



**POSITION PAPER
WHAT KIND OF GLOBAL CLIMATE DEAL
DOES YOUTH DESERVE?**

1 Climate change is one of the biggest threats to humankind and it is the clearest
2 example of how the lifestyles of the older and current generations of the global
3 North are compromising the needs of younger and future generations, and
4 especially the livelihoods of populations in the global South. The European Youth
5 Forum acknowledged the need for action in its 2006 Policy Paper on Sustainable
6 Development and in its 2008 Resolution on Climate Change, and is now calling on
7 the governments to adopt an ambitious and fair global climate change deal this
8 year in order to prevent dangerous climate change and to allocate appropriate
9 funding for adaptation. States would thereby assume their global responsibility
10 towards the current and future generations in the North and the South. Moreover,
11 in these times of financial crisis which will have long term repercussions on young
12 people, the European Youth Forum urges governments both to invest in youth and
13 involve young people, as well as to use the crisis as an opportunity to build a new
14 sustainable economic model. Youth are a moral stakeholder and can provide parts
15 of the solution, and they therefore need to be involved.

16

17 An ambitious and fair deal

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19 The science and the facts are there: climate change is already happening and its
20 economic, social, environmental and humanitarian consequences have been
21 strongly established¹. Young people in the North and especially those in the South
22 will be the most affected in the long run, and the European Youth Forum calls upon
23 States to take measures equal to the scale of the issues at stake and in line with the
24 science and experts' reports which have been recently published (such as the 2006
25 Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change, the fourth assessment report of
26 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the latest updates).

27

28 *Mitigation*

29 In order to prevent "dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate
30 system", as stated in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),
31 global temperature increases should be kept as far below 2°C as possible and a
32 level of greenhouse gases concentration stabilised at 350ppm CO₂ equivalent as
33 quickly as possible. According to the IPCC's fourth assessment-report, this would
34 require at least a reduction of 50-80% of global CO₂ emissions reduction (based on
35 the 1990 figures), with targets even higher for developed countries in line with
36 their historic responsibilities and respective capacities. Developing countries must
37 be supported to take mitigation actions, among which measures against
38 deforestation and desertification. The economic operators should also be held
39 accountable for their social and environmental responsibility, and green
40 technologies and green jobs could also play a significant role in the emissions
41 reduction, while environmentally-friendly initiatives can constitute a major
42 opportunity for the economies. In order to achieve the targets, the transport sector
43 and especially aviation and shipping must be included in the schemes.

44

45 *Adaptation*

¹ See the Oxfam International Briefing Paper 130, July 2009. "Suffering the Science".

1 Some effects of climate change, especially with regards to ecosystems but also to
2 low lying developing states, will not be reversible. Still, much can be done to
3 reduce the vulnerability of some environments. Social and economic factors, such
4 as the state of development, are closely linked to the adaptive capacity of a country
5 and must therefore be addressed. Resources should be dedicated to the planning
6 of development efforts as well as delivering increased resilience on the ground and
7 residual cost. Climate change has strong human rights implications, such as the
8 emergence of new and increased migration-flows. This will affect the dignity of
9 many human beings when their rights to health, food, private life and other
10 fundamental rights will be infringed. Special attention should be given to enhance
11 the adaptation capability of the weakest groups such as youth, women and least
12 developed nations.

13 *Financing*

14 The Stern review estimates the global costs of stabilisation at 550ppm CO₂ at
15 around 1% of GDP by 2050, bearing in mind that these costs exponentially increase
16 as action is delayed and that the costs of inaction in the long term are even higher.
17 It is estimated that the developing countries would need between 57-73 bn € a
18 year, of which 38 bn € would be needed for adaptation. Governments should thus
19 develop and adapt the current financing mechanisms, as well as devise innovative
20 tools to fund the reduction of emissions, the research and development in clean
21 energy, reduce deforestation, and allow for technology cooperation and
22 adaptation. Considering their responsibility, industrialised nations should commit
23 to allocating bold financial commitments, both in terms of mitigation and
24 adaptation in developing countries. Moreover, this support should be additional to
25 the current Official Development Assistance (ODA). The European Youth Forum
26 stresses the importance of donor countries to still fulfil the 0.7% commitment they
27 have already made. While maintaining and increasing current levels of ODA, these
28 programmes themselves have to be climate proofed in order to facilitate an overall
29 green development.

30 *Governance*

31 Cooperative action between all States is greatly needed and in order to reach a
32 global deal the new agreement needs to be fair to all parties. The European Youth
33 Forum urges governments to assume their common but differentiated
34 responsibilities and to adopt a new agreement which takes into account the needs
35 of future generations, and especially those of the least developed countries and
36 the small islands developing States. This would mean a significant shift in
37 investments and in the global trade and production models, and a change of
38 lifestyle and consumption patterns in the North. This change would present
39 economic benefits, more and better jobs as we move to a knowledge society, and
40 an improved well-being and quality of life, as well as a better redistribution of
41 wealth, more equity and a change in the conception of development.

42 Dialogue and actions between all stakeholders, institutions, non-governmental
43 organisations, researchers and businesses should be encouraged. It is necessary to
44 involve organisations in different fields in order to revise the overall system and to
45 get the engagement of all, such as the World Trade Organisation and the

1 International Labour Organisation. Existing relevant bodies such as all of the three
2 Rio Conventions and the UN Commission on Sustainable Development should
3 have a strengthened and more influential role. In this frame, the involvement of
4 youth is paramount.

5
6 The European Youth Forum insists on the creation of strong, effective and
7 accountable enforcement mechanisms for achieving the binding targets of Kyoto
8 and the Copenhagen deal, using for example trade penalties, as a natural
9 continuation of transmitting global challenges from the domestic arena, where
10 such enforcement mechanisms are in place, to a supranational level. This should
11 lead to strong and democratic global governance capable to tackle climate change
12 and eventually protect other global commons as well.

13
14 Why does involving youth matter?

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16 Long term action requires the involvement of youth, not only because young
17 people will have to live with the severe consequences of climate change and
18 because they are the decision-makers of tomorrow but because they can
19 contribute to finding solutions today. Moreover, education for sustainable
20 development and global education are key to a change of mindset. Strong
21 intergenerational solidarity is needed to tackle this issue as those making decisions
22 today will not be the ones facing the consequences in the future.

23
24 The United Nations and UN Member States have long acknowledged youth to be
25 relevant for achieving the UN goal as set out in the UN Charter. Youth delegates
26 have been active in United Nations meetings, especially the UN General Assembly,
27 for decades. Also in the Commission on Sustainable Development and in the UN
28 Framework Convention on Climate Change the participation of representatives
29 from youth organisations is increasing, and many of these are included in their
30 national delegations. Youth can provide invaluable perspectives into issues which
31 affect them, while tremendously contributing to youth empowerment and youth
32 participation in general. The European Youth Forum therefore encourages
33 governments to include youth in their delegations, through cooperation with the
34 National Youth Councils, and UN agencies to support youth in their attempt to take
35 part in the decision making processes as outlined in several UNGA resolutions.

36
37 In parallel, youth have also been playing a strong non-governmental role outside
38 and inside the conferences, and in the climate debate in general, by standing as
39 the moral stakeholders, raising a different voice especially through the affirmation
40 of the need for solidarity between youth of all regions of the world and by bringing
41 more liveliness to those processes. Their importance should be acknowledged by
42 governments, international organisations and non-governmental organisations
43 and should be supported in order to build capacities both in terms of finances and
44 expertise in order to build a more democratic, transparent and coordinated climate
45 youth movement.

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1 Education for sustainable development and, in a broader sense, global education ²
2 prepare people to fully take up their role as citizens of one world, by enabling them
3 to develop empathy, a sense of belonging to the global community, and
4 responsibility towards other people and the environment. They are paramount to a
5 new development model and therefore need to be mainstreamed into formal
6 education and further strengthened into non-formal education and informal
7 learning. In schools, it could be transversally included into all the relevant subjects.
8 To address climate change, it could be integrated into classes such as biology,
9 geography, philosophy and history, but these should be complemented by
10 practical and tangible trainings on energy saving and more sustainable behaviour.

11
12 Youth organisations are the main providers of non-formal education that can fill
13 the gaps which formal education leaves, especially by putting the emphasis on
14 learning by doing and peer to peer education. In order to recognise this positive
15 role, youth organisation should benefit from an enabling environment providing
16 them with adequate resources. Addressing the challenges brought on by climate
17 change can only be successful through an intergenerational implementation,
18 stimulating young people to commit taking actions themselves and acting as role
19 models. Hence policy makers should include measures to promote global
20 education in the new agreement in order to enable a real shift in current and future
21 generations' lifestyles to address the new challenges, and use the opportunities of
22 the economic and climate crisis in a globalised world.

23 24 Conclusion

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26 The European Youth Forum urges governments, especially European States, to
27 adopt an ambitious and fair deal ensuring a decent life for current and future
28 generations both in the global North and the global South. This deal should
29 acknowledge the role of young people in taking up this responsibility. The EU
30 should take a leading role in the fight against climate change. It should fulfill its
31 previous commitments rather than attempting to narrow down its scope. The EU
32 must show real leadership in terms of mitigation efforts and commit to cutting
33 additional volumes of greenhouse gasses on top of the already adopted volumes
34 in its 20-20-20-package. Being the strongest regional actor the EU should increase
35 its climate diplomacy, and help make the voices of the most vulnerable countries
36 and future generations heard in the political process. Furthermore the EU should
37 lead in assuring that a global deal is an equitable deal, both for the developing
38 countries and the next generations. The European Youth Forum recalls the
39 commitments made by the States in Rio in 1992 with regards to citizens'
40 participation. Youth organisations also commit to taking actions and involving
41 young people in the fight against climate change. As representative bodies of
42 young people, they need to be involved in order to ensure adequate participation
43 of youth in the process.

² see the YFJ Policy Paper on Global Education: a global vision on education - an education for global citizenship
http://www.youthforum.org/fr/system/files/yfj_public/strategic_priorities/en/0007-08_GE-FINAL.pdf