

# YOUTH POLICY PAPER

## PREAMBLE

Climate change impacts all of us, but not equally. Developing nations and small island states are on the frontlines of negative impacts of climate change, and they have the fewest resources to cope with them. Even within nations, climate change increases existing inequalities. According to estimates, by 2030 the climate crisis could push 100 million people into extreme poverty.

Moreover, the climate crisis creates profound generational injustice. We, today's youth, along with future generations, are facing the harshest impacts of a crisis we didn't cause. The decisions of past and current leaders have placed our future in jeopardy. It is therefore crucial that our voices be heard, for we and the future generations are the ones that will live with the consequences of the decisions made now.

We fully support the statements made by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, who has called for an end to the era of fossil fuels "with justice and equity." We recognize the necessity of immediately banning fossil fuel subsidies and redirecting these resources towards building sustainable renewable energy capacity and supporting other sustainable initiatives. This is not only a matter of environmental responsibility in terms of climate justice but also of global justice and equity for the people and the planet.

## THEREFORE, WE URGE YOU, THE COMMITTED GOVERNMENTS, TO:

### 1. END THE USE OF FOSSIL FUELS

- We demand an immediate end to the subsidization, exploration, extraction, and utilization of all fossil fuels. Achieving net-negative emissions by 2050 requires swift action grounded in the principles of a just transition and common but differentiated responsibilities.
- We call on all nations at UNFCCC COP29 to set a clear timeline, well-defined targets and sufficient means for ensuring just transition from fossil fuels to sustainable renewable energy. Vague commitments to "transitioning away" are no longer enough and fail to hold governments accountable.
- We call upon all governments and stakeholders to support and stand behind the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

## **2. ENSURE THE REALIZATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION OF AFFECTED AND VULNERABLE GROUPS**

- We demand respect for the rights of Indigenous people. We urge the governments to apply the Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC) UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People in all climate-policy related decisions.
- We call upon protection for refugees and other financially vulnerable communities. Their precarious living conditions, compounded by the lack of financial resources, make it even more difficult to recover from climate-induced disasters.
- We request governments to engage diverse voices and adopt inclusive decision-making by actively involving women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and marginalized communities in shaping climate solutions.
- We urge the governments to implement and integrate sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender-based violence (GBV) into national disaster and contingency plans, and update midwifery curricula to include climate-related risks.

## **3. INVEST IN PREVENTIVE MEASURES AND NECESSARY ADAPTATION**

- We call on governments to align their commitments with the guidelines and estimates provided by the UNFCCC. New financial goals must reflect the urgency of the climate crisis.
- We urge to Invest More in Adaptation and Anticipatory Action. Governments must meet this goal and ensure that vulnerable communities are equipped to withstand the impacts of climate change.
- We call on governments to increase their contributions to The Loss and Damage Fund, ensuring that it can adequately address the needs of nations and communities already bearing the brunt of the climate crisis. Invest in protecting, restoring and rewilding natural ecosystems together with communities.

#### 4. RECOGNIZE THE UNEQUAL IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

- We call on all governments to recognize the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable nations and communities. Policies must be tailored to prevent and mitigate damage to those most at risk, while also including mechanisms for accountability and compensation for climate-induced damages.
- We urge all governments to fulfill promises to reduce carbon emissions and keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius. Failure to do so will exacerbate poverty, hunger, and environmental degradation.
- We require governments to protect and Restore Natural Ecosystems: Immediate action is needed to halt deforestation and ban destructive practices such as bottom trawling, overfishing, and illegal mining. Governments should commit to protecting and restoring 30 per cent of land and ocean by 2030, in line with the 30x30 Conservation Agenda.

*\*Around 80 per cent of the remaining global biodiversity is found on the lands of Indigenous People. It is vital that states commit to protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples to their lands, cultural heritage, and to obtaining consent for any projects on their lands.*

#### FINAL REMARKS

Climate justice calls for a more inclusive and sustainable approach to addressing the global climate crisis. Therefore, we urge governments and decision-makers to include and listen to these demands lifted by young people. We are the ones who will live with the consequences of your decisions today. It is by ending the use of fossil fuels, listening and including affected groups in the decision-making processes, investing in preventive measures and acknowledging that climate change affects us unequally that we can create an impact on the climate. As the world gathers for COP29, it is important that we ensure that the commitments to climate action are also pursued in alignment with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Climate solutions that neglect these important values risk undermining the long-term success of global efforts, as the voices of the most vulnerable including marginalized communities, Indigenous peoples, and youth must be at the focus of our collective efforts to solve the climate crisis.