

REPORT

**Green Foundation Ireland, in partnership
with UCD Earth Institute, celebrate
Earth Day with a Seminar**

"Flooding and Climate Change in Ireland"



**Studio 3, UCD Planning Building,
Richview Campus, Belfield, Dublin 4
*Friday 22 April 2016***

**Friday 22 April is EARTH DAY and is also
the day of the signing of the
Paris Climate Change Agreement**

Chair of event: John Gormley
Facilitator of event: Stiofán Nutty
Administrator of event: Ann O'Conarain

The theme for this Seminar was inspired by an article written by EOIN O'NEILL "**Ireland's flood problem is small but a rethink is required**", published in *The Irish Times* on Friday 15 January 2016, on how best to approach these flooding events to mitigate their impact.

THE KEY POINTS MADE BY OUR SPEAKERS

Dr. Eoin O'Neill is a lecturer in environmental policy at UCD Planning and Environmental Policy and UCD Earth Institute. He has worked in the UK Environment Agency.

Eoin noted that the General Election stymied debate and fed into unrealistic expectations of what flood defences can achieve. He commented that even the media are not prepared to use language which may be considered alarmist but rather try to allay the fears of the public through the use of language which may not instil fear and dread. Yet there is no doubt flooding will continue in Ireland unless we develop a national coherent policy to address this ever worsening situation.

Dr. Cara Augustenborg (Environmental Scientist; Chair of Friends of the Earth Ireland).

Cara briefed the Seminar on the increasing risk of flooding posed by climate change. She also focused on how the recent experience of flooding in Ireland was changing government policy and she outlined some progressive schemes that were being implemented in two UK towns, Pickering and Pontbren that were proving effective and did not involve huge cost. Cara concluded by saying: "*I'm not sure that much real preparation is really taking place now to ameliorate the flooding threat in the coming winter.*"

Duncan Stewart (Environmentalist, Broadcaster, Chair of Green Foundation Ireland).

Duncan explored some of the reasons for the reticence of government to really deal with the climate change issue and the increasing resultant threat of flooding in particular. He argued that much more needed to be done through our system of education to raise the awareness of this serious challenge and he also criticised the media for their failure to cover the subject. He stated: "*Our media are just not responding to flooding and climate change issues. We need much more education and awareness of these crucial subjects.*"

Chair **John Gormley** then facilitated an animated and wide ranging Q and A session involving the Seminar participants and speakers, before formally bringing the Seminar to a close.