

COP27 Policy Paper

Youth and Environment Europe's position at COP27

About the Policy Brief

The Climate Crisis continues to be one of the most significant threats that humanity faces today. The recently published Sixth Assessment Report on Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change provides further scientific evidence that the most vulnerable people and systems are immensely affected by climate hazards. Youth is also one of critical groups to whom it is crucial to achieve the Paris Agreement's goals and build momentum ahead of the next UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP27) in Egypt in November. This is why Youth and Environment Europe (YEE) has developed its advocacy strategy towards COP27, while preparing for its representation at the UN Climate Change Conference.

YEE's advocacy strategy towards COP27 includes:

- Bring together a team of **young delegates to COP27**, covering a diverse range of geographical and ethnical backgrounds to follow negotiation tables and influence decisions.
- Deliver a **position paper focusing on #ClimateJustice** in the lenses of various technical topics, encompassing
 - The results of research conducted by COP27 delegates on various technical topics;
 - The inputs of our youth-led Member Organisations via an online consultation workshop on 19 October;
 - The input of young leaders who participated to YEE's thematic workshops;
 - The precious role of YEE's delegates to COP26 and the YEE Advocacy Team in gathering youth demands and helping to translate them into a set of clear proposals by drafting YEE's COP27 Policy Brief.
- Deliver a **side-event** on climate-induced migration and the role that adaptation can play across Africa, Europe and Southern America. In line with the #ClimateofChange campaign, this is done in partnership with the European Environmental Bureau.
- Hold a 1:1 **briefing with European leaders** during COP27

- Build a **coalition** with partners and interested youth organisations from European and Global South organisations present at COP27, on a daily basis with morning coffees, as a chance to be more organised and structured during the COP27 and its pressing daily agendas.

This Policy Brief is structured as follows:

- The first section will introduce COP27 and highlight its global and regional relevance;
- The second section explains YEE's main objectives and lays down a set of overarching themes, which essentially make up the backbone of YEE's Youth policy position related to the climate crisis.
- The third section of this Policy Brief focuses on the key topics of COP27, including YEE's research topics, and explores existing challenges and recommendations to most effectively address them under the scope of UN climate change negotiations and from a youth-based viewpoint.
- Lastly, a set of conclusions ultimately representing YEE's key messages in the context of COP27 youth-led advocacy.

I. Policy background of COP27

The latest science clearly shows that climate change is accelerating and its impacts are becoming more frequent and devastating. The window for a livable future is closing rapidly. The next UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP27) will be a defining moment from multiple points of view.

First, the Conference will be hosted by Egypt, which can potentially mean that those African countries (and the Global South in general), which are the least responsible for the climate crisis, yet hit hard by its consequences, will finally be given more attention. There is an increasing pressure to address climate injustice.

Moreover, the COP27 Presidency expressed commitment to the main objective of the Conference, which is to move from negotiations and planning to implementation, turning pledges into a reality through an inclusive, transparent and party-driven process.

Building on Glasgow's momentum, governments need to take immediate action by submitting more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Long-Term Strategies, as countries are still far away from the level of ambition needed to achieve the Paris Agreement goals.

Emission reductions, adapting to the impacts of climate change, loss and damage and climate finance are among the key areas which require enhanced progress on

the ground. In order to fulfil the double adaptation finance agenda by 2025 agreed at COP26, there is a need for further tightening definitions and shifting orders of magnitude of climate finance upwards.

COP27 also needs to start to actualize the 10-year Glasgow work program to strengthen the implementation of Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE), and ensure that youth, observers and civil society have a central role to play in the climate change negotiations. The Global Stocktake will show, however sufficiently enough from other sources, how slowly we're achieving the Paris Agreement. Nevertheless, we expect a decision on the process to be inclusive with the most affected communities and actors, and be centred in a rights-based approach to fully reflect the magnitude of impacts. Lastly, Parties must adopt a Mitigation Work Programme, announced last year, that will be in alignment with the urgency of action expressed by so many voices and communities, especially the scientific one, and will hopefully show the road for governments and companies to move towards intense emissions reductions in the following years.

The upcoming UN Climate Change Conference is going to take place during extremely difficult times. The COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war against Ukraine have devastating impact on human lives, global energy and food security, while also have significant consequences for the global fight against climate change. It is crucial to understand that these crises are strongly interlinked, therefore all stakeholders need to unite and address them for a livable, sustainable and just future.

II. YEE's overarching priorities and main goals: an overview

CLIMATE JUSTICE

Climate crisis is an inherently social issue, as the repercussions of human inaction have not been borne equally between rich and the poor, young and older generation, women and men, the marginalised communities such as the indigenous people, LGBTQI community, BIPOC, people with disabilities and former colonies and post colonial countries. This leads the most vulnerable being more exposed to the risks posed by climate impacts such as floods, droughts, storms, increased wildfire, rising temperature and sea levels, air pollution, lack of access to food and clean water.

During COP26, it came to the YEE delegation that despite the recognised interconnection between climate crisis and **climate injustice**, during discussions, the latter topic was often **not defined, nor contextualised**. At high level stakeholder

events, climate justice was completely left out of discussions, clearly lacking visibility to its essence.

At COP27, YEE aims to open up discussions on climate justice, highlighting the importance of broader definitions and multi-dimensional nature of vulnerability, and in turn find ways to work with various stakeholders to understand this crucial topic in a comprehensive context, in order to start **mainstreaming it in policies across sectors**.

As the changing climate has extremely serious implications for the equity between present and future generations, we should see **intergenerational inequity** as part of climate injustice. Earlier this year the UN General Assembly adopted a historic resolution, declaring access to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, a universal human right. The resolution, despite not being legally binding on the 193 UN Member States, is expected to help reduce environmental injustices, empower people in vulnerable situations, including children, youth, women and indigenous peoples. Therefore, we prompt Parties to:

- Incorporate the **right to a healthy environment into all national constitutions** and regional treaties. Once incorporated, apply and enforce the law, and establish an **effective monitoring and reporting system** to follow up on the legal action and results.
- **Move beyond GDP as a measure of a country's prosperity**: current and future generations measure and define their prosperity by other factors more in line with environmental and social issues.

III. YEE's key demands for COP27 decision-making

FINANCE

Overview

In line with Article 9 of the Paris Agreement, developed country Parties are obliged to provide financial assistance to developing country Parties to mitigate the impacts of and adapt to climate change, as well as they should further strengthen their efforts to mobilize climate finance. Other Parties are encouraged to provide or continue to provide such support voluntarily.

It is also important to achieve a balance between adaptation and mitigation finance, while considering the needs of developing countries, especially the ones more

vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as small island developing states (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCs).

However, out of USD 632 billion of global climate finance flows in 2019/2020 only USD 46 billion (7.4%) was dedicated to adaptation, and USD 571 billion (90.1%) to mitigation. COP26 urged developed countries to at least double their collective provision of adaptation finance from 2019 levels by 2025, in order to achieve balance.

COP27 Presidency's priorities for finance include the need for enhanced transparency of finance flows and facilitated access to meet the needs of developing countries specially Africa, LDCs, and SIDS; follow up on existing commitments and pledges; and progress on delivery of the annual USD 100 billion.

Key policy demands

- We urge all Parties to agree on funding projects to avert, minimize and address loss and damage, especially in developing countries and vulnerable communities.
- Call on developed country Parties to deliver on their commitment to invest USD 100 billion in climate finance to support mitigation, adaptation and resilience measures for SIDS and LDCs, and ensure delivery of at least 50% adaptation finance annually towards the collective USD 100 billion climate finance goal up until 2025. Parties should consider climate adaptation as a smart investment strategy, since if it is done right, it will save lives, reduce inequalities and losses, and create economic opportunities.
- YEE asks for the majority of finance plans being delivered through grants rather than loans for affected countries- so as to promote the implementation of not only national programmes, but independent, locally-managed adaptation and mitigation projects. We demand to keep the highest level of transparency of financing mechanisms and targets, as well as improved access to grants for vulnerable countries, as well as local and indigenous communities that safeguard around 40% of all terrestrial protected areas and intact ecosystems.
- Provide solid safeguards in climate finance mechanisms allowing youth to be massively mobilised as a result of climate investments and projects on the national and local level

SCIENCE

Overview

Science can unite various stakeholders and global efforts against the existential threat of climate change. We strongly support the role of science and of the scientific

community in providing evidence-based information to climate policy on the international, national, and local levels. We especially welcome the findings of the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report on Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability.

Key policy demands

- We urge all UN agencies and UNFCCC Parties to publicly endorse scientific findings and recommendations as key stakeholders to the Convention in their own right, with their findings being vital to keeping the UNFCCC and the Treaties relevant, effective and alive.
- Demand academia and research institutes, international institutions and governments to communicate scientific evidence in a clear manner to raise public awareness in the civil society at large.
- Acknowledge the validity and relevance of other forms of dynamic knowledge, based on respect, experience and careful observation of nature, including indigenous, traditional and local knowledge.
- We urge stakeholders to continue research on vulnerabilities and consider science as a powerful tool to achieve climate justice. Moreover, we demand that resources go specifically for research in the Global South, which is critical to better understand the climate change related effects locally. In the last 30 years, Africa received just 3.8% of climate-related research funding globally, although it is impacted the most.
- We demand developed country Parties and innovators to ensure effective technology transfer to developing country Parties and to the most vulnerable.
- We ask stakeholders to promote youth-led innovation by engaging youth representatives, committees and advisory councils with youth experts when making decisions guided by science that concern their future. Including knowledge from indigenous and/ or marginalized youth to ensure said knowledge is amplified, remembered and given its rightful place in searching for innovative ways to impact climate and environmental policy. Provide financial opportunities for innovative youth-led startups and projects.

YOUTH AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

Overview

Young people should play a leading role in shaping international, national and local strategies to fight the climate crisis, ultimately striving towards protecting future generations and achieving climate justice. However, climate - and especially youth-led NGOs - still lack significant support and massively rely on private

philanthropy, reducing an already strained organisational capacity.

Key policy demands

YEE urges all relevant stakeholders to

- Allocate specific **funding and facilitate institutional support** to youth-led climate networks and organisations, especially those in the Global South.
- Parties to establish binding frameworks to ensure coherent enduring **consultation with** youth representatives, especially those coming from **underrepresented and vulnerable communities**.
- National authorities to establish **Youth Advisory Councils on climate change** and their inclusion in every national policy-making process that relates to climate change, especially in designing, implementation, monitoring and updating of NDCs;
- **Building young people's capacity**, by means of:
 - Improving youth constituencies and NGOs capacity and accessibility to even more children and youth around the world;
 - Intensifying and devoting more funding to youth, such as funding and research opportunities, training, mentorship programmes;
 - Introducing national safeguards to ensure that those initiatives are accessible to marginalised youth and vulnerable groups.

RESILIENCE

Overview

By 2030 predictably 4 billion people from vulnerable groups and communities will be impacted by the consequences of climate change, such as extreme heat, drought, flooding and sea-level rise. These impacts often disproportionately affect low-income communities, communities of color, smallholder farmers, rural entrepreneurs, coastal communities. As greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, climate change will continue to accelerate, that is why it is important to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to hazardous events, trends, or disturbances related to climate.

While previous COPs have seen an increase in focus on resilience and adaptation it has been spread across different initiatives, spaces and events inside and outside the COP. The Resilience Hub at COP26 was the first ever permanent home for resilience at a COP, and it is returning as a dynamic, inclusive virtual and physical space at COP27.

Key policy demands

- We ask governments and businesses to establish and implement pre-disaster mitigation grants to help the most vulnerable communities build resilience to

climate impacts, and ensure the highest levels of transparency and accountability of financial processes.

- We urge Parties to scale up early warning systems and anticipatory action and investment in climate risk management and resilience building; and ensure engagement of climate, humanitarian, DRR (disaster risk reduction), development actors and local communities to reduce silos and promote coherence and coordination.

DECARBONIZATION

Overview:

Pledges announced by parties to reduce emissions nationally are concerningly little, even taking their new or updated forms into account. The [2021 Emissions Gap Report](#) showed that NDCs are at **7,5%** emissions reduction, *an alarming status quo* that predicts a **2.7°C increase in global temperatures**. The commitments of G20 members, accounting for almost 80% of the GHG emissions, do not set them on a clear path towards net zero. [Updated estimates](#) show that we need up to **seven times greater total reduction** in order to be consistent with keeping global temperatures at 1.5 °C warming. This slow movement towards net-zero is due to relying too much on technology and carbon markets, as well as corporations using their power to hinder efforts of emissions mitigation or even to punish states for adopting climate policies through [lawsuits](#). The COP26 decision of adopting a Mitigation Working Programme at COP27 might finally show the road of drastical emissions reduction, without any excuse for shirking.

Both parties and companies have to focus on decarbonisation efforts as their primary action, and leave the carbon markets to complement it. Prioritising market mechanisms or relying on one instead of the other is a false promise of a solution that hinders consistent emissions reductions.

As some developing countries have become big polluters, the concept of common but differentiate responsibility (CBDR) has to incorporate more dimensions of accountability. This includes a 'responsibility of reality', assuming growing duties as a response to the current global climate challenges; responsibility of cooperation supporting small and medium-sized developing countries with weak coping capacities; and responsibility of climate leadership, taking more ambitious roles in mitigating global warming. As much as this extension of CBDR is needed, this should not fade away the promise and obligation of developed countries to pay loss and damage to the Global South.

Key demands:

- **Stronger ambition in the NDCs** to realistically reach the 2030 goals of emissions reduction.
- Adopt a decision at COP27 regarding the **Mitigation Work Programme that is aligned with the urgency in action** depicted by scientists, CSO, young people and other stakeholders.
- **Decouple growth from climate action!** Economic growth without a rise in environmental pressures appears highly unrealistic¹, therefore we demand downscaling of economic production and consumption in the wealthiest countries, while encouraging policy-makers to support alternatives to the so-called 'green growth'.

ADAPTATION

Overview:

The slow implementation of mitigation measurements creates a crucial need for quicker and stronger adaptation measurements. The future will differ by 1.5-degree celsius as the targeted warming threshold is aimed by the Paris Agreement and 2.4-3 degrees celsius as the current policies and NDCs set. If we are not ready for today's climate hazards, we are not ready for the shocks of tomorrow. Also, although the climate crisis is a worldwide phenomenon, it affects the global population unequally. The so-called "adaptation gap" is occurring globally.

Despite the fact that the need for climate change adaptation has been scientifically recognised for more than 20 years, historically, Parties and stakeholders were less focused on adaptation actions than mitigation efforts during the COPs, which is reflected in the critical underfunding of adaptation finance. At COP26, 2-year Glasgow-Sharm-El-Sheikh Adaptation Programme on Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) was launched, which delivery spills into this year and will be one of the critical subjects discussed at COP27 (including the Fourth Workshop). Therefore, COP27 is also branded as an "Adaptation" COP with an ambition to increase adaptation finance. Also, considering that COP27 is set in Africa, it builds on the momentum to induce adaptation actions in Africa, LDCs and SIDs.

¹ 'Decoupling Debunked – Evidence and Arguments against Green Growth as a Sole Strategy for Sustainability' (EEB - The European Environmental Bureau)
 <<https://eeb.org/library/decoupling-debunked/>> accessed 14 October 2022.

Key demands:

- **We ask to scale up the adaptation finance and Introduce the target of GGA for accessibility of adaptation finance.** The finance flows need to be more accessible to the recipients (not only governments but municipalities and communities) and consider the Locally-led Adaptation (LLA) principles.
- **YEE demands to release NAPs as soon as possible, and Parties should put the same importance on them as the NDCs. NAPs should promote LLA and incorporate youth participation.** Young people need to be engaged in decision-making in more than tokenistic ways, allowing them to make demands. The existing ones should be revised in order to fulfil these criteria.
- **We ask to shift from a top-down approach to the LLA:** empowering local actors and communities to avoid maladaptive issues.
- **We demand to respect community and indigenous knowledge.** Adaptation projects shall be revised before actual funding, and an indicator of “the intrinsic value of indigenous culture” should be integrated into a cost-benefit analysis.
- **We urge to increase and provide support for the adaptation plans and capacities of vulnerable nations and communities from the developed states.**

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Overview

A decarbonisation and transformation of the agriculture and the food system overall is desperately needed, as it accounts for 20% of global emissions, including land use². Both substantially, moving from an industrialised meat-centred food system towards plant-based, as well as technologically advanced regenerative, climate compatible practices of growing food.

For the first time in its history, the United Nations has officially acknowledged, through a landmarked vote of an United Nations Environment Assembly [resolution in March 2022](#), that there is a nexus of animal welfare, human and environmental health and well-being. However far from putting the finger on the real issue - *factory farming* - this vote is giving hope that we’re finally addressing the cow in the room: industrial livestock production and consumption.

Activists and journalists alike have written about the political silence around this topic at COP26, and COP27 is announcing the same quietness. The presidency vision for the thematic day on Agriculture focuses rather on climate finance,

² Phoebe Weston and Jonathan Watts, ‘The Cow in the Room: Why Is No One Talking about Farming at Cop26?’ The Guardian (9 November 2021) <<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/09/the-cow-in-the-room-why-is-no-one-talking-about-farming-at-cop26-aoe>> accessed 14 October 2022.

adaptation, resilience and boosting technology for a better food system. Although welcomed, this alone will not tackle the core issue of the food and climate crisis we are facing, and will not advance efforts to end hunger globally, which is projected to stay the same as in 2015 - at 8% of the world's population, increasing the prevalence in Africa³.

Key demands:

- **Endorse the Plant-Based Treaty** to *stop the problem increasing* (no land use change, including deforestation, for animal agriculture) *and eliminate the driving forces behind the problem* (transition away from animal-based food systems to plant-based, regenerative, climate-compatible systems).
- As livestock is the biggest emitter of methane, **act on and implement the Global Methane Pledge**.
- **Invest in research in the Global South** for better understanding of the climate change related effects locally (from 1990–2019 research on Africa received just **3.8%** of climate-related research funding globally)
- **Include rural young people and women** at the core of sustainable, climate-compatible, agricultural policy to make sure farmers have successors and local communities autonomy in producing their own food.
- **Properly use traditional and indigenous knowledge**, that provides a rich, diverse range of agricultural practices and solutions for local realities that could help improve adaptation actions for sustainable and resilient agrifood systems.

LAND

Overview:

Land has multiple essential functions: it provides the supply of food, freshwater and many other ecosystem services, as well as biodiversity, which make up the principal basis for human livelihoods and well-being. Human use directly affects more than 70% of the global, ice-free land surface. Land also plays an important role in the climate system, being simultaneously a source and a sink of CO₂. Climate change has adversely impacted food security and terrestrial ecosystems as well as

³ In Brief to The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021 (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO 2021) 5 <<http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb5409en>> accessed 14 October 2022.

accelerated desertification and land degradation in many regions ⁴, which were the initial results of unsustainable, intensive agricultural practices. 70 percent of all ice-free land has been already altered by human activity, impacting over 3.2 billion people. The most vulnerable people impacted by land degradation are small holders, rural communities especially women, pastoralists and indigenous people.

In 2015, the 12th session of the Conference of the Parties to the [United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification \(UNCCD COP 12\)](#) adopted 35 decisions related to desertification, land degradation and drought. These included how to pursue Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) within the framework of the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) and how to align [UNCCD](#) goals and the action of Parties with the SDGs. As a follow-up, the UNCCD Secretariat launched a new initiative: Land Degradation Neutrality, which has been enshrined in the SDGs as target 15.3 on achieving a land degradation neutral world by 2030.

Key demands:

- We demand Parties to establish **mutually supportive climate and land policies** that enable and incentivise sustainable land management for climate change adaptation and mitigation including improved access to markets for inputs, outputs and financial services, empowering women and indigenous peoples, enhancing local and community collective action for reducing poverty.
- Furthermore, to enhance the effectiveness of decision-making and governance by the **involvement of local stakeholders** (particularly those most vulnerable to climate change including indigenous peoples and local communities, women, and the poor and marginalised) in the selection, evaluation, implementation and monitoring of policy instruments for land-based climate change adaptation and mitigation. Agricultural practices that **include indigenous and local knowledge** can contribute to overcoming the combined challenges of climate change, food security, biodiversity conservation, and combating desertification and land degradation.
- We call upon the Parties to address land rights and barriers to **women's participation** in sustainable land management include financial transfers to women under the auspices of anti-poverty programmes, spending on health, education, training and capacity building for women, subsidised credit and program dissemination through existing women's community-based organisations.

⁴ IPCC, 2019: Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems [P.R. Shukla, J. Skea, E. Calvo Buendia, V. Masson-Delmotte, H.-O. Pörtner, D. C. Roberts, P. Zhai, R. Slade, S. Connors, R. van Diemen, M. Ferrat, E. Haughey, S. Luz, S. Neogi, M. Pathak, J. Petzold, J. Portugal Pereira, P. Vyas, E. Huntley, K. Kissick, M. Belkacemi, J. Malley, (eds.)].

GENDER

Overview:

Climate solutions presented in technological and scientific advancements or the promotion of a low-carbon energy future through the energy transition are only half of the answer. The other half lies in ensuring climate justice through social justice. A significant number of environmental policies are gender-blind and lack a deeper analysis of environmental issues as complex socio-political challenges. As policies do not operate in a vacuum, they risk reproducing existing inequalities and discrimination in our society.

Key demands:

- Research widely shows that environmental impacts are gendered; this calls for **gender equality being integrated into the objectives of environmental policies**. This is a precondition for policy coherence, given the cross-cutting character of both environment and gender equality and the provisions on gender mainstreaming under the European treaties.
- There is a need to apply **intersectional frameworks in environmental policies** and challenge prevailing systems of oppression and redefine social, economic and political norms that work for all people and the planet. The environmental and social crisis, including the staggering gender inequalities that we are facing in Europe and worldwide, are rooted in unfettered capitalism, patriarchy, and racism.
- **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) should integrate gender on environmental policies** to explore unintended impacts on gender equality and develop gender-responsive policies. The method used should be robust and harmonised and include the consultation of various gender experts.
- **Gender-just representation** on the political, business, activism, and institutional levels should be ensured. Parity measures, policies and best practices can contribute to creating gender-just environments.

WATER

Overview:

Climate change is strongly interlinked with the water crisis. For people around the world, causing more severe floods and droughts, rising sea levels, shrinking ice fields, and wildfires. Such impacts can drastically worsen the quantity and quality of water that people need to survive.

The effects of climate change-induced water insecurity are not evenly felt across populations. Particularly vulnerable groups are women, children, disabled and

indigenous peoples are suffering from severe floods and droughts, rising sea levels, shrinking ice fields, and wildfires. Their adaptive capacity and ability to access adequate water and financial and societal resources are also limited and vary across race, ethnicity and caste.

Women's water rights are hampered by societal patriarchal norms, as in most communities in developing countries, women and girls are in charge of fetching water and they have to walk long distances. This responsibility takes away significant time from income-generating activities and education.⁵

Key demands:

- For communities to sustainably adapt to climate impacts on water security, we demand **accessible, bottom-up engagement and well-coordinated efforts** in all stages of the decision-making processes. Communities also need to be involved in sector-specific adaptation responses, to make sure that climate action (SDG 13) is well aligned with clean water and sanitation (SDG 6).
- We call on Parties to recognise the importance of **Indigenous knowledge and local knowledge** in improving water security, combine and integrate it with technical understandings of climate change for more effective water management, adaptation measures and strategies.
- We welcome the launch of the **AWARE initiative** to enhance exchange of information, capacity building and investment in water adaptation and water projects in Africa.
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- We request Parties to incorporate **governance mechanisms** and methods in their NDCs and NAPs **for integrating water and climate** for addressing the interface of drinking water, sanitation and health.

ACE

Overview:

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) coined the term "Action for Climate Empowerment" (ACE). It focuses on six priority areas: **education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information, and international cooperation** on these issues. In recent years, the implementation of all six areas has been deemed to be essential for everyone to

⁵ Caretta, M.A., A. Mukherji, M. Arfanuzzaman, R.A. Betts, A. Gelfan, Y. Hirabayashi, T.K. Lissner, J. Liu, E. Lopez Gunn, R. Morgan, S. Mwanga, and S. Supratid, 2022: Water. In: Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Lösche, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA, pp. 551–712, doi:10.1017/9781009325844.006.

understand and participate in addressing the complex issues posed by climate change. For ACE to be successful it needs a long-term, strategic, and country-driven approach, including a call for countries to incorporate essential steps into existing climate change adaptation and mitigation plans and strategies, as well as the designation of a National Focal Point (NFP) to coordinate these efforts.

The role of the National Focal Point for ACE is to foster the implementation of all ACE elements at the national level. ACE National Focal Points may have different political, technical and organisational responsibilities according to the national circumstances. The benefits of NFP are significant for a number of reasons, such as it presents an opportunity to implement ACE systematically, identify gaps and prioritise actions, establish targets and milestones, and identify key indicators to track and measure progress toward ACE. It has the potential to improve policy coherence and cross-sectoral collaboration for ACE action. Having a national ACE strategy means developing policy instruments and measures to ensure an integrated, coherent approach to ACE implementation, taking into account each country's identified objectives and creating an opportunity for more financial support.

Key demands:

- **We demand from all parties to create their own National Focal Points (NFP).** Having national focal points for national and international work accelerates solutions for climate change through education, training and awareness-raising.
- **We need mandatory annual reporting on domestic ACE implementation.** Under the UNFCCC (additional to existing areas like National Communications), while emphasising the need for capacity building and resources to support those Parties who may otherwise be unable to fulfil such requirements within their current circumstances.
- **Creating "ACE Youth Focal Point".** Making a similar NFP but for the engagement of young people can assess the government's ACE efforts on youth. It will not only increase public support for climate action and make national implementation of ACE policies youth friendlier, but it will also increase domestic public participation, international collaboration and exelorate youth political participation.
- **Sharing good practices in one place.** To make the most progress on ACE, there must be a single online platform where all ACE-related issues can be found, raised, and supported. This site or portal, hosted by the UNFCCC, would serve as a place for: training ACE NFPs; reporting ACE progress; sharing best practices, important scientific papers, and reports; and connecting ACE people. It could also provide additional support for ACE projects.

ENERGY

The overview:

The Russian invasion of Ukraine and the global energy crisis has exposed that the green energy transition is more up-to-date than ever. A just transition through coal & nuclear phasing out and a shift transition to renewable energy were at the heart of the discussions at the COP26. Moreover, the latest IPCC report states that the global use of coal, oil and natural gas has to be declined by 95%, 60% and 45% by 2050 in order to limit global warming to 1.5°C. However, global ambitions to phase out fossil fuels and to reach net-zero emissions do not match reality today amid rising natural gas prices and soaring demand for coal.

Obviously, the global energy crisis creates the risk of slowing down the phasing out of fossil fuels and the transition to clean energy, but at the same time it harms the most vulnerable in society - rising utility and food prices put more people under increased financial pressure while building new coal plants and reopening old ones violate the rights of local communities to a healthy environment and undermine climate change efforts.

In the rush to solve the energy crisis the world should not overlook energy justice. We have to choose solutions based on the needs of vulnerable people and communities to achieve energy and climate justice - a necessary piece of a just and fair energy transition.

Key policy demands:

- The energy crisis should not be used as an opportunity to greenlight new coal and natural gas infrastructure - YEE demands Parties and private sector to stop funding any new fossil fuel projects. Instead, fossil fuels funds must be redirected towards the deployment of new renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency measures.
- States must exit or drastically reform the Energy Charter Treaty in order to avoid paying millions to oil companies for adopting climate policies.
- We demand an equitable community engagement around the energy decision-making process. Engagement of vulnerable and marginalised groups in the development and implementation of energy policies is a key necessity to ensure the just and fair energy transition.

BIODIVERSITY

Overview:

Human activity and actions have without a doubt damaged our natural environment to an extent that it will be an enormous challenge to reverse or even bring to a halt. According to the global assessment from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)⁶ biodiversity continues to decline in every region of the world, significantly reducing nature's capacity to contribute to people's wellbeing. By 2050, we are expected to have destroyed up to 46%⁷ of all biodiversity. However, **it is the basis of our world that cannot be replaced**. The ecosystems that are degrading at an unprecedented rate therefore are losing their capacity to help us mitigate and adapt to climate change in a moment where we need it most. Put simply, we cannot tackle one without acting on the other as they are intrinsically linked. According to the UN⁸, Biodiversity loss and degradation, damages to and transformation of ecosystems are already key risks for every region due to past global warming and will continue to escalate with every increment of global warming.

The loss of biodiversity however is not only an environmental issue but also a matter of social and environmental justice. It disproportionately affects the world's poorest countries and people whose livelihoods often rely on natural resources. Women have little decision-making power over natural resources in many countries even though they are one of the groups that are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

At last year's COP26, some progress was made in relation to biodiversity as over 100 global leaders committed to end deforestation and reverse land degradation by 2030 and provide US\$12 billion for forest-related climate finance between 2021-2025.⁹

However, as the loss of biodiversity goes way beyond forest ecosystems, we urge responsible parties to follow an inclusive approach that builds on the interconnected nature of today's challenges.

Key policy demands:

⁶ [The IPBES Global Assessment](#): Pathways to Action, February 18, 2020, accessed on 14.October 2022

⁷ [There's justice in the battle for biodiversity](#): 28 June 2018, accessed on 13 October 2022

⁸ [Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability](#): 2022, accessed on 14 October 2022

⁹ [THE GLOBAL FOREST FINANCE PLEDGE](#): 02.11.2021, accessed on 14 October 2022

- **We ask for a socially just management of conservation sites:** As the CBD Aichi Target 11 calls for an equitable management of conservation sites, local communities should be the ones guiding and being accountable to investments in conservation sites
- **We ask for the recognition of the interconnectedness of biodiversity, human wellbeing and sustainable development, and address these three planetary crises together:** All support that targets the loss of biodiversity must be inclusive and seek wins for poverty and equity in poorer nations
- **We ask for stronger coherence between UNFCCC and CBD:** Calls for action that refer to CBD COP15 are equally relevant for the COP27 nature theme and the challenges being discussed should not be seen as separate. Joint work and coherent strategies between both conferences are crucial to ensure mutually reinforcing positive impacts. Decisions taken during Part 2 of the World's Biodiversity Summit during COP27 can play a role in creating momentum for the upcoming COP15
- **We ask governments and international institutions to promote and support the implementation of Nature-based Solutions:** NbS should be supported by legal safeguards that ensure NbS national strategies are laid down as a set of actions contributing not only to mitigate the climate, but also increasing biodiversity, supporting human health and socio-economic wellbeing, ensuring a more sustainable land and sea use – relying on Ecosystem-based Approaches. EbAs allow for a proactive role of environmental defenders, such as indigenous people, local communities and youth. Nature-based Solutions (NbS) can provide 30% of the solution we need to get on track for limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees.
- **We urge governments to work towards mandatory disclosure of nature-related risks:** Mandatory disclosure on nature by companies can be an important tool to increase more consistent action, as at the moment, companies are still failing to disclose them. In their 2021 report¹⁰, WWF stated that unsustainable production and consumption are the main drivers in biodiversity loss, which underlines the importance of disclosure and transparency.

OCEANS AND COASTAL ZONES

Key policy demands:

We are planning to join YOUNGO's Global Ocean Declaration, and in addition we demand

- integration of ocean-based solutions in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as well as in National Adaptation Plans, wherever possible, supported

¹⁰ [HALVE HUMANITY'S FOOTPRINT ON NATURE AUGUST 2021 TO SAFEGUARD OUR FUTURE](#): August 2021, accessed on 14 October 2022

by best available scientific and other kinds of knowledge. → e.g. Marine Protected Areas and 30x30 campaign

- unlocking more funding in research and development for ocean technologies that can support climate action. Ocean-climate action should also be accounted for it in marine spatial planning (MSP)
- better coordination and harmonization across different ocean-related UN processes and governance.
- Reducing the anthropogenic pressure on the ocean, caused by overexploitation of resources and pollution, especially from plastic litter - support for an inclusive UN Plastics Treaty process.

TRANSPORT

Overview:

Road transport accounts for 10% of global emissions; transport emissions are rising faster than those of any other sector. While substantial changes, such as the introduction of zero-emissions vehicles, **purchasing and using EVs is not a good option**, since producing such vehicles is also resource-intensive. It is more important to boost research and innovation into the electrification of public transport vehicles and increasing efficiency on the other hand. This top-down approach is a key precondition to decarbonise the transport sector. Keeping in mind area specificities and inequalities between urban areas and rural areas :

Key policy demands:

Member states must enforce laws that ensure and hold major companies accountable for their freight efficiency within supply chains. This can be done through limiting the multiple types of vehicles that companies use in order to organise their transportation of goods as well as keeping into account their consumption level.

To create affordable and efficient public transportation that supports the needs of workers and students who commute - to allow them to live their life in the city to the fullest in a sustainable and just way

To configure the cities within the frames of smart growth format in the cities that are not designed that way by emphasizing putting homes near shops, jobs and public transportation and curtailing the distance of travel of individuals within their communities in order to make the transportation more accessible and to reduce the level of carbon footprint.

To support bike-friendly communities in the cities/countries that are not designed to integrate cycling traffic with vehicle traffic in order to reduce carbon footprint caused by transportation.

Travel methods to COPs and any United Nation meetings must have the least possible carbon footprint, with the possibility of hosting nations providing more environmental transport options, including cheaper train connections in a frequent setting.

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Overview:

Everyone has a fundamental human right to housing and to a clean and healthy environment. Urban and rural human settlements are essential in combating climate change as well as enhancing social change. However - predominantly urban areas - are significant contributors to climate change, nevertheless they are also significantly affected by the impacts of climate change. Previous COPs put emphasis primarily on urban environments and built areas, nevertheless focus should be put also on vulnerable communities in informal settlements, rural areas, nomads or to those who had to be displaced in other regions. These communities are on the frontline of the climate crisis and suffer the most from the effects of climate change, even though they contribute the least. Concretely, the most vulnerable actors are the poor urban communities, primarily slum dwellers, often members of minorities, and especially youth and women, who are mostly not integrated into the decision-making processes in their communities. Some of these individuals are also often subjects of environmental racism as they are dislocated into environmentally degraded sites. With unprecedented urbanisation, especially on the African continent, the gaps in equality and standard of living are increasing.

YEE also emphasises that people who lose their settlement should not be forgotten in the global policies as climate change has become the most significant humanitarian challenge. Climate-related disasters already displace millions of people each year. Almost 60 million in 2021 alone people lost their homes because of environmental hazards and degradation. This number will only increase with rising temperature if the carbon pledges are not kept, as more people, especially the population of LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDs, will live in areas affected by the impacts of the climate crisis.

Key Demands:

- **We ask for support for development of green cities of short distances:** Provide accessible public transportation, safe bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure throughout the neighbourhood, and accessible amenities for all

members of the community regardless of economic background or racial affiliation.

- **We ask for support ecosystem-based adaptation in urban and rural areas** to adapt and to mitigate the impacts of the climate change, to provide green spaces and natural-based solutions and to protect the most vulnerable inhabitants, including children and youth, from the impacts of climate change.
- **We demand to ensure participatory approach in community development with a putten emphasis on the incorporation of the youth of all genders, minorities and indegenous** into community decision-making processes and leadership positions. Primarily Youth itself is an important actor in urban areas, as by 2030, 50% of all urban inhabitants will be young people.
- **We ask to enhance urban community adaptive capacity and mitigation efforts through decentralisation processes and principles of locally led adaptation.** These transition initiatives, e.g support for local energy collectives, ensure influx new green jobs for community members.
- **YEE strictly demands for zero tolerance of environmental racism in urban and rural communities:** incorporate well-being and indegenous heritage into new sustainable development assessments and strategies of human settlements.
- **We urge for Climate-induced migration and displacement need to be implemented into the processes of NDCs and NAPs.** In many cases, there are no clear plans to address migration and disaster displacement. Climate change must be acknowledged as a legal reason to migrate globally, and a declaration on global cooperation on climate-induced migration shall be introduced with a pledge to introduce humanitarian visas for climate-induced migrants.

IV. Conclusion

#EnvironmentEmpowermentEquity: our aim is to achieve respect to and protection of the environment and planetary boundaries at all levels; to empower young people, especially from marginalised communities, to take part in decision making processes that impact their future; and to ensure equity while tackling the climate crisis.

#AchieveClimateJusticeBy2030: while making progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, we need to ensure that climate injustice will also be addressed within this decade. We need transformational change with careful consideration to human and nature rights, well-being, health and the needs of the most vulnerable to climate change.

#MindTheGap_InAdaptation: Although the climate crisis is a worldwide phenomenon, it affects the global population unequally. The "adaptation gap" is an occurring global issue when adaptation measures that poor communities or regions cannot afford, nevertheless they are at the frontline of climate crisis. Due to the lack of adaptation finance, adaptation gap is widening!

#HealthyEcosystemsHealthyPeople: The natural ecosystems do not need us to survive! We are the ones dependent on intact ecosystems and thriving biodiversity to make sure the planet is still liveable/habitable for our and future generations. We simply have to step back and act as one component of a global network again.

Contributors

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