

SDSN Youth Asia-Pacific

# ASIA-PACIFIC YOUTH PRIORITIES FOR COP27 POSITION STATEMENT

## Summary of priorities

1. Centralising marginalised voices
2. Climate education for all
3. Immediate Decarbonisation
4. North/South Equality

## About the statement

As a global network, SDSN Youth endeavours to connect young people to collectively localise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Empowering the youth as changemakers of tomorrow is one of SDSN Youth's priorities. In line with SDSN Youth's mandate, the regional SDSN Youth networks from the Asia-Pacific region organised a workshop to bring together youth voices from across the region and compile a list of youth priorities that could be brought forward at COP27.

The workshop saw participation from youth from 13 countries from the region, who worked in groups to create lists of their top six, climate action priorities. (see below for an example). The most common priorities included; Centralising marginalised voices, climate education, immediate decarbonisation, global north/south equality, water management, plastic and waste reduction, intra-regional collaboration, and corporate regulation. **This statement outlines these priorities that the youth of the region identified as the most important.**

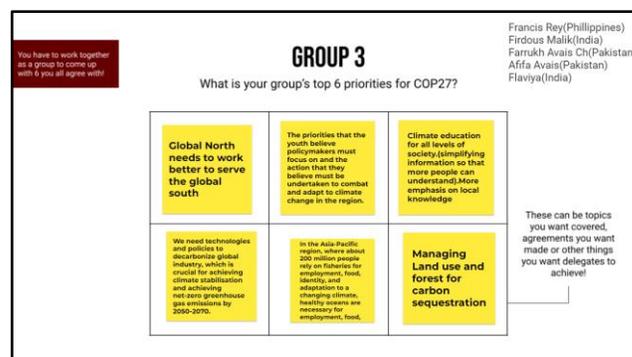


Image: One of the eight whiteboards from the workshop

## Background information

The Asia-Pacific region is arguably the most disaster-prone region in the world. With extensive coastlines, low-lying territories, and many small island states, its geography makes it highly susceptible to rising sea levels and weather extremes. Heat waves, floods, and droughts affect every aspect of life, from nutrition and health to safety and income. Importantly, Asia-Pacific's poorer communities contribute the least to greenhouse gas emissions, yet they are the ones feeling the consequences of climate change most severely. Unpredictable weather patterns can lead to failing crops, spiking food prices, and spreading diseases that threaten to wipe out decades of development gains. A two metre sea level rise could displace over 180 million people, mostly across Asia<sup>1</sup>.

The consequences of climate change are undoubtedly quite dire for the region. The youth of the region not only face the short-term implications of climate change but bear the burden of longer term economic and health consequences. According to a report that surveyed nearly 10,000 children and youths, across 12 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, over 77% of children and youth reported having noticed more climate related disasters locally in the last two years<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [Eckstein, 2019](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Guardians of the planet | UNICEF East Asia and Pacific](#)



**Image:** Youth who attended our position statement writing workshop

As the effects of climate change disproportionately affect youth, integrating their voices into climate action and policy should be a global priority. SDSN Youth is committed to mobilising youth to shape a sustainable world for future generations. In the Asia-Pacific region, SDSN Youth is focused on enabling youth as agents of change, empowering them to be at the forefront of sustainable development and ensuring that their voices are being heard.

## ASIA-PACIFIC YOUTH PRIORITIES

### 1. Centralising Marginalised Voices

SDG 5, 10, 13, 17

Climate Change affects different communities differently. An assessment report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change<sup>3</sup> asserts that while climate change affects everyone, it does not affect everyone equally. Vulnerability to climate change is exacerbated by inequity and marginalisation linked to gender, ethnicity, low income and other social and economic factors.

<sup>3</sup> [Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability | Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability \(ipcc.ch\)](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/working-group-ii/)

Indigenous populations and women are often affected the most by the adverse effects of climate change. For example, women in many societies are responsible for household energy, food, water and care for the young and elderly. Particularly in developing countries, the consequences of climate change can increase the burden for women and girls, for example, causing them to travel further to obtain daily supplies, leaving less time for paid work and potentially exposing them to greater risk to their personal safety. In a similar manner, Indigenous Populations are often more reliant on their land for day-to-day activities, and are threatened by rising sea levels, flash floods and drought that accompany global warming.

And yet, despite the discrepancy in how different groups are affected by climate change, previous negotiations and policy decisions have minimised the voices of those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. These groups, while maybe present, have had limited opportunities to contribute to policy decisions, yet business trade associations and industries with other conflicts of interest have had a larger impact on climate decisions.

**Young people of the Asia-Pacific region overwhelmingly want the international community to centralise the concerns of marginalised people in climate discussions.**

#### What action do young people want?

- 1. Include diverse perspectives into climate policies**, including those of women, indigenous people, economically weaker communities, socially marginalised communities, and other vulnerable people.
- 2. Ensure representation of marginalised voices** in government bodies, conferences and other bodies where key actions are taken.

## 2. Climate Education

SDG 4, 10, 13

Education plays an instrumental role in promoting climate action. Giving people climate change knowledge is the best way to empower them to act. Furthermore, misinformation about climate disasters and a lack of education in disaster-prone regions is leading to many people being unclear about what to do when their community experiences a climate related disaster. Hence, climate education is increasingly becoming a case of 'life-or-death'. Young people want the world to ensure all people have climate education.

**Youth from the Asia-Pacific region are requesting more resources to develop students' competencies in combating challenges from climate change.**

### What action do young people want?

1. **Ensure that no one is left behind from free and equitable education**, as this is the most effective way for one to understand climate change and address it in action.
2. **Infuse climate education into relevant curricula** to ensure all students understand the causes and impacts of climate change and are ready to act.

## 3. Decarbonisation Immediately

SDG 7, 9, 11, 12, 13

The Asia-Pacific region decarbonised at a rate of 0.9% in 2020, which is lower than the 2.9% in 2019. To put itself on the current 1.5°C trajectory, the region needs to significantly increase its efforts to decarbonise.

In 2020, Asia Pacific was responsible for 52% of the global CO2 energy related emissions. While territories across the region are at different stages of development and have very different socio-economic conditions, demand for energy will necessarily vary across the region. For as long as fossil fuels make up a significant portion of the region's energy mix, decarbonisation will be too slow.

Unfortunately, the region is decarbonising at a significantly slower rate than the global average rate. The region's increased use of fossil fuels over the last 12-18 months has complicated the existing situation.

Faster decarbonisation will require a fundamental shift in energy systems away from fossil fuel dependent energy sources, and for businesses and other corporations to be held accountable for their emissions.

**Young people across the Asia-Pacific region strongly feel that decarbonisation must be made an immediate priority by governments across the board.**

### What action do young people want?

1. **Create ambitious 2030 targets** for all countries across the region, particularly for countries that are relatively wealthier or possess the ability to decarbonise faster.
2. **Invest more in green technology** and create the pathways for just transitions away from fossil fuels.
3. **Enforce greater regulation on business and other organisations** to ensure multinational corporations prioritise decarbonisation.

## 4. North/South equality

SDG 10, 11, 12, 13

The most affluent countries of the world, also referred to as the "Global North", are responsible for around half

of all emissions since the Industrial Revolution, as estimated by the World Inequality Database. Privileged lifestyles in the Global North produce a carbon footprint 100 times greater than that of the world's poor nations combined. In 2019, the top 10% of global emitters (771 million individuals) were responsible for about 48% of global CO2 emissions, while the bottom 50% (3.8 billion individuals) were responsible for almost 12% of all emissions. This does not only mean that least developed countries, often located in the "Global South", have contributed far less to global warming. It also implies that least developed countries have had a less equal share in the direct benefits of fossil fuel use, including energy consumption.

It is crucial to recognise that the Global South and the Global North face different realities, which imply different capacities, as well as different priorities on the political agenda. The Global South also disproportionately faces the repercussions of climate action as well.

**Young people from developing countries want wealthy countries to invest more in their own decarbonisation but also provide funds for developing countries to deal with the loss and damage caused by climate change.**

### What action do young people want?

- 1. Acknowledge the different climate realities** amongst different countries and communities, as well as the different responsibilities of the Global north and South based on historic pollution.
- 2. Decolonise the climate narrative and** recognise that climate change is a consequence of the unprecedented acceleration in human production and consumption, which started with colonialism.

### What can you do?

1. Young people want you to act! Please share this statement with anyone working in climate change spaces.
2. Utilise this statement to help us create a unified message from the Asia-Pacific. Advocate for the world to achieve these four priorities.
3. Integrate these priorities while crafting policies and lobbying for climate action at COP and other climate change conferences.
4. Talk about climate action and spread the word to other youth!

### About SDSN Youth

SDSN Youth was launched in 2015 by Professor Jeffrey Sachs - at the 5th meeting of the SDSN Leadership Council in Paris. Over the past five years, we have expanded rapidly, with over 3000 program members worldwide.

We believe that young people are the ideal agents to be at the forefront of the sustainable development movement: they are forward-thinking, creative, and come in large numbers.

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