

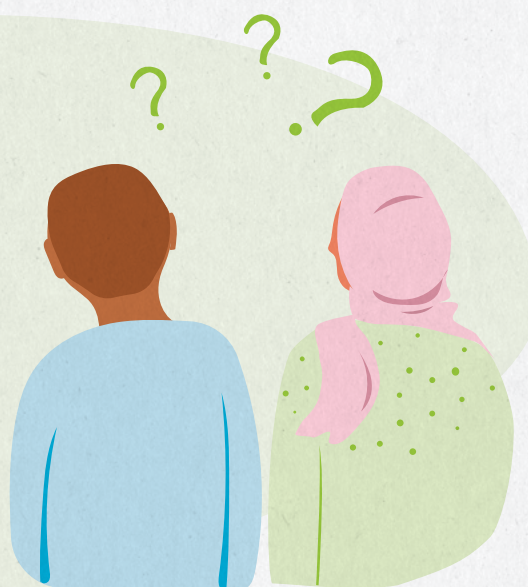


Toolkit for Young Climate Activists
in the Middle East and North Africa Region/Arab States Region

VOLUME IV :THE PARIS AGREEMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

PREFACE

“We, as young people, are agents of change in different sections of society. We are not being left behind in climate action: our voices are being increasingly heard and we are demanding the right to participate fully. In fact, our participation is a right that should be central to the formulation of public policy.”



The Toolkit for Young Climate Activists in the Middle East and North Africa 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.

The toolkit was originally developed by young people in Latin America and The Caribbean and has been updated and revised for the MENA region based on feedback from young people in this region.

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

The booklets are designed so you can read them and deepen your knowledge on each of the topics. You can use them to build and 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.

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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

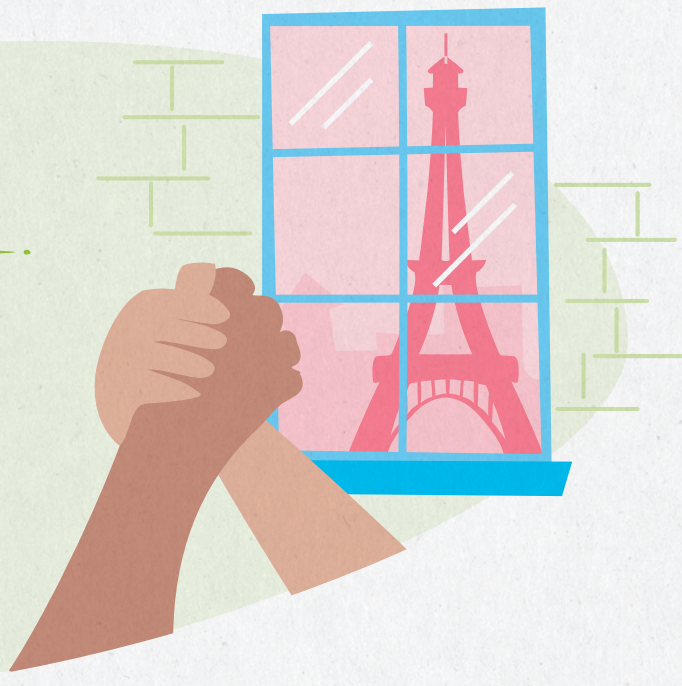
CMA	Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement
COP	Conference of the Parties
MGCY	United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WIM	Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage
YOUNGO	Constituency of Youth NGOs





INTRODUCTION

The Paris Agreement was adopted in 2015 in Paris, France and has changed the course of global climate action. It has united nations behind the common cause of undertaking ambitious actions to tackle climate change.



The Agreement has been signed by 195 countries and was developed during the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), also called the Conference of the Parties (COP).

Countries that participate in the Agreement or the UNFCCC are called Parties.

The Agreement is a key instrument for meeting the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs.

The Agreement calls for countries to take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to help societies and ecosystems adapt better to climate change. Participation is voluntary and countries are not penalized if they do not meet their commitments. Civil society therefore plays a very important role in monitoring the implementation of the Agreement at the national and local levels.

There are two main bodies that ensure that the Agreement is applied and its terms are met:



The Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA), which represents the countries that signed the Agreement, acts as the supreme body overseeing the Agreement's implementation and takes the decisions necessary to promote its effective implementation.



The Agreement Secretariat, which is the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; it organizes the sessions of the annual conferences, receives reports from the countries and provides them with assistance.



THIS TIMELINE LISTS THE MILESTONES THAT LED TO THE SIGNING OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT:

1992



Creation Of The United Nations Framework Convention on climate change based on the Earth Summit.

1997

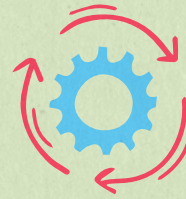


COP3: countries adopt the Kyoto Protocol aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

2007



COP13: countries agree to work on a new text to replace the Kyoto Protocol.



2005

The Kyoto Protocol comes into force.

2009



COP15: the targets set are not met; countries only agree to limit the global temperature increase to 2°C but do not set targets to meet by 2050. Countries move the new agreements to 2015.



2010

COP16: countries adopt the Cancun Agreements. The creation of the Green Climate Fund of the Technology Mechanism is noteworthy. Industrialized countries' mitigation actions and targets are recognized. Countries introduce adaptation as an important component of climate action.

2014



COP20: countries adopt the Lima Call for Climate Action, which contains the key elements for the Paris Agreement. The goal of pursuing climate ambition is consolidated. Launch of the "intended nationally determined contributions".



2013

COP19: countries propose the warsaw International Mechanism as a mechanism to address climate change loss and damage.

2015



United Nations Summit: adoption of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2015



COP21: countries adopt the Paris Agreement.¹



WHY IS THE PARIS AGREEMENT IMPORTANT?

Because of its ambition and goals


- › It sets ambitious targets for climate action in countries.
- › It promotes commitments to limit this century's average global temperature increase to no more than 2°C, and pursues additional efforts to limit the increase to only 1.5°C.
- › It seeks to increase country level capacity for adaptation to climate change.
- › It lays the foundation for a shift to low-emission, climate-resilient development models.
- › It aims to achieve a balance between greenhouse gas emissions and removals.

Because of its content

- › It promotes climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, which include strengthening resilience, reducing vulnerability, and increasing and conserving natural areas that have the capacity to absorb greenhouse gases.
- › It promotes innovation and technology transfer to improve resilience and provide an effective response to the impacts of climate change in the medium and long term.
- › It addresses the damages and losses associated with the adverse effects of climate change, which occur when adaptation is no longer possible, and it recognizes the importance of supporting countries suffering from such effects.
- › It establishes mechanisms for voluntary cooperation among countries by facilitating the implementation of nationally determined contributions (NDCs).

Attention!

A "balance" between emissions and removals is not enough; we need to absorb much more than we emit to compensate for all the years that we have been emitting rather than absorbing.




Mitigation: The reduction of sources of greenhouse gas emissions or the increase in sinks (natural areas that absorb greenhouse gas emissions).

Adaptation: The process of adjusting natural or human systems to the actual or expected climate or its effects in order to moderate adverse effects or benefit from opportunities.

NDCs: Each country's commitments to address climate change at the national level, taking into account its priorities and capacities.

Because it calls for action, collaboration and accountability

- › **Action:** All measures adopted should be reflected in NDCs, which are the actions that each country decides to take to address climate change. The contributions should be highly ambitious, so that the objectives of the Agreement are met, and adapted to the reality of each country, taking into account its priorities and capacities.
- › **Collaboration:** It proposes that developed countries support developing countries with its implementation through measures such as capacity-building and funding for implementing actions.
- › **Accountability:** It establishes a transparency framework that offers a clear vision of climate action in each country, the progress made and the support given or received by the different countries. This transparency framework has flexibility to take into account the capacities of developing nations.



The Agreement calls for countries to take ambitious and progressive action and enables a collaborative approach to climate action. In addition, it takes special account of the capacities of developing nations.

Because of its relationship to human rights

- › Implementing the Paris Agreement is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and making progress towards the 2030 Agenda. The Agreement recognizes the importance of protecting and respecting human rights in all climate actions. Those rights are, principally: the right to health, development, gender equality, the empowerment of women and intergenerational equity, as well as the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, people with disabilities, people in vulnerable situations and children.

Because of the importance of citizen participation

- › The Agreement sets ambitious goals, but actions by countries are voluntary. It is extremely important that civil society, including young people and adolescents, exercises its right to participate and be involved in defining national plans and climate targets, and demands that those targets be met.
- › It is important to create different mechanisms to integrate social actors. Among the most important are YOUNGO (Youth+NGO), which officially represents children and young people in the UNFCCC, and the United Nations Major Group on Children and Youth (MGCY). There are also many other organizations and networks that were founded by and for young people so that they can participate and be involved in climate decisions. We advise you to find out what organizations and networks exist in your country.²



ARTICLES OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT

1

For the purpose of the Agreement, the definitions contained in Article 1 of the CMNUCC apply. In addition:

- Convention: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
- Conference of the Parties: Conference of the Parties to the Convention
- Parties: countries that participate in the Agreement (in this document, we will call the parties "countries").

2

The Agreement aims to strengthen countries' response to climate change in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Its objectives are:

1. to limit the global temperature rise this century to 2°C and enhance efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C.
2. to increase countries' ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change
3. to achieve low-carbon economic development.

The Agreement will be implemented to reflect equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of different national circumstances.

3

Countries should strive and be ambitious with their NDCs to comply with the Agreement. In addition, the needs of developing nations should be taken into account.

4

To fulfil the objective of the Agreement, countries should aim to reach peaking of emissions and then rapidly reduce them. The aim is to achieve a balance between greenhouse gas emissions and the capacity to absorb those emissions. In addition, each country must communicate its intended NDCs, which should include the actions it intends to take to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

NDCs should progressively increase in ambition, reflecting countries' shared responsibilities while taking into account their differences and their capacities.

Developing nations will receive support to help them achieve this. A reduction in greenhouse gas emissions may be considered a secondary mitigation benefit resulting from these adaptation measures.

5

Countries should conserve and enhance sinks and reservoirs (i.e. natural areas that absorb greenhouse gas emissions). Countries may also introduce incentives to reduce forest degradation, build sustainable management and increase forest cover. Alternative approaches are proposed, which combine mitigation and adaptation for integrated forest management.

6

This article establishes two intercountry cooperation mechanisms for the implementation of NDCs. Such cooperation is voluntary, and is governed by the principle of promoting sustainable development, ensuring environmental integrity and transparency, and avoiding the double counting of countries' actions. The first mechanism is the exchange or transfer of greenhouse gas emission reductions between countries. The second mechanism focuses on intercountry cooperation for mitigation, adaptation, financing, technology transfer and capacity-building. The technical rules that will govern the mechanisms of this article are currently being negotiated.

Article 6

is the most complex article of the Paris Agreement to understand, and the one that generates the most conflict during negotiations. The most important thing you need to know about this article is that it is the driving force behind the Paris Agreement and sets out the mechanisms for developing climate action through voluntary international cooperation with integrated, holistic and balanced approaches.

7

Each country must increase its capacity to carry out adaptation processes, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change, while contributing to sustainable development. Adaptation is a challenge that involves all people at all levels of governance. Adaptation processes should be transparent, participatory, inclusive and gender-sensitive. In addition, they should be based on scientific information and local and traditional knowledge, as well as the knowledge of indigenous peoples. Adaptation aims to protect people, livelihoods and ecosystems. Each country can adopt measures such as formulating or improving plans, programmes and policies.

Countries should strengthen cooperation and support to enhance adaptation processes, particularly for developing nations, and especially the most vulnerable. United Nations specialized agencies should support country efforts to implement such processes.

8

It is important to prevent, reduce and address the loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change. Countries could strengthen understanding, actions and support in a cooperative and facilitative manner through the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM).

9

Developed countries should provide financial resources to developing countries to assist them in implementing mitigation and adaptation actions. Other countries are encouraged to provide support on a voluntary basis. Balance should be maintained in financing for adaptation and mitigation measures, taking into account the priorities of each country. The needs and constraints of developing nations should also be considered, especially those of the most vulnerable. In addition, developed countries should submit information on the resources provided and developing countries will report on their progress. This information will be taken into account in the "global stocktake".

10

Countries should strengthen cooperation in developing and transferring technology to improve climate change resilience and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This will require boosting collaboration, research and development; facilitating access to technology (particularly for developing nations); and accelerating innovation for an effective and long-term response to climate change.

11

Countries will need to secure financial resources to promote collaborative research approaches. This article establishes a Technology Mechanism to promote and facilitate the strengthening of technology development and transfer.

The Agreement should enhance the capacity and capabilities of developing nations, especially the most vulnerable, for effective climate action. To do this, it should facilitate technological development, access to climate finance and the relevant aspects of education and public awareness. Capacity-building should be participatory, cross-cutting and gender-sensitive. All countries should cooperate to improve the capacity of developing nations. A developed country should report when it provides support to developing countries through regional, bilateral or multilateral approaches. The country in receipt of support should report on the assistance received and its capacity-building process.

12

Countries should cooperate to improve education, training, public awareness and participation, and access to information on climate change.

13

This article establishes the transparency framework to provide a clear picture of the measures taken to address climate change, and offers flexibility in considering the capacities of developing countries. In addition, developing nations will receive support to build capacity for implementing transparency. The article sets out the reports that each country should submit. This information is reviewed by a group of experts that highlights the points that each country needs to improve, and at the same time ensures transparency. Developed countries are evaluated by the support they provide to other countries.

14

A global stocktake will be conducted periodically to determine the collective progress towards the purpose and objectives of this Agreement. Mitigation, adaptation, means of implementation and support generated will be considered, in the light of equity and based on the best available scientific information. The global stocktake also informs countries where their actions could be improved.



15

An expert committee will facilitate the implementation and enforcement of the Agreement. The committee of experts will pay attention to the capacities and circumstances of the countries.

16

The COP is the central decision-making meeting of the countries and will serve as the supreme body of the countries that have signed the Agreement. Countries that are parties to the Convention but not to the Agreement may participate as observers in the meetings of the COP, as may countries that have withdrawn from the Agreement. The agencies of the United Nations or its Member States and the International Atomic Energy Agency may be observers. National or international, governmental or non-governmental organizations that have jurisdiction in the matters covered by the Agreement and which inform the Secretariat of their wish to be represented may also be observers, unless there is opposition.

17

This article establishes the Secretariat of the Convention as the secretariat of the Agreement, which will perform any functions assigned by the COP.

18-19

These articles establish two bodies to support the Agreement: the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation of the Convention; the COP specifies their functions. Observer countries to the Agreement may participate in the deliberations of the supporting bodies.³

20-24

These articles deal with the procedures for the Agreement's entry into force. In addition, they indicate that articles of the Convention may be applied to the Agreement by making the respective necessary changes.

25

Each country has one vote in the Agreement.

26

The Secretary-General of the United Nations is the body that holds the Agreement.

27

The Agreement applies as a whole, without the possibility of excluding any of its articles.

28

Countries may withdraw from the Agreement after three years from its entry into force; the waiver must be submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. A country that withdraws from the Convention will be withdrawing from the Agreement. The waiver will take effect one year after notification or the date indicated in the notification.

The Agreement is available in English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, French and Arabic.



BE INSPIRED!

Youth participation experiences at the regional and international levels

The Arab Youth Council for Climate Change (AYCCC)

The AYCCC is an initiative by the Arab Youth Center in cooperation with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCAE), the Office of the UAE's Special Envoy for Climate Change, and private sector partners under the umbrella of the Arab League. The Council aims to achieve an increase in the interaction of Arab youth on environmental issues, support youth climate action, and engage young Arabs in developing innovative and sustainable solutions to the climate change challenge.

Actions taken:

- Every two years, the council hosts up to fifteen young Arabs who are working on climate change portfolios in the government and private sectors, and entrepreneurs.
- Encouraged investment in enterprises and startups operating in the field.
- Submitted strategic recommendations for decision-makers in the Arab world.

Challenges:

- The absence of an integrated Arab model for climate action.
- Lack of a regional platform that enhances Arab youth interaction with environmental issues, and contributes to creating opinion leaders and young innovators in climate action.

Outcomes:

- Represented Arab youth in local and international forums and voice their opinions and views.
- Equipped Arab youth with the necessary skills to raise awareness and keep up with climate challenges.
- Supported Arab countries in achieving their climate action goals.
- Suggested innovative green solutions for all segments of society in the public and private sectors.



Participation in Pre-COP26 in Milan as youth delegates for Lebanon (Elsy Milan and Hussein Ali Ghandour)

Elsy Milan and Hussein Ali Ghandour represented Lebanon as youth delegates at the Pre-COP26 in Milan in September 2021. Elsy was already committed to environmental protection as a Master's student in chemical engineering, by co-founding the student initiative: Sustainable Engineering and Lifestyle. Hussein is an environmental activist working with other young people and local communities on environmental and climate issues affecting Lebanon.

Action taken

- At the Youth4Climate event, different topics were discussed in working groups. Elsy co-facilitated the unit on financial flows for sustainable recovery.
- Hussein participated in the Climate Conscious Society, which worked on the final draft of the Youth4Climate manifesto. He also gave a speech during a local climate strike in Milan with tens of thousands of strikers.
- The youth delegates had the opportunity to ask questions and express their opinions on the presentations by country ministers on key NDCs.

Challenges

- During the preparation for the conference, it was difficult to reach Lebanon's officials as climate change did not seem to be high on the government's agenda.
- "To be actually heard not just listened to as a mere speaker was a challenge," stated Elsy, who wanted to use the Pre-COP26 to inform influential people about the situation in Lebanon and also to give women a voice.
- It was also a challenge for Middle Eastern countries to stand out and to have fruitful participation in climate governance.
- Hussein explained that the main challenges during Pre-COP26 were having clear instructions and guidance on his role in contributing to the Youth4Climate manifesto text and not having total freedom alongside other delegates to change the text however they wanted.

Outcomes

- The youth delegates issued a Youth4Climate manifesto, which was translated into six languages, including Arabic.
- Their demands were forwarded to the COP26.
- As the most important outcome of his participation in Pre-COP26, Hussein sees the connection and collaboration with other young climate activists from around the world and the opportunity to exchange ideas and perspectives.
- On a personal level, Elsy joined YOUNGO (the youth constituency of the UNFCCC) and returned to her research lab with bigger hopes, higher aspirations, and the will to fight for a better future.





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2. United Nations, Adoption of the Paris Agreement, Resolution of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, FCCC/CP/2015/L.9, United Nations, Paris, 12 December 2015, <<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/l09r01.pdf>>, accessed 13 April 2020.
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