

2-3 JUNE 2022

STOCKHOLM+



A HEALTHY PLANET FOR THE PROSPERITY OF ALL
- OUR RESPONSIBILITY, OUR OPPORTUNITY

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

DRAFT ONE

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STOCKHOLM + 50

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The Stockholm+50 Youth Task Force

The Stockholm+50 Youth Task Force has been convened jointly by LSU (as ex-officio focal point to the Swedish government) and the Children and Youth Major Group of UNEP (as ex-officio focal point to the leading agency). The Task Force members was selected from an open process which saw more than 350 applicants, and is composed of 50 young people from across the world, representing their countries, communities, organizations and constituencies on a voluntary basis, including from UN Global Indigenous Youth Caucus, Our Common Agenda Next Generation Fellows, YOUNGO, UN SG Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change, Global Youth Biodiversity Network, Decent Jobs for Youth Initiative, SDG 7 Youth Constituency, Y20, Sustainable Communities, SCP Youth Constituency & others.

During Spring 2022, the Task Force has self-organized work on consultations, youth competitions, partner meetings, developed a youth handbook and this policy statement to involve young people across the world in enhancing capacity and forming the dialogues leading up to the Stockholm+50 International Meeting. Three global consultations have been conducted so far. These consultations have shaped the outcome of this policy paper and we are proud to present this work to you, the readers, at Stockholm+50.

We are standing at an inflection point in human history. What we decide at Stockholm+50 will shape the future for generations to come. It is time to turn the tide. Listen to the demands of young people and sign on to this commitment. We look forward to working with you to create a better, more sustainable future for all.

//The Stockholm+50 Youth Task Force

As youth across the world, we express our deep concern regarding the current state of our home - Planet Earth - and the previous and current mishandling of the global environment by the people in power. With this first draft of the Stockholm+50 Youth Policy Paper, we set out a vision for the road ahead and the steps required to achieve it. Coordinated by the Stockholm+50 Youth Task Force, this policy paper is the product of initial research, discussions, and hybrid consultations to ensure the views of as many young people are represented.

In keeping with the themes of Stockholm+50, youth have developed key demands that we believe will contribute to achieving these goals. We urge you, the reader, to read the demands in their entirety as they reflect the scale of work needed.

Under the theme “Reflecting on the urgent need for actions to achieve a healthy planet and prosperity of all”, we call on governments to use both various already established legal statutes and new legislature to aid in the punishment of polluters and the stopping of destructive activities which damages critical ecosystems that bore vital services and function. Additionally, we call for the commitment of governments to protect land and ocean, combat plastic pollution, ban environmentally harmful chemicals while encouraging practices related to a green, circular economy and integrated water resource management.

Under the theme “Achieving a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic”, we strongly urge governments to ensure access to W.A.S.H (water, sanitation and hygiene), COVID-19 vaccines and healthcare for all . We urge world leaders to reflect on the inequalities in our society that the pandemic has brought to the forefront and its particular impact on vulnerable and marginalized groups. We need to see a just transition taking this into account and addressing the animal-industrial complex. Lastly, we call for a science based approach when it comes to policy creation.

Under the theme “Accelerating the implementation of the environmental dimension of Sustainable Development in the context of the Decade of Action”, we call for the immediate phase out of fossil fuels and scaling up of safe, clean and sustainable energy for all - to reach net-negative emissions by 2050. Secondly, we call for comprehensive education programmes centered around environmentally harming processes, systems and events. Lastly, we call for developed countries to allocate a predetermined percentage of their budget to foster projects and capacity building opportunities.

Finally, under the theme “Ensuring Inclusive Processes for Decision Making”, we urge governments to establish inclusive decision-making processes where all perspectives can be heard and considered, especially vulnerable or marginalized groups such as LGBT, indigenous and disabled groups. We call on countries and governments to support and protect all environmental activists.

We recognise the strong interlinkages between these themes. For Stockholm+50 to be successful, all themes must be addressed. As young people of today, we look forward to collaborating and engaging in meaningful discussions with the governments present at Stockholm+50 to ensure a better, more sustainable future for all. We have an opportunity to change the way we interact with our planet and the time to change is now.

A. Reflecting on the urgent need for actions to achieve a healthy planet and prosperity of all

We call for all governments to:

- Provide constitutional and other legal guarantees of the right to a healthy and sustainable environment to enable victims of climate change to take polluters to court over crimes such as ecocide. More specifically, criminalizing large-scale environmental destruction by including ecocide in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
- Immediately halt deforestation, ban bottom trawling and overfishing, illegal mining including in fragile ecosystems, and other destructive practices which hamper the environment's ability to regenerate or execute vital ecosystem processes.
- Ensure the protection and restoration of 30% of land and ocean, in alignment with the 30x30 Conservation Agenda, which is the first step to protecting half of the earth by 2050, in line with standards proposed by the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People.
- Commit to the principles of actions for circular economy, moving beyond greenwashing, whilst putting in place measures to reduce, reuse, recycle, sustainably manage waste and move into closed-loop cycles.
- Transform our agri-food systems in line with the recommendations from the World Food Forum Youth Action Compendium by shifting towards more sustainable, small-scale agriculture and plant-based diets while recognizing socio-cultural and economic contexts - making nutritious, safe and sustainable food affordable and accessible to all.
- Implement integrated water resource management (IWRM), such as achieving parity between groundwater withdrawals and groundwater recharge as well as implementing comprehensive water conservation measures such as wastewater treatment and water reuse.
- Ban the use of harmful chemicals, such as the POPs listed under the Stockholm Convention, and enforce a precautionary, science-based approach for the introduction of any new chemicals to ensure no harmful effects on land, air, water, and living organisms.

- Transparently prepare and communicate strengthened nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and long-term strategies, with the adequate support from developed nations, in 2022 with clear plans for reducing GHG emissions and reaching net-zero within the coming decades, through an inclusive, stakeholder-driven process aligned with the recommendations of IPCC.
- Introduce mandatory greenhouse gas reporting, human rights and environmental due diligence laws for listed corporations and a legally binding international treaty to cover global trade and supply chains. Such legislation must have a substantial liability and enforcement regime.
- Call for non-violent dialogue and negotiations to solve disputes, and recognize the detrimental impact of violent conflicts and war on human lives, development, and the environment.
- Ratify and fulfill their commitments under CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC, CITES, invasive species protocol, UNCLOS, and other international conventions on the environment and sustainable development as a minimum.
- Ensure that the plastics treaty is legally binding, declare a global crisis on plastics to call for urgent action, and prioritize innovation in technology for plastics cleanup.
- Ensure that coastal development takes place in a manner using a marine spatial planning framework so all stakeholder interests are addressed. Unsustainable marine practices such as overfishing, mangrove and wetland degradation are immediately addressed with adequate laws and policies.

B. Achieving a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic

We call for all governments to:

- Ensure global justice and fairness in terms of access to vaccines, healthcare to impoverished and under-resourced communities and marginalized groups, whilst investing in protective and restorative measures against future and current health risks including pandemics, diseases, malnutrition, antibiotic resistance, air pollution & climate induced disasters.
- Adopt a science-based approach in policy-making in response to our triple planetary-health crisis, based on the latest available, peer-reviewed accepted scientific consensus, ensure transparent sharing of information among and between countries and support and recognize the role of science in informing sound decision-making.
- Align all recovery measures with sustainable and environmentally sound investments into green jobs, low-carbon technology and future-proof sectors to avoid carbon lock-in of fossil fuel infrastructure and stranded assets which hinders sustainable development.
- Transform the animal-industrial complex towards sustainability, recognizing its significant impact on greenhouse gas emissions, expanding deforestation and future health risks due to the close proximity of animals and excessive use of antibiotics.
- Align with the Our Future Agenda: New Deal for a New Generation plan to address the immediate COVID-19 pandemic and the longer-term need for quality education and skills development, secure and meaningful jobs and economic opportunities, and more sustainable ways of living.
- Ensure constructive implementation measures on Just Transition promoting socioeconomic equity during and beyond the global pandemic.
- Implement practices that would foster a regenerative care-based economy that addresses the gendered division of labour and unpaid care work typically placed on the shoulders of women, girls and gender-diverse people which is exacerbated by the global pandemic.
- Ensure access to WASH - water, sanitation and hygiene.

C. Accelerating the implementation of the environmental dimension of Sustainable Development in the context of the Decade of Action

We call for all governments to:

- Commit to expanding education regarding the causes, effects and solutions of climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation to enhance capacity among youth, prepare them for green jobs and build a sustainable future, by integrating these topics in all school curricula and ensuring free education for all children, especially for women and other marginalized groups, globally.
- Immediately phase out the subsidizing, exploration, extraction and utilization of all fossil fuels to achieve net-negative emissions by 2050, following the principles of a just transition and common but differentiated responsibilities. Concurrently, governments should rapidly scale up sustainable, renewable, safe and secure energy for all.
- Amend the global current economic systems in respective member states, which are not fit-for-purpose to achieve a sustainable future, including by immediately stopping all forms of corruption, tax evasion and illicit financial flows. An economic system in which businesses and money-making take priority over human wellbeing and environmental protection is unethical and unsustainable in the long term.
- Ensure that all environmentally harmful and polluting activities pay the right price by internalizing all environmental, social, welfare and health costs, applying a polluter-pays-principle.
- Ensure affluent countries utilize a fair percentage of profits towards the benefit of environmental protection and human development beyond their national borders, and integrate the spirit and principles of environmental justice.
- Put in place adequate laws, enforcement efforts, cooperation and anti-corruption including among state officials to stop environmental crimes, with an attention towards endangered and vulnerable species, including wildlife trafficking and illegal logging.

D. Ensuring Inclusive Processes for Decision Making

We call for all governments to:

- Adopt participatory and inclusive decision-making processes at every level to ensure the meaningful participation of all stakeholders highlighting youth, workers, vulnerable groups, Indigenous Peoples' and local communities.
- Recognize that to achieve sustainable and inclusive development is through democratic societies that take all perspectives into regard. Above all, the principles of free speech, press freedom, organization, and free and fair elections in accordance with human rights.
- Fulfill their obligations to protect and support young activists. To commit the end of violence against young human rights, land, and justice defenders, furthermore to end attacks towards journalists and other young people who have mobilized to build a better world.
- Follow the recommendations in the NDC Youth Engagement Plan to meaningfully involve young people in designing and implementing national commitments to cut emissions and adapt to climate change.
- Increase investments in children and youth through mitigation and adaptation programmes, support to civil society organizations, young entrepreneurs and marginalized groups, recognize that investing in youth gives a leverage towards a sustainable future.
- Ensure greater inclusivity, participation and collaboration with youth in the development, implementation and evaluation of environmental and sustainability policies, and calling for all governments to bring national youth delegates to participate in all international meetings.
- Establish and strengthen the representation of future generations, by appointing a new United Nations Special Envoy for Future Generations, ensuring and promoting a Declaration on Future Generations.