



COP21 • CMP11

PARIS 2015

UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

Commonwealth Youth
Expert Group Meeting on
Climate Change

**Policy Recommendations
and Voluntary Commitments**

Executive Summary

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“Young people deserve more than just being engaged in climate change policy or action; they need to be empowered and equipped with the necessary skills to act as equal partners in the global response to climate change. This should be our main goal given their creativity, energy and uniqueness.”

**Jean Paul Brice Affana Affana,
27, Cameroon**

We are a group of fourteen young experts and practitioners in climate change representing eleven Commonwealth nations who gathered together in London, United Kingdom, from 9-11 June 2015 during the Commonwealth Youth Expert Group Meeting on Climate Change. We hope our recommendations will be taken forward by world leaders and Heads of Commonwealth nations, and be included in their pledges in the lead up to and during the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). We are fully committed to make the following recommendations happen.

We see the upcoming COP21 as a relevant opportunity to **strengthening global partnership and citizens' participation in climate change**. Hence, we recommend the **creation of a Global Partnership on Climate Change under the auspices of the UNFCCC** to serve as an independent body that strengthens the role of civil society in implementing global climate change responses with meaningful citizens' participation. Furthermore, the Partnership could play a key role in mobilizing funds for global climate change solutions in support to the Green Climate Fund and other financial institutions.

Enhancing research on climate change and enabling access to information and data are two necessary steps to empower citizens' action on climate change. For achieving that, we recommend the **creation of a Youth Vulnerability Index on Climate Change and Disasters**, which can be a mapping tool highlighting the existing and various impacts of climate change and related disasters on children and youth, including those that are marginalised and with disabilities. The Index can be accessible both online and offline in youth friendly ways.

We believe that a **strong consideration of young people's needs and expectations within the United Nations Alliance on Climate Change Education, Training and Public Awareness will help strengthening its role**. We recommend a commitment from Commonwealth Member

States, other governments and donors to the sustainability of the Alliance through the provision of significant financial resources, institutional endorsement with Article 6 national focal points, and support to the capacity of young people to deliver educational and awareness raising campaigns at local level, while also setting up focal points where needed.

In order to **adapting climate change responses to human health, gender and human rights**, we recommend the **establishment of a United Nations Joint Programme on Gender, Health and Human Rights within the UNFCCC process** which can help achieve five key objectives, including: (i) improve gender-responsive climate action and policy, (ii) develop appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures, (iii) support governments to integrate direct and indirect responses to climatic impacts on health in their national development policies, (iv) provide research evidence as a basis of understanding climatic impacts on gender, health and human rights, and (v) protect victims of climate change and disasters from human rights abuse, mainly during extreme weather events and conflicts.

It is possible to **transforming climate change into opportunities for youth employment and youth entrepreneurship**. We recommend the provision by Commonwealth member states, other governments and relevant institutions of adequate financial resources and capacity support to young entrepreneurs for **the creation of youth-led Climate-Smart Agriculture, low-carbon and social enterprises** which align expertise, skills, innovation and competence towards low-carbon and 'green' economies in agricultural transformation, climate change mitigation and adaptation and development.

Disasters pose a huge threat on the lives of world citizens today more than never before. **Empowering citizens and youth's ability and action in disaster risk reduction, recovery and resilience** could be achieved. We encourage the UNFCCC Secretariat to mobilise parties to the Convention towards the enforcement of Article 48(e) of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 adopted in March 2015 by the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction which calls for international organisations and treaty bodies, and international financial institutions at the global and regional levels to support developing countries, at their request, in the implementation of the Framework, with youths' support.

Building the 'Blue Economy' and sustainable ocean governance can enable citizens' wellbeing. **The formulation and implementation of national policies which enable sustainable ocean governance and the 'Blue Economy' address youth unemployment and job creation** by small states' governments that we recommend to world leaders, can also have indirect action on other social issues affecting young people, such as migration, limited access to information and technologies, participation in crime, lack of participation in governance and policies, etc.

Access to climate funds by governments can be built up on young people empowered role in climate finance if they are provided with necessary skills and participation spaces. We recommend that the Commonwealth Climate Finance Skills Hub which is to be agreed by Heads of Commonwealth governments at their meeting in Malta in November this year includes within its structure youth desks both at the headquarters and at the regional nodes level, as well as a youth representative to be part of the Hub's governing body.

We ask world leaders to commit at COP21 to achieving a 100% renewable energy future with sustainable energy access for all. We recommend that **Parties at the UNFCCC take strides to acknowledge, in a legally-binding agreement, that the long term goal of phasing out fossil fuels and transitioning to 100% renewable energy by 2050 is essential and urgently needed**. We also recommend putting young people at the centre of promoting the use of renewable energy within communities all around the world, building their capacities to do so.

We commit to a sustainable post-2015 global agreement on climate change and to be working towards limiting global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius to protect both the environment and our communities from climatic impacts. We ask Heads of Commonwealth nations and other world leaders to hear our voice and act upon our recommendations, and fully include us, our peers, all stakeholders and the international community to take concrete actions and solutions.



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