Youth Engagement Across 30 COPs

From Berlin 1995 to Belém 2025 · Towards Antalya 2026

COP31 TÜRKİYE ANTALYA

2026

POLICY PAPER | UNESCO CHAIR · ESD, GREEN SKILLS & CLIMATE ACTIONS



A historical, analytical and policy-oriented mapping of every youth-related decision, declaration, work programme and presidency outcome adopted under the UNFCCC process.

With a forward-looking roadmap for COP31 Antalya and the post-2025 climate agenda through 2035 · UNESCO Chair on ESD, Green Skills & Climate Actions, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change of Türkiye.

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Declarations, Gaps & Future Pathways for Action

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A historical, analytical and policy-oriented mapping of every youth-related decision, declaration, work programme and presidency outcome adopted under the UNFCCC process — with a forward-looking roadmap for COP31 and the post-2025 climate agenda through 2035.

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MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY

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MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY

IN ALIGNMENT WITH

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

ALLIED CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES CYCLES, 2026

UNCCD COP17 ULAANBAATAR 2026

COP17 YEREVAN | ARMENIA TAKING ACTION FOR NATURE

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On the cover: Young people carry a "Youth is the Future" banner at a climate mobilisation. Across thirty Conferences of the Parties the UNFCCC has built the most elaborate intergenerational-engagement architecture of any multilateral environmental regime — the question for COP31 Antalya and the decade that follows is whether it will be resourced. Photo credit: UNFCCC.

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How to read this policy paper. Sections 1–5 establish the historical and institutional record. Sections 6–10 diagnose the recognition–implementation gap. Sections 11–15 set out the comparative, strategic and prescriptive agenda for COP31–COP40. Annexes A–J hold the underlying datasets, the decision record and the methodology.

YOUTH AND THE CONVENTION

The generation that will inherit the outcome

Every young person alive today has lived their whole conscious life inside the Convention era. They are the first generation to grow up with the UNFCCC and the last that can still change what it delivers.

Across thirty Conferences of the Parties they moved from the margins of the corridor to a recognised constituency, an annual forum, and a Presidency office of their own. What has not yet followed is the money.



About This Policy Paper

A flagship policy paper on youth in the UNFCCC process, 1995–2025 — a comprehensive, evidence-based mapping of youth engagement across all thirty Conferences of the Parties, from COP1 Berlin (1995) to COP30 Belém (2025).

It is designed to serve incoming COP Presidencies, UN agencies, multilateral climate-finance institutions, academic institutions and youth networks as a reference document and a strategic roadmap for the COP31–COP40 cycle.



Delegates and youth representatives convene at a climate and sustainability event.

About This Policy Paper

Suggested citation

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Scope and coverage

The policy paper covers all formally adopted youth-related decisions, declarations, work programmes, action agendas and presidency outcomes under the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol (CMP) and the Paris Agreement (CMA) from 1995 to 2025. It draws on official UNFCCC documents, presidency outcome statements, Standing Committee on Finance reports, Subsidiary Body conclusions, and accompanying technical and synthesis papers, supplemented by independent monitoring reports from UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, OECD-DAC, and the Voices for Just Climate Action 2023 Youth Stocktake.

Audience

- Incoming and outgoing COP Presidencies and national focal points
- UN agencies (UNFCCC Secretariat, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, ILO, UN Youth Office)
- Multilateral climate finance institutions and replenishment delegates
- YOUNGO, the Presidency Youth Climate Champion (PYCC), regional and local Conferences of Youth, and youth-led organisations
- Universities, research institutes and climate-governance scholars
- National parliaments, line ministries and subnational governments

Methodological notes

Quantitative figures are drawn from the UNFCCC Secretariat's published statistics on observer admissions and participation. Qualitative narrative is built from cover decisions (the 1/CP.x and 1/CMA.x series), action plans, work programmes, and presidency outcome reports. Complementary statistics are cited with full attribution. Methodology and data sources are detailed in Annex J.

The policy paper is written for Presidencies, UN agencies, multilateral climate-finance institutions, youth networks and the academic community.



Rights, Credits and Distribution

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this policy paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official positions of the UNFCCC Secretariat, the COP30 or COP31 Presidencies, the Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change of the Republic of Türkiye, or partner organisations. The designations employed and the presentation of material in this report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Photo credit

The COP30 Presidency Youth Climate Champion and the UNFCCC.

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This policy report is distributed in collaboration with the Department of Climate Change Adaptation and Local Policies of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change of Türkiye, for the COP31 Antalya cycle and the post-2025 climate agenda.

The COP31 Antalya Presidency emblem. Türkiye and Australia will co-host the thirty-first Conference of the Parties in 2026.

The 2030 Agenda. Youth engagement under the UNFCCC intersects with at least eight of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.

FROM THE AUTHORS

Foreword

Thirty Conferences of the Parties separate Berlin in 1995 from Belém in 2025. Over that period the UNFCCC system has undergone three transformations relevant to this policy paper — institutional, normative and demographic.

This policy paper documents how those three transformations have intersected around the figure of the young person.



Researchers and partners of the UNESCO Chair on ESD, Green Skills & Climate Actions.

Foreword

Thirty Conferences of the Parties separate Berlin in 1995 from Belém in 2025. Over that period, the UNFCCC system has undergone three transformations relevant to this policy paper. The first is institutional: the elaboration of an architecture — Subsidiary Bodies, work programmes, observer constituencies, financial mechanisms, presidency offices — that did not exist in 1995. The second is normative: the gradual codification of intergenerational equity from a preambular aspiration into operational decision text. The third is demographic: the emergence of a generation that has lived its entire conscious life inside the Convention era and that now constitutes the most active stratum of climate civil society.

This policy paper documents how those three transformations have intersected around the figure of the young person. It tells a story that is, on the textual evidence, more affirmative than the policy debate often allows. The Glasgow Climate Pact paragraphs 64 and 65, the Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan, Decision 16/CP.28 institutionalising the Presidency Youth Climate Champion, and the COP30 Youth Mutirão Action Agenda are durable institutional achievements. They will outlast the presidencies that brokered them.

The policy paper also tells a story that is, on the quantitative evidence, more sobering than the rhetoric admits. A 2.4% child-responsive share of multilateral climate finance, a 1-in-591 ratio of climate-fund projects with education as their principal objective, and an under-50% prevalence of child- or youth-sensitive provisions in NDCs are not statistical artefacts. They define the operational gap between the recognition the system has achieved and the implementation it has yet to deliver.

The policy paper is offered, in that spirit, to colleagues across the UN system, the multilateral climate-finance architecture, the youth-network ecosystem, and the academic community. It is intended as a working reference for the COP31–COP40 cycle, an evidence base for the 2026 mid-term review of the Glasgow Work Programme on Action for Climate Empowerment, and an instrument for the NDC 3.0 and 4.0 cycles. With COP31 to be hosted by Türkiye and Australia in 2026, the policy paper carries a particular institutional resonance for the author and the partner ministries.



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September 2026

Three transformations — institutional, normative and demographic — have intersected around the figure of the young person.



WITH GRATITUDE

Acknowledgements

In the spirit of the *mutirão* — collective effort — this policy paper is the product of many hands. The authors are grateful to the institutions, colleagues and young people whose documentation, research and lived experience made it possible.



Partners and young researchers gathered at a climate and sustainability field event.

Acknowledgements

Institutional partners

This policy paper was prepared by the UNESCO Chair on Education for Sustainable Development, Green Skills & Climate Actions, in collaboration with the Department of Climate Change Adaptation and Local Policies of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change of the Republic of Türkiye.

The authors gratefully acknowledge the institutional support of both partners and of the Directorate of Climate Change, whose work on the COP31 Action Agenda — and in particular its dedicated Youth and Education axis — gave the policy paper its forward-looking orientation.

Support from the Government of Bangladesh

The authors gratefully acknowledge the support of the **Bangladesh Climate Change Trust (BCCT)**, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Established under the Climate Change Trust Act to steward Bangladesh's national climate finance, the Trust works at precisely the intersection this policy paper examines — between the multilateral climate-finance architecture and the communities, and in particular the young people, who must ultimately absorb and deliver climate action. Its support for this work reflects a broader commitment to strengthening intergenerational voice within the UNFCCC process, and to ensuring that the evidence base on youth engagement is shaped by the perspectives of climate-vulnerable developing countries as well as by those of the institutions that convene the process.

UN system and documentary sources

The analysis rests on the published record of the UNFCCC Secretariat, whose decision repository, Action for Climate Empowerment materials and Presidency Youth Climate Champion pages are the policy paper's primary evidentiary base. The authors acknowledge the work of UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, the ILO, the OECD and the Standing Committee on Finance, whose monitoring underpins the policy paper's finance and education indicators, and the IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin for its continuous documentation of COP1 through COP30.

In the spirit of the *mutirão*, this policy paper is the product of many hands across the UN system, the youth-network ecosystem and the partner ministries of Türkiye and Bangladesh.



Acknowledgements

YOUNGO, the PYCC office and the youth movement

The authors owe a particular debt to YOUNGO, the official children and youth constituency of the UNFCCC, for its publications — the 2023 Youth Needs Analysis for Capacity Building, the 2023 Youth Stocktake of UNFCCC Processes, and the 2024 Youth Stocktake monitoring-and-evaluation framework — and to their authors Karishma Ansaram, Elizabeth Gulugulu and Sifa Kinoti. We thank the COP30 Presidency Youth Climate Champion — Sally Higgins, COP30 Presidency Youth Climate Champion — Marcele Oliveira, and her team, together with the COP29 Champion — Leyla Hasanova, whose "Highlights from the COP30 Presidency Youth Climate Champion" report supplied much of the Belém evidence base. Above all, the authors acknowledge the children, young people and youth-led organisations — from local and regional Conferences of Youth to the biome representatives of the Youth Mutirão — whose advocacy is the subject of this policy paper.

> Responsibility for the analysis, and for any errors or omissions, rests with the authors alone.

Young people, youth-led organisations and Conferences of Youth — from local and regional COYs to the biome representatives of the Youth Mutirão — are the subject of this policy paper.



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Eighteen figures and seven tables carry the quantitative argument of the policy paper.



Acronyms

ACE
Action for Climate Empowerment

AF
Adaptation Fund

BINGO
Business and Industry NGOs (UNFCCC constituency)

CMA
COP serving as Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement

CMP
COP serving as Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol

COP
Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC)

COY
Conference of Youth (annual, convened by YOUNGO)

ENGO
Environmental NGOs (UNFCCC constituency)

FRLD
Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage

GCF
Green Climate Fund

GEF
Global Environment Facility

GST
Global Stocktake (Paris Agreement Article 14)

GWP on ACE
Glasgow Work Programme on ACE (Decision 18/CP.26)

IPO
Indigenous Peoples Organisations (UNFCCC constituency)

LCOY
Local Conference of Youth

LGMA
Local Government and Municipal Authorities (UNFCCC)

NCQG
New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance (COP29, 2024)

NDC
Nationally Determined Contribution (Paris Agreement)

PYCC
Presidency Youth Climate Champion (Decision 16/CP.28, 2023)

RCOY
Regional Conference of Youth

RINGO
Research and Independent NGOs (UNFCCC constituency)

SBI
Subsidiary Body for Implementation

SBSTA
Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice

SCF
Standing Committee on Finance (UNFCCC)

SDG
Sustainable Development Goal

SIDS
Small Island Developing States

TUNGO
Trade Union NGOs (UNFCCC constituency)

TVET
Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UNFCCC
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

WGC
Women and Gender Constituency (UNFCCC)

YOUNGO
Children and Youth Constituency (recognised 2009 / formalised 2011)

The vocabulary of the UNFCCC youth-engagement architecture, from ACE to YOUNGO.



A youth banner at a climate mobilisation. Photo credit: UNFCCC.



Youth is the Future

Thirty Conferences of the Parties have built the most elaborate intergenerational-engagement architecture of any multilateral environmental regime. The question for the decade that follows is whether it will be resourced.

Executive Summary

Over thirty Conferences of the Parties, the UNFCCC has built the most elaborate intergenerational-engagement architecture of any multilateral environmental regime — yet the gap between textual recognition and resourced implementation is the system's defining equity challenge for the COP31–COP40 cycle.





Young people mobilise for climate action. The September 2019 Global Climate Strike remains the largest youth-led mobilisation in modern environmental history. Photo credit: UNFCCC.

Executive Summary

The three-era arc

This policy paper proposes a three-era periodisation of youth engagement under the UNFCCC. The **Pioneer Era** (COP1 Berlin, 1995 — COP14 Poznań, 2008) is characterised by informal coalitions and the absence of any recognised youth-constituency framework. The **Recognition Era** (COP15 Copenhagen, 2009 — COP25 Madrid, 2019) saw the formal admission of YOUNGO as an observer constituency, the adoption of the Doha Work Programme on Article 6, the Paris Agreement's Article 12, and the emergence of the school-strikes mobilisation. The **Institutionalisation Era** (COP26 Glasgow, 2021 — COP30 Belém, 2025) brought the Glasgow Climate Pact paragraphs 64–65, the Glasgow Work Programme on Action for Climate Empowerment, the institutionalisation of the Presidency Youth Climate Champion under Decision 16/CP.28, and the Belém Youth Mutirão Action Agenda.

Five empirical findings

01

Six-fold constituency growth

YOUNGO membership has grown approximately six-fold, from ~150 organisations at recognition in 2009 to ~900 organisations across 165+ countries by COP30 in 2025.

02

A structural participation ceiling

The estimated youth-delegate share of Blue-Zone participation has stabilised in the 11–14% range since COP26, suggesting a structural ceiling.

03

The 2.4% finance indicator

Of every USD 100 in multilateral climate finance, only USD 2.40 is assessed as child-responsive (UNICEF, 2024); of 591 climate-fund projects approved between 2006 and 2023, exactly one had education as its principal objective.

04

NDCs remain largely youth-blind

Fewer than half of submitted NDCs are explicitly child- or youth-sensitive, and only approximately 3% were developed through participatory processes with children.

05

Coverage without proportionality

LCOY and RCOY platforms now cover ~141 jurisdictions, but Asia-Pacific — home to ~60% of the global youth population — accounts for only ~20% of LCOY jurisdictions.

The school-strikes mobilisation of 2018–2020 placed youth voice at the centre of public climate discourse and fed directly into the Glasgow Climate Pact.



Executive Summary

Strategic outlook

Three observations should orient the next decade. The **demographic arithmetic is decisive**: the under-30 cohort of 2025 will live with the cumulative climate outcomes of COP31 through COP40 and will transition into Party-delegation and ministerial leadership across the 2030s and 2040s. The **finance question is the single most important leverage point**: the NCQG consolidation at COP30 into a USD 1.3 trillion-per-year-by-2035 trajectory is the principal policy opening for embedding youth-responsive criteria at scale. The **political economy favours consolidation, not expansion**: the era of new declarations and pavilions is reaching saturation, and the operational question — how to resource, evaluate and reform existing architecture — must dominate the COP31–COP40 cycle.

> *"The Pioneer Era proved youth could organise; the Recognition Era proved the system could admit them; the Institutionalisation Era is proving — unevenly — that recognition can be converted into architecture."*

The demographic arithmetic is decisive: the under-30 cohort of 2025 will live with the cumulative climate outcomes of COP31 through COP40.



Ten Key Findings

The policy paper's analytical chapters develop the following ten findings in detail. They are presented here in synoptic form.

01

Three eras anchor the arc.

Pioneer (COP1–14, 1995–2008), Recognition (COP15–25, 2009–2019), and Institutionalisation (COP26–30, 2021–2025) each correspond to distinct institutional thresholds — informal organising, constituency admission, and formal architecture.

02

YOUNGO has become a durable constituency.

Recognised in 2009 and formalised in 2011, YOUNGO has grown to ~900 member organisations across 165+ countries by 2025, with a non-hierarchical governance model anchored by rotating focal points and seven core working groups.

03

The Glasgow Climate Pact is the constitutional anchor.

Paragraphs 64 and 65 of Decision 1/CP.26 (2021) mandate full and meaningful participation of children and youth, and require an annual youth-led climate forum — the legal underpinning for every Presidency since.

04

The PYCC is the most consequential innovation since YOUNGO.

Decision 16/CP.28 (2023) institutionalised the Presidency Youth Climate Champion as a standing role with overlapping two-year terms. Marcele Oliveira (Brazil, COP30) is the third holder.

05

The COP30 Youth Mutirão is a substantive consolidation.

The Brazilian Presidency's Action Agenda introduced a six-pillar, thirty-objective framework engaging 4,200+ young people across 26 consultations in 80+ countries.

Findings 01–05 describe the architecture thirty Conferences of the Parties have built; findings 06–10, overleaf, describe what it has not yet resourced.



Ten Key Findings

06

Climate finance remains profoundly mis-aligned with youth needs.

Just 2.4% of multilateral climate finance is child-responsive (UNICEF, 2024). Of 591 projects approved 2006–2023, only one had education as principal objective. Fewer than half of NDCs are child- or youth-sensitive.

07

Regional disparity in youth representation persists.

Although COY and LCOY platforms operate in 140+ jurisdictions, badge allocation, visa and travel-finance constraints consistently over-represent youth from developed and host-country regions.

08

The Global Youth Statement has become an annual reference.

Since COP25 (2019), the YOUNGO policy team has consolidated regional and local COY outputs into an annual Global Youth Statement, presented to Parties through the Presidency.

09

Under-18 access remains constrained.

For years, under-18s could attend COPs only on the dedicated Young and Future Generations Day; rule changes in 2017 extended access to 16- and 17-year-olds, but younger children continue to participate principally through external and online channels.

10

Belém's Youth Mutirão introduces a collective-action model.

COP30's Action Agenda embedded a Youth Mutirão — from the Brazilian tradition of collective effort — engaging 4,200+ young people directly across 26 consultations within Brazil and at international events.

> Findings 01–05 describe what the system has **built**. Findings 06–10 describe what it has not yet **resourced**. Section 10 develops the distinction as the recognition–implementation gap.

Findings 06–10 describe what the system has not yet resourced: finance alignment, regional equity, under-18 access and collective-action models.



The Numbers That Frame the Policy Paper

Table 1 · Key statistics at a glance

~900

YOUNGO member organisations across 165+ countries by COP30 (2025); six-fold growth from ~150 at recognition in 2009.

~12,000

Affiliated organisations within the broader YOUNGO assembly, by self-reported estimates.

11–14%

Estimated youth-delegate share of Blue-Zone participation, stable since COP26; suggests a structural ceiling.

2.4%

Share of multilateral climate finance assessed as child-responsive (UNICEF, 2024).

1 of 591

Climate-fund projects approved 2006–2023 with education as the principal objective.

~3%

Share of NDCs developed through participatory processes that included children (UNICEF, 2023).

<50%

Share of NDCs assessed as explicitly child- or youth-sensitive in content (UNICEF, 2023).

~141

Jurisdictions with active LCOY or RCOY platforms in the 2025 cycle.

4,200+

Young people directly engaged in COP30 Belém Youth Mutirão consultations.

USD 1.3 tn/yr

COP30 consolidated target for total annual climate-finance flows by 2035 (NCQG envelope).

~84,000

Total registered participants at COP28 Dubai — record COP attendance.

~6 million

Participants at the September 2019 Global Climate Strike peak, the largest youth-led mobilisation in modern environmental history.

Source: UNFCCC Secretariat, YOUNGO, UNICEF (2023, 2024), OECD-DAC (2024), IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin, UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance (2024), COP30 Presidency. Compiled by the author.

Twelve indicators frame the argument — from a six-fold constituency expansion to a 2.4% child-responsive share of multilateral climate finance.



VISUAL ATLAS

Thirty COPs in One View

Eight figures that frame the whole policy paper: the milestone map of all thirty Conferences of the Parties, the comparative profile of the three eras, the growth of the constituency, the trajectory of participation, the shape of the finance gap, and the demographic case for youth-centred climate action.



A line of walkers crossing open snow. Thirty Conferences of the Parties, traced in one view — the milestones, the eras and the gaps.



Figure A. One tile per COP from COP1 Berlin (1995) through COP30 Belém (2025). Tile colour denotes era; stars mark major youth-engagement milestones. Source: author's compilation from UNFCCC decisions, Presidency outcome reports and IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin.

Visual Atlas · Figures B and C

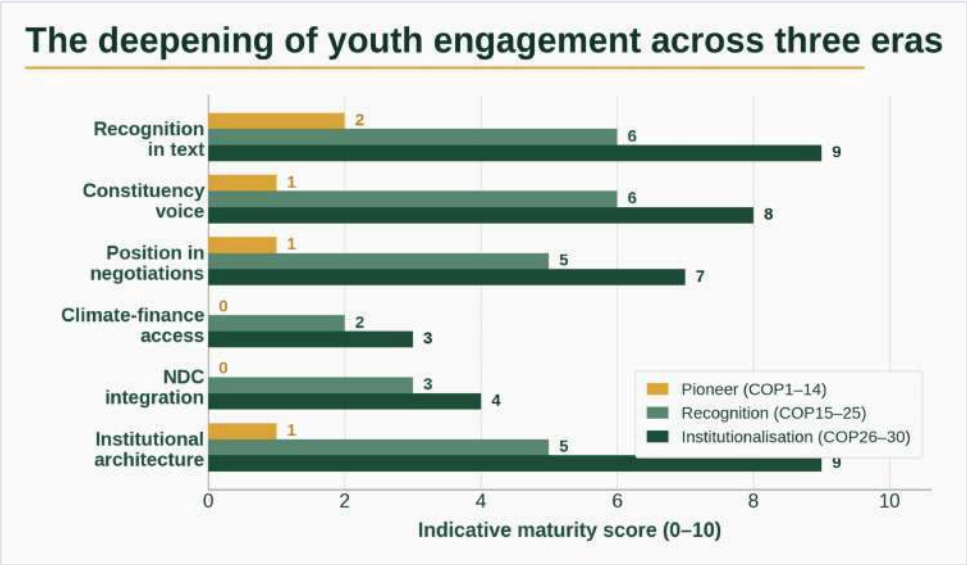


Figure B. Comparative profile of three eras across six youth-engagement dimensions, scored on an indicative 0–10 scale. The progression from Pioneer through Recognition to Institutionalisation captures the cumulative deepening of every dimension; finance access and NDC integration are the slowest.

Source: Author's synthesis from UNFCCC cover decisions, the Independent Youth Stocktake (Voices for Just Climate Action, 2023), and Presidency reports for COP26–COP30.

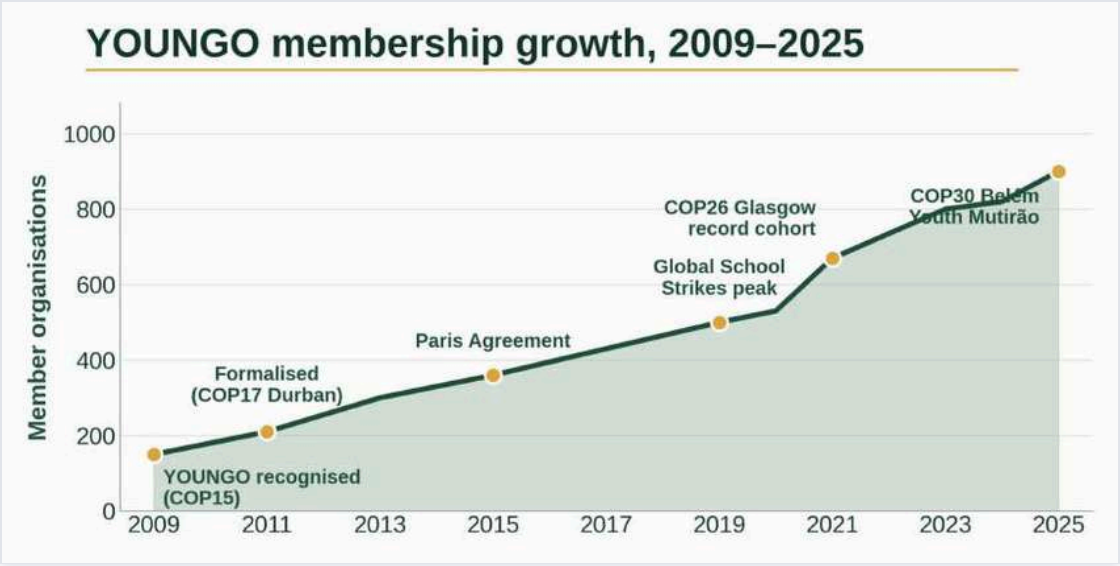


Figure C. YOUNGO membership growth, 2009–2025. Six-fold expansion from ~150 organisations at recognition (COP15) to ~900 organisations by COP30. Key inflection points are marked.

Source: YOUNGO Secretariat self-reported membership statistics and author's compilation of public records.

Visual Atlas · Figures D and E

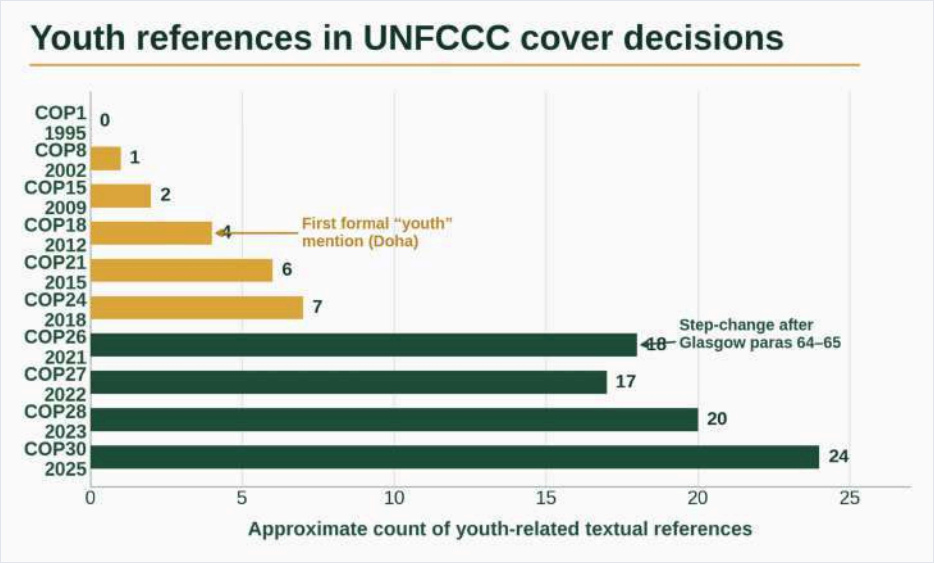


Figure D. Approximate count of youth-related textual references in cover decisions and annexed work programmes at selected COPs. The chart captures the inflection at COP18 (Doha) and the step-change at COP26 (Glasgow).

Source: Author's text analysis of UNFCCC cover decisions and annexed work programmes.

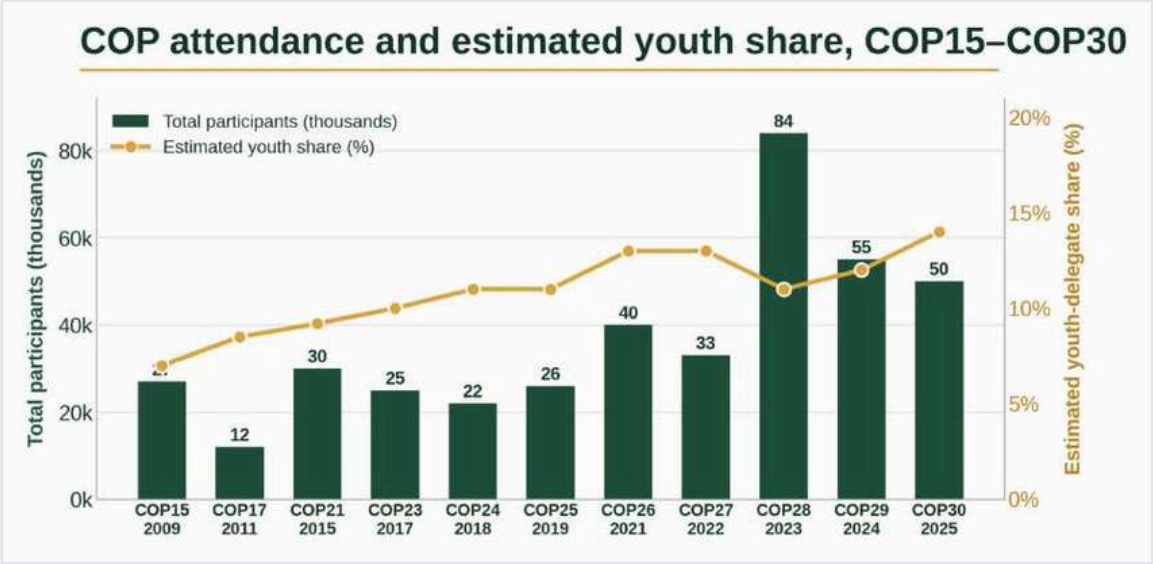


Figure E. COP attendance (total registered participants, in thousands) and the estimated youth-delegate share of total, COP15 Copenhagen (2009) through COP30 Belém (2025). The estimated youth share has stabilised in the 11–14% range since COP26.

Source: UNFCCC Secretariat Statistics on Admission; YOUNGO accreditation summaries; author's triangulation.

Visual Atlas · Figures F and G

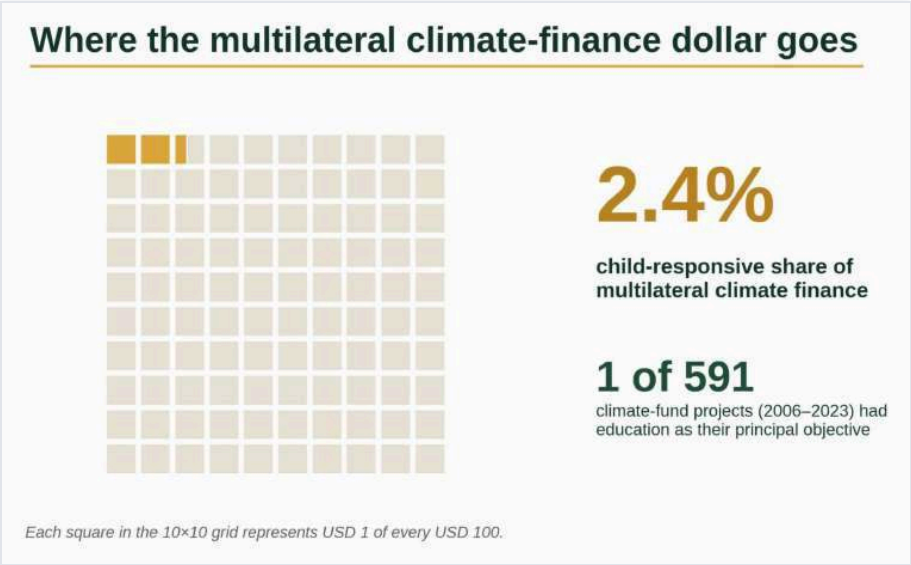


Figure F. Where the multilateral climate-finance dollar goes. Of every USD 100 in multilateral climate finance, only USD 2.40 is assessed as child-responsive. Each square in the 10×10 grid represents USD 1.

Source: UNICEF (2024) media advisory on COP29; UNICEF (2023) NDC content analysis; OECD-DAC climate-finance reporting.

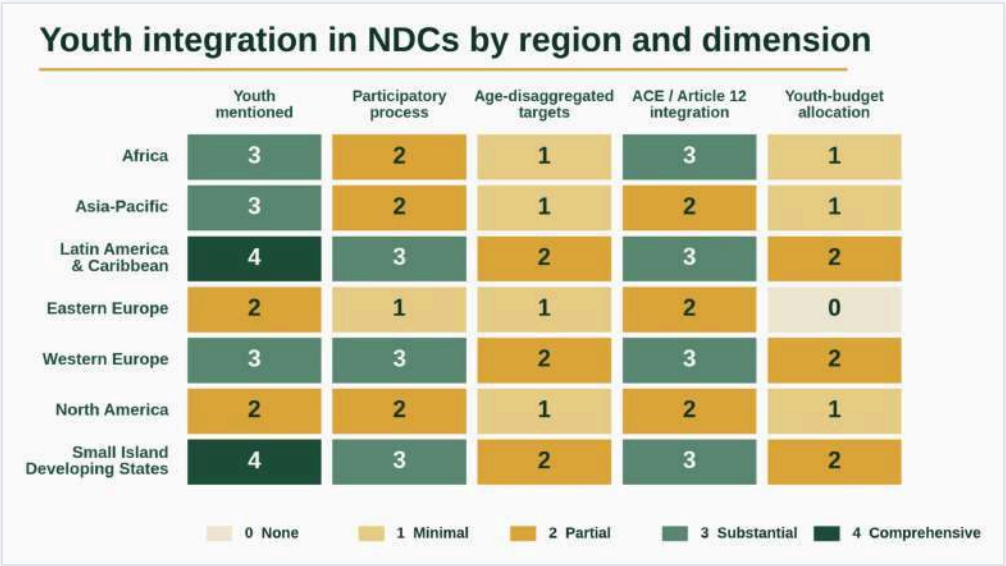


Figure G. Indicative heatmap of youth integration in NDCs across seven regions and five dimensions, scored on a 0–4 scale. Latin America & Caribbean and SIDS lead on textual recognition but no region scores above 2 on youth-budget allocation.

Source: Author's compilation from UNICEF (2023) NDC content analysis; UN Women (2024); UNDP Climate Promise NDC reviews.

Visual Atlas · Figure H

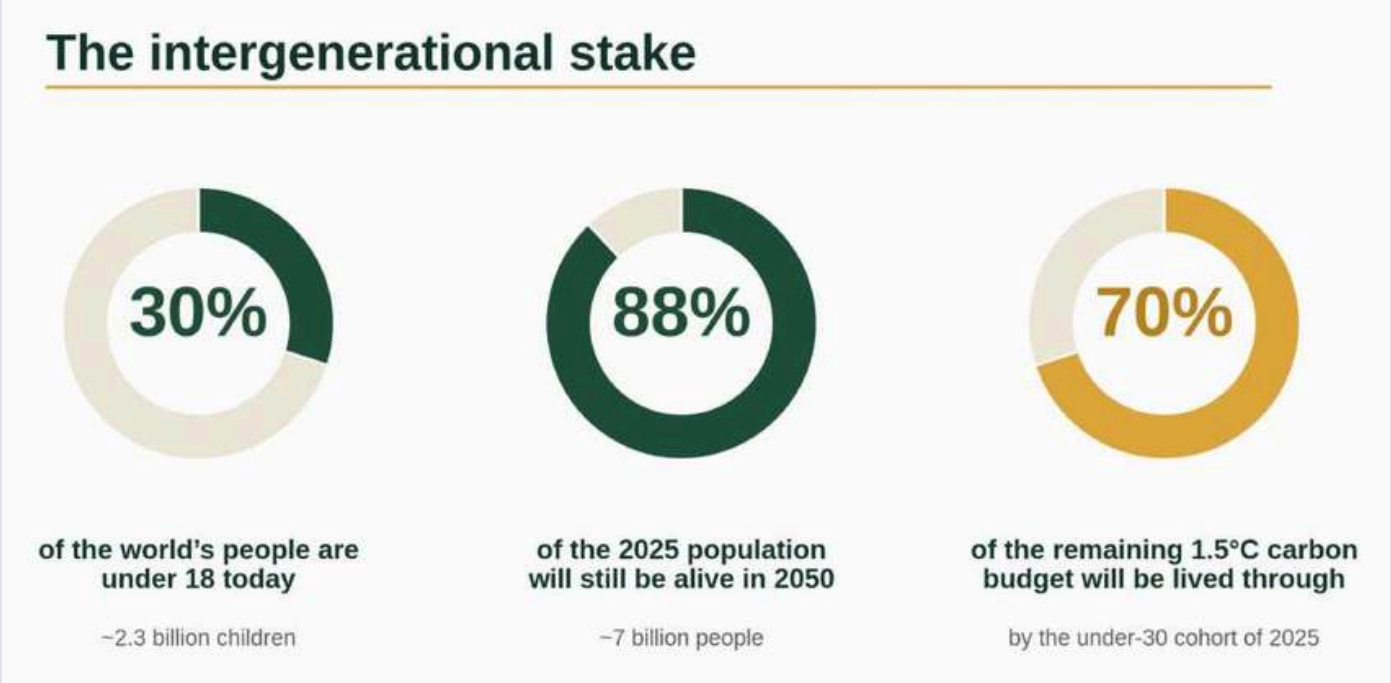


Figure H. The intergenerational stake: three indicators of the demographic case for youth-centred climate action — the under-18 share of the global population, the share of the 2025 population still alive in 2050, and the share of the remaining 1.5°C carbon budget lived through by the under-30 cohort of 2025.

Sources: UN Population Division (2024); IPCC AR6 WG1; UNICEF (2024); author's synthesis.

> *"The demographic arithmetic is decisive: the cohort that will live with the cumulative climate outcomes of COP31 to COP40 is already born."*

Three indicators of the demographic case for youth-centred climate action.



Three Decades of Youth Engagement



Three decades of youth engagement in the UNFCCC process, 1992–2025. A condensed chronology of the milestones developed in full across Sections 1–4 and Annexes A and B.

Source: Author's compilation from UNFCCC decision documents, Presidency outcome reports and IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin coverage of COP1–COP30.

Host Nations of the Conference of the Parties



COP host nations, COP1–COP30 (1995–2025). Thirty sessions across five UN regional groups. COP31 will be hosted by Türkiye in Antalya in 2026 with Australia, under a dual-host arrangement. Source: UNFCCC Secretariat session records; author's compilation.

The Historical Arc of Youth in the UNFCCC, 1995–2025

This chapter sets the historical frame for the policy paper. It proposes a three-era periodisation of youth engagement under the UNFCCC: the Pioneer Era (COP1 Berlin, 1995 — COP14 Poznań, 2008); the Recognition Era (COP15 Copenhagen, 2009 — COP25 Madrid, 2019); and the Institutionalisation Era (COP26 Glasgow, 2021 — COP30 Belém, 2025).



Young people march for climate action. The school-strikes mobilisation placed youth voice at the centre of public climate discourse worldwide.

The Historical Arc of Youth in the UNFCCC

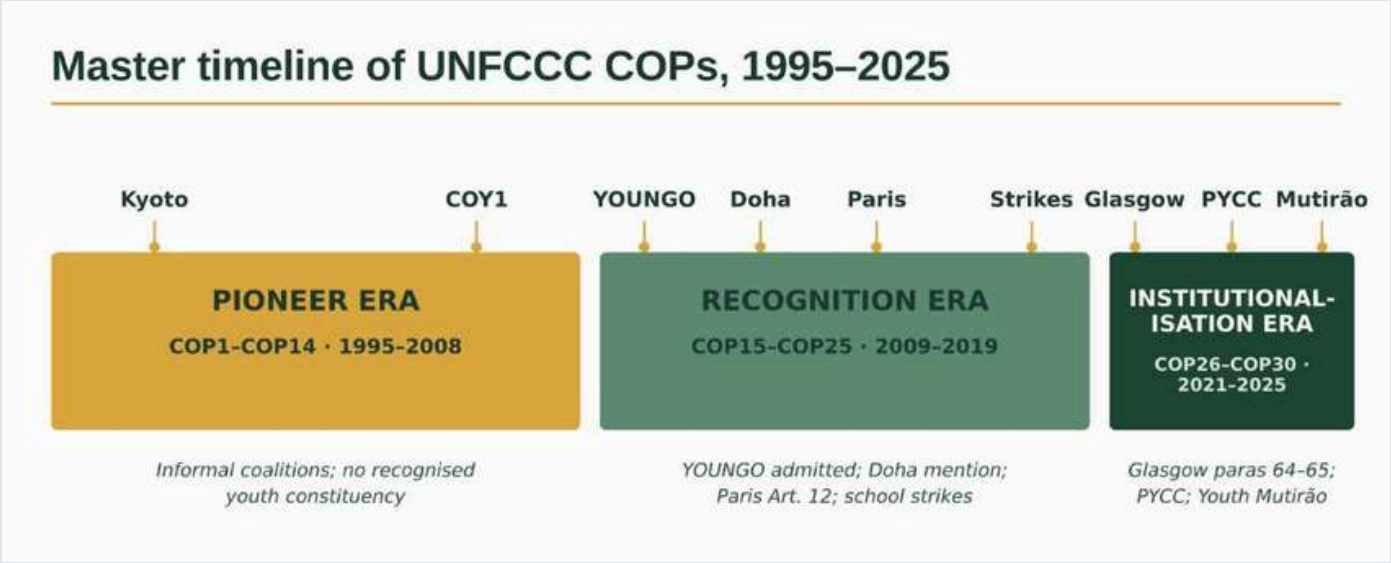


Figure 1. Master timeline of UNFCCC Conferences of the Parties, 1995–2025, with three eras of youth engagement marked.

Source: Author's compilation from UNFCCC decisions and IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin.

1.1 The Pioneer Era (COP1–COP14, 1995–2008)

The Pioneer Era is bounded by COP1 Berlin (1995) and COP14 Poznań (2008). The Berlin Mandate adopted at COP1 set in motion the negotiations that culminated in the Kyoto Protocol at COP3 (1997). Youth presence during this era was informal and intermittent. There was no recognised youth constituency within the observer architecture. The first standalone Article 6 work programme — the New Delhi Work Programme adopted at COP8 (2002) — established the institutional foundation that would later anchor the Action for Climate Empowerment agenda. COY1 was held at COP11 Montreal (2005), marking the emergence of an organised youth space alongside the formal negotiation track.

1.2 The Recognition Era (COP15–COP25, 2009–2019)

The Recognition Era opens with the provisional admission of YOUNGO as the sixth observer constituency at COP15 Copenhagen (2009) and the full formalisation at COP17 Durban (2011). It is shaped by three watershed instruments: the Doha Work Programme on Article 6 (Decision 15/CP.18, 2012), which contains the first formal mention of youth in operational UNFCCC decision text; the Paris Agreement (2015), whose Article 12 establishes the legal basis for Action for Climate Empowerment in the post-2020 architecture; and the Global School Strikes mobilisation peaking in September 2019, which placed youth voice at the centre of public climate discourse worldwide. By the end of the era, YOUNGO had grown from ~150 to ~500 member organisations.

The Historical Arc of Youth in the UNFCCC

1.3 The Institutionalisation Era (COP26–COP30, 2021–2025)

The Institutionalisation Era is defined by five Presidencies (UK, Egypt, UAE, Azerbaijan, Brazil) that each contributed a durable institutional layer. COP26 Glasgow (2021) adopted paragraphs 64 and 65 of the Glasgow Climate Pact — the constitutional anchor for the youth-engagement architecture — and the Glasgow Work Programme on Action for Climate Empowerment (Decision 18/CP.26). COP27 Sharm el-Sheikh (2022) operationalised paragraph 65 with the first annual youth-led climate forum, the first Children and Youth Pavilion in the Blue Zone, and the first Presidency Youth Envoy. COP28 Dubai (2023) institutionalised the Presidency Youth Climate Champion through Decision 16/CP.28. COP29 Baku (2024) embedded the first PYCC under the institutional mandate and secured the New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance with preambular youth references. COP30 Belém (2025) consolidated the architecture with the Youth Mutirão Action Agenda: a six-pillar, thirty-objective framework engaging 4,200+ young people across 26 consultations in 80+ countries.

> *"The Pioneer Era proved youth could organise; the Recognition Era proved the system could admit them; the Institutionalisation Era is proving — unevenly — that recognition can be converted into architecture."*

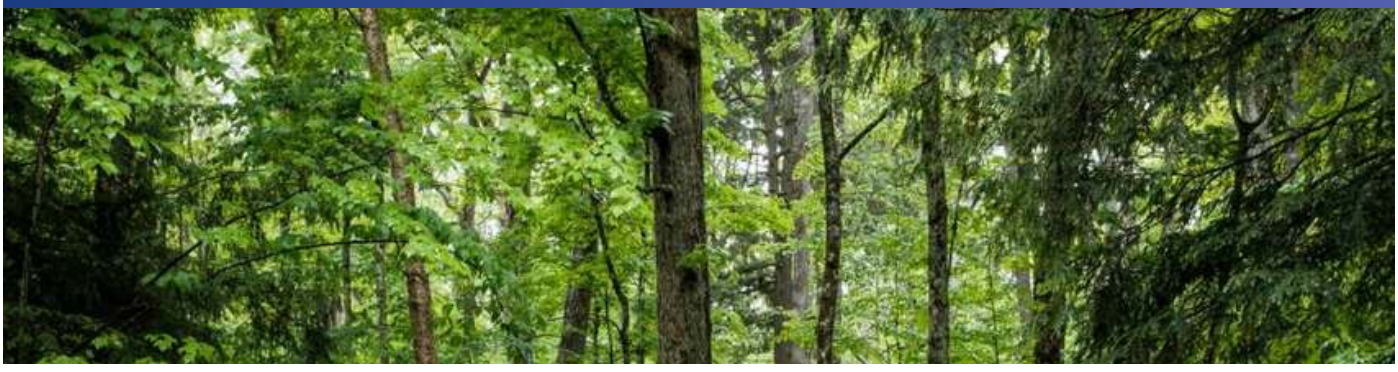
Pioneer Era · COP1–COP14, 1995–2008

Informal coalitions; no recognised youth-constituency framework. Berlin Mandate (1995), Kyoto Protocol (1997), New Delhi Work Programme on Article 6 (2002), first COY at Montreal (2005).

Recognition Era · COP15–COP25, 2009–2019

YOUNGO admitted (2009) and formalised (2011); Doha Work Programme (2012) carries the first operational mention of youth; Paris Agreement Article 12 (2015); ~6 million strikers in September 2019.

The Pioneer Era proved youth could organise; the Recognition Era proved the system could admit them.



From the Glasgow Pact to the Belém Mutirão: Five Presidencies, Five Layers

This chapter examines the five Presidencies of the Institutionalisation Era as a cumulative architecture rather than a sequence of stand-alone events. Each Presidency contributed a distinct institutional layer that subsequent Presidencies preserved and extended.

Glasgow, Sharm el-Sheikh, Dubai, Baku and Belém each added a durable layer to the youth-engagement architecture.



From the Glasgow Pact to the Belém Mutirão

2.1 Glasgow (COP26, 2021): the constitutional anchor

The Glasgow Climate Pact (Decision 1/CP.26) is the constitutional anchor of the contemporary youth-engagement architecture. Paragraph 64 recognises the role of children and youth in addressing and responding to climate change and invites future Presidencies and the secretariat to facilitate the meaningful participation of youth in decision-making processes. Paragraph 65 invites the President of COP26 to ensure that future climate change negotiations include the meaningful participation of children and youth, and to encourage Parties to include youth representatives in their national delegations. Together these paragraphs create a soft-law obligation that all subsequent Presidencies have respected and operationalised. The parallel adoption of the Glasgow Work Programme on Action for Climate Empowerment (Decision 18/CP.26) created a ten-year work programme structured around four pillars — policy coherence, coordinated action, tools and support, and monitoring, evaluation and reporting — with youth participation embedded across each pillar.

2.2 Sharm el-Sheikh (COP27, 2022): operationalisation

The Egyptian Presidency operationalised paragraph 65 with three first-time interventions: the first annual youth-led climate forum; the first Children and Youth Pavilion in the Blue Zone, co-convened with UNICEF; and the appointment of the first Presidency Youth Envoy. The Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan (Decision 1/CP.27) renewed the children-and-youth language of Glasgow and added an explicit reference to Action for Climate Empowerment.

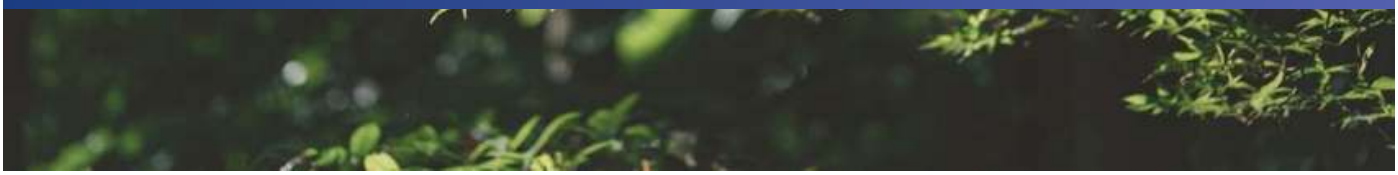
2.3 Dubai (COP28, 2023): institutionalisation

The UAE Presidency's signature contribution was Decision 16/CP.28, which institutionalises the Presidency Youth Climate Champion as a standing role with overlapping two-year mandates. The Decision specifies the PYCC's functions: convening youth dialogues across the Presidency calendar, coordinating with successive Presidencies on continuity of youth-engagement initiatives, and serving as the institutional interlocutor between the Presidency and YOUNGO. COP28 also hosted the first Children and Youth Day in the Presidency programme.

2.4 Baku (COP29, 2024): the finance link

The Azerbaijani Presidency seated the first PYCC under Decision 16 — Leyla Hasanova — and secured the New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance (Decision 1/CMA.6), which contains preambular references to children, youth and intergenerational equity. The NCQG sets a developed-to-developing target of USD 300 billion per year by 2035, within a broader annual envelope to be consolidated through 2025.

Five Presidencies, five institutional layers — each preserved and extended by the Presidency that followed.



Belém (COP30, 2025): Consolidation

2.5 The Youth Mutirão Action Agenda

The Brazilian Presidency's Youth Mutirão Action Agenda is the most substantively developed Presidency youth instrument to date. "Mutirão" refers to the Brazilian tradition of collective community effort. The Action Agenda is organised around six pillars and thirty objectives, and was developed through 26 consultations in 80+ countries engaging 4,200+ young people. COP30 also hosted the inaugural Indigenous Youth Forum and consolidated the NCQG envelope into a USD 1.3 trillion-per-year-by-2035 trajectory.

The Mutirão converted recognition into a set of concrete, traceable deliverables that distinguish it from earlier Presidency youth programmes. Accessibility measures included the City of Youth — an unprecedented initiative by the Government of Belém providing fully subsidised accommodation for 200 young people from 80 countries, co-designed by the PYCC team and the National Youth Secretariat, with 80% of places reserved for young women and LGBTQIA+ youth — alongside subsidised accommodation in an adapted school benefiting at least 200 further delegates and interpretation services for youth events. A multilingual "Youth Mutirão" website, launched on International Youth Day (12 August 2025), recognised 307 youth-led initiatives from 46 countries aligned to the COP30 Action Agenda.

Children's participation reached a new threshold: more than 600 letters from children and adolescents were delivered to negotiators during Pre-COP in the presence of over 1,000 children, and an open call for "MiniCOPs" enabled child-led local climate dialogues. Other strands included the #NDCNOW campaign (381,000 video views; 231,662 reached), tree-planting mutirões that planted at least 500 trees across three continents, and the delivery of an Indigenous Youth Statement to the Presidency. Together these outputs make Belém the clearest demonstration to date of what a resourced PYCC mandate can deliver — while also illustrating its dependence on host-country investment that is not yet structurally guaranteed.

Belém in numbers

4,200+

Young people engaged directly across 26 consultations in 80+ countries.

200

Young people from 80 countries hosted at the City of Youth, fully subsidised.

307

Youth-led initiatives from 46 countries recognised on the Youth Mutirão platform.

600+

Letters from children and adolescents delivered to negotiators during Pre-COP.

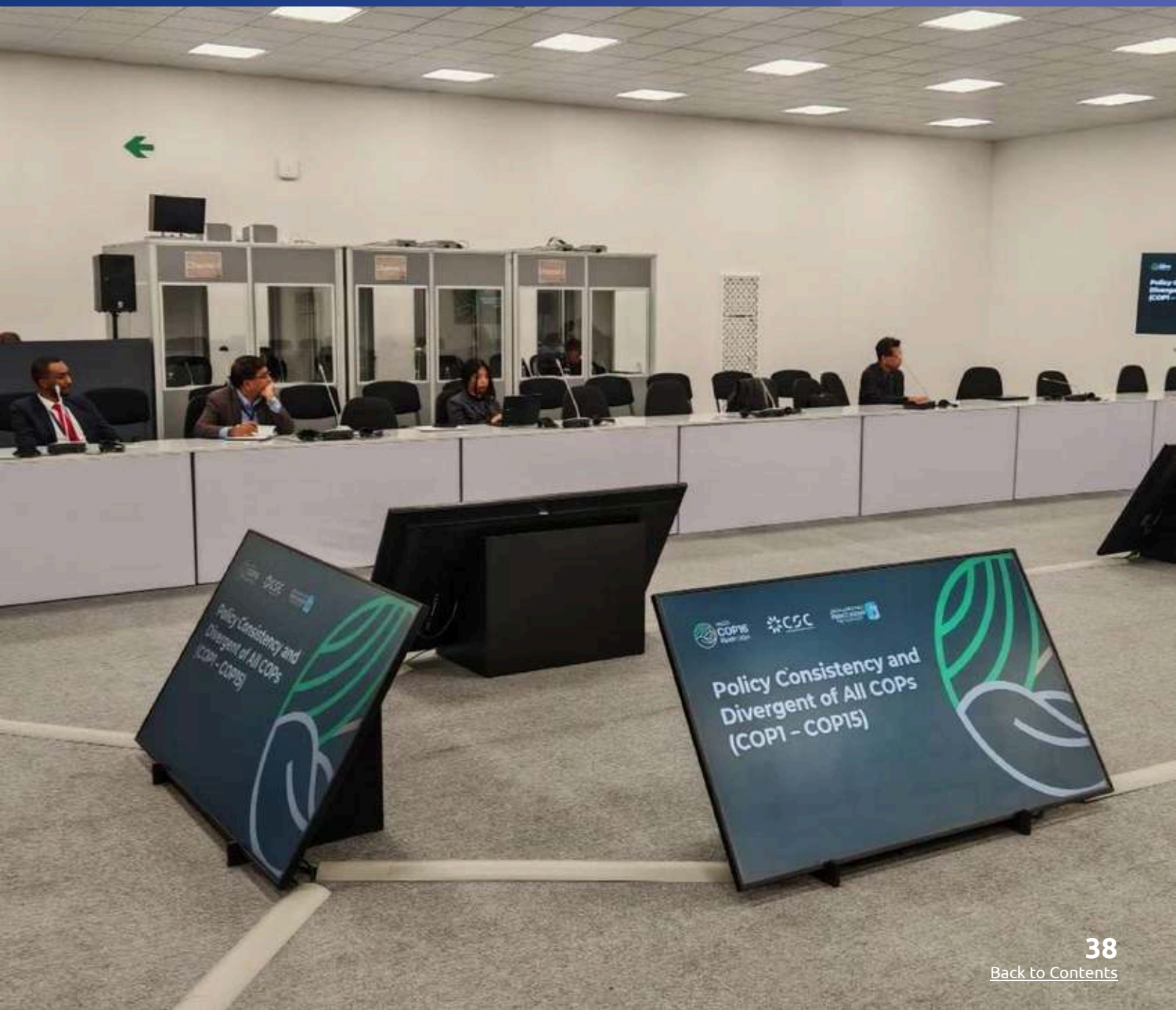
Source: COP30 Presidency & UNFCCC (2026), "Highlights from the COP30 Presidency Youth Climate Champion"; COP30 Presidency (2026), "Inside COP30's Youth Mutirão".

The Youth Mutirão converted recognition into traceable deliverables: the City of Youth, the MiniCOPs, the #NDCNOW campaign and tree-planting mutirões across three continents.



Youth in Negotiations and the Observer Constituency Architecture

This chapter examines how YOUNGO operates within the UNFCCC's nine-constituency architecture, the modalities of youth participation in negotiations, and the procedural and structural constraints that condition youth influence.



A negotiating room at a Conference of the Parties. The most consequential drafting moments are typically inaccessible to observers. Photo credit: UNFCCC.

Youth in Negotiations and the Observer Constituency Architecture

3.1 The nine observer constituencies

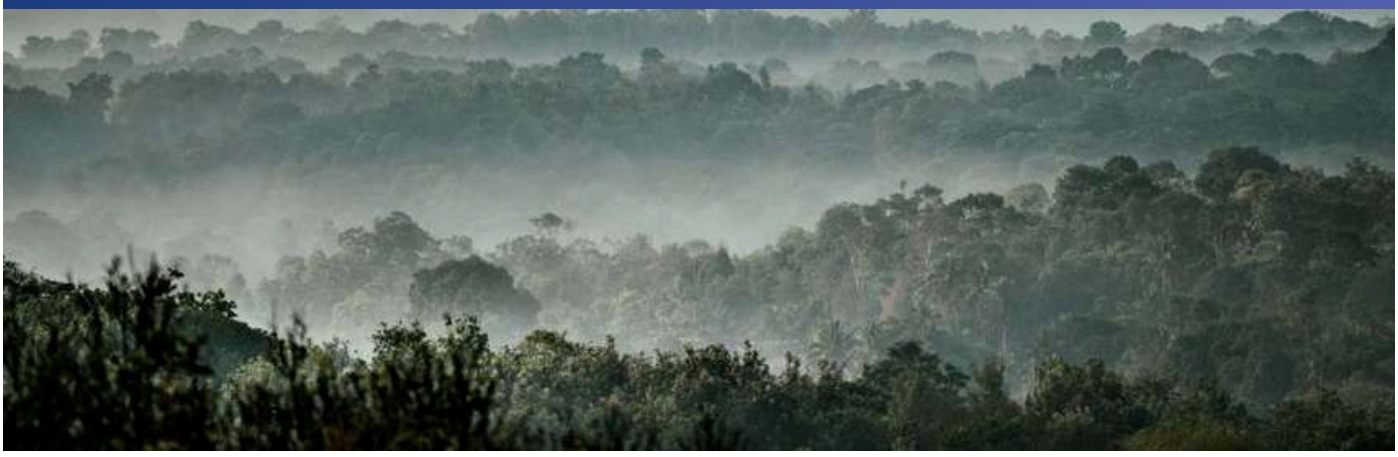
UNFCCC observer participation is organised through nine recognised constituencies, each representing a distinct stakeholder community. The architecture has evolved organically since the Convention's entry into force, with YOUNGO joining as the sixth constituency in 2009 (provisional) and 2011 (formal). The Farmers constituency was the most recent addition, joining in 2014. Together the nine constituencies represent thousands of admitted observer organisations and channel non-Party stakeholder input into the Subsidiary Bodies, the COP and the CMA.

3.2 Modalities of youth participation in negotiations

Youth participation in UNFCCC negotiations operates through six distinct modalities, each with different procedural weight.

- **Plenary interventions.** Constituency Focal Points may speak in plenary sessions of the COP, SBSTA and SBI, typically for two to three minutes.
- **Contact-group participation.** Observers may attend contact groups when open to observers, subject to chair discretion.
- **Written submissions.** Constituencies may make formal written submissions to the secretariat; YOUNGO has made over thirty such submissions since 2010.
- **Side events.** Each COP hosts hundreds of side events in the Blue Zone, and YOUNGO organisations contribute substantially to the side-event programme.
- **Bilateral meetings.** Youth delegates routinely meet Party negotiators bilaterally during a COP.
- **Mandate-track participation.** Since COP26, the annual youth-led climate forum and (since COP28) the PYCC office provide direct, presidency-mediated channels.

Six modalities, six different weights of procedural influence. The most consequential drafting moments remain inaccessible to observers.



The Nine Observer Constituencies

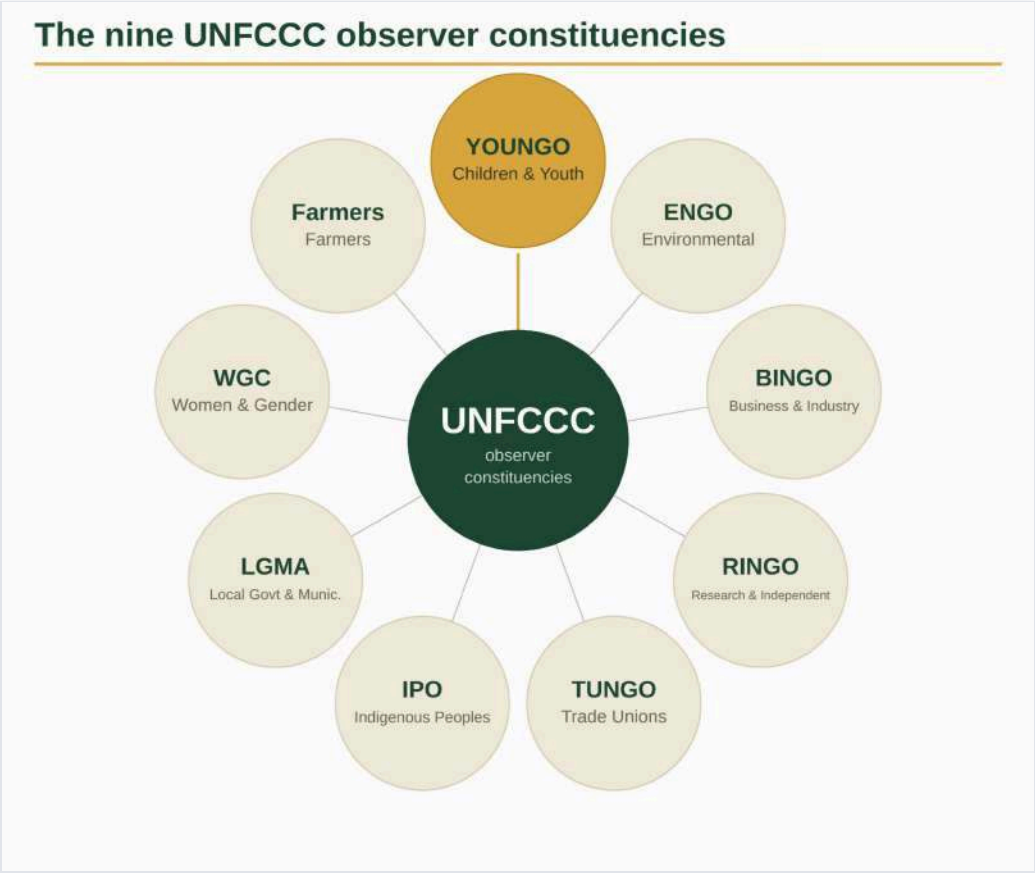


Figure 2. Architecture of the nine UNFCCC observer constituencies, with YOUNGO highlighted.

Source: UNFCCC Secretariat "Statistics on Admission" portal (2024); author's visualisation.

3.3 Procedural and structural constraints

The influence of any one constituency on negotiated outcomes is conditioned by procedural rules and structural realities. First, COP outcomes are adopted by consensus of Parties; observers may speak but cannot vote. Second, secondary-zone access is granted by accreditation, which YOUNGO administers for its members through a constituency quota system. Third, the most consequential drafting moments — closed contact groups, informal-informal sessions, and Presidency huddles in the final days of a COP — are typically inaccessible to observers. Fourth, the consensus rule means that even a strong constituency position can be defeated by the objection of a single Party. These structural features bound the maximum operational reach of any observer constituency, including YOUNGO.

> The consequence is that constituency influence is exercised principally through **agenda-shaping** — submissions, plenary statements, Global Youth Statements and presidency channels — rather than through decisive intervention in the closing hours of a negotiation.

YOUNGO and Institutional Engagement Mechanisms

This chapter examines the operational structure of YOUNGO, the Conference of Youth (COY) ecosystem, and the institutional mechanisms that bridge youth advocacy and Presidency programmes — including the PYCC office and the ACE National Focal Point network.



Young delegates at a Conference of Youth. LCOY and RCOY platforms now operate in more than 140 jurisdictions.

YOUNGO: A Self-Organised Constituency

4.1 Structure and governance

YOUNGO is the official UNFCCC observer constituency representing children and youth (ages broadly under 35). It operates as a non-hierarchical, self-organised network spanning, by its own estimates, approximately 12,000 affiliated organisations across more than 165 countries. Its governance comprises three nested layers. At the top sits the Global Youth Assembly, the open forum convening all affiliated organisations at COY and at intersessional moments. Two rotating Focal Points — elected annually for one-year terms with gender balance — represent the constituency to the UNFCCC Secretariat. A Global Coordination Team of approximately twenty coordinators ensures continuity across COP cycles. Seven core policy Working Groups produce the technical substance of YOUNGO's negotiation engagement: Mitigation, Adaptation, Loss & Damage, Finance, Action for Climate Empowerment, Climate Justice & Human Rights, and Capacity Building & Outreach.

The constituency status now anchoring this structure was extended by the UNFCCC Secretariat to admitted youth NGOs in 2009. The Focal Point line provides an institutional memory of the constituency's development: from Wilson Ang and Lina Li in 2009, through figures such as Marie-Claire Graf and Heeta Lakhani (2020–2021) and the Global North / Global South pairing model, to the 2026 Global Focal Points Megi Marku (Albania) and Timothy Sitanya (Zambia). The roster also overlaps materially with the authorship of YOUNGO's own research: Elizabeth Gulugulu (Focal Point, 2022) and Karishma Ansaram co-authored the constituency's 2023 capacity-building needs analysis and, with Sifa Kinoti, the 2024 Youth Stocktake monitoring-and-evaluation framework — signalling a deliberate shift from advocacy alone toward structured self-monitoring.

YOUNGO operates as a non-hierarchical, self-organised network of approximately 12,000 affiliated organisations across more than 165 countries.



YOUNGO Organisational Structure

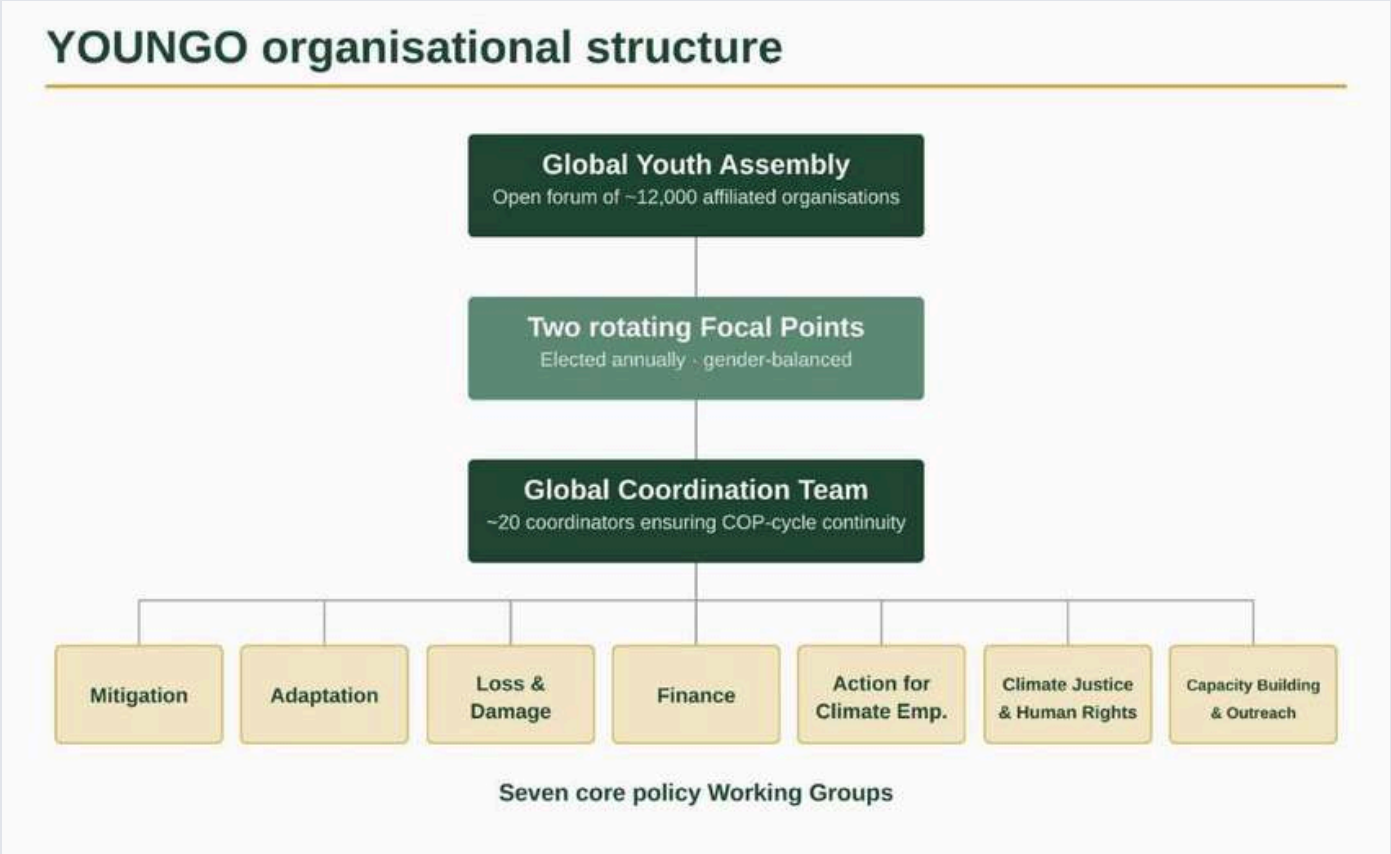


Figure 3. YOUNGO organisational structure: Global Assembly, Focal Points, Global Coordination Team and seven core policy working groups. Seven working groups — Mitigation, Adaptation, Loss & Damage, Finance, Action for Climate Empowerment, Climate Justice & Human Rights, and Capacity Building & Outreach — produce the technical substance of the constituency's negotiation engagement.

Source: YOUNGO publicly available structure documentation (2024); author's synthesis.

Seven core policy working groups produce the technical substance of YOUNGO's negotiation engagement, from mitigation and adaptation to climate justice and capacity building.



The Conference of Youth Ecosystem

4.2 COY, LCOY and the Global Youth Statement

The Conference of Youth (COY) is YOUNGO's annual global youth conference, held immediately preceding each COP and structured to produce a Global Youth Statement transmitted to Parties through the Presidency. COY1 was held at COP11 Montreal (2005). The Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) and Regional Conference of Youth (RCOY) platforms now operate in over 140 jurisdictions, providing pathways for national and regional youth voice to feed into the Global Youth Statement. Türkiye's LCOY platform has been one of the most active in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region, with consistent participation from university-affiliated and ministry-supported youth networks.

The growth of the LCOY platform tracks the broader expansion of the youth-engagement architecture. From 8 LCOYs in 2015, the platform grew to 24 in 2016, contracted during the COVID-affected 2019–2020 period, then expanded sharply to 75 in 2022, 94 in 2023 and 97 in 2024. The RCOY layer, launched in 2017, stabilised at 7–8 platforms per cycle. By the COP29 cycle YOUNGO had endorsed 107 LCOYs and 9 RCOYs in a single year — a scale of decentralised mobilisation that gives the Global Youth Statement an increasingly broad evidentiary base. The GYS is itself a bottom-up instrument: regional and local conference outputs are consolidated through surveys, focus groups and L/RCOYs into a single document, and across COP26 and COP27 the statement aggregated the policy proposals of more than 40,000 young people from over 140 countries.

Two YOUNGO research instruments give the COY ecosystem an emerging evidence base of its own. A 2023 capacity-building needs analysis surveyed roughly 500 young people across eight regions and found that, while most respondents were familiar with the COP process, far fewer could accurately describe YOUNGO's technical and policy role — the strongest demand was for guidance on how to negotiate on the ground, the role of the observer constituency, and the function of the COY and the Global Youth Statement, with adaptation, education and climate finance the most-requested thematic areas. Building on this, YOUNGO's Youth Stocktake initiative — launched at COP28 (2023) and extended in 2024 — proposes a Monitoring and Evaluation framework with three tools: a Parties' checklist on youth inclusion designed to feed the Global Stocktake and Biennial Transparency Reports; a survey instrument for L/R/GCOY participants and organisers; and a Global Youth Statement tracker that scores, on a 0–100% scale, the extent to which each youth demand is acknowledged, its solution recognised, and its implementation reflected in final COP cover text. These instruments are the constituency's direct response to the recognition–implementation gap analysed in Section 10.

8 to 107

LCOY platforms endorsed per cycle, 2015 to the COP29 cycle.

40,000+

Young people across 140+ countries whose proposals fed the COP26–COP27 Global Youth Statements.

From 8 Local Conferences of Youth in 2015 to 107 endorsed in a single COP29 cycle — a scale of decentralised mobilisation that broadens the Global Youth Statement's evidentiary base.



The Presidency Youth Climate Champion Office

4.3 A standing role under Decision 16/CP.28

Decision 16/CP.28 (Dubai, 2023) institutionalised the Presidency Youth Climate Champion as a standing role with overlapping two-year mandates. The first holder under Decision 16 was Leyla Hasanova of Azerbaijan (COP29 Presidency, 2024); the current holder is Marcele Oliveira of Brazil (COP30 Presidency, 2025). The role's principal functions are to convene youth dialogues across the Presidency calendar, coordinate with successive Presidencies on continuity of youth-engagement initiatives, and serve as the institutional interlocutor between the COP Presidency and YOUNGO. The COP31 Türkiye–Australia Presidency will inherit and extend this office through 2027.

The UNFCCC characterises the PYCC as a facilitative role: the Champion may speak on behalf of the Presidency or in a personal capacity, but does not speak on behalf of, or represent, children and young people (Decision 16/CP.28, paragraph 6). The core mission of every PYCC is to enhance the meaningful, inclusive engagement of children and youth in climate action, serving as a bridge between children and youth — including YOUNGO and other youth groups — and the COP Presidency. Because Parties did not prescribe a selection process when they institutionalised the role, each Presidency determines its own appointment procedure and its own format for reporting on the PYCC's work. This design choice grants flexibility but also produces uneven documentation across mandates, reinforcing the case (Section 13) for a standing PYCC secretariat with continuity across Presidency cycles.

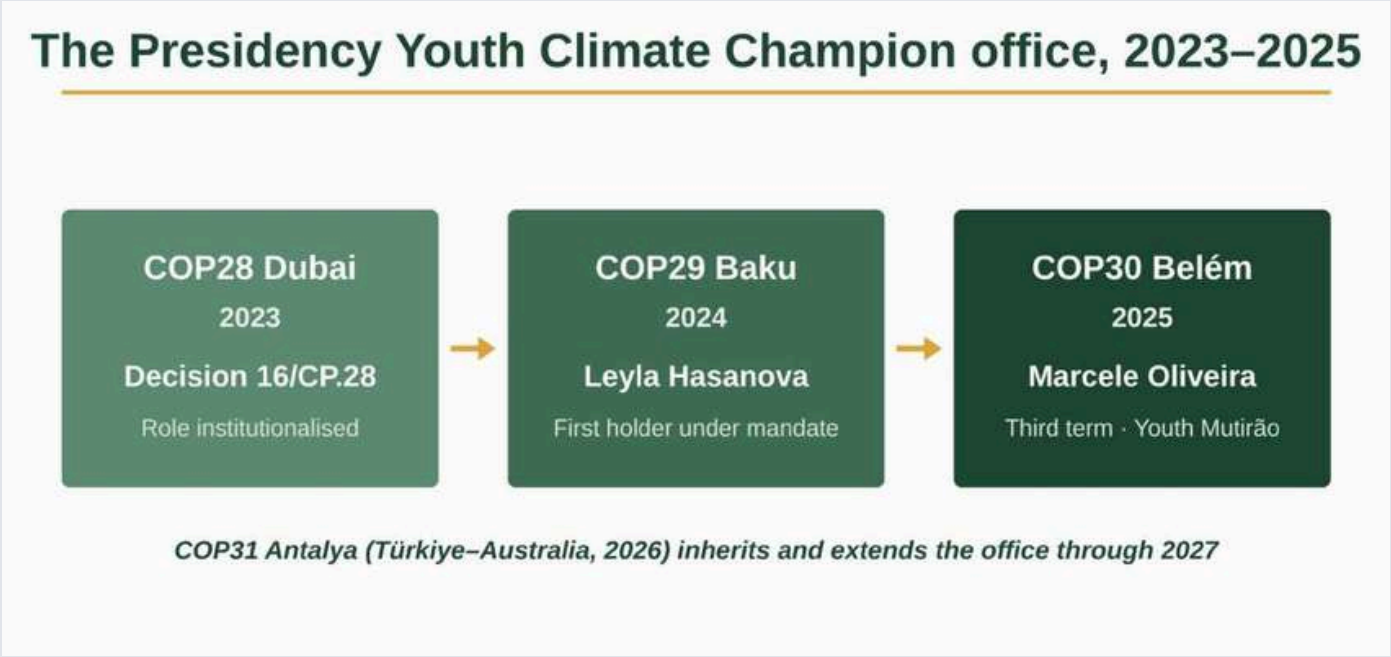


Figure 4. The PYCC office, 2023–2025: three Presidencies, two-year overlapping terms, institutional mandate under Decision 16/CP.28.

Source: Author's compilation from COP28, COP29 and COP30 Presidency outcome documentation.

The PYCC Office in Practice

The two mandates completed to date illustrate how the role is exercised in practice. Leyla Hasanova (COP29, Azerbaijan) — Chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement Youth Organization — framed her mandate around limiting warming to 1.5°C, advocating child- and youth-sensitive indicators in future NDCs, and positioning the Champion as "a bridge between children and young people and the Presidency."

Marcele Oliveira (COP30, Brazil) was appointed by President Lula in 2025 through an innovative open call led by the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic and facilitated by the National Youth Secretariat, which received 154 applications and shortlisted 24 young people. A cultural producer from Realengo in Rio de Janeiro's West Zone and Executive Director of the Perifalab Institute, Oliveira built her mandate around confronting environmental racism, elevating Global South and Amazonian voices, and the "Youth Mutirão" — a concept rooted in the Brazilian and Indigenous tradition of collective community effort.

The COP30 mandate also demonstrates the operational scale a fully resourced PYCC office can reach. Oliveira assembled an advisory team and a Participatory Committee of youth representatives drawn from each of Brazil's six biomes — Amazon, Caatinga, Cerrado, Pampa, Pantanal and Atlantic Forest — and ran a work plan shaped by 26 consultations and conversations engaging more than 4,200 young people directly, generating 928 media pieces and 55 international articles. The Champion's reporting ("Highlights from the COP30 Presidency Youth Climate Champion," published jointly by the COP30 Presidency and the UNFCCC in 2026) documents continuity with her predecessor through the smooth handover from the COP29 PYCC team and the shared #NDCNOW campaign, which built directly on the NDC campaign led by the COP29 PYCC in 2024. This continuity across mandates — rather than the personality of any one holder — is the institutional value the two-year overlapping term was designed to protect.

> *"The Champion is a bridge between children and young people and the Presidency — not a substitute for their voice."*
>
> *Paraphrasing Decision 16/CP.28, paragraph 6, and the mandate framing of the first PYCC, Leyla Hasanova (COP29, Azerbaijan)*

154

Applications received in Brazil's open call for the COP30 PYCC; 24 candidates shortlisted.

928

Media pieces generated by the COP30 PYCC mandate, including 55 international articles.

Continuity across mandates — rather than the personality of any one holder — is the institutional value the two-year overlapping PYCC term was designed to protect.



Climate Justice, Indigenous Youth, Gender and Intergenerational Equity

This chapter examines how the climate-justice frame intersects with youth engagement, with particular attention to Indigenous youth, gender, disability, and the operationalisation of intergenerational equity.

Indigenous and Global South youth remain structurally under-represented within the broader youth-delegate population.



Climate Justice, Indigenous Youth, Gender and Intergenerational Equity

Climate justice has emerged as the dominant analytical frame for youth climate advocacy under the UNFCCC since approximately 2015. The frame integrates three traditions: the environmental-justice tradition originating in 1980s US grassroots movements; the climate-debt tradition associated with the G77+China and Bolivia's COP15-era interventions; and the human-rights-based tradition that gained ground through the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the UN Human Rights Council's recognition (Resolution 48/13, 2021) of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

5.1 Indigenous youth

Indigenous youth occupy a distinctive position in the constituency architecture. They participate through two parallel channels: YOUNGO (the Children and Youth constituency) and IPO (the Indigenous Peoples constituency). COP30 Belém hosted the inaugural Indigenous Youth Forum, an institutional innovation that begins to address the dual-constituency tension. The Amazonian setting of COP30 placed Indigenous youth — particularly from Pan-Amazonian Indigenous Peoples — at the centre of the Presidency's programme.

5.2 Gender

Gender intersects with the youth analysis at multiple points: YOUNGO Focal Points operate under a gender-balance rule (one female and one non-female focal point); the Global Youth Statement consistently demands gender-disaggregated climate finance reporting; and the PYCC office has, in its three terms to date, been held principally by women. The Lima Work Programme on Gender and its successor, the Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender, provide the institutional architecture within which youth–gender intersectionality is operationalised.

5.3 Disability and intersectionality

Youth with disabilities, gender-non-conforming youth, and youth from Small Island Developing States are systematically under-represented within the broader youth-delegate population. The 2023 Independent Youth Stocktake (Voices for Just Climate Action) identifies these intersectional under-representations as the constituency's most pressing equity challenge. COP30 Belém made early moves toward intersectional inclusion through the Indigenous Youth Forum and the LGBTIQ+ Climate Action Working Group within YOUNGO.

Climate justice integrates three traditions: environmental justice, climate debt, and the human-rights-based approach recognised in Resolution 48/13 (2021).



Operationalising Intergenerational Equity

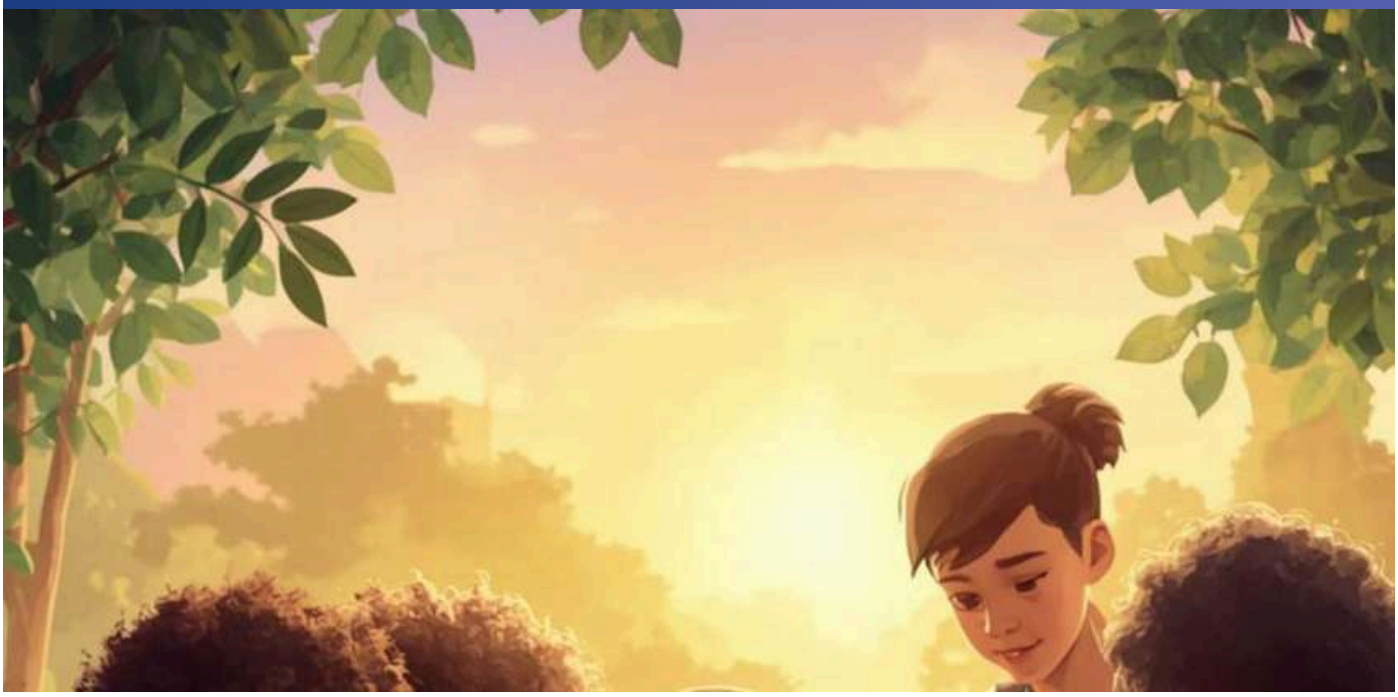
5.4 From preambular aspiration to operational law

The codification of intergenerational equity has moved from preambular aspiration in the 1992 Convention to operational decision text in the Institutionalisation Era. The UN Secretary-General's Common Agenda Policy Brief 1 (2023), "To think and act for future generations," framed the Pact for the Future adopted at the September 2024 Summit of the Future, which contains a Declaration on Future Generations. Translating the Declaration into operational UNFCCC instruments — including a possible intergenerational-equity clause in the NDC 4.0 cycle (due 2035) — is one of the principal opportunities for the COP38–COP40 horizon.

The codification pathway. 1992 Convention preamble › Paris Agreement preamble (2015) › Glasgow Climate Pact paragraphs 64–65 (2021) › Decision 16/CP.28 (2023) › Declaration on Future Generations, Pact for the Future (2024) › a prospective intergenerational-equity clause in the NDC 4.0 cycle (2035).

> *"True intergenerational equity is not achieved when young people are invited into the room. It is achieved when the instruments adopted in that room carry obligations that outlive the people who signed them."*

From preambular aspiration in the 1992 Convention to operational decision text — and, prospectively, an intergenerational-equity clause in the NDC 4.0 cycle due 2035.



Climate Finance Access for Youth-Led Initiatives

This chapter examines the architecture of climate finance from the vantage point of youth-led initiatives. It documents the disparity between rhetorical commitments to youth engagement and the structural barriers that prevent youth-led organisations from accessing climate finance at scale.



Community-scale renewable energy. Minimum grant sizes in multilateral channels typically exceed the absorptive capacity of youth-led organisations.

The Climate-Finance Architecture

6.1 Four interconnected layers

The climate-finance architecture under the UNFCCC operates through four interconnected layers. At the apex sit the multilateral climate funds: the Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility, the Adaptation Fund, and the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (operational from 2024). A second layer comprises bilateral and regional development banks, including the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. A third layer comprises national climate funds and national climate-change programmes. A fourth layer comprises youth-targeted mechanisms: the African Development Bank's YouthAdapt programme, YOUNGO's microgrant programme, the Children Investment Fund Foundation grants, the CYNESA East-Africa youth fund, and country-specific LCOY seed-fund mechanisms.

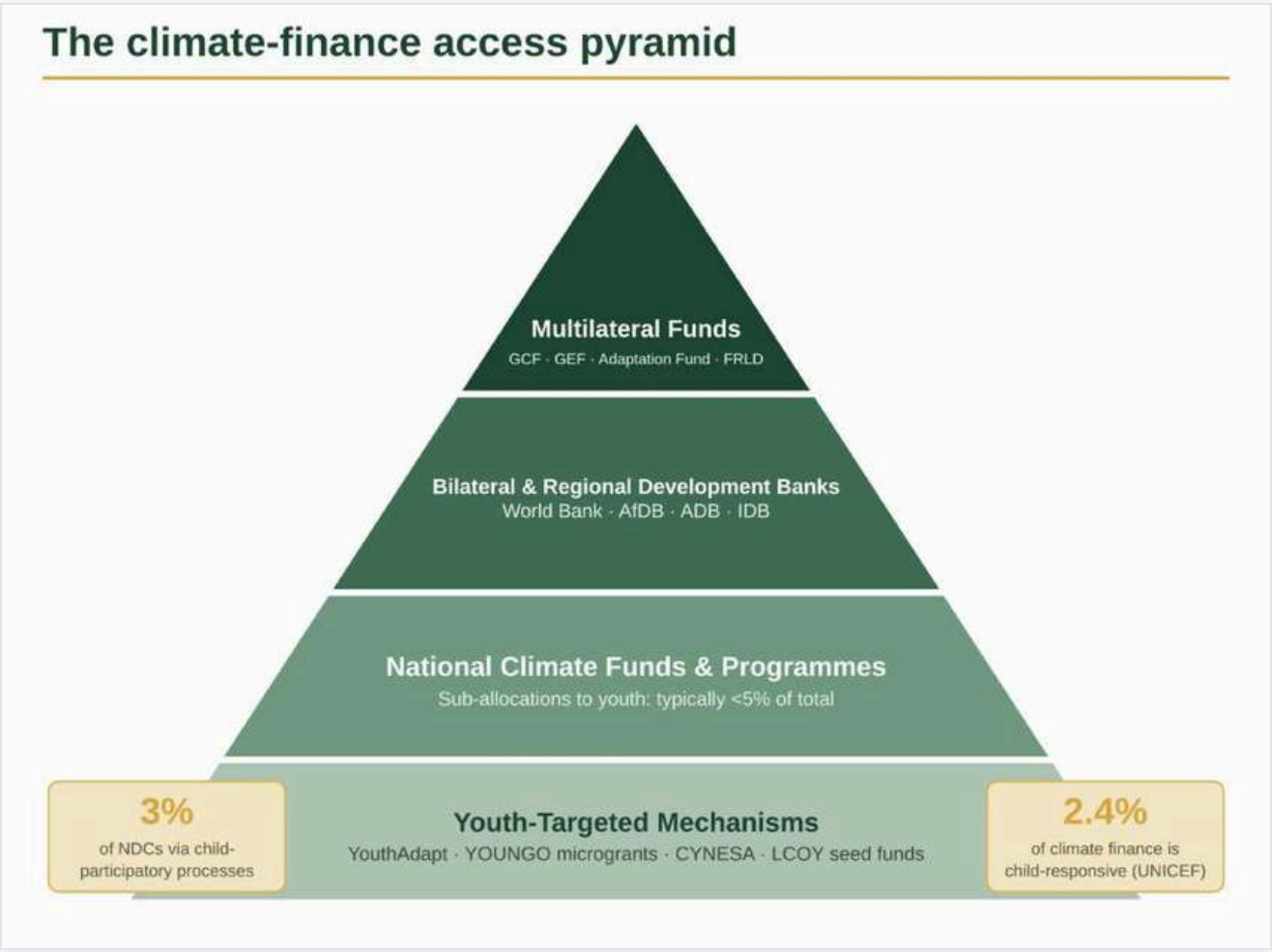


Figure 5. The climate-finance access pyramid: diminishing access to capital as one moves down the architecture from multilateral funds to grassroots youth-led initiatives.

Source: UNICEF (2024) media advisory on COP29 for the 2.4% indicator; UNICEF (2023) for the 3% NDC indicator; author's visualisation.

The Youth-Finance Gap

6.2 Empirical indicators

Independent monitoring produces a consistent set of empirical indicators of the youth-finance gap. UNICEF estimates that only 2.4% of multilateral climate finance is child-responsive (UNICEF, 2024). Of the 591 climate-fund projects approved by the GCF, the GEF, the Adaptation Fund, the Climate Investment Funds and the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience between 2006 and 2023, only one had education as its principal objective. Approximately 3% of Nationally Determined Contributions submitted under the Paris Agreement were developed through participatory processes that included children and youth in a structured way, and fewer than half of NDCs are explicitly child- or youth-sensitive in their content (UNICEF, 2023). The Standing Committee on Finance's 2024 Biennial Assessment indicates that Article 12 (ACE) activities account for less than 1% of multilateral climate-finance flows.

6.3 Structural barriers for youth-led organisations

- **Minimum grant size.** Multilateral channels typically require minimum grants of USD 250,000 or higher, well above the absorptive capacity of most youth-led organisations.
- **Accreditation requirements.** GCF accreditation is resource-intensive and lengthy; few youth-led organisations are independently accredited.
- **Reporting burdens.** Results-based finance imposes reporting requirements that exceed the administrative capacity of grassroots youth-led entities.
- **Language.** Most multilateral application processes operate in English, French and Spanish, excluding youth-led organisations operating in Arabic, Portuguese, Russian, Mandarin and dozens of national languages.

6.4 The NCQG opening

The New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance, agreed at COP29 Baku and consolidated at COP30 Belém into a USD 1.3 trillion-per-year-by-2035 envelope, is the single most important policy opening of the COP31–COP40 cycle for embedding youth-responsive criteria at scale. Specific operational opportunities include: dedicated youth windows within the GCF and the GEF; child- and youth-responsiveness as a tracked dimension in NCQG-aligned reporting; minimum-grant-size flexibilities for accredited youth-led entities; and a youth seat on the Loss & Damage Fund Governing Board.

2.4%

Of multilateral climate finance assessed as child-responsive (UNICEF, 2024).

<1%

Of multilateral climate-finance flows tagged to Article 12 / ACE activities (SCF, 2024).

Of every USD 100 in multilateral climate finance, only USD 2.40 is assessed as child-responsive.



Green Jobs, Skills and Youth Entrepreneurship in the Climate Transition

This chapter examines the labour-market dimension of the climate transition from the perspective of young workers and entrepreneurs, drawing on ILO, UNESCO and OECD data on green-jobs creation, skills gaps and youth-led climate-tech entrepreneurship.

Energy-efficient construction and retrofitting offer the largest near-term green-jobs gains in OECD economies.



Green Jobs, Skills and Youth Entrepreneurship

The climate transition is projected to create a substantial net increase in global employment by 2030, but the distribution of those jobs across regions, sectors and skill levels is uneven. ILO modelling suggests approximately 100 million new green jobs will be created by 2030 in a moderately ambitious transition scenario, partially offset by approximately 75 million jobs displaced in fossil-fuel and energy-intensive sectors. Youth — defined here as ages 15–34 — are projected to capture a disproportionate share of new green jobs because of their over-representation in entry-level positions and their concentration in geographies experiencing the most rapid renewable-energy expansion.

7.1 Sectoral patterns

Green-jobs growth is concentrated in five sectors. Renewable-energy generation and storage is the largest by absolute employment, with solar PV and onshore wind leading. Energy-efficient construction and retrofitting offer the largest near-term gains in OECD economies. Sustainable transport — public transit, electric mobility, active travel infrastructure — is rapidly scaling in major urban markets. Climate-smart agriculture and ecosystem-restoration jobs are the principal pathway for rural and Indigenous youth. Green digital and AI-enabled climate services constitute an emerging sector with significant cross-cutting demand.

7.2 Structural barriers to youth access

- **Skills mismatch.** TVET systems have integrated systematic green-skills curricula in fewer than 20% of countries (UNESCO-UNEVOC).
- **Access to early-stage capital.** An estimated 1–2% of global climate-tech venture capital reaches African and Latin American youth founders.
- **Geographic concentration.** Green-jobs growth in OECD economies and a small number of large emerging markets (China, India, Brazil, Indonesia) leaves Sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia-Pacific under-served.

~100 m

New green jobs projected by 2030 in a moderately ambitious transition scenario (ILO).

~75 m

Jobs displaced in fossil-fuel and energy-intensive sectors over the same horizon.

Renewable-energy generation and storage is the largest green-jobs sector by absolute employment, with solar PV and onshore wind leading.



Green Skills and Just Transition

7.3 The Türkiye green-skills agenda

Türkiye's 2053 Net-Zero Strategy and the Twelfth Development Plan (2024–2028) embed green-skills development as a national priority. The Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change leads cross-ministerial coordination with the Ministry of Industry and Technology and the Ministry of National Education on green-TVET curriculum reform. The COP31 host position offers a unique platform to scale these national initiatives into a regional Mediterranean–Black Sea green-skills compact, in dialogue with co-host Australia's Pacific green-skills programmes.

7.4 Just-transition framings

The Just Transition Work Programme (Decision 3/CMA.5, COP28) provides the institutional vehicle for connecting youth, labour and climate dimensions within the UNFCCC. Three operational sub-themes are particularly relevant for youth: skills and lifelong learning; social protection floors for transition-affected workers and entrants; and decent work in green sectors. Youth representation in the Just Transition Work Programme dialogues remains modest, and a stronger institutional bridge between YOUNGO, TUNGO (the Trade Union NGOs constituency) and the ILO's green-jobs programme would be a high-leverage COP31–COP33 priority.

> *"A just transition that does not resource the skills of the workers who will deliver it is a plan without a workforce."*

Recommendation link. Recommendation 09 proposes a Türkiye–Australia co-led Global Green Skills Compact under the Just Transition Work Programme, with national green-skills targets as the tracked indicator. See Section 14.

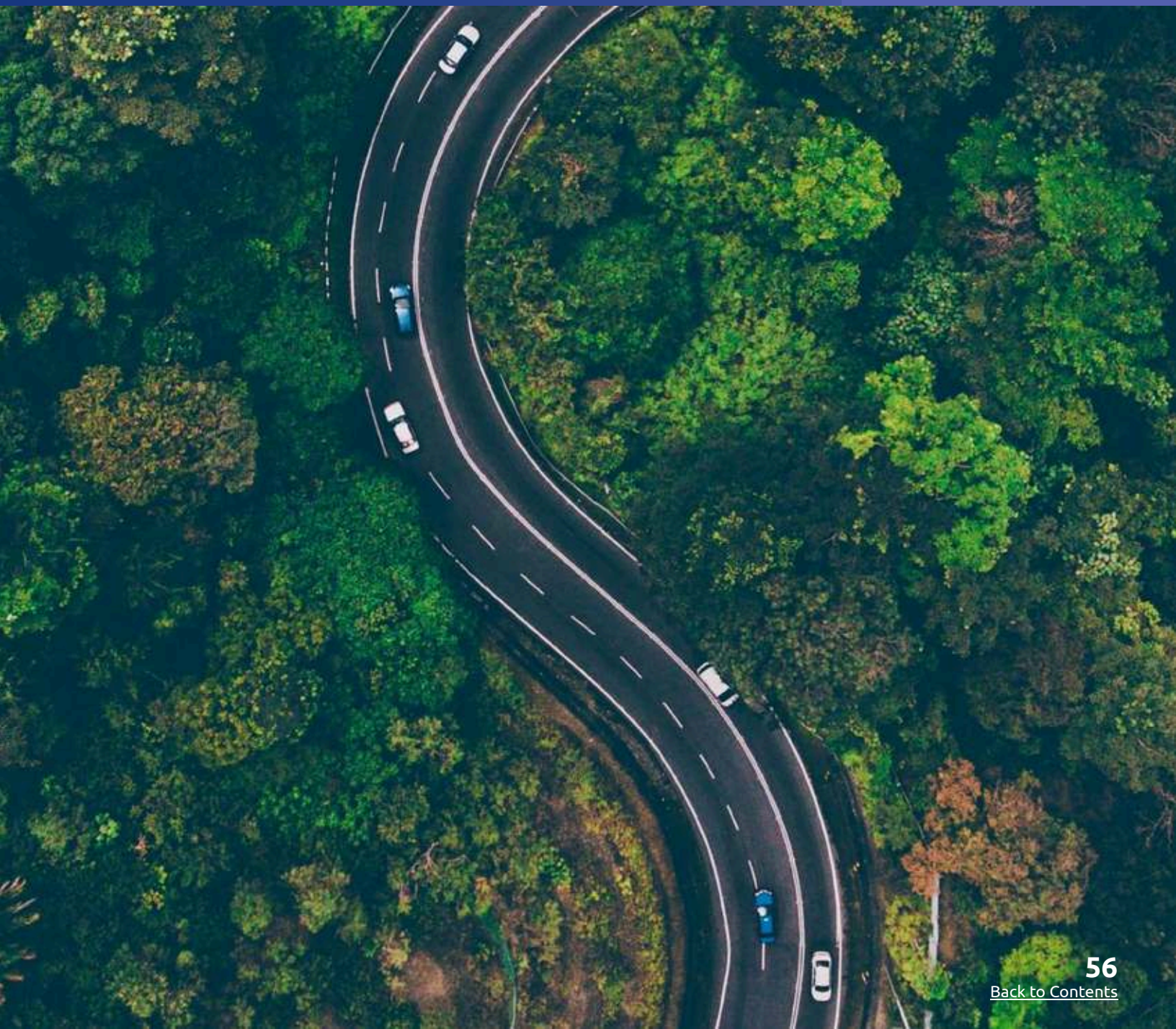
Climate-smart agriculture and ecosystem restoration are the principal green-jobs pathway for rural and Indigenous youth.



Regional Disparities in Youth Engagement

Youth engagement under the UNFCCC is geographically uneven. This chapter documents the regional disparities in Blue-Zone participation, LCOY coverage, and access to climate finance.

Visa costs, travel finance and quota allocation shape who is physically present in the Blue Zone.



The Current Regional Distribution

8.1 Where the delegates come from

Despite the geographic expansion of LCOY and RCOY platforms to over 140 jurisdictions, Blue-Zone youth participation remains concentrated in delegates from the Global North. Estimated regional shares for COP28, COP29 and COP30, averaged across the three sessions, place European delegates at approximately 31% of the youth Blue-Zone presence, North American at 22%, Asian at 18%, African at 13%, Latin American and Caribbean at 11%, and Oceanian and Small-Island delegates at approximately 5%. These shares contrast with the underlying global youth population distribution, which places approximately 60% of all 15–24 year-olds in Asia and Africa.

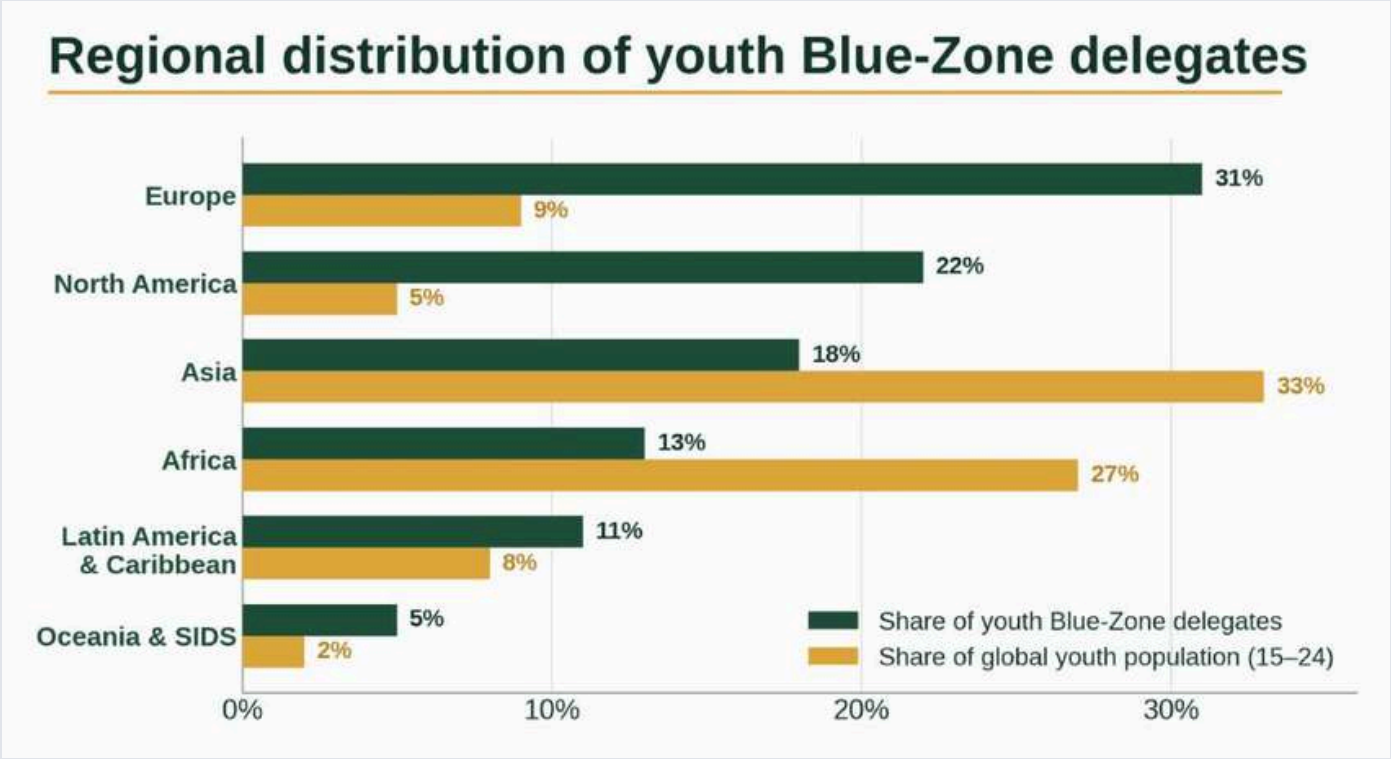


Figure 6. Estimated regional distribution of youth Blue-Zone delegates, COP28–COP30 average. Europe and North America together account for >50% of youth delegates despite hosting <20% of the global youth population.

Source: Author's synthesis from YOUNGO accreditation summaries, COP Presidency reports, and Voices for Just Climate Action data.

Europe and North America together account for more than half of youth Blue-Zone delegates, despite hosting under a fifth of the global youth population.



Drivers and Coverage

8.2 The drivers of regional asymmetry

- **Host-country effects.** COP21 (Paris), COP25 (Madrid) and COP26 (Glasgow) substantially boosted European participation; COP27 (Sharm el-Sheikh) and COP30 (Belém) boosted African and Latin American participation respectively.
- **Visa and travel-cost constraints.** Global South youth face significantly higher barriers to physical attendance.
- **Quota allocation.** The YOUNGO accreditation quota system, while equitable in principle, depends on member-organisation initiative and capacity to apply.
- **Funding for delegation participation.** Most Global North youth delegates self-fund or are supported by national networks; most Global South youth delegates depend on multilateral or philanthropic delegation-support programmes.

8.3 LCOY and RCOY coverage

The LCOY/RCOY platform now operates in approximately 141 jurisdictions across six regional networks. Africa hosts approximately 38 LCOYs, Asia-Pacific approximately 28, Eastern Europe approximately 15, Latin America & Caribbean approximately 22, Western Europe & Others approximately 28, and SIDS approximately 10. The platform is a powerful instrument for translating local youth voice into the Global Youth Statement, but its uneven coverage — particularly in Asia-Pacific relative to that region's youth population — is a structural equity challenge addressed in the Annex H regional dataset.

~60%

Of all 15–24 year-olds globally live in Asia and Africa.

~31%

Of youth Blue-Zone delegates are European — the single largest regional share.

> *"Coverage is not the same as proportionality. A platform present in 141 jurisdictions can still deliver a Blue Zone that looks nothing like the world's youth population."*

Host-country effects, visa and travel costs, quota allocation and delegation funding together drive the regional asymmetry.



Digital Activism, AI and Youth Climate Movements

This chapter examines how digital tools, social media and emerging AI capabilities have reshaped youth climate organising, and the implications for the next decade of UNFCCC engagement.

The 2018–2020 Global School Strikes combined decentralised local-chapter autonomy with high-density digital coordination.



Digital Activism, AI and Youth Climate Movements

The 2018–2020 Global School Strikes movement, anchored by Fridays for Future, is the largest youth-led mobilisation in modern environmental history. At its September 2019 peak, approximately six million participants joined coordinated demonstrations across 4,500 locations in 150 countries. The movement's organisational signature combines decentralised local-chapter autonomy with high-density digital coordination — a template that has shaped subsequent youth climate organising and contributed directly to the substantive uplift of paragraphs 64–65 of the Glasgow Climate Pact.

9.1 Three digital-transformation trajectories

- **Social-media platform fragmentation.** Organising has shifted away from Twitter/X toward TikTok, Instagram Reels, Discord and decentralised platforms, with consequences for coordination, discoverability and surveillance.
- **Generative-AI tools.** Youth networks are adopting generative AI for policy analysis, submission drafting, multilingual translation, and grassroots climate education at unprecedented scale.
- **AI-mediated negotiation tracking.** Tools that automatically summarise SBSTA and SBI documents, transcribe contact-group statements, and parse cover-decision drafts have substantially lowered the technical barrier to youth participation in real-time negotiation engagement.

9.2 Risks and governance questions

- **Surveillance and digital safety.** Youth climate activists in jurisdictions with restrictive civic space face heightened surveillance risks.
- **AI bias.** Generative-AI tools trained primarily on Global North data risk reproducing existing geographic and linguistic asymmetries.
- **Mental-health implications.** The always-on coordination demands of digital climate organising contribute to documented climate-anxiety and burnout patterns among engaged youth respondents (Voices for Just Climate Action, 2023).

The Horizon 2 (COP34–COP37) priority of an independent youth-accountability monitoring mechanism should embed these governance questions into its design.

~6 million

Participants at the September 2019 Global Climate Strike peak.

4,500

Coordinated demonstration locations across 150 countries.

Organising has shifted from Twitter/X toward TikTok, Instagram Reels, Discord and decentralised platforms — with consequences for coordination, discoverability and surveillance.



Barriers, Implementation Gaps and the Recognition–Implementation Gap

This chapter consolidates the policy paper's diagnostic argument: that the UNFCCC system has achieved substantial textual and institutional recognition of youth engagement, but that operational implementation lags significantly behind.

Recognition without resourcing produces the appearance of progress and the experience of stagnation.



The Gap, Quantified

The policy paper's central diagnostic claim is the existence of a recognition–implementation gap. **Recognition** is operationalised here as the appearance of youth, children, intergenerational, or ACE references in cover decisions, work programmes, and Presidency outcome statements. **Implementation** is operationalised as the share of climate finance reaching youth-led entities, the prevalence of structured youth-participation processes in NDC development, the institutional resourcing of the PYCC office and the Glasgow Work Programme on ACE, and the equity of accreditation across the YOUNGO membership.

10.1 On every metric, the system under-performs against its own baseline

Recognition versus implementation

Dimension	Recognition	Implementation
Climate finance	~80% recognition coverage in post-2021 cover decisions	Only 2.4% of multilateral climate finance is child-responsive (UNICEF, 2024)
NDC integration	>90% rhetorical recognition of youth in NDCs	~3% of NDCs developed through structured participatory processes with children
Accreditation equity	Universal language in YOUNGO membership criteria	Global North over-representation by 15–20 percentage points relative to youth population shares
PYCC resourcing	Institutionalised status under Decision 16/CP.28	Principally Presidency-funded with no standing secretariat
ACE implementation	Glasgow Work Programme adopted with four pillars	<1% of multilateral climate-finance flows tagged to ACE / Article 12

Source: Author's synthesis from UNFCCC cover decisions, UNICEF (2023, 2024), the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance Biennial Assessment (2024) and YOUNGO accreditation data.

> *"Recognition without resourcing produces the appearance of progress and the experience of stagnation. The COP31–COP40 cycle must be the era in which resourced implementation catches up with textual recognition."*

Recognition without resourcing produces the appearance of progress and the experience of stagnation.



Closing the Gap

10.2 A four-part agenda

01

Finance reform

Dedicated youth windows in the GCF, GEF and Adaptation Fund; minimum-grant-size flexibilities for accredited youth-led entities; and a youth seat on the Loss & Damage Fund Governing Board.

Horizon 1–2 · GCF, GEF, AF, FRLD Boards

02

NDC integration

A mandatory youth marker in NCQG-aligned reporting from the 2027 NDC 3.0 cycle.

Horizon 2 · UNFCCC Secretariat; Standing Committee on Finance

03

Accreditation reform

Secretariat publication of age-disaggregated participation statistics; visa- and travel-finance reform for Global South youth delegates.

Horizon 1 · UNFCCC Secretariat; host countries

04

ACE resourcing

A standing PYCC secretariat funded multi-laterally; LCOY/RCOY core funding through the Glasgow Work Programme on ACE budget.

Horizon 1 · UNFCCC Secretariat; Presidencies; Parties

> These four shifts are developed into ten addressable recommendations in Section 14, and sequenced across three ten-year horizons in Section 13.

Four operational shifts — finance reform, NDC integration, accreditation reform and ACE resourcing — would substantially close the recognition–implementation gap.



Comparative Presidency Analysis, COP26–COP30

This chapter compares the youth-engagement architecture of the five Presidencies of the Institutionalisation Era — Glasgow (COP26), Sharm el-Sheikh (COP27), Dubai (COP28), Baku (COP29) and Belém (COP30) — and identifies the contributions each has made to the cumulative architecture.

Each Presidency of the Institutionalisation Era added a durable institutional layer that its successors preserved and extended.



Comparative Presidency Dashboard

Comparative Presidency dashboard: youth dimensions, COP26–COP30

Dimension	COP26 Glasgow 2021	COP27 Sharm 2022	COP28 Dubai 2023	COP29 Baku 2024	COP30 Belém 2025
PYCC office *institutionalisation*	—	First Youth Envoy	**Decision 16/CP.28**	First under mandate	Third term
Annual youth-led forum	**Established**	First held	Held	Held	Held + Mutirão
Children & Youth Pavilion *Blue Zone*	—	**First in Blue Zone**	Continued	Continued	Continued
Youth-targeted finance *commitments*	Limited	Limited	YouthAdapt mention	**NCQG youth refs**	**1.3tn/yr roadmap**
Regional / SIDS support *delegations*	Limited	**African Youth Prog.**	MENA expansion	Caspian focus	**Indigenous focus**
Action Agenda integration	—	Limited	Pavilions + pledges	Action Agenda	**Youth Mutirão**

Gold cells indicate leading practice for that Presidency.

Figure 7. Comparative Presidency dashboard on youth dimensions, COP26–COP30. Gold highlighting indicates leading practice for that Presidency.

Source: Author's synthesis from Presidency outcome reports, COP cover decisions, and PYCC reports.

Each Presidency of the Institutionalisation Era has added a durable institutional layer. **Glasgow** (UK, COP26) contributed the textual scaffolding of paragraphs 64 and 65 of the Glasgow Climate Pact and the parallel adoption of the Glasgow Work Programme on ACE. **Sharm el-Sheikh** (Egypt, COP27) operationalised paragraph 65 with the first annual youth-led climate forum, the first Children and Youth Pavilion, and the first Presidency Youth Envoy. **Dubai** (UAE, COP28) institutionalised the PYCC office through Decision 16/CP.28. **Baku** (Azerbaijan, COP29) embedded the first PYCC under Decision 16 and secured NCQG youth-references. **Belém** (Brazil, COP30) consolidated the architecture with the Youth Mutirão Action Agenda, a six-pillar thirty-objective framework engaging 4,200+ youth across 26 consultations in 80+ countries.

Each Presidency of the Institutionalisation Era added a durable layer that its successors preserved and extended.



Looking Ahead: COP31 Antalya

11.1 Inheriting a cumulative architecture

COP31 Antalya (Türkiye–Australia, 2026) inherits this cumulative architecture and is uniquely positioned to consolidate it. The Türkiye Presidency's priorities — anchored in the Twelfth Development Plan (2024–2028) and the 2053 Net-Zero Strategy — emphasise green skills, climate education, just-transition pathways, and Mediterranean/Black Sea regional cooperation. Co-hosting with Australia opens additional opportunities for North–South partnership on Pacific climate justice and Indigenous-youth engagement. The policy paper's ten recommendations (Section 14) are calibrated for COP31 implementation and the COP31–COP33 mid-term review cycle of the Glasgow Work Programme on ACE.

The cumulative layers, COP26–COP30

COP26 Glasgow — textual anchor (paras 64–65; GWP on ACE)
COP27 Sharm el-Sheikh — operationalisation (forum, pavilion, envoy)
COP28 Dubai — institutionalisation (Decision 16/CP.28)
COP29 Baku — the finance link (NCQG youth references)
COP30 Belém — consolidation (Youth Mutirão Action Agenda)

What COP31 Antalya inherits

A standing PYCC office with an overlapping mandate through 2027; a mid-term review of the Glasgow Work Programme on ACE due in 2026; an NCQG envelope awaiting youth-responsive criteria; and a dual-host arrangement with Australia that opens Mediterranean–Black Sea and Pacific channels simultaneously.

> *"The era of new declarations and pavilions is reaching saturation. The operational question — how to resource, evaluate and reform existing architecture — must dominate the COP31–COP40 cycle."*

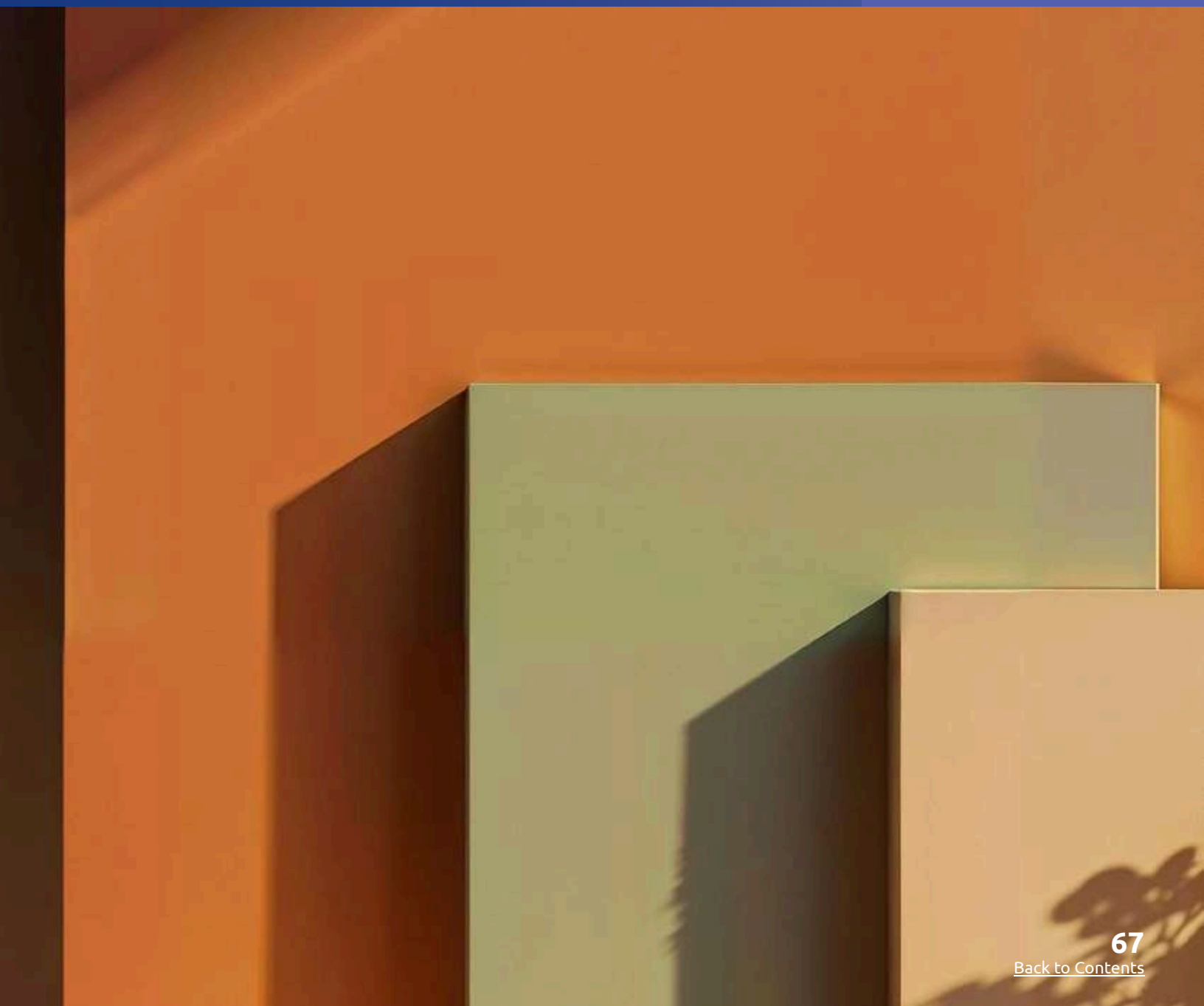
COP31 Antalya inherits a cumulative architecture and is uniquely positioned to consolidate it under a Türkiye–Australia dual Presidency.



SPOTLIGHT · TÜRKIYE, COP31 HOST

Türkiye and the COP31 Antalya Youth Agenda

Türkiye will host COP31 in Antalya in November 2026 in partnership with Australia under a unique dual-host arrangement. The Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change has appointed a dedicated National Focal Point for Youth and Education within the COP31 Action Agenda — placing youth engagement structurally at the heart of the Presidency programme from the outset.



COP31 will be held in Antalya in November 2026 under a Türkiye–Australia dual-host arrangement.

Türkiye and the COP31 Antalya Youth Agenda

Strategic context

Türkiye ratified the Paris Agreement in October 2021 and adopted a 2053 Net-Zero Strategy. The Twelfth Development Plan (2024–2028) sets cross-cutting green-transition objectives. The Climate Law (Law No. 7552, 2025) establishes the legal architecture for emissions reduction and the national emissions trading system. Within this framework, the Directorate of Climate Change leads cross-ministerial coordination on adaptation, mitigation, climate finance, and Action for Climate Empowerment.

Youth and education in the COP31 Action Agenda

The COP31 Action Agenda is organised around five axes, with Axis 5 dedicated to people, education and just transition. The dedicated National Focal Point for Youth and Education within Axis 5 leads coordination with YOUNGO, the PYCC office of the COP30 Brazilian Presidency, the incoming COP32 (2027) Presidency, and the UNFCCC Secretariat. Türkiye has indicated four operational priorities for the youth-and-education axis:

- Green-skills development through TVET reform;
- Integration of climate change into formal curricula at all levels;
- A regional Mediterranean–Black Sea youth platform;
- A structured Türkiye–Australia youth dialogue across the dual Presidency.

Türkiye in comparative perspective

Türkiye's youth share of its COP28 national delegation was approximately 11.5%, below the sample mean of approximately 14.7% across 17 Parties examined (Figure 9). The COP31 host position offers a natural occasion to consolidate Türkiye's delegation-youth share toward the 17–25% range achieved by Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands and Norway. Crossing the 17% threshold by COP31 would place Türkiye in the leading quartile of Parties on this dimension.

11.5%

Türkiye's youth share of its COP28 national delegation.

14.7%

Sample mean across the 17 Parties examined in Figure 9.

Türkiye's 2053 Net-Zero Strategy and the Twelfth Development Plan embed green-skills development as a national priority.



Türkiye in Comparative Perspective

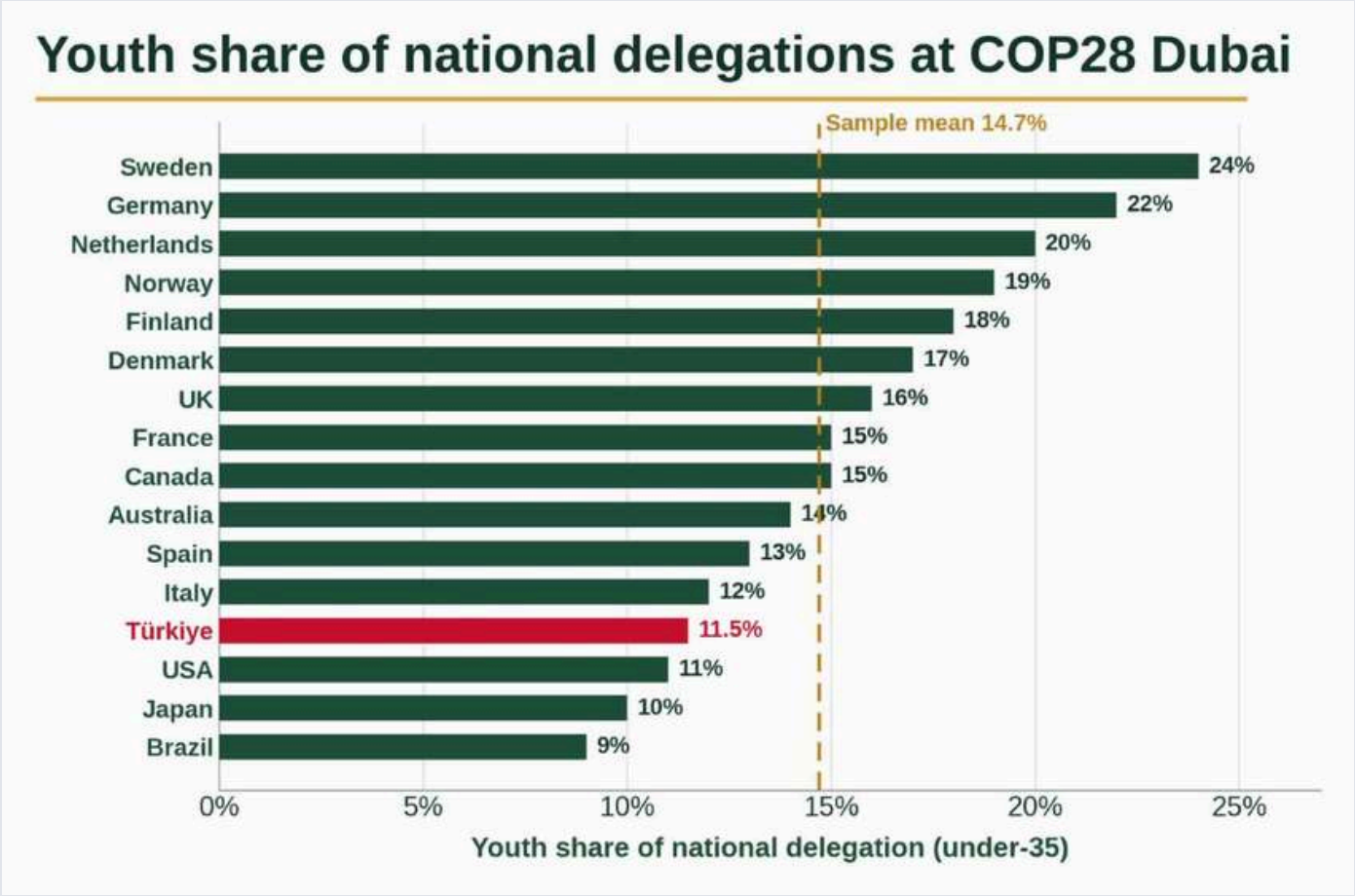
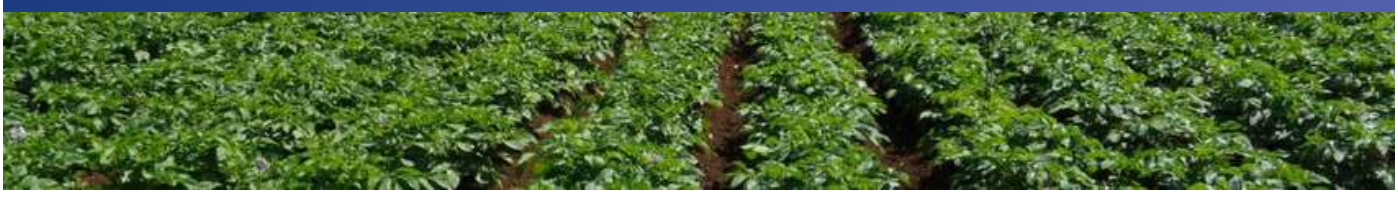


Figure 9. Youth share of national delegations at COP28 Dubai, illustrative sample of 17 Parties. Türkiye highlighted in red.

Source: Author's compilation from Party-published delegation lists, COP28 (UAE, 2023).

> *"Crossing the 17% threshold by COP31 would place Türkiye in the leading quartile of Parties on delegation-youth share."*

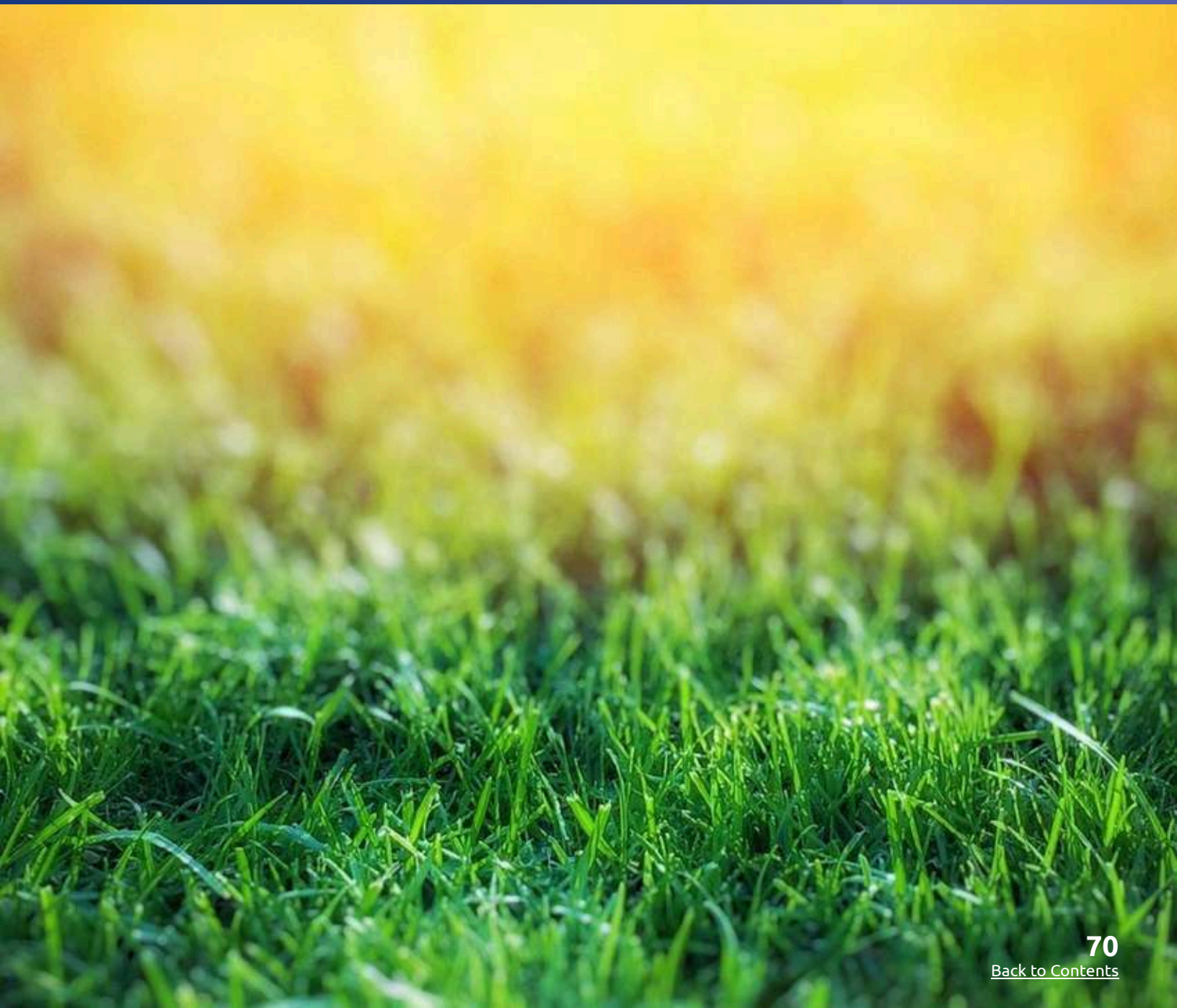
Crossing the 17% threshold by COP31 would place Türkiye in the leading quartile of Parties on delegation-youth share.



SDG, Paris Agreement and Loss and Damage Linkages

This chapter analyses the linkages between the UNFCCC youth-engagement architecture and three adjacent multilateral instruments: the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030), the Paris Agreement implementation cycle, and the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage.

Youth engagement under the UNFCCC intersects with at least eight of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.



Sustainable Development Goals

12.1 An eight-goal intersection

Youth engagement under the UNFCCC intersects with at least eight of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals. SDG 4 (Quality Education) is the most directly relevant: target 4.7 specifies education for sustainable development. SDG 13 (Climate Action) has explicit youth-engagement language under target 13.3. SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), SDG 17 (Partnerships), and SDG 1 (No Poverty) also intersect substantively. The eight-by-seventeen alignment matrix in Figure 10 maps the strength of linkage between each major youth-related COP outcome theme and each SDG.



The seventeen Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. Youth engagement under the UNFCCC intersects most strongly with SDG 4, SDG 13 and SDG 17.

Source: United Nations (2015), *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1).

The three strongest linkages



Target 4.7 specifies education for sustainable development — the direct anchor for Action for Climate Empowerment under Article 6 and Article 12.



Target 13.3 carries explicit youth-engagement language on education, awareness-raising and institutional capacity for climate action.



Goal 17 underpins the constituency architecture itself — the multi-stakeholder partnerships through which youth voice reaches the process.

SDG Alignment of Youth-Related COP Outcomes

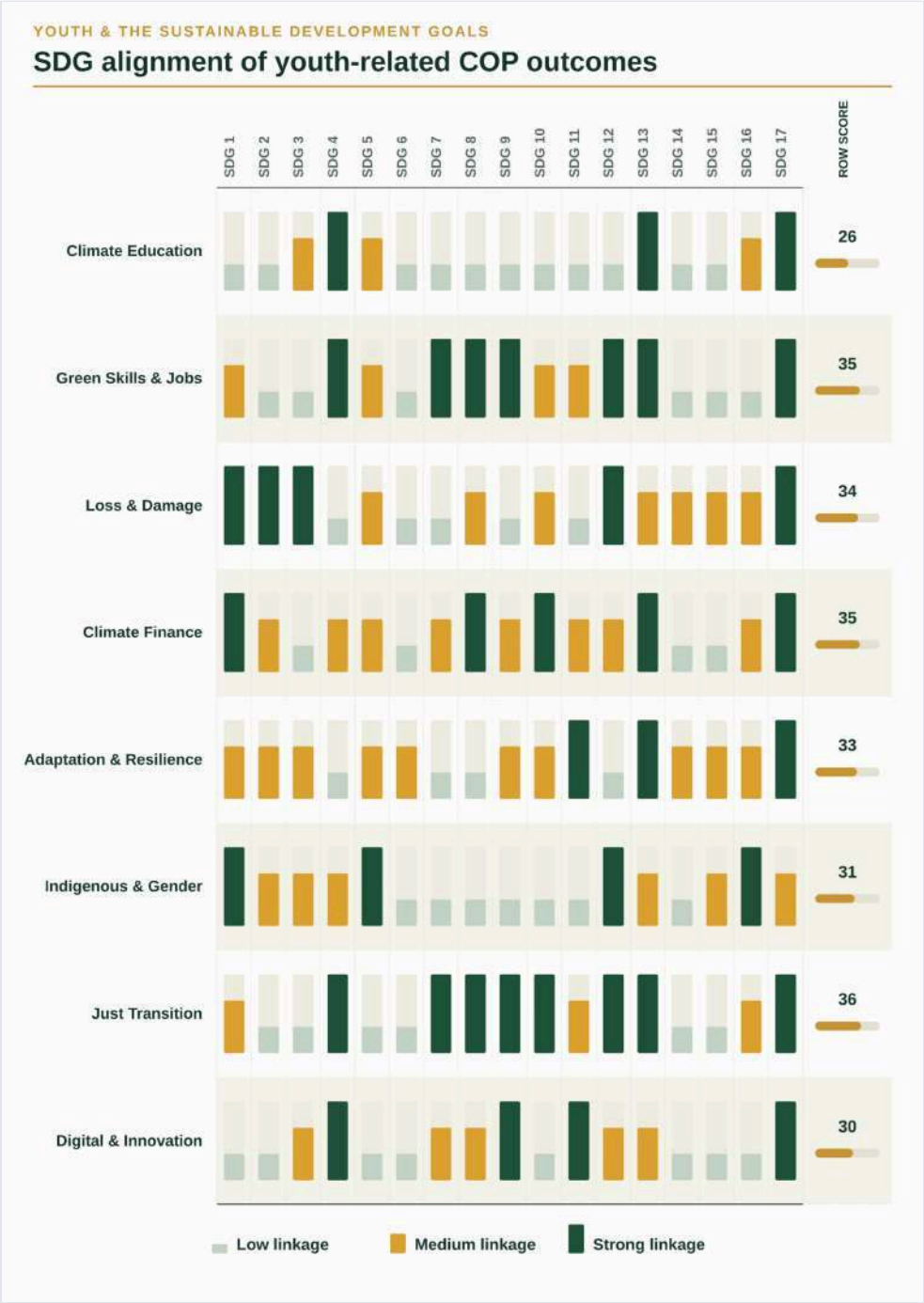


Figure 10. SDG alignment of youth-related COP outcomes (eight themes × seventeen SDGs). Strength of linkage on a Low–Medium–Strong scale. Strongest linkages: SDG 4, SDG 13, SDG 17.

Source: Author's mapping of COP outcomes against the 2030 Agenda.

Paris Agreement and Loss and Damage

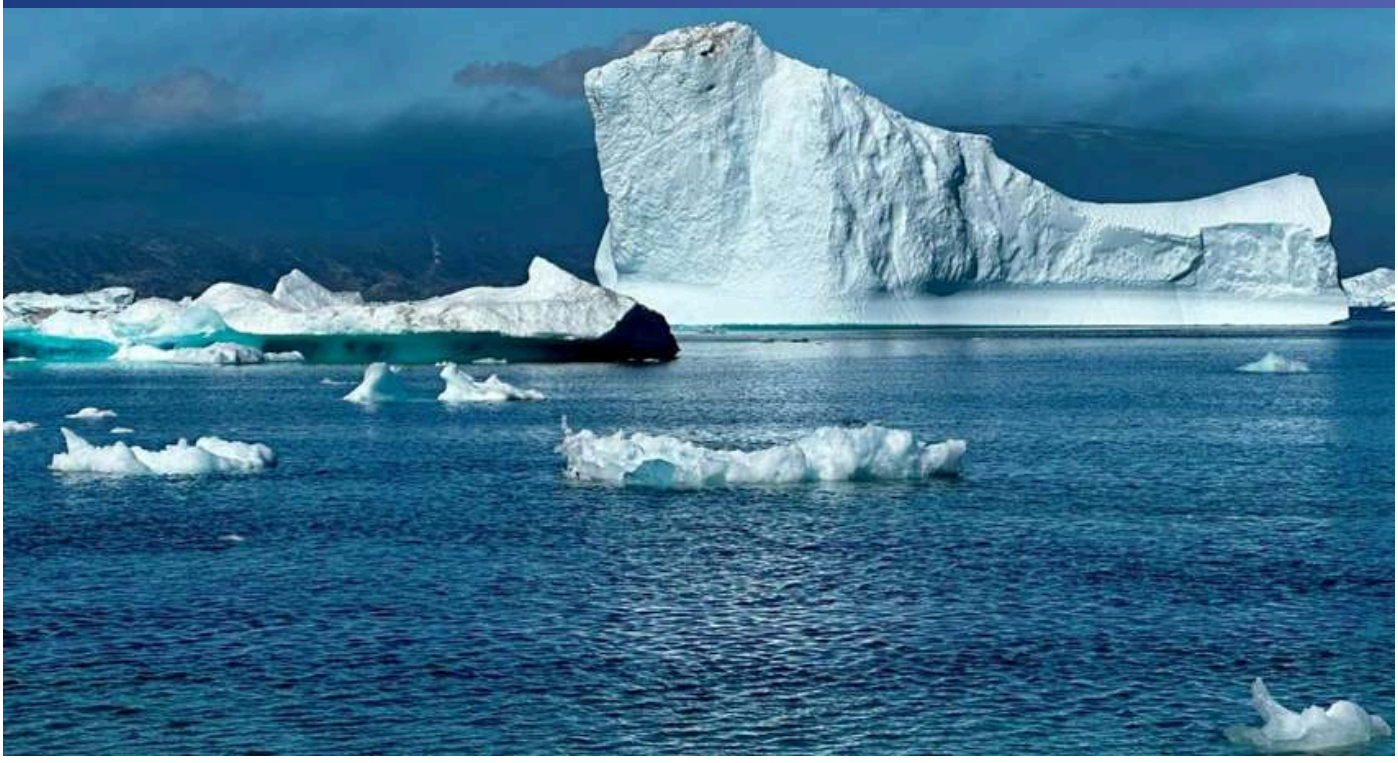
12.2 Paris Agreement implementation cycle

The Paris Agreement implementation cycle is structured around five-yearly ratchet moments: the Global Stocktake (GST), the NDC submission cycle, and the Adaptation Communications. Youth voice has been institutionalised at each ratchet moment to varying degrees. The first Global Stocktake (GST1, COP28 Dubai, 2023) included a dedicated youth-engagement workstream. The second Global Stocktake (GST2, 2028–2033) provides an opportunity to embed a standing right-of-audience for youth — a Horizon 3 priority of the policy paper's strategic roadmap. The 2025 NDC 3.0 cycle is the first opportunity to operationalise a mandatory youth marker; the 2030 NDC 4.0 cycle is the principal window for intergenerational-equity clauses.

12.3 Loss and Damage Fund

The Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD), agreed at COP27 and operationalised through 2024, has a distinctive intergenerational character. The harms it is designed to address — including slow-onset losses associated with sea-level rise, glacial retreat and ecosystem collapse — will be experienced predominantly by populations alive today and not yet born. The FRLD governance architecture (Board, Trustee, Secretariat) is being designed in 2024–2026; its capitalisation and replenishment cycles will shape intergenerational fund mechanics for decades. A youth seat on the FRLD Governing Board (Horizon 1 priority) would embed intergenerational accountability structurally at the fund level.

Slow-onset losses — sea-level rise, glacial retreat, ecosystem collapse — will be experienced predominantly by populations alive today and not yet born.



Strategic Roadmap for Youth Engagement, COP31–COP40

This chapter sets out a ten-year strategic roadmap for the consolidation, mainstreaming and intergenerational accountability of youth engagement under the UNFCCC. The roadmap is organised into three horizons corresponding to the mid-term review of the GWP on ACE, the second NDC cycle, and the third Global Stocktake.

A ten-year horizon: COP31 Antalya (2026) through COP40 (2035).



The Three Horizons

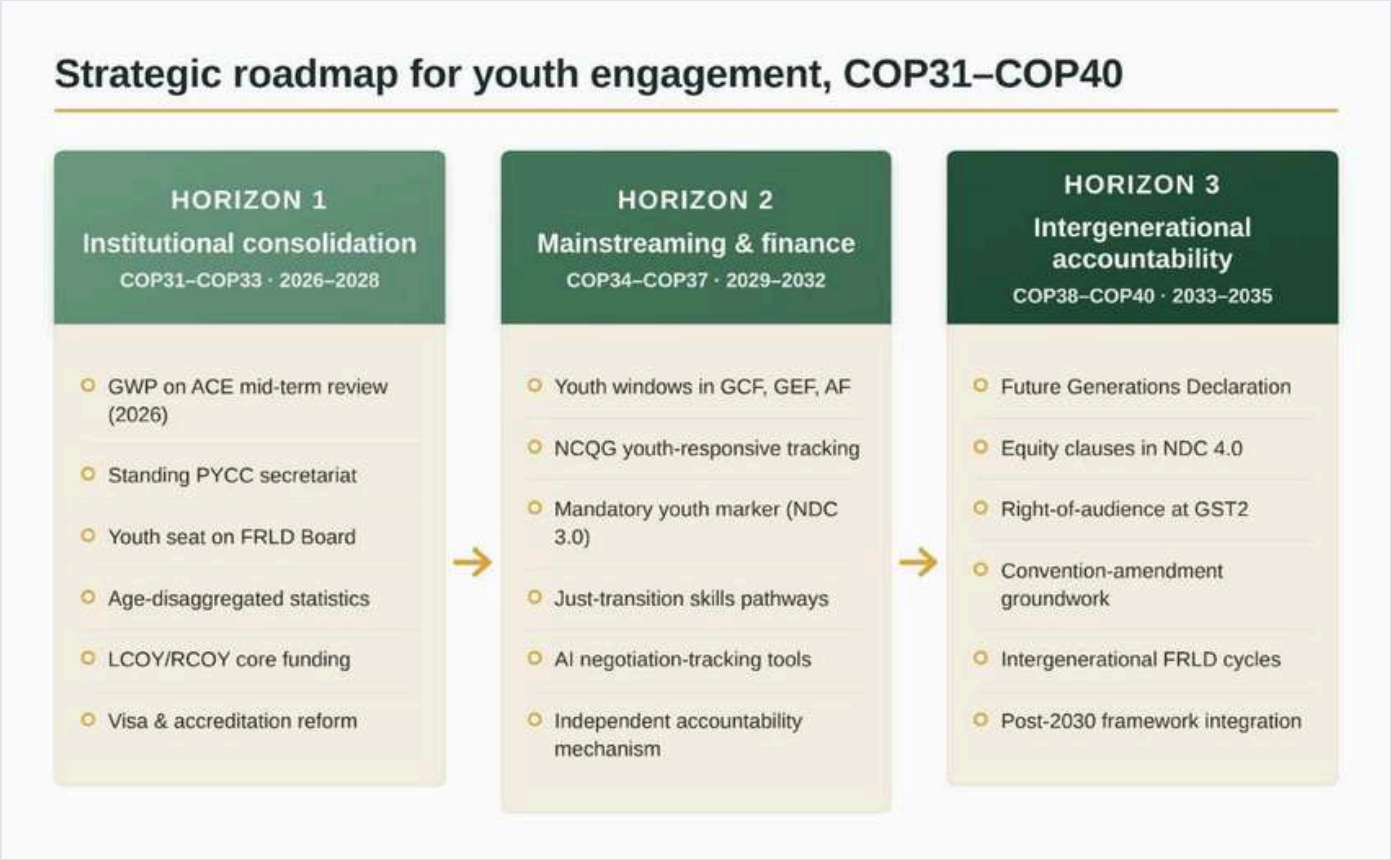
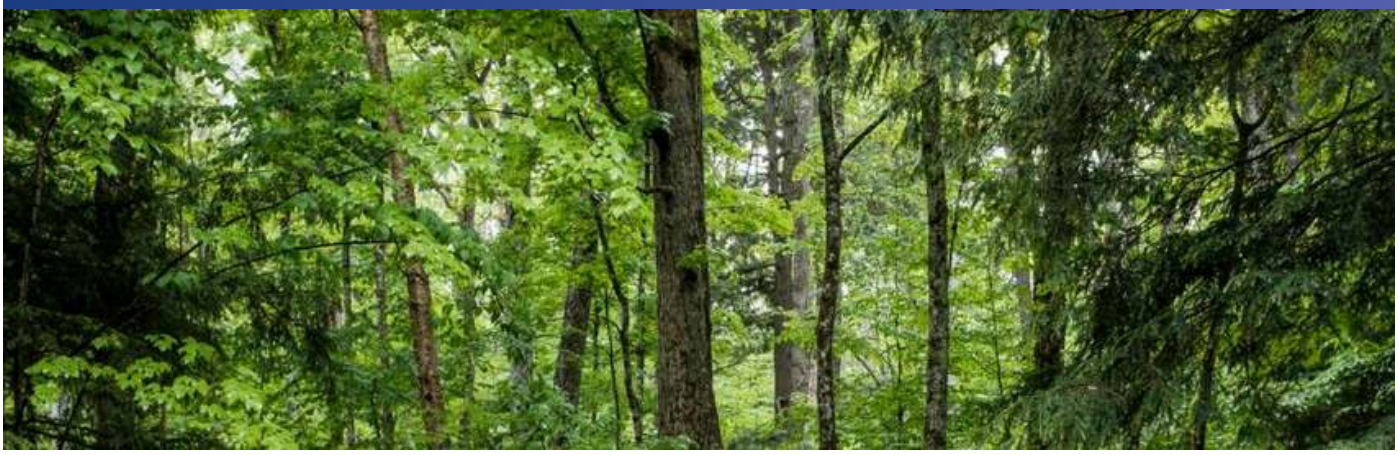


Figure 8. Strategic roadmap for youth engagement under the UNFCCC, COP31–COP40. Three horizons of institutional consolidation, mainstreaming and intergenerational accountability.

Source: Author's synthesis. The roadmap is illustrative, not prescriptive.

Three horizons to 2035: institutional consolidation, then finance, then intergenerational accountability in operational law.



Three Horizons, 2026–2035

13.1 Horizon 1 — Institutional consolidation (COP31–COP33, 2026–2028)

The first horizon focuses on consolidating the institutional gains of the Institutionalisation Era. Six priorities define this horizon: the mid-term review of the Glasgow Work Programme on ACE in 2026; the establishment of a standing PYCC secretariat with multi-year funding; securing a youth seat on the FRLD Governing Board; systematic publication of age-disaggregated participation statistics by the UNFCCC Secretariat; LCOY/RCOY core funding through the Glasgow Work Programme on ACE budget; and visa and accreditation reform for Global South youth delegates.

13.2 Horizon 2 — Mainstreaming and finance (COP34–COP37, 2029–2032)

The second horizon focuses on translating institutional architecture into financial flows. Priorities include: dedicated youth windows in the GCF, GEF and Adaptation Fund; NCQG implementation with youth-responsive tracking and a mandatory youth marker from the 2027 NDC 3.0 cycle; integration of ACE National Focal Point and PYCC reporting frameworks; just-transition pathways tied to youth-skills strategies; AI tools for negotiation tracking and multilingual outreach; and an independent youth-accountability monitoring mechanism.

13.3 Horizon 3 — Intergenerational accountability (COP38–COP40, 2033–2035)

The third horizon focuses on translating intergenerational equity into operational law. Priorities include: implementation of the Future Generations Declaration adopted under the Pact for the Future (September 2024); intergenerational-equity clauses in the NDC 4.0 cycle (due 2035); a standing right-of-audience for youth at the third Global Stocktake (2028–2033); exploratory work on a Convention amendment to enable binding youth-participation rules; intergenerational replenishment cycles for the FRLD; and integration with the post-2030 framework.

> **Sequencing logic.** Horizon 1 secures what exists. Horizon 2 attaches money to it. Horizon 3 converts it into obligations that bind beyond the political cycle that created them.

Horizon 1 secures what exists. Horizon 2 attaches money to it. Horizon 3 converts it into obligations that bind beyond the political cycle that created them.



Ten Recommendations for COP31 and the COP31–COP40 Cycle

Ten addressable recommendations, each with a named addressee and a monitorable instrument or indicator. Table 7 presents the full recommendations matrix.

The next ten COPs will be judged by what is resourced, not by what is declared.



Ten Recommendations

Table 7 · Recommendations matrix — addressees, instruments, indicators (1–5)

01

Binding Youth Engagement Charter

Adopt a binding Youth Engagement Charter at COP31 Antalya that operationalises Glasgow Pact paragraphs 64–65 with monitorable obligations.

Addressee: COP31 Presidency · YOUNGO · Parties **Instrument / indicator:** Cover decision · soft-law instrument

02

30% youth in delegations by 2030

Set a Party-level aspirational target of 30% delegation youth share (under-35) by 2030; publish annually.

Addressee: All Parties · UNFCCC Secretariat **Instrument / indicator:** Annual age-disaggregated participation statistics

03

Youth Climate Finance Window (USD 500M/yr)

Establish a dedicated Youth Climate Finance Window across GCF, GEF, AF and FRLD with USD 500 million annual flows.

Addressee: GCF · GEF · AF · FRLD Boards **Instrument / indicator:** Annual disbursement to youth-led entities

04

Standing PYCC secretariat

Establish a multi-year-funded standing PYCC secretariat with continuity across Presidency cycles.

Addressee: UNFCCC Secretariat · Presidencies **Instrument / indicator:** Multi-Presidency funding compact

05

Climate education in all national curricula

Set a 2030 target of climate change in all national curricula at primary and secondary levels through the GWP on ACE.

Addressee: Parties · Ministries of Education · UNESCO **Instrument / indicator:** National ACE strategies; UNESCO reporting

Recommendations 01–05 address the institutional and educational architecture: the charter, delegation targets, the finance window, the PYCC secretariat and climate education in national curricula.



Ten Recommendations

Table 7 · Recommendations matrix — addressees, instruments, indicators (6–10)

06

Regional Youth Negotiator Academies

Establish four regional Negotiator Academies (MENA, Africa, Asia-Pacific, LAC) to build technical negotiation capacity for Global South youth.

Addressee: UNFCCC Secretariat · regional partners **Instrument / indicator:** Trained negotiators per region per year

07

Mandatory youth marker from NDC 3.0

Introduce a mandatory youth marker in NCQG-aligned reporting from the 2027 NDC 3.0 submission cycle.

Addressee: UNFCCC Secretariat · Standing Committee on Finance **Instrument / indicator:** Tagged finance flows in OECD-DAC reporting

08

Youth seats on Loss & Damage Fund Board

Reserve at least two youth seats on the FRLD Governing Board with full voting rights.

Addressee: FRLD Board · COP/CMA Presidency **Instrument / indicator:** Board composition decision

09

Global Green Skills Compact

Launch a Türkiye–Australia co-led Global Green Skills Compact under the Just Transition Work Programme.

Addressee: COP31 Presidency · ILO · UNESCO **Instrument / indicator:** Compact text; national green-skills targets

10

Biennial Youth Climate Stocktake

Institute a Biennial Youth Climate Stocktake with a public dashboard, feeding into each Global Stocktake.

Addressee: UNFCCC Secretariat · YOUNGO · independent monitors **Instrument / indicator:** Public dashboard; biennial report

Recommendations 06–10 address capacity, finance tracking, fund governance, green skills and independent monitoring.



Conclusion — From Recognition to Implementation

Thirty Conferences of the Parties have produced the most elaborate intergenerational-engagement architecture of any multilateral environmental regime. The question for the next ten is whether that architecture will be resourced.

The cohort that will live with the cumulative climate outcomes of COP31 to COP40 is already born.



From Recognition to Implementation

Thirty Conferences of the Parties have produced the most elaborate intergenerational-engagement architecture of any multilateral environmental regime. The trajectory traced in this policy paper — from the silent Pioneer Era of COP1 Berlin through the Recognition Era opened by YOUNGO's 2009 admission and culminating in the Institutionalisation Era anchored by paragraphs 64 and 65 of the Glasgow Climate Pact and Decision 16/CP.28 — is a story of substantive achievement. Each Presidency of the Institutionalisation Era has contributed a durable institutional layer that subsequent Presidencies have preserved and extended.

The policy paper's diagnostic argument is, however, that recognition has run substantially ahead of implementation. A 2.4% child-responsive share of multilateral climate finance, a 1-in-591 ratio of climate-fund projects with education as their principal objective, and an under-50% prevalence of child- or youth-sensitive provisions in NDCs are not statistical artefacts. They define the operational gap between the recognition the system has achieved and the implementation it has yet to deliver. The 11–14% structural ceiling on youth Blue-Zone participation since COP26 is similarly a symptom of unresourced recognition.

Three observations should orient the next decade. First, the demographic arithmetic is decisive: the cohort that will live with the cumulative climate outcomes of COP31 to COP40 is already born. Second, the finance question is the single most important leverage point: the NCQG consolidation into a USD 1.3 trillion-per-year-by-2035 trajectory is the principal policy opening for embedding youth-responsive criteria. Third, the political economy favours consolidation, not expansion: the era of new declarations and pavilions is reaching saturation, and the operational question — how to resource and reform existing architecture — must dominate the COP31–COP40 cycle.

This policy paper is offered as a contribution to that question. It is written in the conviction that the next ten COPs will be judged not by the number of youth pavilions, declarations or champion offices established, but by whether the children alive today inherit a UNFCCC architecture that has translated their voice into binding decision-making weight, into resourced finance access, and into substantive influence over the climate trajectory their lives will trace. The COP31 Türkiye–Australia Presidency carries a particular institutional weight in this moment of consolidation.

> *"The next ten COPs will be judged not by the number of youth pavilions, declarations or champion offices established, but by whether the children alive today inherit a UNFCCC architecture that has translated their voice into binding decision-making weight, into resourced finance access, and into substantive influence over the climate trajectory their lives will trace."*

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Note on sources and verification

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Participation shares are the weakest link in the evidentiary chain. Because the UNFCCC Secretariat does not publish age-disaggregated participation statistics, every youth-delegate share in this policy paper is an indicative estimate triangulated across YOUNGO accreditation summaries, Presidency outcome reports and independent monitoring. Annex J sets out the triangulation method and its limits in full; Recommendation 02 proposes annual age-disaggregated publication as the corrective instrument.

> URLs were last verified in September 2026. Where a document has been relocated within the UNFCCC repository, the decision symbol (for example, 1/CP.26 or 16/CP.28) remains the stable identifier and should be used for retrieval.

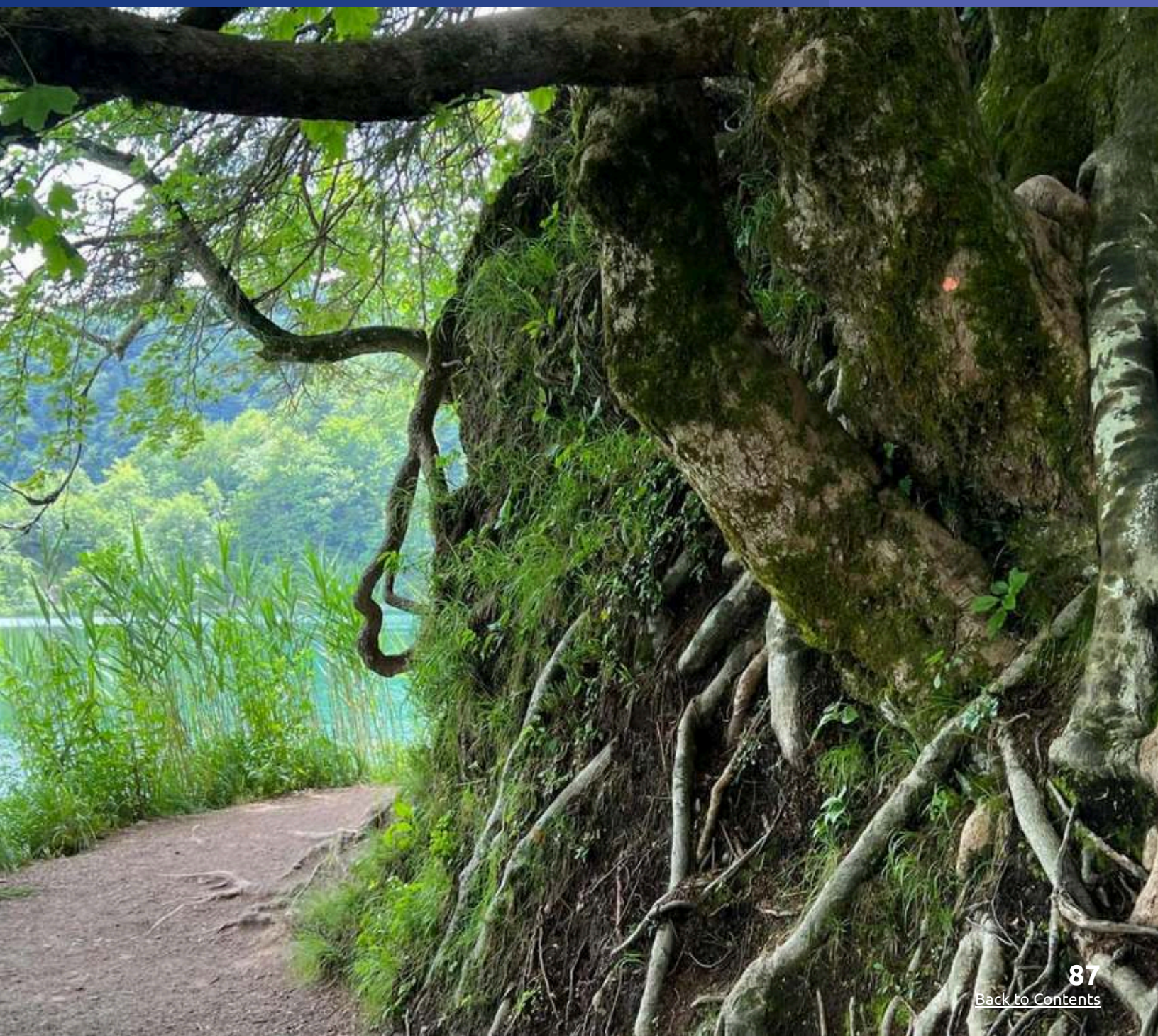
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Annexes A–J

Ten annexes document the decision record, the chronological matrix of milestones, the independent Youth Stocktake findings, participation statistics, stakeholder mapping, the glossary, extended finance and regional datasets, the official source directory, and the research methodology.

Supporting datasets and documentation for the analysis developed in Sections 1–15.



Annex A · Decisions Referencing Children, Youth or Intergenerational Equity

Annex A maps the principal UNFCCC decisions, declarations and presidency outcomes that reference children, youth, education, or intergenerational equity across the thirty Conferences of the Parties.

Table 2 · Chronological list of UNFCCC decisions with youth-relevant content

COP	Year & host	Instrument	Youth-relevant content
COP1	1995 Berlin	Berlin Mandate	No explicit youth reference; convention text (Art. 4 and 6) carries implicit obligations through education provisions.
COP3	1997 Kyoto	Kyoto Protocol	Articles 10(e) on education, training, public awareness create implicit youth pathway.
COP8	2002 New Delhi	Decision 11/CP.8	New Delhi Work Programme on Article 6; first standalone Article 6 work programme; created institutional foundation for ACE.
COP11	2005 Montreal	Montreal Action Plan	COY1 held immediately prior; marks emergence of organised youth space.
COP15	2009 Copenhagen	Copenhagen Accord	YOUNGO recognised as observer constituency under provisional arrangement.
COP17	2011 Durban	Durban Platform	YOUNGO confirmed as full observer constituency.
COP18	2012 Doha	Decision 15/CP.18	Doha Work Programme on Article 6 (2012–2020); first formal mention of "youth" in operational decision text.
COP21	2015 Paris	Paris Agreement; Decision 1/CP.21	Article 12 of the Paris Agreement: legal basis for ACE post-2020.
COP23	2017 Bonn (Fiji)	Talanoa Dialogue	Talanoa Dialogue concept introduced; age limit lowered to 16–17 for accreditation.
COP26	2021 Glasgow	Decision 1/CP.26; 18/CP.26	Glasgow Climate Pact paras 64–65; Glasgow Work Programme on ACE.
COP27	2022 Sharm el-Sheikh	Decision 1/CP.27	First Children and Youth Pavilion; first Youth Climate Dialogue; first Youth Envoy.
COP28	2023 Dubai	Decision 16/CP.28; Decision 1/CMA.5	PYCC institutionalised; first Children & Youth Day; first GST decision.
COP29	2024 Baku	Decision 1/CMA.6 (NCQG)	NCQG agreed; Leyla Hasanova first PYCC under Decision 16.
COP30	2025 Belém	Youth Mutirão Action Agenda	Marcele Oliveira PYCC; Youth Mutirão; Indigenous Youth Forum.

Source: UNFCCC decision repository; IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin; UNFCCC Secretariat ACE materials.

Fourteen Conferences of the Parties carry decision text referencing children, youth, education or intergenerational equity.



Annex B · Chronological Matrix of Youth Engagement Milestones

Chronological matrix of the principal milestones in youth engagement with the UNFCCC, organised by year and dimension.

Table 3 · Chronology of youth milestones in the UNFCCC system, 1992–2025

Year	Institutional	Mobilisation	Finance	Policy / normative
1992	Rio Earth Summit	Earth Summit youth caucus	—	Agenda 21 Ch. 25; children and youth recognised.
1995	COP1 Berlin	Marginal youth presence	—	Berlin Mandate.
2005	COP11 Montreal	COY1 launched	—	First standalone Conference of Youth.
2009	COP15 Copenhagen	YOUNGO recognised	—	Copenhagen Accord; civil-society mobilisation.
2011	COP17 Durban	YOUNGO confirmed	—	Durban Platform.
2012	COP18 Doha	—	—	Doha Work Programme; first “youth” mention.
2015	COP21 Paris	Global mobilisation	—	Paris Agreement Article 12.
2019	Global School Strikes	~6 million strikers	—	UN Climate Action Summit Youth Plenary.
2021	COP26 Glasgow	YOUNGO 670+ orgs	—	Glasgow Pact paras 64–65; GWP on ACE.
2022	COP27 Sharm el-Sheikh	First C&Y Pavilion	FRLD agreement	First Youth Envoy.
2023	COP28 Dubai	PYCC institutionalised	FRLD operationalised	First C&Y Day; Global Stocktake.
2024	COP29 Baku	Leyla Hasanova PYCC	NCQG agreed	Baku Finance Goal.
2025	COP30 Belém	Youth Mutirão	NCQG to USD 1.3tn/yr	Six-pillar Action Agenda.
2026	COP31 Antalya	GWP on ACE mid-term review	NCQG implementation	Türkiye–Australia dual Presidency.

Source: Author’s compilation from UNFCCC decisions, Presidency outcome reports and IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin.

Thirty-four years of institutional development, from the Rio Earth Summit youth caucus of 1992 to the Türkiye–Australia dual Presidency of 2026.



Annex C · Summary of the Independent Youth Stocktake (2023)

Summary of the key findings of the independent Youth Stocktake of UNFCCC Processes published by Voices for Just Climate Action in 2023.

C-1

Finding C-1

Institutional recognition of youth has advanced substantially since 2010 but operational implementation lags. The gap between rhetorical commitment and resourced action is the system's single largest equity deficit.

C-2

Finding C-2

Access constraints — visa, accreditation quotas, accommodation costs — remain the principal barrier to Blue-Zone participation for Global South youth.

C-3

Finding C-3

Youth participation in NDC preparation is highly uneven: a minority of NDCs report any consultation with national youth networks, and a smaller minority report structured consultation.

C-4

Finding C-4

The four pillars of the Glasgow Work Programme on ACE are unevenly implemented at country level; the youth-participation pillar receives the least resourcing.

Findings C-1 to C-4 concern recognition, access, NDC participation and the uneven resourcing of the Glasgow Work Programme pillars.



Annex C · Summary of the Independent Youth Stocktake (2023)

C-5

Finding C-5

Climate-finance access for youth-led organisations is severely constrained: minimum grant sizes, accreditation requirements, and reporting burdens exclude most youth-led organisations from major multilateral channels.

C-6

Finding C-6

The Children and Youth Pavilion is highly valued as a convening space but is structurally a soft-power instrument and does not, on its own, translate into negotiation influence.

C-7

Finding C-7

Mental-health impacts of climate anxiety are widespread among engaged youth respondents, with implications for sustainability of long-term advocacy.

C-8

Finding C-8

Indigenous youth, gender-non-conforming youth, youth with disabilities, and youth from Small Island Developing States are systematically under-represented within the broader youth-delegate population.

Source: Voices for Just Climate Action (2023), *Youth Stocktake of UNFCCC Processes*.

Findings C-5 to C-8 concern finance access, the limits of pavilion diplomacy, climate anxiety, and intersectional under-representation.



Annex D · Participation Statistics by COP

Indicative participation statistics for youth and children at successive COPs.

Table 4 · Estimated youth-delegate participation at selected COPs, 2009–2025

COP	Year & host	Total participants	YOUNGO members	Youth-delegate share (est.)
COP15	2009 Copenhagen	~27,000	~150	~6–8%
COP17	2011 Durban	~12,000	~200	~7–9%
COP21	2015 Paris	~30,000	~350	~8–10%
COP23	2017 Bonn (Fiji)	~25,000	~400	~9–11%
COP24	2018 Katowice	~22,000	~450	~10–12%
COP25	2019 Madrid	~26,000	~500	~10–12%
COP26	2021 Glasgow	~40,000	~670	~12–14%
COP27	2022 Sharm el-Sheikh	~33,000	~750	~12–14%
COP28	2023 Dubai	~84,000	~800	~10–12%
COP29	2024 Baku	~55,000	~820	~11–13%
COP30	2025 Belém	~50,000	~900	~13–15%

Source: UNFCCC Secretariat Statistics on Admission; YOUNGO Secretariat self-reporting; IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin.

Methodological note. The UNFCCC Secretariat does not currently publish systematic age-disaggregated participation statistics. All youth-delegate shares cited here are indicative estimates triangulated across YOUNGO accreditation summaries, Presidency reports and independent monitoring. Recommendation 02 proposes annual age-disaggregated publication as the corrective instrument.

Attendance grew from ~27,000 at COP15 Copenhagen to a record ~84,000 at COP28 Dubai — but the youth-delegate share has held within an 11–14% band since COP26.



Annex E · Stakeholder Mapping

Five-tier mapping of principal institutional stakeholders relevant to youth engagement.

Tier A · Intergovernmental and UNFCCC-system actors

Actor	Role relevant to youth engagement
UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP)	Supreme decision-making body; adopts decisions referencing children, youth and intergenerational equity.
UNFCCC Secretariat (Bonn)	Administrative support; ACE focal point; manages YOUNGO liaison; convenes Youth Climate Forum.
Presidency Youth Climate Champion (PYCC)	Two-year overlapping presidency role (Decision 16/CP.28); convenes youth dialogues.
ACE National Focal Points	Country-level focal points for Article 6 / Article 12 implementation.
Standing Committee on Finance	Biennial Assessment of climate finance.

Tier B · UN system and partner agencies

Actor	Role relevant to youth engagement
UN Youth Office (SG Envoy)	Mainstreams youth issues across the UN system.
UNICEF	Child-rights mandate; lead agency on child-responsive climate finance metrics.
UNESCO	Climate change education; ACE partner; UNESCO Chairs on ESD.
UNEP	Tunza Youth and Children programme.
ILO	Just transition and green-jobs framework.
UNDP	Climate Promise programme; NDC support.

Tier C · Youth networks and constituencies

Actor	Role relevant to youth engagement
YOUNGO	Official UNFCCC Children and Youth constituency; ~900 member organisations across 165+ countries.
COY (Conference of Youth)	Annual global youth conference preceding each COP.
LCOY (Local COY)	Country-level COY platforms; ~141 jurisdictions in 2025.
Fridays for Future	Global school-strikes movement.
Indigenous Youth networks	Indigenous youth caucuses; COP30 inaugural Indigenous Youth Forum.

Five tiers of institutional stakeholders, from the Conference of the Parties itself to national statistical offices.



Annex E · Stakeholder Mapping

Tier D · Academic and research partners

Actor	Role relevant to youth engagement
UNESCO Chairs on ESD	Including the UNESCO Chair on Education for Sustainable Development, Green Skills & Climate Actions.
Research and Independent NGOs (RINGO)	Universities, think tanks, climate research institutes; UNFCCC observer constituency.
IPCC	Provides science basis; engages with youth through SROCC and AR6 outreach activities.

Tier E · National-level institutional partners

Actor	Role relevant to youth engagement
Ministries of Environment / Climate	COP31 host ministry: Türkiye Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change.
Ministries of Education	Curriculum reform for climate education; ACE National Focal Point coordination.
National Statistical Offices	Age-disaggregated participation reporting; just-transition labour-market data.

Source: Author's compilation from UNFCCC constituency records, UN system mandates and partner-institution documentation.

Where the policy paper was prepared

UNESCO Chair on Education for Sustainable Development, Green Skills & Climate Actions.

In collaboration with

Department of Climate Change Adaptation and Local Policies, Directorate of Climate Change, Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change of Türkiye — host of COP31 Antalya, 2026.

Academic, research and national-level partners complete the stakeholder map.



Annex F · Glossary of Terms

Definitions of technical terms used throughout this policy paper.

Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE)
The work programme under Article 6 of the Convention and Article 12 of the Paris Agreement, comprising six elements: education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information, and international cooperation.

Children and Youth (UNFCCC operational definition)
Accreditation: 16–17 with parental consent (since 2017); 18+ as adults; "youth delegate" commonly defined as 18–35.

COY (Conference of Youth)
Annual youth-led conference convened by YOUNGO preceding each COP.

FRLD (Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage)
Multilateral fund agreed at COP27 (2022) and operationalised at COP28 (2023).

Glasgow Climate Pact
Cover decision adopted at COP26 (Decision 1/CP.26, 2021). Paragraphs 64–65 anchor youth participation.

Glasgow Work Programme on ACE
Ten-year work programme adopted at COP26 (Decision 18/CP.26, 2021); four-pillar structure.

LCOY (Local COY) / RCOY (Regional COY)
Country-level and regional youth conferences feeding into the Global Youth Statement.

NCQG (New Collective Quantified Goal)
Climate-finance goal agreed at COP29; USD 300bn/yr by 2035, within a USD 1.3tn/yr envelope consolidated at COP30.

NDC (Nationally Determined Contribution)
Country-level climate pledge under the Paris Agreement; revised on a five-yearly cycle.

PYCC (Presidency Youth Climate Champion)
Two-year overlapping presidency role institutionalised by Decision 16/CP.28 (2023).

YOUNGO
Official UNFCCC Children and Youth constituency. Recognised at COP15 (2009), formalised at COP17 (2011); ~900 member organisations.

Youth Mutirão
COP30 Presidency initiative (Belém, 2025) — six-pillar, thirty-objective Action Agenda. "Mutirão" refers to collective community action in Brazilian Portuguese.

Definitions of the technical vocabulary used throughout the policy paper.



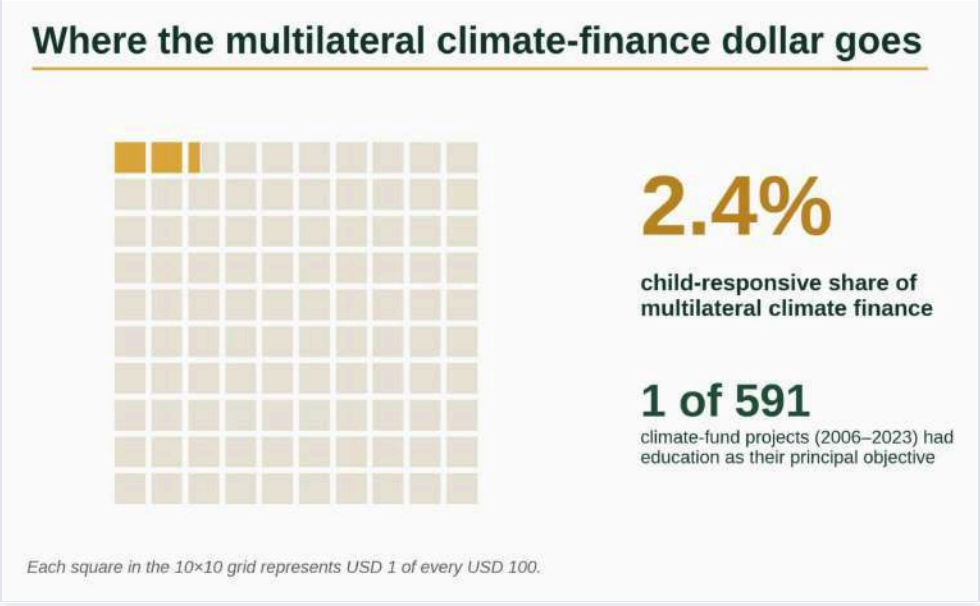
Annex G · Extended Statistics on Youth Climate Finance

Principal quantitative evidence base on the youth dimension of climate finance.

Table 5 · Core indicators of child- and youth-responsiveness in climate finance

Indicator	Value	Source
Share of multilateral climate finance assessed as child-responsive	2.4%	UNICEF (2024)
Share of NDCs developed through participatory processes with children	~3%	UNICEF (2023)
Climate-fund projects with education as principal objective (of 591, 2006–2023)	1	UNICEF (2024)
Share of NDCs assessed as child- or youth-sensitive	<50%	UNICEF (2023)
Share of Article 12 (ACE) within multilateral climate-finance flows	<1%	SCF Biennial Assessment (2024); UNESCO
Multilateral climate finance, total annual flows (2022)	~USD 89.6 bn	OECD-DAC (2024)
NCQG annual target by 2035 (developed to developing)	USD 300 bn	Decision 1/CMA.6 (COP29, 2024)
NCQG total envelope target by 2035 (all sources)	USD 1.3 tn	COP30 consolidation (Belém, 2025)

Source: UNICEF (2023, 2024); OECD-DAC (2024); UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance (2024).



Each square in the 10×10 grid represents USD 1 of every USD 100 in multilateral climate finance. The 2.4 shaded squares are the child-responsive share.

Annex H · Regional Datasets: LCOY and RCOY Coverage

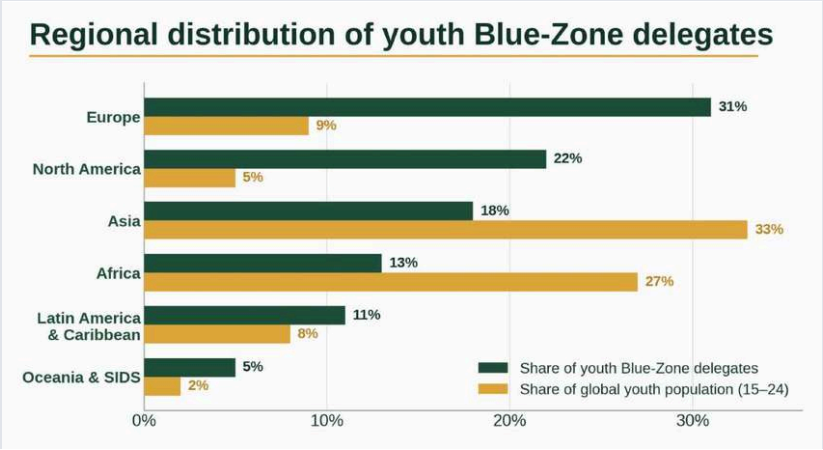
Indicative regional coverage of LCOY and RCOY platforms as of the 2025 cycle.

Table 6 · Indicative LCOY and RCOY coverage by UNFCCC region

UNFCCC region	LCOY (~)	RCOY platforms	Representative country participants
Africa	~38	RCOY Africa	Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, South Africa, Senegal, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt.
Asia-Pacific	~28	RCOY Asia-Pacific	India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, Japan, Korea.
Eastern Europe	~15	RCOY Eastern Europe	Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Türkiye.
Latin America & Caribbean	~22	RCOY LAC	Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Chile, Argentina, Peru, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic.
Western Europe & Others	~28	RCOY Europe / N. America-Oceania	Germany, France, UK, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, USA, Canada, Australia.
SIDS (cross-cutting)	~10	SIDS sub-network	Fiji, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles.
Total	**~141**	**~6 platforms**	—

Source: YOUNGO Secretariat (2025); LCOY Coalition (2025); UN Population Division (2024).

> **The proportionality problem.** Asia-Pacific is home to approximately 60% of the global youth population but accounts for approximately 20% of LCOY jurisdictions. Closing that gap is a Horizon 1 priority (Section 13) and underpins Recommendation 06 on regional Youth Negotiator Academies.



Regional distribution of youth Blue-Zone delegates, COP28–COP30 average (reproduced from Figure 6).

Annex I · Official UNFCCC and UN System Source Links

Curated directory of official source links for the principal documents referenced in this policy paper.

UNFCCC core documents

- UNFCCC Convention text — https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf
- Kyoto Protocol — https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.pdf
- Paris Agreement — https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf
- Glasgow Climate Pact (Decision 1/CP.26) — https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cop26_auv_2f_cover_decision.pdf
- Decision 16/CP.28 (PYCC) — https://unfccc.int/documents/637073

Presidency portals

- COP30 (Belém) Presidency — https://cop30.br
- COP29 (Baku) Presidency archive — https://cop29.az
- COP28 (Dubai) Presidency archive — https://www.cop28.com

Multilateral climate-finance institutions

- Green Climate Fund — https://www.greenclimate.fund
- Global Environment Facility — https://www.thegef.org
- Adaptation Fund — https://www.adaptation-fund.org
- OECD Climate Finance Tracking — https://www.oecd.org/climate-finance

Partner ministries and institutions

- Türkiye Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change — https://www.csb.gov.tr
- Directorate of Climate Change (Türkiye) — https://iklim.gov.tr
- Bangladesh Climate Change Trust — https://www.bcct.gov.bd
- UNESCO Chair on Education for Sustainable Development — https://www.unesco.org/en/sdgs/education

A curated directory of official sources for every principal document referenced in the policy paper.



Annex J · Methodology

Documentation of the research methodology underpinning this policy paper.

J.1 Research design

The policy paper is a documentary policy analysis combining three methods: (i) systematic review of UNFCCC primary decisions and Presidency outcomes (1995–2025); (ii) secondary analysis of UN system and civil-society publications on youth engagement; (iii) descriptive statistical synthesis of indicators of participation, finance access, and regional distribution.

J.2 Source hierarchy

Sources are organised into a four-tier hierarchy: **Tier 1** — UNFCCC primary decision documents (cover decisions, Presidency outcomes, Subsidiary Body conclusions); **Tier 2** — UN system reports (UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, ILO, OECD-DAC, Standing Committee on Finance); **Tier 3** — independent civil-society and youth-network reports (Voices for Just Climate Action, YOUNGO, LCOY Coalition); **Tier 4** — peer-reviewed academic literature.

J.3 Search strategy and inclusion criteria

The systematic review covered all COP outcomes from COP1 (1995) to COP30 (2025), with full-text inspection for decisions referencing youth, children, intergenerational, future generations, education, Article 6, Article 12, Action for Climate Empowerment, or related terms.

J.4 Limitations

Three principal limitations qualify the analysis. First, the UNFCCC Secretariat does not currently publish systematic age-disaggregated participation statistics, so all participation shares cited are indicative estimates triangulated across YOUNGO accreditation summaries, Presidency reports, and independent monitoring. Second, climate-finance tracking with explicit child- or youth-tagging is methodologically nascent, and the 2.4% headline indicator is an aggregate UNICEF estimate that does not disaggregate by region or instrument. Third, the policy paper is a documentary analysis and does not incorporate primary qualitative research with youth participants.

J.5 Quality assurance

All primary decision references were cross-checked against the UNFCCC document repository at https://unfccc.int/documents. All quantitative indicators were cross-checked against at least one independent secondary source. Direct quotations from cover decisions were verified against the official authenticated text. Editorial review was conducted by independent reviewers prior to publication.

Youth Engagement Across 30 COPs

Declarations, Gaps & Future Pathways for Action — a historical, analytical and policy-oriented mapping of every youth-related decision, declaration, work programme and presidency outcome adopted under the UNFCCC process, from Berlin 1995 to Belém 2025, with a forward-looking roadmap for COP31 Antalya and the post-2025 climate agenda through 2035.

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