

# GLOBAL YOUTH CLIMATE ACTION DECLARATION





# YOUTH

## Climate Declaration

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The best moment is **NOW**

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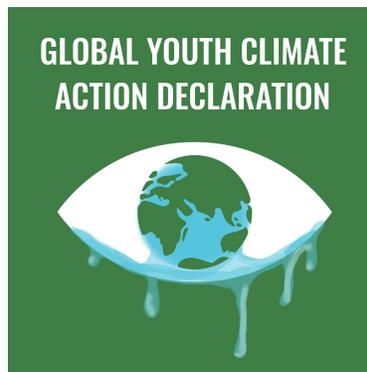
# 2019

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Global Youth Climate Action Declaration

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# *Global Youth Climate Action Declaration*



**2019**

## **Global Youth Climate Action Declaration**

*We, the Youth, unite in our call for urgent action on the transnational crisis of climate change.*

*Together, we represent the global constituency of young people determined to preserve the integrity of our Earth for all lifeforms, for the generations to follow, and for the sake of our own survival. In order to protect our most fundamental right to an inhabitable, healthy environment, it is imperative that we have multi-dimensional cooperation. We must mobilise and transform our hope in order to transcend borders and immerse ourselves in action. This requires cooperation that may be the first of its kind — harmony on a personal, local, national, and international level.*

*Today, in response to the deadlock, ignorance, and inaction of past generations in addressing the Climate Change crisis created by our species, we, **the YOUTH**, declare a global, social, and ecological state of emergency.*

*You — **Heads of State and policymakers at all levels of governance** — have the power to enact the broad sweeping changes we so desperately need.*

*We — **the Youth** — are watching our Earth burn and witnessing the promise of a future diminish before our very own eyes. We are tasked with solving a grand challenge we have inherited from the generations who came before. We ask for intergenerational partnership in working to save our Earth as the speed of climate change continues to accelerate.*

*Together, we can change the course of history by using our power for good, by amplifying the voice of science, by abandoning “business-as-usual”, and by taking a stand for our planet.*

*Alongside biodiversity collapse, denial of human and environmental rights, dramatic levels of pollution, rising inequalities, and resource shortages, climate change will be a determining factor of planetary evolution for decades to come.*

*And in this crisis, with no exceptions, the least responsible will bear the heaviest burdens. We thus urge you to address the rising complexities of the world you have built through adhering to the goals set forth by the Sustainable Development agenda and by governing with compassion for those of us who will soon inherit these grand challenges.*

*We call on Heads of State and policymakers to acknowledge and act in accordance with the most accurate science, particularly the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, the recent IPCC Land Report, and the most recent IPCC report on the Oceans and Cryosphere.*

*We urge you to take immediate action on the recommendations set forth by this declaration.*

## ***We, the global youth, call upon our Heads of State and policymakers at all levels of government to:***

### ***Economic, Political, and Social Drivers***

- *Urge the international community to construct and implement a framework for binding environmental legislation that defends human rights, maintains ecosystem integrity, holds corporations accountable, and balances conflict-of-interest;*
- *Secure the rights of young and future generations by strengthening future-oriented and long-term policies. Intergenerational justice must be infused throughout the entire democratic, policy, and legislative process;*
- *Adopt an intersectional and inclusive approach to social justice that simultaneously considers gender with other social and environmental factors, such as age, religion, class, caste, disability, and ethnicity;*
- *Acknowledge that women are disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change and enact gender-responsive, ambitious climate policies;*
- *Shift towards a circular economy to reduce the damage caused by our current unsustainable economic system in order to broaden localised job opportunities and to catalyse a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions caused by long-distance transportation, overpackaging, and growth of out-of-season food;*
- *Adopt participatory, bottom-up, and inclusive approaches to engage citizens and civil society organisations in policy-making and projects at all social and political levels, allowing them to take ownership as stakeholders. Frontline communities and grassroots groups should especially be included in this multi-actor social dialogue;*
- *Intensify and promote research, innovation, and utilisation of methods involving mitigation strategies;*
- *Allocate specific funds to developing states for their own research programs;*
- *Regulate industrial agricultural practices through an increase in subsidies for the growth of biodiverse vegetables for human consumption and a decrease in subsidies for the growth of monoculture crops to be used in animal feed;*

### ***Infrastructure, Cities, and Local Action***

- *Establish plans at all governmental scales for future infrastructure — aligning with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets and surpassing the aspirations of the Paris Agreement — passing necessary laws and regulations to ensure compliance;*
- *Affirm the principle that cities — both existing and future — should strive to be smart, self-sufficient, and resilient in terms of energy, water, goods, and waste;*
- *Remedy the stark inequities in harmful environmental exposure on communities of low socioeconomic status through careful monitoring of non-communicable disease indicators and ensure environmental health for all;*
- *Reevaluate the overall planning of the State by studying its compatibility with the requirements of climate change actions and scale up tracking of indicators;*
- *Ensure that all levels of government have dedicated staff or departments intentionally dedicated to capacity-building for sustainability;*
- *Address climate action in all phases of design, licensing, and execution of building plans, ensuring that concerned stakeholders claim obligation for application of green building codes. Activate the monitoring role of the concerned governmental entities through all of the project phases for corrective action when needed;*
- *Adopt an integrated design method for localised sustainable projects in the future, considering sustainability challenges, population growth, and water shortages;*
- *Call upon local governments to organise e-waste recycling programmes;*
- *Allocate at least one-third of the urban space in each city for green space through the planting of street trees and the creation of parks, community gardens, green roofs, urban agriculture, vertical farming, and other innovative solutions, while prioritising indigenous species over imported plants, and edibles over ornamentals;*
- *Prohibit the destruction of existing agricultural and forested lands in order to minimize land use and land artificialisation; prioritise the preservation of agricultural, forested, and other natural areas through farmland and open space preservation programs, while re-utilizing currently developed land to improve its utility and foster greater community growth;*
- *Transition public mobility to a diverse range of multi-modal systems that improve both safety and access for cyclists and pedestrians, prioritise low carbon opportunities, and augment electric vehicle technologies;*

### **Youth and Public Mobilisation**

- *Create a sustained and transparent dialogue at all levels between youth and decision-makers so that ideas generated by youth are both heard and implemented;*
- *Support initiatives to amplify the voices of young people in their respective communities, cultivate leadership capacities, and enhance communication of youth across the globe in order to foster the form of collaboration that is imperative in addressing global crises;*
- *Appoint youth representatives across government agencies and ministries from a diverse array of backgrounds to input intergenerational feedback on policies;*
- *Ensure that individuals with all levels of education are enabled to participate in climate decision-making by increasing public access to important events and involvement in policymaking, especially for historically underserved communities and vulnerable populations;*
- *Create avenues for engagement of Indigenous youth at all levels of governance in addition to the promotion of policies that support the education, traditional practices, health, and wellbeing of Indigenous communities;*
- *Strongly support and strengthen the existing institutions that support formal and institutional participation of youth in climate change combating processes, such as the Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) within UNFCCC, while extending these modalities to different structures of society;*

### **Capacity-building, Education, and Awareness**

- *Establish compulsory, solutions-oriented climate change curricula throughout educational institutions in order to equip young people with the knowledge and skills to adequately tackle the climate crisis;*
- *Give access to and develop user-friendly toolkits, manuals, and other practical knowledge-sharing methods for global dissemination of climate change advocacy tools;*
- *Promote management training for the integration of climate change issues horizontally and vertically among key stakeholders;*
- *Promote training on management of climate change risks and their impacts at international, national, and local levels;*
- *Include climate change in religious discourses, cultural heritage, and other important matters for the conscience of mankind;*
- *Promote educational opportunities on climate change for historically underrepresented and systematically disadvantaged groups;*
- *Incentivise educational and working opportunities for women as key factors to decrease the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) to a level that is sustainable and balanced with mortality rates. Such a decrease, indeed, would be advisable in order to reduce the human impact on the environment;*

## ***Nature-based solutions***

- *Recognise that nature-based solutions are essential to catalysing a sustainable, long-term economic system which benefits both humankind and Earth's biodiversity, taking subsequent steps to efficiently implement solutions rooted in nature;*
- *Appreciate, clarify through binding legislation, and show in practice the indispensable role of local and Indigenous communities' wisdom in the protection and sustainable management of biodiversity and ecosystems;*
- *Commit to biodiversity and ecosystem protection, proper valuation of ecosystem services, as well as the restoration and rewilding of biodiverse ecosystems;*
- *Incentivize innovation in the fields of sustainability and socially, ecologically just trade in order to convene global communities dedicated to researching how natural processes can best inform solutions to climate challenges;*
- *Catalyse a global transition to ensure sustainable and just agricultural systems based on the principles of agroecology, ecologically regenerative agriculture techniques, permaculture, climate-smart agriculture, organic farming, and a myriad of other practices that minimise the use of fossil fuel-based machinery or hazardous chemicals, empower communities, and improve resilience to climate impacts by breaking the barriers of intellectual property rights and corporate hegemony over food and seed systems;*
- *Ensure that nature-based solutions are prioritised as a key climate solution alongside the reduction of emissions and that they are implemented in a manner that ensures the long-term protection and restoration of the environment and of natural ecosystems as a priority ahead of short-term economic gain.*

## ***Resilience and Adaptation***

- *Establish an international fund to tackle health risks and humanitarian crises resulting from climate change which directly and fully supports populations that are most at risk;*
- *Adopt a common and universal definition of climate security that will enable a coherent, effective, and comprehensive response to the human and ecological security implications of climate change impacts;*
- *Develop revised concrete National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) that recognise young people as both stakeholders and implementers — not just as a vulnerable group — of adaptation action during 2020 and beyond, with a focus on youth efforts while including capacity support for young people;*
- *Build a resilient society inspired by nature’s adaptive skills and ecosystem services and promote reforms of agricultural institutions, subsidy allocations, and programmes which are more climate change adaptive and resilient;*
- *Develop an amendment to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees to include climate refugees under the definition for the term “refugee” and increase acceptance rates in order to protect those forced to flee their states due to the climate crisis;*
- *Honour, celebrate, and recognise the importance of traditional, local, and Indigenous knowledge;*
- *Establish funding and reallocation programmes to provide those who will lose their jobs as a result of the climate crisis with alternative employment opportunities;*
- *Demand policymakers to ensure just transition policies and plans to protect workers of non-sustainable industries by offering alternatives and defending their rights;*
- *Scale up commitments to the Adaptation Fund;*

## **Mitigation**

- *Develop effective, carbon-neutral land, air, and water transportation systems by setting stringent targets to be achieved by 2050;*
- *Hold States, private maritime vessels, corporations both producing and utilising plastics, and global industrial stakeholders accountable for current and future damages to oceans, seas, and other bodies of water;*
- *Intensify and promote research, innovation, and utilisation of methods involving mitigation strategies;*
- *Allocate specific funds to developing member states for their own research programmes;*
- *Develop and strengthen climate institutions to facilitate robust assessment and reporting systems;*
- *Intensify and promote research, innovation, and utilization of methods involving mitigation strategies such as carbon recycling;*
- *Condemn and restrict all forms of natural resource extraction taking place without local consent or engagement;*

## **Energy Transition**

- *Support technology transfer and promote the development of environmentally sustainable technologies through adequate investment and tax subsidies for renewable energy;*
- *Achieve the transition to a system employing 100% renewable energy by 2030 for all states, expecting high-income countries to aid low and middle-income countries in reaching this goal in line with the SDG agenda as well as the IPCC and channel investment towards cleaner energy;*
- *Facilitate the development of enterprises in all sectors related to the energy transition including training programmes for professional growth in this sector;*
- *Promote the adoption of energy-efficient equipment through tax relief and customs exemptions;*
- *End subsidies for fossil fuels and industrial-scale bioenergy, rejecting any unsustainable and extractive industries which put short-term gain over the wellbeing of people and nature;*

### **Industry Transition & Accountability**

- *Recognise that the existing technology industry contributes significantly to the production of Greenhouse Gases, and thus incentivise low-tech solutions and sustainable technology that can be repurposed and have a longer lifespan to reduce the need for annual developments;*
- *Increase commitments to combat the climate crisis by enhancing incentivization for eco-friendly industries, reducing tariffs on foreign goods that are eco-friendly, prioritising carbon-positive programs, and ascribing score and accreditation systems to industries acting in accordance with the encouragement of a societal shift;*
- *Address the unsustainable consumption and depletion of natural resources due to harmful industrial practices such as intensive farming, bycatch, overfishing, and ecosystem degradation through bottom trawling by shifting to a more sustainable production system;*
- *Identify the need to engage in the principle of just transition, especially in consideration of developing economies; we express particular concern over the importance of assisting developing economies both financially and by providing resources in the form of material and subject experts to assist developing economies in an industry shift;*
- *Promote and support the participation of women, youth and vulnerable groups in agro-processing and value addition;*
- *Drastically reduce the impact of international shipping on the environment by investing in the decarbonization of the shipping sector and in more energy-efficient ships;*
- *Incentivize transparency in labeling by banning self-declaration claims and by mandating a list of all constituent parts of a product;*

## ***Climate Finance and Carbon Pricing***

- *Acknowledge the historic responsibility that developed UN Member States have had in contributing to climate change and issue grant-based funding equivalent to the scale of the climate crisis under the Common But Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR) concept;*
- *Increase developed UN member states' commitments to the Green Climate Fund in order to meet the 100 billion USD goal, while ensuring that these commitments are tracked to guarantee that nations are held accountable for providing funds in a timely manner;*
- *Establish a mechanism where young people can easily access funding instruments for implementation of grassroots-level projects, but also for larger projects like the Conference of Youth (COY) and Local Conference of Youths (LCOY);*
- *Ensure that climate finance is gender-inclusive, protects workers and communities impacted by climate change, puts in place urgent measures to address displacement and migration due to climate change, and builds the resilience of the vulnerable through addressing issues of poverty, inequality, and justice;*
- *Build a constructive dialogue on blue and green economies and subsequent interlinkages with losses and damages in order to find innovative financing mechanisms, such as green bonds, as a means to invest in rehabilitation projects within communities experiencing climate-imposed disasters;*
- *Strengthen accountability and monitoring mechanisms on climate funding to ensure progress, as well as steering committees including local youth constituents;*
- *Strengthen carbon pricing to provide incentives for local action against climate change;*
- *Promote compensation for damage to ecosystem services through actions such as Reduction of Emission from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD), biodiversity offsets, and clean development mechanisms;*
- *Promote commercialization and use of renewable, energy-efficient, and low carbon technologies including the promotion of local manufacturing, the establishment of , and access to renewable energy technologies;*
- *Strengthen incentives for the adoption of greenhouse gas emission removal technologies focused on bottom-up carbon removal projects;*

***We, the collective Youth Voice, speak as one for the wellbeing of all. We stand firm in our resolve towards addressing the climate change crisis through the imperative course of action, detailed above, in meeting the demands of the global youth constituency.***

***We are holding you, those with the power to govern, accountable for your actions. We are watching. We will not relent until we witness the necessary changes for sustaining life on this planet.***

***We have no choice but to carry this torch onward and it is our sincere hope that you will join us as intergenerational partners in fighting for our future.***

***To those who have had the courage and bravery to join us in this endeavour – thank you.***

***To those who are waiting for the right moment to act – that moment is now.***

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## Appendix

### Preamble:

**Sustainable Development Agenda:** Established agenda set to be met by all UN member states by 2030, acting in accordance with the agenda's 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 associated targets. The agenda focuses on the elimination of global issues such as world hunger or poverty while working to establish equality and fair access to opportunity.

**IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C:** An international panel's report on the worldwide impacts and effects of global warming and of a 1.5°C temperature increase due to human-induced and greenhouse gas propelled climate change.  
<https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

**IPCC Land Report:** In full the "Climate Change and Land" report by the International Panel on Climate Change targeting the effects of climate change on desertification, food security, and land degradation among other areas. <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/srcl/>

**IPCC Report on Oceans and Cryosphere:** A recent IPCC report on climate change's impact on the oceans and on the cryospheres around the world.  
[https://report.ipcc.ch/srocc/pdf/SROCC\\_FinalDraft\\_FullReport.pdf](https://report.ipcc.ch/srocc/pdf/SROCC_FinalDraft_FullReport.pdf)

**Paris Agreement:** An intergovernmental agreement passed in 2016 stating the necessity for global states to work together to keep the effects of their emissions on climate change well below a 2°C shift in global temperatures. The agreement itself is based on individual state NDCs and their subsequent contributions to emission-reduction and environmentally-forward action.

### Economic, Social, and Political Drivers:

**Intergenerational Justice:** The concept that the consequences of actions taken today must not only consider.

**Circular Economy:** This is an economic model designed and aimed at eliminating waste and the continual use of resources.

### **Infrastructure, Cities, and Local Action:**

**Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** A collection of seventeen global goals designed to be a “blueprint” to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

**Non-communicable disease (NCD) indicators:** Indicators concerning non-communicable diseases. NCDs, also known as chronic diseases, tend to be of long duration and are the result of a combination of genetic, physiological, environmental and behaviour factors. The main types of NCDs are cardiovascular diseases (like heart attacks and stroke), cancer, chronic respiratory diseases (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma) and diabetes. NCDs disproportionately affect people in low and middle-income countries.

**Green roofs:** It is a type of roof covered in vegetation on building tops and is also a drainage system for rainwater and provides energy. The two categories of green roofs are extensive and inclusive.

**Land artificialisation:** This is the “actual change of state of agriculture, forest, or natural surface towards artificial, which in effect includes urban areas, commercial zones, and industrial wastelands”

### **Youth and Public Mobilisation:**

**Indigenous Peoples:** A group of people who is native to a country with its own set of values and cultural traditions.

**UNFCCC:** The United Framework Convention on Climate Change is a convention adopted by the United Nations at the “Rio Earth Summit” in 1992. Its objective is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations “at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic (human-induced) interference with the climate system” and to ensure a safe future for our planet.

**Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE):** Article 6 of the UNFCCC containing guidelines on education, training, and public awareness on climate change.

### **Capacity building, Education, and Awareness:**

***Total Fertility Rate:*** The total fertility rate in a specific year is defined as the total number of children that would be born to each woman if she were to live to the end of her child-bearing years and give birth to children in alignment with prevailing age-specific fertility rates. It is calculated by totalling the age-specific fertility rates as defined over five-year intervals.

### **Nature-based solutions:**

***Ecosystem services:*** Ecosystem services are the direct and indirect contributions of ecosystems to human well-being. They support directly or indirectly our survival and quality of life.

***Agroecology:*** the application of ecological principles to agricultural systems and practices, or the branch of science concerned with it.

***Permaculture:*** The development of agricultural ecosystems using ways that don't deplete the earth's natural resources and that are therefore sustainable and self-sufficient.

### **Resilience and Adaptation:**

***The 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees:*** The convention is a legal document that states the definition of refugees and the legal obligations of members states that ratify the document to protect them. It is based on the principle of non-refoulement according to which a refugee should not be returned to their country where there are serious threats to their life and freedom. The convention also lays the foundation of the mandate for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

***National Adaptation Plan (NAP):*** This is a framework developed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that enables countries to address medium- and long-term climate adaptation needs and to devise a plan of action incorporating the needs. It also enables for climate mitigation strategies to be a part of the political process of the respective countries.

**Adaptation Fund:** *It is a funding mechanism that provides finance for climate adaptation and resilience projects and programs in developing countries. It is funded by governments, the private sector, and individuals.*

**Corporate Hegemony:** *This is the dominance of one or a group of corporations over the influence and practices of a certain market and the sciences related to it.*

### **Energy transition:**

**Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** *The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. The 17 Global Goals were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which set out a 15-year plan to achieve the Goals.*

**Bioenergy:** *It is a renewable source of energy from natural sources (biomass), including plants, food waste, and wood. It has the potential of providing electricity by treating the biomass, which produces gas.*

### **Industry Transition & Accountability:**

**SDG targets:** *The 17 Sustainable Development Goals each mandates specific targets under various aspects to be achieved. The SDG targets dictate necessary levels for its corresponding indicators (quantifiable measures) to consider the goal “achieved”. There are 169 targets for all seventeen goals.*

### **Climate Finance and Carbon Pricing:**

**CBDR:** *Common but Differentiated Responsibility: Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR–RC) is a principle within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that acknowledges the different capabilities and differing responsibilities of individual countries in addressing climate change.*

**Green Climate Fund:** *The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is a fund established within the framework of the UNFCCC as an operating entity of the Financial Mechanism to assist developing countries in adaptation and mitigation practices to counter climate change.*

*The GCF is based in Incheon, South Korea. It is governed by a Board of 24 members and supported by the Secretariat.*

***COY:*** *The Conference of Youth is an official event of YOUNGO, the official youth-constituency, to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It is an annual international gathering of young people passionate about environmental and climate change.*

***LCOYs:*** *Local conference of Youths (LCOY) are events by YOUNGO, the official children and youth constituency to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. LCOY organisers bring the annual climate negotiations to their home countries and make sure that words are turned into action.*

***Green Economy:*** *The green economy is defined as an economic system that aims at reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities, and that aims for sustainable development without degrading the environment.*

***Blue Economy:*** *According to the World Bank, the blue economy is the "sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of the ecosystem of the ocean."*

***Building Codes:*** *National building codes are considered as the main reference for all engineering works related to the construction industry*

***Biodiversity offsets:*** *Biodiversity offsets are a measurable way to compensate for residual impacts in development projects.*



## Points of Contact

- North America:
  - Nadine Clopton (United States)
    - [nadineclopton@gmail.com](mailto:nadineclopton@gmail.com)
    - Director, UN NGO DPI Executive Committee
    - NGO Youth Representative, Caring & Living As Neighbours
  - Arpan Patel (United States)
    - [patelarpan1995@gmail.com](mailto:patelarpan1995@gmail.com)
    - New York cares, Students 2 Science
  
- Asia:
  - Pratyussh Pol (India)
    - [pratyusshpol@gmail.com](mailto:pratyusshpol@gmail.com) , [fridaysforfuture.india@gmail.com](mailto:fridaysforfuture.india@gmail.com) ;  
+91 9742980156
    - FFF India National Coordinator
  - Meenakshi Monga (India)
    - Atlas Corps, Emerging Leader Global Fellow
    - Email
  - Annie Deng (China)
    - +19173023802
    - The City College of New York NGO, Representative
  
- Europe:
  - Côme Girschig (France)
    - [come.girschig@sciencespo.fr](mailto:come.girschig@sciencespo.fr) +33 6 03 57 69 64
    - Green Ticket
  - Gilberto Morishaw (The Netherlands)
    - [gilbertomorishaw@gmail.com](mailto:gilbertomorishaw@gmail.com) ; +31645739053
    - Ambassador African Caribbean Pacific Young Professionals Network
    - John Lewis Fellow Humanity in Action and Climate Reality Leader
  - Mădălina Scarlat (Romania)
    - [climatestrikeromania@gmail.com](mailto:climatestrikeromania@gmail.com) ; +40766228544
    - Climate Strike Romania & Fridays for Future Romania
  
- South America
  - Milene Pardo-Figueroa (Peru)
    - [pardomilene@gmail.com](mailto:pardomilene@gmail.com) +34658 25 95 87
    - Founder of Generacion2030



- Africa
  - Tafadzwa Chando (Zimbabwe)
    - [tchandow@outlook.com](mailto:tchandow@outlook.com) [tchando@magnayouth.co.zw](mailto:tchando@magnayouth.co.zw)
    - +263717074649 +19293497833
    - Programs Director/Founder - Magna Youth
  - Wantoe T.Wantoe (Liberia)
    - +19143598757/+231770137866/
    - Director: Youth Leader for Global Change
    - Youth Representative: Sisters of Charity Federation
  
- Middle East
  - Zahra Abu Taha (Jordan)
    - [zahra1471990@gmail.com](mailto:zahra1471990@gmail.com) +962787026235
    - iGreeners



# CORE TEAM



[WWW.GYCAD.ORG](http://WWW.GYCAD.ORG)