



Toolkit for Young Climate Activists  
in the Middle East and North Africa Region/Arab States Region

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# VOLUME I :CLIMATE GLOSSARY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE





# PREFACE

The Toolkit for Young Climate Activists in The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region was created by young people who, like you, are concerned about our planet's situation and who, as activists, have faced many challenges when advocating and taking action.

Our goal is to share clear, concise, easily understandable information that describes the course that global, regional, and national climate action is taking, in order to prepare you for meaningful and informed participation.

The toolkit booklets interrelate and are designed so that you can read them in succession and progressively deepen your knowledge of each of the topics. You can also consult them independently, according to your needs.

THIS BOOKLET USES THE TERMS YOUTH AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO REFER TO ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE BETWEEN 10 AND 24 YEARS OLD

0 TO 17

10 TO 18

10 TO 24

15 TO 24



## Volume I

### **Climate glossary for young people:**

Important concepts and definitions that every climate activist needs to know.

## Volume II

### **Tools for climate action:**

Key tools for making progress towards the global climate action goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, including the Paris Agreement, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and other tools.

## Volume III

### **What is climate governance?**

Information about climate governance and the decision-making process at the national and international levels, including the Framework Convention on Climate Change, how it works and the mechanisms for participation.

## Volume IV

### **The Paris Agreement for young people:**

Details of the Agreement, its importance, and all its articles in simple language..



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This toolkit has been updated and revised for the MENA region based on feedback from young people in this region.



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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse Gases
<b>IPCC</b>	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
<b>LCIPP</b>	Local Communities and Indigenous People Platform
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change



# INTRODUCTION

This booklet provides **key definitions** to help you better understand the main concepts of climate change and climate action. Many of these definitions are in the Paris Agreement, which establishes the objectives for global climate action. The Agreement was adopted in 2015 and currently has 195 signatories.



Most of the definitions in this booklet come from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which is a body that provides countries with scientific information to strengthen the global response to climate change. These definitions have been adapted to a more familiar and simpler language. Other definitions can be found in official documents published by the United Nations and other organizations. You can always consult the main source for more details or additional information.

AT THE END OF THE BOOKLET, YOU WILL FIND AN ALPHABETICAL INDEX TO CONSULT IF YOU SIMPLY WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT A PARTICULAR CONCEPT.



We'll start with the basic concepts to help you understand the problems surrounding climate change. This is important for identifying ways to take action.



Then we'll learn about concepts related to climate action and the tools we can use in our actions.



Here we'll understand the climate change impacts concepts that affects our region.



Lastly, we'll look at aspects related to human rights and climate change, as this is a crisis that effects our rights.





# CLIMATE AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONCEPTS

To foster effective climate action, it is important that we understand the challenge we are facing. This section explains the basic concepts that help us to understand what climate change is and its causes. It also contains concepts to help you understand the interactions that occur on the earth.

## **Climate system:**

The climate system is formed by the interactions of its five components:



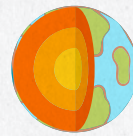
**Atmosphere:**  
the mixture of gases that surround the earth.



**Hydrosphere:**  
the earth's liquid water, including fresh and salt water



**Cryosphere:**  
the earth's ice and snow masses.



**Lithosphere:**  
the continents and sea floor.



**Biosphere:**  
the earth's marine and land biodiversity.<sup>1</sup>

## **Climate:**

The typical weather conditions of a specific region over a given period of time, with a minimum period of 20–30 years.<sup>2</sup>

## **Climate change:**

A change in the state or variability of the climate. Climate change is identified by variability in climate properties that persists for a prolonged period and can be identified through statistical tests. Climate change may be caused by natural, internal processes or by external forces, such as volcanic eruptions or persistent anthropogenic (human-caused) actions.<sup>3</sup>

## **The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**

is an international treaty with 197 State Parties that serves as a framework for international cooperation to combat climate change. The UNFCCC distinguishes climate change from climate variability. Climate change is attributed to human activities that may alter the composition of the atmosphere, while variability is attributed to natural causes.<sup>4</sup>


## **Climate variability**

Refers to variations in the average state of the climate, on all temporal and spatial scales, that exceed the typical scales of weather events.<sup>5</sup>




 **Anthropogenic:**

The effect, outcome or process of human activity<sup>6</sup>.

 **Global warming:**

The current climate change comes from global warming caused by human actions. This warming refers to an increase in global temperature that has been recorded over a period of 30 years or more. It is generally expressed in relation to the levels that existed before the Industrial Revolution.<sup>7</sup>

 **Anthropogenic global warming:**

It is primarily caused by the increase in sources of greenhouse gas emissions, largely from the burning of fuels in the energy sector, which includes transportation, electricity generation, construction and infrastructure. The following sectors are also sources of emissions: farming, industrial processes, and the domestic and industrial waste sector<sup>8</sup>.

Activities that involve a change in land use also contribute to emissions because of potential modification of the soil composition, which can cause the greenhouse gases that were stored in the soil to be released. For example, marine and land ecosystems absorb and store carbon, which they use in their processes, such as photosynthesis. If these ecosystems are destroyed, the carbon they had stored is released.

**Greenhouse gases:**

The gaseous component of the atmosphere that traps heat, which may be natural or anthropogenic.

Greenhouse gases absorb and emit radiation, which causes the greenhouse effect.<sup>9</sup>

# THE PRIMARY GREENHOUSE GASES ARE:

WATER VAPOUR  
(H<sub>2</sub>O)

CARBON DIOXIDE  
(CO<sub>2</sub>)

NITROUS OXIDE  
(N<sub>2</sub>O)

METHANE  
(CH<sub>4</sub>)

OZONE  
(O<sub>3</sub>)




 **Kyoto Protocol:**

The Kyoto Protocol operationalizes the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by committing industrialized countries and economies in transition to limit and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in accordance with agreed individual targets. The Convention itself only asks those countries to adopt policies and measures on mitigation and to report periodically.<sup>10</sup>

 **The Paris Agreement:**

The Paris Agreement was adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 in Paris, on 12 December 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels. To achieve this long-term temperature goal, countries aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible to achieve a climate neutral world by mid-century.<sup>11</sup>

 **Climate Impact:**

The consequences of climate change on social and economic aspects, ecosystems, and species. Economic, social and ecosystem goods and services are also affected. These impacts may be adverse or beneficial. They may be seen as consequences of climate change.

 **Resilience:**


The ability of human and natural systems to face a dangerous phenomenon or disturbance and to respond or reorganize such that they maintain their functionality, identity and structure, as well as conserving their capacity for adaptation, learning and transformation.

 **Biodiversity:**

The diversity and variability of living organisms within each species, among species and within ecosystems.

 **Ecosystem:**


An ecosystem is a unit made up of living organisms and non-living components, and the interactions between them. A forest is an example of an ecosystem.

 **Ecosystem services:**

The processes or functions provided by ecosystems that benefit people or societies. Climate regulation is an example of an ecosystem service.

 **Carbon footprint:**

A carbon footprint corresponds to the amount of greenhouse gases (GHG) produced, directly and indirectly, to support a person's lifestyle and activities. Carbon footprints are usually measured in equivalent tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, during a year, and they can be associated with an individual, an organization, a product, or an event, among others.<sup>12</sup>

 **Climate finance:**

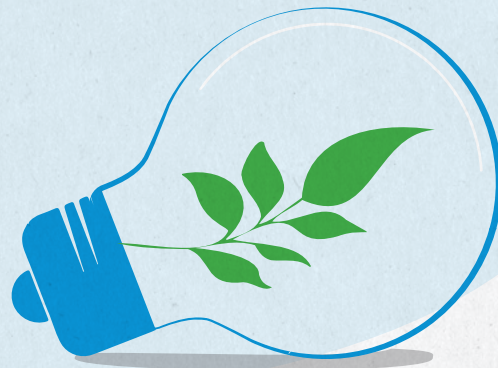
Climate finance refers to local, national, or transnational financing—drawn from public, private, and alternative sources of financing—that seeks to support mitigation and adaptation actions that address climate change. Climate finance is needed for mitigation because large-scale investments are required to significantly reduce emissions. Climate finance is equally important for adaptation, as significant financial resources are needed to adapt to the adverse effects and reduce the impacts of a changing climate.<sup>13</sup>



# CLIMATE ACTION CONCEPTS

Now that you have learned the main definitions, let's move on to the concepts related to climate action at the local, national, and international levels.

The concepts in this section help to guide actions and to establish the objectives or goals that implementing climate action is expected to achieve.



## Mitigation

Mitigation is defined as human actions that seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, for example eliminating the burning of fossil fuels. Mitigation also refers to actions that enhance sinks of greenhouse gases, for example conserving mangrove ecosystems, which are considered sinks as the plants absorb and store carbon in the air.

Mitigation measures may be carried out at different levels:

- **International:** countries may cooperate to mitigate their greenhouse gas emissions.
- **National:** governments may opt for renewable energy to replace fossil fuel-based power systems.
- **Local:** a community may preserve a local forest led by community members.

You may also make changes on a personal level in your consumption habits, for example by using public or alternative transport, such as bicycles.<sup>14</sup>

## Sink

A sink is a reservoir where greenhouse gases are stored. They may be natural or the result of human activity in land and marine ecosystems. Oceans and forests are examples of natural sinks, while sinks resulting from human activity are linked to processes such as reforestation.<sup>15</sup>

## Carbon Market<sup>16</sup>

A trading system in which reduced emissions or captured concentrations of greenhouse gases are traded, exchanged, bought and/or sold. Markets are important because they regulate and balance emissions. There are two types of markets:

### **Regulated carbon market:**

Regulated by mandatory national, regional, or international carbon reduction guidelines.


### **Voluntary carbon market**

Markets that trade in carbon reduction but are outside official and mandatory requirements.

## Cooperation actions

Interactions that focus on inter-country cooperation for mitigation, adaptation, financing, technology transfer and capacity-building measures. Cooperation actions are known as "non-market" actions and are included in article 6 of the Paris Agreement.<sup>17</sup>





## Adaptation

The process of adjusting human systems to the actual or expected climate and its effects. Adaptation aims to moderate damages or take advantage of beneficial opportunities. Natural systems can also adapt, and human intervention may facilitate this adjustment process.

An example of adaptation in human systems is the construction of infrastructure that is resilient to the effects of climate change, while an example in natural systems is the creation of biological corridors that allow species to migrate between areas.

Adaptation can take place at the international, national, or local levels. The private sector must also promote and implement actions that allow it to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, for example by promoting resilient processes that do not depend on fossil fuels.

### Adaptive capacity

The ability of human and natural systems to adapt to potential damage, take advantage of opportunities or address consequences.

### Adaptation limits

The point at which the objectives or needs of a natural or human system cannot be protected from risks through adaptive actions. There are two types of adaptation limit:

#### Hard adaptation limit

when adaptive actions cannot prevent climate risks, meaning impacts and risks become unavoidable.

> For example, irreversible biodiversity losses or projected losses of 90 per cent of tropical corals under a 1.5°C temperature increase scenario.

#### Soft adaptation limit:

when technology and social and economic changes cannot prevent risks through adaptive action, meaning that impacts and risks are unavoidable at that time.

> For example, heat waves affect people living in very large cities or coastal livelihoods, making them unlivable.

### Community-based adaptation:

An approach that places communities at the centre of processes to reduce their vulnerability and increase their ability to adapt to the effects of climate change.

### Ecosystem-based adaptation:

An approach that seeks to protect human systems from the effects of climate change, using ecosystem services. Ecosystem-based adaptation seeks to maintain and increase resilience, and to reduce the vulnerability of ecosystems.

This makes it possible to address other problems that are exacerbated by climate change, such as the loss of biodiversity. Ecosystem-based adaptation also allows natural carbon sinks to be conserved, which means that implementing this type of adaptation helps mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>18</sup>



### Nature-based solution:

Actions that seek to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems by addressing social challenges in an effective and adaptive manner, while simultaneously providing benefits for human well-being and biodiversity.

In nature-based solutions, ecosystems and their services form the basis for responding to the various challenges facing societies. This approach can also include ecosystem-based adaptation.

It is important to conserve the planet's biodiversity because life depends on the relationships between the different levels of biodiversity and ecosystems. Mitigation and adaptive actions also depend on these relationships, so if we do not manage to conserve biodiversity, we will not be implementing effective climate action.<sup>19</sup>



### Reforestation and Afforestation:

Reforestation is the process of planting trees in a forest where the number of trees has been decreasing. Afforestation is when new trees are planted or seeds are sown in an area where there were no trees before, creating a new forest.<sup>20</sup>



### **Green entrepreneurship:**

Green entrepreneurship is the activity of consciously addressing environmental and social problems and developing innovative entrepreneurial ideas that support climate action.<sup>21</sup>

### **Co-Benefits:**

The positive effects that climate action, aimed at one objective, may have on others.

Co-benefits depend on local circumstances and implementation practices<sup>1</sup>. For example, a mitigation action like enhancing the conservation of an ecosystem as a sink also increases the ecosystem's resilience and adaptive capacity and allows human systems to use the ecosystem services.

Similarly, declaring a forest a protected wildlife area to enhance its conservation as a sink also helps the forest to maintain its structure and functionality and to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. This allows communities living close to the forest to increase their resilience and adaptive capacity because of the ecosystem services the forest provides.

### **Climate Ambition:**

Ambition may be associated with a strong desire to achieve a goal; however, climate ambition goes beyond this concept. It refers to the collective commitment of countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and concentrations and to prevent further temperature increases. It also refers to the collective commitment to adaptive measures and the promotion of sustainable development and environmental integrity. Climate ambition considers the national action of countries, as well as any international actions they may take part in. Climate ambition is a key part of articles 4 and 6 of the Paris Agreement.

Climate ambition also refers to actions to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, with special consideration to the vulnerabilities of individuals, groups, and ecosystems.

### **Energy transition:**<sup>22</sup>

Energy transition refers to the global energy sector's shift from fossil-based systems of energy production and consumption — including oil, natural gas, and coal — to renewable energy sources like wind and solar, as well as improved energy storage technologies (lithium-ion batteries).

### **Net zero emission:**<sup>23</sup>

Net zero emission means that all man-made greenhouse gas emissions must be removed from the atmosphere through reduction measures, thus reducing the Earth's net climate balance to zero, after removal via natural and artificial sinks. Thus, humankind would be carbon neutral and global temperature would stabilize.





# CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT CONCEPTS

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## Water scarcity<sup>24</sup>

Water scarcity exists where the demand for water exceeds supply and where available water resources are approaching or have exceeded sustainable limits. Water scarcity can either be physical or economic. Physical water scarcity occurs where water resources are overexploited for different uses and no longer meet the needs of the population. Economic water scarcity generally in areas with sufficient water but access is limited due to poor governance, limited capacity, weak infrastructure, and limited investments.



## Desertification<sup>25</sup>

Desertification is land degradation in arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas resulting from various factors, including climatic variations and human activities. It remains potentially the most threatening ecosystem change impacting the socio-economic conditions of millions of people living in drylands, which account for a significant proportion of the Earth's land.



## Heat islands<sup>26</sup>

Heat islands are urbanized areas that experience higher temperatures than outlying areas. Structures such as buildings, roads, and other infrastructure absorb and re-emit the sun's heat more than natural landscapes such as forests and water bodies. Urban areas, where these structures are highly concentrated and greenery is limited, become "islands" of higher temperatures relative to outlying areas. Daytime temperatures in urban areas are about 1–7°F higher than temperatures in outlying areas and night-time temperatures are about 2–5°F higher.



## Acid rain<sup>27</sup>

Acid rain, or acid deposition, is a broad term that includes any form of precipitation with acidic components, such as sulfuric or nitric acid that fall to the ground from the atmosphere in wet or dry forms. This can include rain, snow, fog, hail or even dust that is acidic. Acid rain results when sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) are emitted into the atmosphere and transported by wind and air currents. The SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> react with water, oxygen, and other chemicals to form sulfuric and nitric acids. These then mix with water and other materials before falling to the ground. While a small portion of the SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> that cause acid rain is from natural sources such as volcanoes, most of it comes from the burning of fossil fuels. The major sources of SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> in the atmosphere are:

- › Burning of fossil fuels to generate electricity. Two thirds of SO<sub>2</sub> and one fourth of NO<sub>x</sub> in the atmosphere come from electric power generators.
- › Vehicles and heavy equipment.



## Extreme weather event<sup>28</sup>

An extreme event is a time and place in which weather, climate, or environmental conditions—such as temperature, precipitation, drought, or flooding—rank above a threshold value near the upper or lower ends of the range of historical measurements. Climate change due to global warming has made many extreme events more likely, more intense, longer lasting, or larger in scale than they would have been without it.





## Drought<sup>29</sup>

Drought is defined as an extended period - a season, a year, or several years - of deficient rainfall relative to the statistical multi-year average for a region.



## Climate Risk<sup>30</sup>

The potential for adverse consequences of that endanger something of value. The risks depend on:

- › Vulnerability: predisposition to be adversely affected. Vulnerability is determined by sensitivity to damage and the lack of capacity to respond and adapt.
- › Exposure: condition in which the system is exposed to the climatic phenomenon or trend.
- › Hazard: a natural or human-induced event that may cause adverse effects on systems.



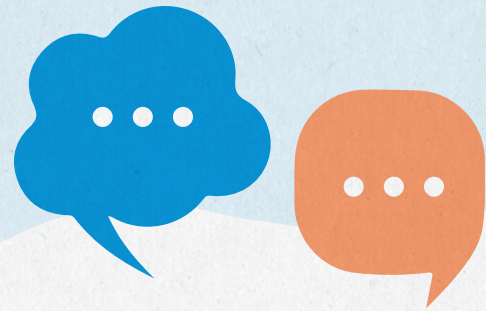
## Loss and damage

The adverse effects of climate variability and climate change that people have not managed to cope with or adapt to. Loss and damage may be economic or non-economic. Non-economic loss and damage relates to impacts of climate change that are hard to quantify, but which influence the degree of vulnerability of human systems (such as loss of traditional ways of living, cultural heritage, loss of life and human health, etc.).

There are moves to ensure that in the future, loss and damage suffered by other species and ecosystems in general will also be considered.

# ESSENTIAL APPROACHES AND CONCEPTS FOR CLIMATE GOVERNANCE

This section contains the essential approaches and concepts we need to understand to engage with climate governance. It also presents the concepts needed to ensure inclusive and transparent climate governance, where all groups and individuals can participate and contribute.



## Climate governance:<sup>31</sup>

Voluntary mechanisms and measures aimed at directing social systems towards preventing, mitigating or adapting to the risks of climate change. Climate governance also enables social actors to participate in the different decision-making processes and the implementation of climate actions.

Climate governance should be seen as a “multi-level” process that includes the following levels:

- **Local:** communities
- **National:** countries
- **International:** a region or involving multiple countries

Climate change affects different sectors of society in different ways, so it is important that each sector is represented in the decision-making spaces at these levels.

## Local knowledge:

The knowledge and skills developed by people and populations in a specific place. This type of knowledge forms the basis of decision-making on day-to-day or long-term issues, as well as informing decisions about local governance.

For example, there are gaps in climate data at the local level because of the complexity or lack of resources to generate them. People in a community represent a valuable source of this knowledge: they

can identify changes in the climate because they have lived in that specific community for a long time and have managed to create techniques and solutions to adapt to climate change based on their experience and knowledge of the territory.<sup>32</sup>

## Just transition:<sup>33</sup>

A set of principles, processes and practices that develop the economic and political power to move from an extractive economy to a regenerative one. This means an integrated and zero-waste approach production and consumption cycle, based on the principle that a healthy economy and a clean environment can and must coexist.

The transition itself must be fair and equitable; it must repair past damage and create new power relationships for the future. The process for achieving this vision should be fair and should not cost workers or community residents their health, environment, jobs or economic assets. It must also ensure that those who might be affected are considered by decision makers and participate in developing solutions.

## Sustainable Development:

Development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development seeks a balance between social, economic and environmental issues.



### **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:**

Known as the 2030 Agenda, this is a universal call for action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of all people throughout the world. In 2015, all United Nations countries approved the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that make up the 2030 Agenda. It also includes an action plan to implement the goals within 15 years.

Goal 13 addresses climate action and was created to prompt urgent action on climate change and its adverse effects. It includes targets related to adaptation, resilience, empowerment for climate action and vulnerabilities.

### **Transparency:**

An effective response to climate change requires reliable, transparent, and comprehensive information on greenhouse gas emissions, the climate actions underway and support or cooperation between countries.

Climate transparency allows us to monitor the actions that a country takes.

### **Climate Justice:** <sup>34</sup>

Links human rights and development in order to achieve a people-centred approach, protecting the rights of those who are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The concept also proposes that the burdens, impacts and benefits of climate change be shared in an equitable and fair manner. Climate justice responds to science and recognizes the need for an equitable distribution of the world's resources.

### **Intergenerational equity:**

Equity between generations that recognizes that the effects of past and current emissions, vulnerabilities and policies impose costs and benefits on people in the future and across generations.

The present generations have obligations towards future generations, so they must ensure sound management of resources and that these conditions and elements can satisfy the next generation.

### **Intragenerational equity:**

Justice within people of the same generation; in relation to sustainable development, it refers to the principle of reducing inequalities between people, especially through poverty reduction.

### **Child-sensitive Climate Policy:** <sup>35</sup>

Policy that insures adaptation, mitigation and other areas of climate action guarantee the protection and enjoyment of children's rights, paying special attention to their specific risks and vulnerabilities.

Child-sensitive policies also involve children in the process of their formulation, implementation and monitoring. Mechanisms need to be created to enable children to participate in each country's climate action plans.

### **Gender Perspective:**

Observing, analysing and promoting transformations to tackle inequalities and inequities in the condition, construction of roles, and position of women and men in society.

Climate action must consider gender-based inequalities, which have social and economic consequences, as well as political and cultural implications for people and their responses to climate change. These inequalities lead to disproportionate suffering from the effects of climate change. This makes it important to integrate the gender component into climate action and to ensure the inclusion of different realities and vulnerabilities.

### **Environmental democracy:** <sup>36</sup>

The participation of social actors is important and needed to guarantee that interests in environmental decisions are considered from an adequate and equitable approach.

Environmental democracy encompasses the rights of access to environmental information, environmental justice, and participation in environmental decision-making spaces. The Environmental Democracy Index monitors the progress of countries in establishing regulations to promote transparency, access to justice and citizen participation in environmental decision-making.


### **Multilateralism:** <sup>37</sup>

This concept is hard to define because there is no single definition. In the context of climate action, multilateralism is defined as the process of dialogue or diplomatic interaction among three or more countries (or other actors) to create policies, make decisions or take joint action in line with certain principles, values and standards of climate action.




**Globalisation:**

The process of increasing integration of economies, societies and cultures, worldwide, as a result of advances in communications, technologies, and transport.

**Youth engagement:**

The rights-based inclusion of adolescents and youth in areas that affect their lives and their communities including dialogue, decisions, mechanisms, processes, events, campaigns, actions and programmes – across all stages from identification, analysis and design to implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

**Business as usual:**

Business as usual (BAU) projections assume that operating practices and policies remain as they are at present. Although baseline scenarios could incorporate some specific features of BAU scenarios (e.g., a ban on a specific technology), BAU scenarios imply that no practices or policies other than the current ones are in place.





# HUMAN RIGHTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate action is closely related to human rights, as climate change directly impacts on our well-being and human dignity. This section explains the importance of protecting and guaranteeing human rights; the rights of children, adolescents, and young people; the rights of access to information; and indigenous peoples' right to prior and informed consultation on issues related to climate change. As a young person, you can promote these approaches and make sure your country always considers them in its climate action plans.



## Human right-based approach:<sup>38</sup>

The application of internationally established human rights standards to development-related policies and practices. The approach is based on the observation that sustainable human development depends on and contributes to the realization of human rights. Its fundamental principles are universality, accountability, and participation. It aims to promote and protect human rights and to eliminate existing inequalities, discrimination and unfair distribution.

The human rights approach to climate change considers the ways and levels at which the effects of climate change can impact people, limiting economic and social progress. It also analyses climate actions in terms of their potential human rights impact. Similarly, it considers aspects such as poverty reduction, the strengthening of human rights and the improvement of health and well-being as actions that help to reduce inequalities and vulnerabilities in the face of climate change.

If climate change mitigation and adaptive actions do not integrate a human rights approach, these rights may be affected.

## Children's rights:<sup>39</sup>

Climate action must be designed to protect and guarantee the rights of children, as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Childhood is a unique stage of physiological and emotional development, meaning that exposure to risks has potential lifelong consequences.

The most vulnerable children are those located in the geographic areas most exposed to climate change and which face the greatest social and economic risks. The effects of climate change exacerbate the risks and inequalities experienced by children and threaten their ability to cope with adverse scenarios. This may subsequently mean that children's rights are not guaranteed.

Mechanisms should be promoted that in official spaces – at the country level or international level, such as in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – children's rights are considered one of the basic approaches to global climate action.



### Right to participate: Access to rights include:<sup>40</sup>

- The right to information on climate change,
- The right to participate in decisions on climate change,
- The right to justice in matters related to climate change.

It is important to guarantee access rights within the framework of climate governance to ensure the genuine and effective integration of individuals, groups or communities into processes or decisions related to climate actions. This may be at the local, national, or international levels. Access rights and climate governance are part of Environmental Democracy.

### Participation rights and climate governance:

The right of citizens to participate directly or indirectly in the decisions made on different issues in the country. It is the means by which citizens and their organizations are able to express their free will on issues that may affect them or to which they are connected.

### Right of access to justice:<sup>41</sup>

The opportunity of every person to receive a response to their legal needs and to have the means to resolve a dispute or protect their rights. Without access to justice, people cannot make their voices heard, exercise their rights, challenge discrimination, or hold decision makers to account.

### Right to information:

A person's right to ask for and receive information from public institutions and entities, unless it is classified as a state secret or access is restricted by the constitution and/or by law.

The right of access to information is fundamental for the full development of a democratic and transparent society and is vital for holding authorities to account.

### Indigenous people:

Indigenous peoples are the most affected by the adverse effects of climate change because of their connection to ecosystems and their services, and their close relationship with nature. Indigenous peoples are essential to increasing the response capacity of ecosystems to the adverse effects of climate change. They also interpret and react to these effects by using traditional knowledge and other techniques to generate solutions.<sup>42</sup>

Climate actions must also consider indigenous peoples' rights, as set out in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous peoples are considered one of the most vulnerable groups to climate change because they live in conditions of socioeconomic and political fragility, which will be exacerbated by the effects of changing climate. They have based their economies on sustainable practices and have essential knowledge from their long history of adapting to highly variable and changing social and ecological conditions.

Indigenous peoples have the right to prior consultation on the use of resources in their territories. Indigenous consultation on climate change issues should consider the vulnerability of indigenous peoples but integrate the capacity to respond and the importance for ecosystem resilience in indigenous territories<sup>29</sup>. In the context of the UNFCCC, the Local Communities, and Indigenous Peoples Platform<sup>30</sup> (LCIPP) was created to:<sup>43</sup>

- preserve and strengthen indigenous knowledge systems,
- increase the participation of local communities and indigenous peoples in the Convention process,
- integrate their considerations into climate change and climate action policies.



# BE INSPIRED!

## Youth participation experiences

### Climate Activist and Expert with Disabilities

My name is Omar Hamadin, director of climatology at Jordan meteorology directorate/Ministry of Transport. I worked hard to overcome obstacles and hardships to get into the world of meteorology, gaining professional and educational skills to handle such an interesting and challenging career. My degree in meteorology, applied statistics, business administration and Msc in Environment Technology and Climate Change, empowered me for my current position.

#### Challenges:

- In spite of a physical challenge due to contracting polio at a very early age, I always believed that every cloud has a silver lining. I remember in vivid detail one day when I climbed an Olive tree and spent hours looking for the source of the icy, howling, wind sounds. As a child, weather fascinated me, I read a lot about forecasting and always had a strong feeling toward the details of the sky.
- The challenges lying ahead for the world in terms of this fascinating science are enormous. As I have already dealt with significant physical challenges, I have learned to turn challenges into "Lemons", and I strongly believe that when life hands you Lemons, make lemonade.

#### Outcomes:

- In 2014, I took part in the workshop held in Nairobi, Kenya, on Climate and Health Data Analysis for Early Warning System funded by WHO.
- I was nominated by the regional WHO office to join the Early Warning System Joint project on Monitoring and Assessing the Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health for Jordan. The project came out with impressive findings that climate parameters have direct and indirect effect on human health.
- Recently, I have been honored to participate in the preparation of a report for the Fourth national communication on Climate change for Jordan that was delivered to the UNFCCC. My participation was on climate projection and dynamic downscaling for Jordan.





## Entrepreneurial Participation: Bio Treasure and Solutions for Sustainable Societies (Omer Badokhon, Yemen)

For his commitment to climate and environmental protection, Omer was awarded the Young Champion of the Earth prize in 2017. Omer is a young chemical engineer from Yemen, where he is working on his project called Bio Treasure. Bio Treasure aims to turn organic waste into biogas. By providing an alternative to burning wood, the startup can help reduce emissions while solving waste management issues in the rural areas of Yemen. Based on his ideas, Omer was noticed by his local government, who supported his project. Through his commitment to environmental protection and integrated development, Omer's story gained worldwide attention and showed how entrepreneurial participation of young people can advance climate action.



### Action taken

- Omer attended the YLP3 training in 2017 where he gained knowledge on project development and business planning.
- He developed a prototype of his product and registered it as a startup called Bio Treasure.
- Through the UN Environment Programme's Young Champion of the Earth Award, Omer was able to participate in further entrepreneurship training in Germany and Nairobi.
- Omer also participated in the Arab Entrepreneurship Rally 2019 in Bahrain and his project was selected as the best start-up idea from Yemen.

### Challenges

- Delays in project activities due to conflict and conditions in Yemen.
- Significant financial set-backs due to money transfer blockages in Yemen.
- Difficulties with online communication and calls via the internet due to the low speed of the internet.
- The lack of foreign embassies in Yemen as a result of the conflict, making travel difficult and thus causes marketing and external funding barriers.
- The absence of an entrepreneurship echo system in Yemen (e.g. no start-up capital from the private sector or international organizations).

### Outcomes

- A device for producing biogas from organic waste.
- Omer also founded an NGO (Solutions for Sustainable Societies) that supports communities in the sustainable use of their local resources and helps young entrepreneurs.
- Omer has built a network of investors to support participants in training programmes – helping more young people to realise their ideas.



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