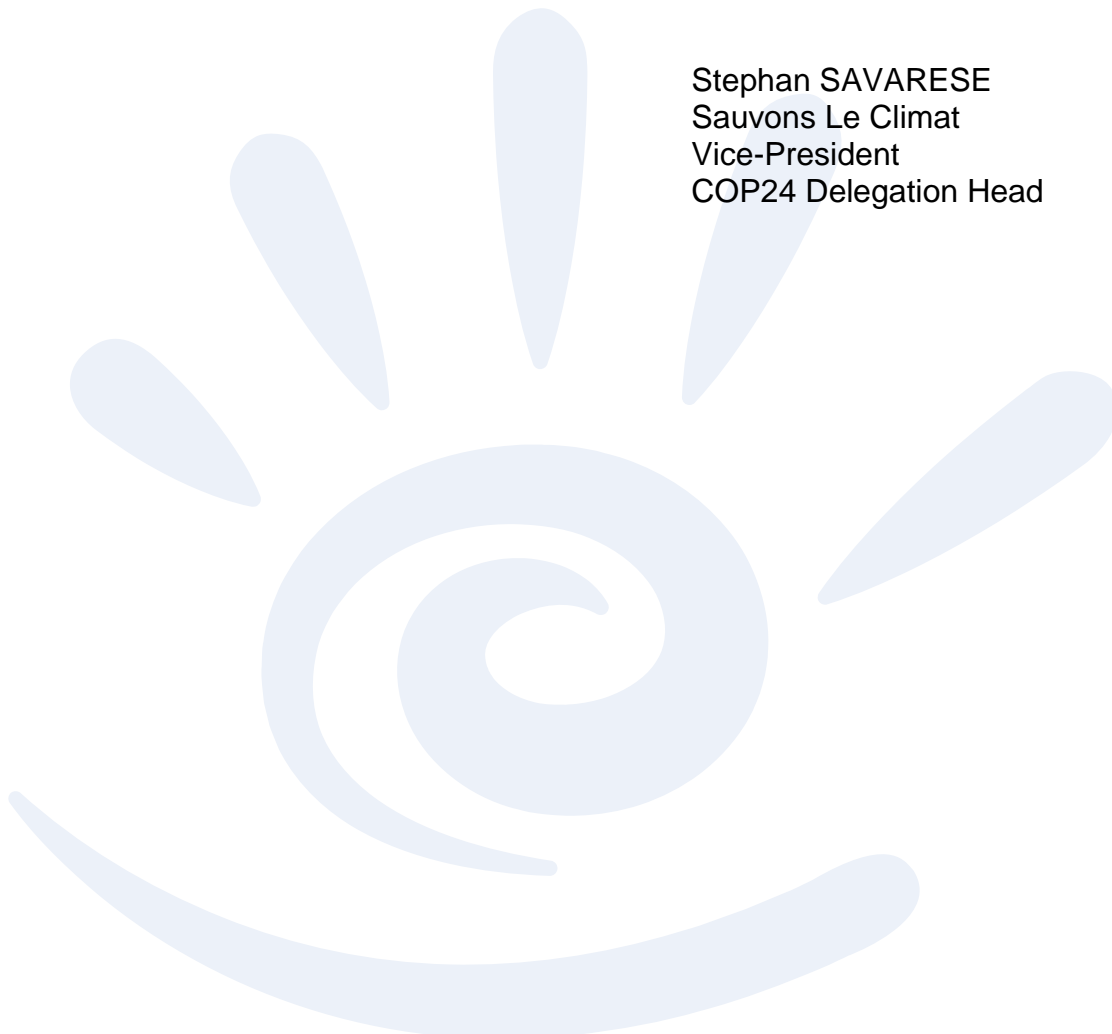
China is also a world leader with respect to development and fabrication of clean energy generation. China is the source of the great majority of the world's solar panels, and Chinese manufacturing is responsible for much of the recent cost reductions for solar panels. China also has a robust and rapidly growing nuclear industry, which has demonstrated the ability to build reactors fairly quickly at low cost. China is expected to become a major world supplier of non-emitting nuclear plants. China is also a world leader with respect to advanced reactor technology development.

France

Save the Climate is happy to present their home country of France with the Climate Champion Award. France has already decarbonized its electrical generation with less than 5% of generation coming from fossil fuels. France has lead the world in clean energy and advanced power technology since the 1970s when it embarked on a grand national project for energy independence. In 1973 Prime Minister Pierre Messmer announced that France would insulate itself from energy supply shocks by using its heavy engineering and scientific capabilities to massively deploy nuclear power. Under the the slogan "In France, we do not have oil, but we have ideas," a grand national project was undertaken and as a result France has the cheapest electricity and cleanest air in Europe. Decades after this wise decision France pays half as much for power as Germany does and is orders of magnitude cleaner and greener.

United Kingdom

For their last selection, Save the Climate has chosen the United Kingdom. The UK has a floor price on carbon which has been effective in pushing emitters to cut back. All new coal plants in the UK are also required to have carbon capture and sequestration, effectively banning new coal construction. Anchoring these resources, the UK's nuclear power program has kept over 20% of its electricity clean, while wind, solar, and hydro have added another 15%. Ambitious plans to add large new nuclear plants will help transition the grid to an even cleaner, greener future. Coal usage is down to under 9% in 2016, from 67% in 1990 and over 90% in the 1940s. Nuclear, gas, and wind have been major drivers of this achievement. While gas is relatively cleaner than coal, hopefully the UK can keep the momentum going and displace it with even more advanced nuclear and renewables.



Stephan SAVARESE
Sauvons Le Climat
Vice-President
COP24 Delegation Head