

SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH STATEMENT TO COP27

We, the youth of South Africa, encouraged by the mandate of the South African constitution to ensure the protection and conservation of the environment, balanced with sustainable development and the equitable distribution of natural resources, recognise the urgent need for accelerated climate action to build a self-actualized, climate-resilient, and prosperous society. This statement reflects the above mandate by highlighting the voices of the youth from across the country who see the future of a cleaner, greener South Africa and world.

In taking climate action, we stress the obligation to uphold human rights with special emphasis on promoting intersectional and inclusive climate action. We applaud South Africa's commitment to realising the goals set out in the Paris Agreement and are aware of the pivotal role the South African government has and continues to play within this international forum, especially regarding the upcoming UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP27) held on the African continent. We call for climate justice and equity to underpin all actions toward addressing the climate crisis, catered towards the issues faced by the global South.

Building on the successful launch of the South African Youth Climate Action Plan (SA YCAP), we believe its underpinning principles should be taken up on an international platform as well. These principles include Intersectionality, Advocacy and Activism for Climate Action, Good Governance, Systemic Transformation, and Environmental Sustainability.

Considering the upcoming negotiations taking place in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, we would like to put forward the following recommendations that align with the goals set out for COP27:

1. Adaptation and Resilience

Intersectionality and Equity

We recognise and appreciate all national and international efforts made to emphasise and mainstream the relationship between gender and climate change as these are cross-cutting issues that need to be addressed. Furthermore, we reaffirm the Paris Agreement's "common but differentiated responsibility" values regarding equitable action to climate change based on various intersectional and socioeconomic factors.

- We support the meaningful participation of women in climate policy-making and inclusive mechanisms for implementing and monitoring the Paris Agreement.
- We affirm the importance of equity in both global and local climate action. Therefore, we call for equitable sharing of resources such as finances, knowledge, and technology to ensure that under-resourced countries are also able to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.
- We urge funding organisations and donors to take into account the gender-specific impacts of climate change, particularly in areas related to water, food security, agriculture,

energy, health, disaster management, and conflict when developing and introducing climate change adaptation technologies.

- We urge for the acknowledgment of the rights of indigenous peoples within their respective areas and how different solutions can be created with them regarding adaptation to the impacts of climate change.
- We acknowledge the geographical disparities that exist globally with regard to the impacts of climate change, therefore ensuring that appropriate approaches are taken to ensure each community, city, and country has the necessary systems in place to mitigate and adapt to the consequences brought on by their geographical location.

Stakeholder Participation

We applaud the South African government on their recent strides in increasing youth participation in international Climate Change meetings by including and adopting youth delegates to their delegation to attend COP Conferences. We support the strengthening of the voice of the youth from global South countries at international decision-making tables and stress the need for the involvement of women, youth, and those from marginalised communities in the entirety of the decision-making processes of international policies and frameworks.

- We urge for transparency and accountability from the international community within relevant platforms to address corruption, publicise and actively work towards equitable climate action, and incentivise good governance and the shift towards the green economy.
- We call for transparency from local and national governments concerning the allocation and financing of tenders, relating to public interest in the context of the just transition.
- We implore the international community to take on a zero-tolerance policy concerning the breaking of environmental laws from relevant stakeholders.

Capacity Building

Guided by Article 12 of the Paris Agreement, Article 6 of the UNFCCC, and the concluding Doha Work Programme on Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE), we call for the inclusion of youth-friendly, accessible mechanisms to create awareness and educate the members of society on the adverse effects of climate change and capacitate them to create solutions to this global crisis. We urge the government to embrace youth-led, youth-focused initiatives that allow for the existence of voices from the global South, particularly from Africa, and support with capacity building and resources to engage communities regarding climate changes and intersecting socio-economic issues.

- We call for the dissemination of accessible texts and effective communication of all relevant UNFCCC documents to make climate-related information more understandable for all, especially in rural and marginalised communities.
- We advocate for an ACE-related Action Plan that ensures the implementation of capacity building and that ACE-related activities are implemented nationally.

- We call for increased implementation of climate change education within the national school's curriculums through the following:
 - a) Qualitative and quantitative climate education be formally integrated into all subject curriculums from basic education to tertiary level,
 - b) Capacity-building educational institutions on greener jobs and opportunities outside of a carbonised society; and
 - c) Regularly tracking environmental and climate literacy rates internationally for better data analyses regarding ACE implementation plans.
- Encourage the use of accessible media and community platforms for disadvantaged groups to gain the necessary skills and education to learn about climate action for their respective areas.
- Affirming and formalising the role of NGOs and other community-based organisations and their contributions made within their communities to allow for access to support systems, including increased financial resources to aid with the implementation of projects and policies.
- Create and promote sustainable entrepreneurship opportunities to further community-based climate action.

Loss and Damage

Deeply concerned by the harms that are experienced by vulnerable communities due to the loss and damage from extreme weather conditions such as extreme droughts, cyclones, and heatwaves, we call for nations to draw their attention towards vulnerable and at risk communities and to provide economic support. We acknowledge the introduction of the Glasgow Dialogue yet implore the international community to further implement practical policies that tackle the economic and non-economic losses and damages that affect vulnerable communities. We reaffirm that climate change has already caused and will increasingly cause loss and damage and that, as temperatures rise, impacts from climate change and weather extremes, as well as slow onset events, will pose an ever-greater social, economic and environmental threat to developing countries bearing the brunt of impacts.

- We urge developed country Parties, who are the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism, UN entities and intergovernmental organisations, and other bilateral and multilateral institutions, including NGOs and private sources, to provide enhanced and additional support for activities addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change.
- Call on the UNFCCC to continue providing support for developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change that may seek or wish to benefit from the technical assistance available from organisations, bodies, networks, and experts under the Santiago Network.
- Operationalization of the Santiago Network must;
 - a) Be guided by the best available science and as appropriate, including traditional, local and indigenous knowledge; and follow a gender-mainstreaming approach,

- b) Be efficient, demand-driven, and responsive to nationally- and locally-led needs, with a focus on the most vulnerable, to complement existing structures and strive to maximise coherence and synergies, while avoiding additional burdens on developing countries in terms of reporting and other obligations,
- Recommending that carbon footprints be calculated and updated promptly to inform decision-making processes to prevent irreparable damage.
- Call for the necessary precautions to be made via policy and local government initiatives to ensure advanced and sustainable food banks are created, equipped, and made accessible amidst the food security being aggravated by the climate crisis and agricultural destabilisation.
- Urging for the use of urban spatial planning, especially in disaster-stricken areas, to better prepare for unlikely weather-related events. This can be done through the following:
 - a) Planned and appropriate relocation supported by the cooperation between governments, private sectors and civic society engagements to make land available for human settlement development.
 - b) The creation and implementation of climate-specific and locally responsive emergency action and disaster management procedures, particularly in disaster-risk and disaster prone areas.
- Calling for recognised relief centres to be better equipped with the tools and resources in preparation for unforeseen natural disasters.
- Encouraging all relevant parties within the international community to work together to deliver on mobilising the necessary finance to protect vulnerable communities through the following:
 - a) Further requesting improved and transparent implementation plans with regards to the fiscal requirements in adapting to weather-related disasters by making resources accessible to disaster-stricken areas; and
 - b) Support vulnerable countries and communities in their efforts to rapidly scale up prevention and preparedness measures to avert, minimise, and address displacement.

2. Mitigation and Technology

In line with international agreements and national policies that set out to raise climate ambition, we stress the need to move towards the use of innovative, atmospheric carbon extractive technologies. This requires significant investment into diverse technologies and mechanisms that aim to capture carbon at the source, as well as processes that limit the development of carbon.

Technological development is crucial in improving the quality and collection of both ecological and climate data for conservation, as well as in allowing crucial sectors such as agriculture to develop more sustainably. Highlighting Article 10 of the Paris Agreement, regarding the Technology Mechanism established under the Convention that served the Agreement, we note the following:

Climate Technology

- We urge for enhanced financing, equitable distribution, and strategic application of conservation and sustainable farming technology.
- Further stress the need for investment in research to better understand and develop Carbon Dioxide Removal and Solar Radiation Management technologies.
- Call for urgent investments into renewable energy technologies that can be made affordable and accessible to fossil-fuel-reliant economies that would otherwise be unable to contain a balanced mix of energy sources.

Mitigation

- Strongly recommend an increase in the carbon tax for companies that are over-emitting greenhouse gases and stress the importance of re-investing the funds collected into community-based climate initiatives that focus on climate mitigation and adaptation.
- We propose the establishment of a public and private sector carbon index, with the associated rating of companies and their products based on their environmental and humanitarian practices and carbon outputs, with incentivised opportunities for those compliant.
- Call for all Parties to end new investments into fossil fuels while raising ambition towards increasing renewable energy investments contentious but the motivation must be to move in this direction

3. Environmental Sustainability

To ensure inclusive climate action is to also prioritise environmental sustainability, specifically under the context of protecting and restoring ecosystems and natural habitats while reducing carbon emissions. We stress the need for the enhanced implementation of biodiversity conservation initiatives designed through collaboration with marginalised groups and communities, supported by strengthened and cross-sectoral policies, and sufficiently funded to allow for effective monitoring and data capturing, processing, and reporting systems.

We champion the recognition of nature-based solutions as an essential means of protecting and restoring ecosystem services while providing the opportunity to utilise local, indigenous knowledge systems and nature-based tools to combat climate change. As such, we suggest an increased, collaborative, and inclusive commitment to the research, finance, and implementation of nature-based solutions.

Water, Biodiversity, and Wildlife

- We express our appreciation for the effective practice of the Blue Economy to monitor the growth of the population of all marine life to stabilise global ocean ecosystems.
- We further urge for stricter laws within the international community on animal poaching, trade, and or ownership of wild and endangered species to prevent wildlife trafficking and related zoonotic diseases.

- We urge for the protection and stabilisation of worldwide formal and informal conservation areas.
- Encourage the financial mobilisation and investment into green solutions of water filtration and water reclamation technologies to enhance service delivery within water-scarce communities around the world.

Agriculture

Furthermore, guided by the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture, we call for increased strides in effective climate action through agriculture which should:

- Promote cost-effective, sustainable farming methods, the use of natural pest management, and further encourage the use of field buffers, large-scale composting, biocontrol, and polyculture,
- Prioritise collaborative stakeholder engagement surrounding agricultural unions, co-operatives and their regulation of farming issues,
- Foster community-owned regenerative agriculture, permaculture, hydroponics, and aquaponics practices,
- Stimulate the transition of natural fertilisers and growth stimulants to reduce genetically modified organisms (GMO) to promote ecological and sustainable farming,
- Promote alternative farming methods such as vertical farming (aeroponics) to stimulate crop cultivation and combat mainland farming,
- Call upon stakeholders to incentivise sustainable soil management through advanced machinery to commercial farmers.

Waste Management

A clear indicator of a sustainable society is how waste is managed. In the decoupling of environmental degradation from economic growth, there is a further need to decouple waste generation as a marker of that growth. These aspirations can only be realised if we create a value and demand for waste that ensures we can:

- Call for a ban on single-use plastic, with a complete phase-out by 2025 in line with the legally-binding plastic agreement established at UNEA 5.2,
- Call for greater collaboration with informal waste pickers, who are responsible for over 90 percent of recycling that occurs in city centres, to provide them with essential entrepreneurial skills to grow their businesses,
- Further, call for collaboration with informal waste pickers to divert all biological waste away from landfills by 2025,
- Highlight, with great urgency, the need for collaboration between researchers, business, and government stakeholders to build biomass power stations that will provide renewable energy in a clean, green, and environmentally-friendly manner,

- Call for amendment, revision, implementation, and monitoring of regulations that target air, water, and land pollution, as well as illegal dumping, to curb the levels of environmentally harmful practices, especially at the industrial and commercial scale,
- Promote for increased investments into waste reclaiming, recycling, and buy-back facilities, especially in rural areas.

4. Systemic Transformation

We champion the need for an equitable, swift, and just energy transition. We further insist on a just transition from highly centralised energy production dependent on fossil fuels, towards decarbonised and decentralised production of clean, renewable energy. A decarbonised, green, and circular economy cultivates the need to create green employment opportunities, while reducing carbon emissions to ensure a resilient and socially equitable economy. Finally, we welcome the announcement of the National Treasury to annually increase the carbon tax to reach up to US\$120 well after 2050 and call for the following:

Just Transition

- We welcome the work of the Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) in developing the Just Transition Framework and further commend its adoption by the cabinet. Furthermore, we call on South Africa and its partners to finalise and release the investment plan for JET-P for release to the public to ensure transparency and accountability in its use.
- We are concerned by the potential privatisation of electricity production and supply. We, therefore, call for clear and ethical regulation between the competition commission, government, and Independent Power Producers to prioritise clean, green, stable and affordable electricity supply to South Africans.
- Reemphasise the need for a national renewable energy expert database to ensure that renewable energy projects are locally managed.
- We are deeply concerned by the lack of sufficient observations and data in the Global South to enable scientists to study trends in climate to make accurate and informed policy decisions. We therefore call for increased investments in building more observation stations in Global South countries to better understand the trends and future impacts of climate change

Transport

- Reemphasise the need for improvements in the safety of public transport in order to encourage a modal shift to public transportation.
- Highlight the need for increasing the fuel efficiency of transport services and implementation of green-powered public transportation.
- We recommend that the fiscal charges and taxes related to the per capita use of transport services be restructured over the longer term so that each mode and sector of transport pays the total costs of their impact on the environment.

- We call on African member states to give priority to regional transport projects over national projects where the former improves both national and regional transport efficiency and reduces transport costs.
- Further, emphasise the need for African member states and Regional Economic Communities to be fully aware of the expected growth in transport demand and of the need to ensure that transport infrastructure capacity should satisfy future transport demand.
- Call for a review of the National Land Transport Strategic Framework to mainstream sustainability, accessibility, and affordability in transport industries whilst also prioritising cleaner fuel alternatives for public transport and freight.

Energy

- Solemnly reaffirm the need for the government to strengthen efforts towards increasing investment for the mobilisation of natural resources such as wind, solar, and hydropower towards a just transitional energy shift.
- Urgently call for the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy to actively transition all new fossil investments.
- We call upon the international community to accelerate the development of technologies and the adoption of policies to transition towards low-emission energy systems, including by rapidly scaling up the deployment of clean power generation and energy efficiency measures.
- We urge for accelerated efforts towards the phasedown of unabated coal power and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, while providing targeted support to the poorest and most vulnerable in line with national circumstances and recognizing the need for support towards a just transition.

Green & Circular Economy

- Cognisant of the important role small-holders have to play in supplying affordable, sustainable, and locally-produced agricultural products to the supply chains, we call for collaborations with small-holders to provide them with essential and green entrepreneurial upskilling to grow their business.
- We call upon the government to codify sustainable manufacturing practices for all manufacturing companies to ensure that there is no destruction of the environment in the duration of the lifecycle of the goods
- Call for stricter regulations that will put pressure on manufacturers to create products that are sustainable and will allow for ease of entry into the circular economy
- Call for a ban on single-use plastic by 2025.

5. Finance

The success of climate action is heavily reliant on equitable access and mobilisation of climate financing. We note with concern that the current provision of climate finance remains grossly insufficient to respond to worsening climate impacts in developing countries. We further stress the importance of predictability and adequacy of finance for adaptation, including the value of the Adaptation Fund in delivering dedicated support for adaptation. Guided by the Extended Work Programme on Long-term finance, we, therefore, call for the following measures to be taken:

- We urge developed countries to urgently reaffirm and meet their climate finance commitments to jointly mobilise US\$ 100 billion per year for developing countries to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement.
- Note with concern the difficulty faced by developing nations in accessing climate finance and further re-emphasise the importance of scaled-up financial resources to take into account the needs of developing country Parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change
- Call for a continued increase in the scale and effectiveness of climate finance from all sources globally, including grants and other highly concessional forms of finance
- Call for the development of indicators to track the progress of climate financing under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation, constituted through the biennial high-level ministerial dialogue on climate finance
- Encourage relevant providers of financial support to consider how vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change could be reflected in the provision and mobilisation of concessional financial resources and how they could simplify and enhance access to finance
- Noting the importance of monitoring, evaluation, and due diligence, we stress that information about the financing bodies and pathways are made public and transparent with specific reasons for how and why such funds have been approved for their respective sectors in order to allow the public to track the mobilisation of funds.
- We raise concern on the conditions and restrictions attached to international financial programs aimed at assisting developing countries where:
 - a) The number of mobilised funds does not meet the requirement to equally mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change; and
 - b) The structure of these funds consists of loans that need to be paid back with unreasonable interest rates, creating national debt and counteracting financial measures put in place to combat climate change.

This statement was created by the youth participants of the national COP 27 Youth Climate Statement National Model Government process. This process was convened by Youth@SAIIA, the Youth Policy Committee (YPC), CAAP co-founded by the European Union, and WESSA, with the support of UNICEF South Africa, UNDP South Africa, and the Embassy of Finland to South Africa. Over 200 young people representing over 80 organisations, schools and universities took part in the process. The statement was presented at the National Stakeholder Consultation to Minister Barbara Creecy of the Department of Forestry and Fisheries and Environmental Affairs and Deputy Chairperson Valli Moose of the Presidential Climate Commission on 24 October 2022 in Midrand. For any queries, please send your email to youth@saiia.org.za.



Participants from the following schools, universities and youth organisations participated in the youth statement process.

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| African Climate Alliance | Intuthuko Senior Secondary School |
| Ahmed Kathrada Foundation | Just Share NPC |
| Amnesty International South Africa Youth Chapters | Kasselsvlei Comprehensive High School |
| Bardale High School | Kuilsriver Technical high school |
| Blue Hills College | Lehlasedi High School |
| Buhlebemfundo Secondary School | Mamodikeleng High School |
| Cape Climate Collective | Manyano High School |
| Cape Peninsula University of Technology | Manzomthombo Senior Secondary |
| Cape Town High School | Marikana Youth Development Organisation |
| Centre Of Science And Technology | Matome Aphane Educational Foundation |
| Climate Ambition Accountability Project | Mayville Secondary School |
| Crawford College Sandton | Menzi High School |
| Curro Durbanville High School | Mfuleni Technical Academy |
| Durban Girls' High School | Mission of Faith |
| Durban University of Technology | Moletsane Secondary School |
| Environmental Climate Change Youth Club Action | Mzuvele High School |
| Environmental Monitoring Group | National School of the Arts |
| Extinction Rebellion Youth | Nelson Mandela University |
| Fairdale High School | North West Department of Environment, Conservation and Tourism |
| Fairdale no2 High School | North West University |
| Fridays for Future South Africa | Northern Cape Agricultural High School |
| Glenwood Boys' High School | Oscar Mpetha High School |
| Greenpeace Africa | Parklands College |
| Greenside High School | Progress Comprehensive High School |
| Groutville Youth Organization | R.A Kobue High School |
| Hector Peterson Senior Secondary school | Rhenish Girls' High School |
| Idwala lethu Foundation | Rhodes High School |
| Intsebenziswano Senior Secondary School | |

Rhodes University
Saul Mkhizeville Youth Program
Sea Point High School
Sibelius High School
Siphamandla Secondary Senior School
Sol Plaatje University
Springs Boys' High School
STEAM Ambassadors Club
Sundial Movement
The Conscious Campaign
Tshwane University of Technology
Ubuntu Rural Women and Youth Movement
UCT Online High School
University of Johannesburg
University of KwaZulu-Natal
University of Pretoria
University of South Africa
University of the Free State

University of the Western Cape
University of the Witwatersrand
Uxolo High School
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