



# Youth Participation in the UNFCCC Negotiation Process

THE UNITED NATIONS, YOUNG PEOPLE, AND CLIMATE CHANGE



**Youth Participation in the UNFCCC Negotiation Process:**  
The United Nations, Young People, and Climate Change

*A publication of the United Nations Joint  
Framework Initiative on Children, Youth and Climate Change*

2010-05

Layout: 5F, Adam Axelsson

Thank you to the photographers who have contributed to  
this endeavour: Liam O'Doherty (TakingITGlobal),  
Emma Biermann (UKYCC) and Ebony Payne, Ellie Johnston,  
Erin O'Sullivan and Kyle Gracey (SustainUS).





## Foreword

The world needs to take concerted, ambitious action to limit the magnitude of climate change and adapt to its inevitable impacts.

These impacts, including droughts and rising sea levels, are especially alarming for young people who will inherit the world in the years to come. Following the outcomes of the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen (COP 15), an inclusive and pragmatic way forward needs to be found at meetings of the UNFCCC, with a view to effectively responding to climate change and safeguarding the livelihoods of future generations.

As a recognized civil society actor, the youth constituency has demonstrated its eagerness to participate in UN climate change meetings. Since September 2008, the UNFCCC secretariat has been working together with United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and young people to promote active youth participation in the climate change negotiation process through the Joint Framework Initiative on Children, Youth and Climate Change. I thank all our partners for their support to this endeavor and congratulate them for their successful activities at COP 15. I also thank them for contributing towards this booklet on youth participation in the UNFCCC negotiating process.

This collaborative effort confirms the commitment of the United Nations system to engage youth in activities related to climate change. We hope to continue working with young people and call on them to continue to be enthusiastically involved in the global response to the enormous challenge of climate change.

**YVO DE BOER**

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY,  
UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK  
CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE



# Table of Contents

<b>FOREWORD BY YVO DE BOER</b>	<b>1</b>
ACRONYMS	3
INTRODUCTION	4
<b>YOUTH IN THE UNFCCC NEGOTIATION PROCESS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>GROWING TOGETHER IN A CHANGING CLIMATE: YOUTH PARTICIPATION AT COP 15/CMP 5</b>	<b>10</b>
The Road to Copenhagen	10
YOUNGO at COP 15/CMP 5	11
Why is it important to involve young people in the UNFCCC negotiations?	12
Moral/equity-based value	13
Indirect value to the outcome of the negotiations	15
Direct value to the outcome of the negotiations	15
<b>EXAMPLES OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES</b>	<b>17</b>
The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UN CSD)	17
The United Nations General Assembly (UN GA)	17
The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)	17
The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)	18
The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	18
The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)	18
<b>THE WAY FORWARD: ENHANCED YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE UNFCCC PROCESS</b>	<b>22</b>
Short term	22
Medium-term	25
Long-term	26
<b>END NOTES</b>	<b>28</b>

## Acronyms

AWG-LCA	Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention
AWG-KP	Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
COY	Conference of Youth
CSO	Civil society organization
DESD	Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UN CSD	United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
YOUNGO	The youth constituency under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, stands for Youth Non-Governmental Organization (Youth NGO)

# Introduction

In preparation for the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC and the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP), the United Nations Joint Framework Initiative on Children, Youth and Climate Change released the brochure “Growing Together in a Changing Climate: The United Nations, Young People, and Climate Change,” which contained information on some of the many climate change initiatives – projects, campaigns, educational tools, websites and publications – produced by the United Nations and young people.

They ranged from global initiatives raising awareness for combating climate change to advocacy efforts at the UNFCCC negotiations.

As a follow-up to this publication, the United Nations Joint Framework Initiative is now releasing “Youth participation in the UNFCCC negotiation process.” This publication is intended to inform governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and young people on how youth participation has taken place at sessions of the UNFCCC starting with COP 5, highlighting increased efforts by young people to advocate for effective solutions to tackle climate change. For governments, it aims to be a guide to better understand young people’s involvement in the UNFCCC

negotiation process. For the United Nations family, it is intended as a means of sharing information and best practices on how young people participate in international policy making processes. For the public at large, it provides inspiration and assurance of the commitment by young people to achieve a more sustainable world.

The information presented here was gathered through a series of interviews with government delegates, United Nations officials, representatives of NGOs and young people. The responses received were reviewed and complemented with information readily available from public sources, such as websites and publications.



### AGENDA 21, CHAPTER 25

It is imperative that youth from all parts of the world participate actively in all relevant levels of decision-making processes because it affects their lives today and has implications for their futures. In addition to their intellectual contribution and their ability to mobilize support, they bring unique perspectives that need to be taken into account.

---

# Youth in the UNFCCC Negotiation Process

The grouping of civil society referred to as “youth” is defined by the United Nations General Assembly (UN GA) as persons between 15 and 24 years of age.<sup>1</sup> This definition overlaps with that of “children,” defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child as all persons between 0 and 18 years of age.<sup>2</sup>

According to the *Guidelines for the Participation of Representatives of Non-governmental Organizations at Meetings of the UNFCCC*, “representatives shall normally be at least 18 years of age. Younger representatives may be registered at the discretion of the secretariat.”<sup>3</sup> This has translated into a greater number of young people rather than children participating in the UNFCCC intergovernmental process.

At COP 5 in Bonn, which took place from 25 October to 5 November, 1999, young people participated in a parallel Children and Youth Forum on the Environment and in the session of the COP itself as members of NGOs shaping official interventions and lobbying delegates. The Government of the Netherlands hosted a special international youth meeting in parallel with COP 6, where young people crafted a youth declaration, which was presented to the COP President. At COP 7 in Marrakesh, youth organizations made statements “urging a move toward a low carbon-emitting future, and entry into force of the Protocol as the start of a ‘long path’ in combating climate change.” At COP 8 in New Delhi, a parallel children’s conference drafted a “Children’s

Charter on Climate Change,” which stated the younger generation’s concerns about the effects of climate change to their future. Young people came together as an “organized caucus” for the first time at COP 10 in Buenos Aires, drafting a declaration which called for “the recognition of a Youth Constituency Group within the COP in order to assure youth participation, in line with other groups such as businesses, indigenous people and environmental organizations.” At COP 11/CMP 1 in Montreal, the Government of Canada sponsored an ambitious “International Youth Summit” organized by Canadian environmental youth groups.

Building on these experiences, youth have organized pre-conferences called “Conferences of Youth” before every meeting of the COP/CMP since COP 11/CMP 1. Young people held the second Conference of Youth prior to COP 12/CMP 2 in Nairobi, which helped built their capacity to participate in the UNFCCC process by providing them with negotiating skills and a broader understanding of climate change science. At COP 13/CMP 3 in Bali, young

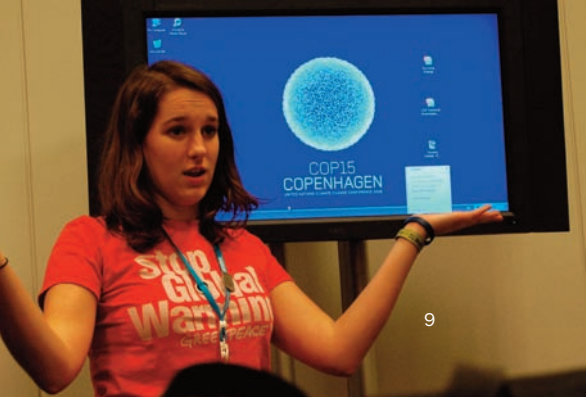




people held the third Conference of Youth and actively participated in the COP through press conferences and side events. At COP 14/CMP 4, over 500 young people congregated in Poznan to request governments to work together to reach an ambitious climate treaty. They also blogged, analysed policy developments, staged creative awareness-raising activities, and organized two international capacity-building training workshops to kick-off their participation in COP 14/CMP 4.







# Growing Together in a Changing Climate: Youth Participation at COP 15/CMP 5

## The Road to Copenhagen

Immediately after COP 14/CMP 4 in Poznan, young people started preparing to participate at COP 15/CMP 5. This meeting, according to the Bali Road Map, was programmed to complete a comprehensive process to enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action up to and beyond 2012.<sup>4</sup>

Prior to COP 15/CMP 5, the secretariat granted a provisional constituency status to young people. This new constituency is referred to as YOUNGO. The constituency status (a) provided a conduit for the exchange of official information between young people and the secretariat; (b) assisted the secretariat in ensuring an effective participation by youth appropriate to an intergovernmental meeting; (c) coordinated young people's interaction at sessions including convening constituency meetings, organizing meetings with officials, providing names for the speakers list and representation at official functions; and (d) provided logistical support to youth during sessions.<sup>5</sup>

Following the provision of constituency status, YOUNGO now elects two focal points who help liaise between young people and the secretariat. This election will take place after each meeting of the

COP/CMP and involve hundreds of youth organizations and youth leaders active in the UNFCCC negotiations. In order to ensure an inclusive process, one focal point is elected among youth from developing countries and the other among youth from developed countries. The constituency status ensures formal speaking slots during plenary sessions, facilitates access to secretariat staff, and provides access to office space during meetings of the UNFCCC. YOUNGO is also invited to workshops and other events organized by the secretariat to share views and experiences on specific thematic issues.

In preparation for COP 15/CMP 5, young people participated in the intersessional meetings in 2009, created sub-groups to plan on-site activities in Copenhagen, carried out a selection process for youth delegates from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I



Parties) who would receive financial support to participate at COP 15/CMP 5, planned and implemented advocacy strategies by meeting with government's representatives in their respective capitals, and organised the Conference of Youth.

### **YOUNGO at COP 15/CMP 5**

With the financial support of the Government of the Netherlands and the technical assistance from the secretariat, YOUNGO designed and planned a series of events to enhance the participation of young people, especially those from developing countries, at COP 15/CMP 5.<sup>6</sup>

Young people sought to actively influence Parties to agree upon ambitious, legally binding targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions and to reach consensus on how to move forward with further commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol beyond 2012. Furthermore, young people wanted to share their hopes and aspirations for international action towards addressing climate change issues.



About 1500 young people participated in COP 15/CMP 5 as representatives of Parties, NGOs and the media. In collaboration with the Joint Framework Initiative, young people organized side events under the banner of a Young and Future Generations Day, including an intergenerational inquiry with the UNFCCC Executive Secretary and high-level governmental officials. At this event, young representatives chosen by their peers shared their plans and actions to respond to climate change. Other side events included high-level briefings with officials such as the Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA), the Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP), the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary General on Climate Change. These meetings provided an opportunity for young people to share views and learn more about the status of negotiations at COP 15/CMP 5, the state of climate science and the commitment by the United Nations system to involving youth in climate change activities.

As part of the general exhibition area, young people set up a “Youth Arcade,” consisting of fifteen youth-related booths. Within this area, the secretariat, in collaboration with young people, hosted a UNFCCC Youth Booth where participating

United Nations agencies and youth organizations presented their initiatives on climate change and youth. This was a place for all actors to display their success stories, identify synergies and develop new partnerships. All events taking place at the booth were included in the official daily programme distributed to COP 15/CMP 5 participants.

Young people carried out awareness-raising activities such as helping plan and present the Fossil of the Day award, which was bestowed on those governments performing the worst during the past day’s negotiations at meetings of the UNFCCC.

As members of Party delegations, young people were increasingly pro-active in the negotiation process. One concrete example involved a delegate from Switzerland taking a prominent role in the capacity-building negotiations under the AWG-LCA.

**Why is it important to involve young people in the UNFCCC negotiations?**

In addition to the initiatives previously listed, young people have contributed to deliberations at meetings of the COP/CMP through plenary interventions, web-only submissions to the COP/CMP, submissions to the subsidiary bodies and direct lobbying with delegates. In preparation for and in between sessions, youth participated in workshops organized under the auspices of the COP/CMP and held informal meetings

with the UNFCCC Executive Secretary. These contributions can be classified on the basis of their merits as adding:

- (a) *moral/equity-based value,*
- (b) *indirect value to the outcome of the negotiations,*  
*and*
- (c) *direct value to the outcome of the negotiations.*

### **Moral/equity-based value**

Involvement of young people in the UNFCCC negotiation process provides an avenue for elaborating holistic approaches to tackle climate change and promote sustainable development. For example, according to a Party representative, his government is “pleased to promote the participation of youth in climate change activities because it will contribute to fighting climate change through increasing efforts in education, public awareness and poverty eradication. We need our new generation to work together to achieve our common goal in tackling climate change.” Another Party representative stated “I would like to strongly support the need to take into account the concerns of young people and involve them in shaping our thinking when negotiating for a fair, equitable and inclusive climate deal, which will be legally binding. As senior citizens of this Planet, we have a moral obligation to ensure that we do all that it takes to reach an agreement which will ensure that our children and great grand children inherit a safer planet than we did from our great grant parents.”

*The youth is our  
future! You will be  
at the table to  
decide how your  
future will be.*

**ADNAN Z. AMIN**, DIRECTOR OF  
THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM CHIEF  
EXECUTIVES BOARD FOR COORDINATION  
AT COP 15/CMP 5



**ACCORDING TO YOUNG PEOPLE INTERVIEWED,**

their participation adds value beyond a moral imperative. In their own words, the principle that “decisions taken about us, should not be taken without us” should be recognized as a means to improve policy responses to climate change. Other international agreements relating to public participation include:

- Agenda 21, Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, which affirms the rights of members of civil society to participate in international inter-governmental decision-making processes on environmental matters, and Chapter 25, which states that “involvement of today’s youth in environment and development decision-making and in the implementation of programmes is critical to the long-term success of Agenda 21”;
- the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which stipulates that “when adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account”;
- the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, which stresses that citizens and NGOs promoting environmental protection have the right to participate in decision-making processes;
- the United Nations World Programme on Action for Youth, as well as United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 52/83, 54/120, 56/117, 58/133, 59/148, 60/2, 62/126, 64/130, which call for more youth representation in official government delegations;
- Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs.





### **Indirect value to the outcome of the negotiations**

Young people's objectives at meetings of the COP/CMP are diverse; while some attend to share their views with delegates, others attempt to raise awareness about the work of their organizations through side events. These events offer opportunities for open dialogue and exploring new topics that may not be fully discussed during meetings of the COP/CMP given the limitation of time and scope of the agenda. Side events are successful in identifying concrete linkages between local activities by youth and issues discussed at intergovernmental negotiations.

Young people's activities at COP/CMP meetings demonstrate their willingness to contribute to the process but are not sufficient for effective participation at meetings of the COP/CMP. Young people seek to expand their activities by initiating hearings with Party delegates and informal meetings with representatives of the COP/CMP Bureau to directly share their views on the negotiated text.

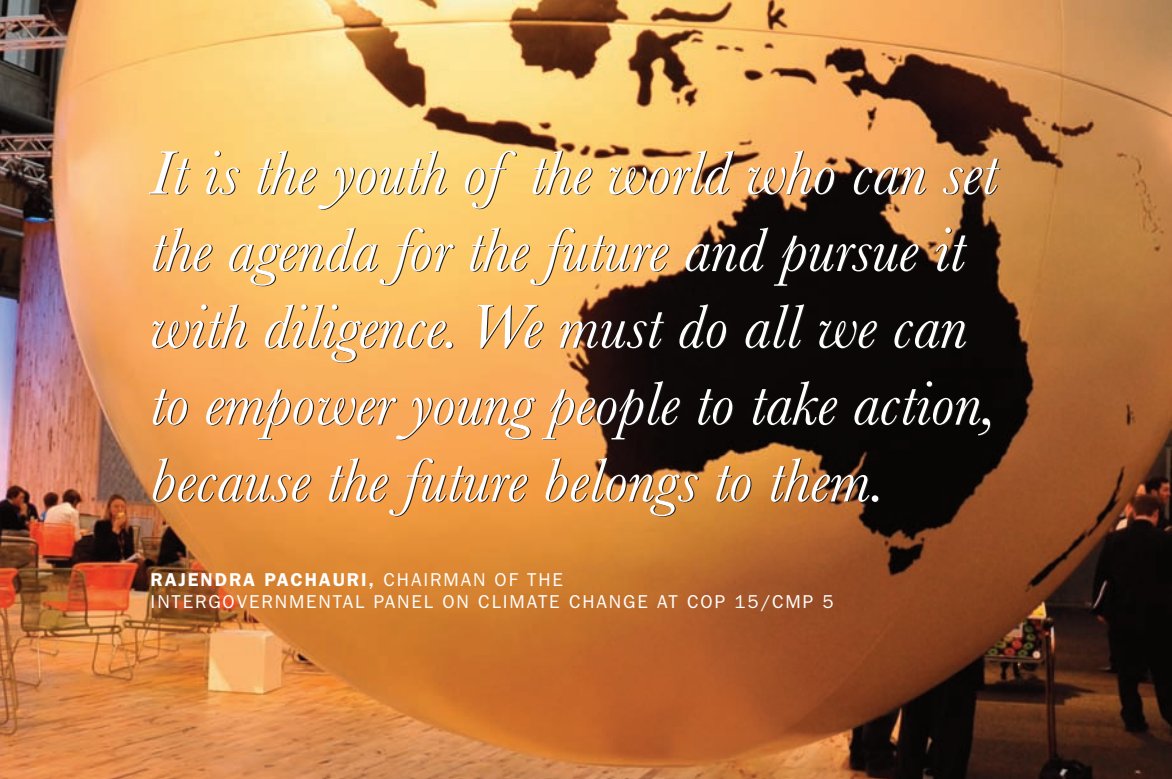
### **Direct value to the outcome of the negotiations**

Plenary sessions offer a direct opportunity to add value to the negotiation process. However, given the timing of the interventions (they usually come at the end of the proceedings), these tend not to be fully effective in influencing Parties' positions. A representative of a youth organization stated that "youth interventions were

scheduled at times when the room was empty of Party delegates. This was especially true for the final YOUNGO intervention addressing the 'full' plenary, scheduled during a time when most delegates were on break."

Some young people attend the UNFCCC negotiations as members of official delegations of their respective countries. Such youth delegates bring new perspectives and capacity to the delegation, while gaining new and applied skills. For example, an official youth delegate to COP 15/CMP5 stated that he was able to interact with his Minister and provide feedback to the delegation's daily planning. Another official youth delegate shared that he was able to explain the scientific rationale behind the 350 parts per million target, which later contributed to shaping his country's support to a 1.5-degree global temperature goal.

Young people in official delegations distill from the process a more nuanced understanding of the negotiation dynamics, which is shared in turn with other members of the YOUNGO constituency and their domestic networks. This understanding can enhance the effectiveness of youth input to the negotiations, in particular when lobbying government delegates.



*It is the youth of the world who can set the agenda for the future and pursue it with diligence. We must do all we can to empower young people to take action, because the future belongs to them.*

**RAJENDRA PACHAURI**, CHAIRMAN OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE AT COP 15/CMP 5



# Examples of Youth Participation in Other Intergovernmental Processes

Across the United Nations system, young people have been actively and effectively participating in intergovernmental processes.

**The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UN CSD)**, prompted by the outcomes of the Johannesburg Plan of Action stemming from the World Summit on Sustainable Development, recognizes youth as a major civil society group. During the sessions of the UN CSD, young people are able to deliver opening statements as part of the general debate and are part of an interactive discussion between major groups and governments. Youth also participate in thematic dialogues on the implementation of the work of the UN CSD, take part in a high-level segment with Ministers and provide overall comments during the closing Plenary of each session<sup>7</sup>

**The United Nations General Assembly** hosts youth delegates who are invited to attend the full duration of its sessions, and actively participate in the meetings of the Third Committee that deliberates on Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Issues. Youth delegates participate in the general work of their Missions through attending a range of meetings, informal negotiations and providing assistance in monitoring debates and drafting reports. The UN GA

also held informal interactive hearings with non-governmental organizations to receive their input prior to important sessions such as the 2005 Millennium Summit.

**The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** since 2007 has been holding ministerial roundtables, which provide a space for constructive dialogue between government delegates and civil society representatives, including young people. These roundtables have offered a “smaller, more informal set-up of twenty participants that has helped to ensure that the quality of the dialogue has been much higher than in many other United Nations Forums.”<sup>8</sup> The topics discussed have ranged from mechanisms to create a green economy to understanding international environmental governance at a country level.<sup>9</sup>

UNEP implements a long-term strategy on the engagement and involvement of young people in environmental issues.<sup>10</sup> One key component entails a youth advisory council comprised of up to seven advisors (one for each of the six UNEP regions plus one representative of indigenous youth). The Council advises UNEP, especially at

## EXAMPLES OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES

meetings of its Governing Council, on better ways of engaging young people in its work and represents young people in international environmental fora. The Council seeks to increase youth involvement in UNEP's work by informing youth groups in their regions about UNEP's programmes for young people. Members of the Advisory Council are elected at each Tunza International Youth Conference to serve for a period of approximately two years.<sup>11</sup>

**The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** has always had a major focus on youth in its programmes.<sup>12</sup> UNESCO seeks to empower young people by reaching out to them and encouraging their participation in its programmes, various networks and partner organizations.

The UNESCO Youth Forum has emerged as a very important tool to engage young people in UNESCO's work. The Youth Forum is an integral part of the Organization's General Conference, the highest decision-making body which meets every two years to define the UNESCO's general direction and budget. In 2003, the General Conference unanimously decided to make the Youth Forum a permanent feature prior to its biannual meetings.

The Youth Forum brings together youth delegates from all over the world to exchange views, share experiences, reflect together and identify common opportunities and challenges. Their discussions lead to a

final report which is presented at the General Conference, allowing for young people's views, concerns and recommendations to be taken into account by the representatives of the Member States and the UNESCO Secretariat.<sup>13</sup>

**The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)** organized in June 2008, within the context of the High-level meeting on AIDS, an Informal Interactive Hearing aimed to be "an opportunity to exchange views between civil society and Member States on various issues, with a particular focus on key priority issues for civil society, including young people, in achieving universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010."<sup>14</sup> These day-long hearings helped to inform the rest of the high-level negotiations, and the President of the General Assembly drafted a report summarizing its proceedings. The feedback from participating stakeholders suggested that the quality of the civil society input into the High-Level Meeting was very high.<sup>15</sup>





*Youth are the leaders and citizens of tomorrow. They need to be engaged in shaping their future which starts today.*

**AHMED DJOGLAF**, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY  
AT COP 15/CMP 5



**The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

allows civil society representatives, including youth, to make interventions when recognized by the Chair of the Plenary or a Working Group. Civil society representatives made statements in formal sessions of the COP to the CBD, once all Parties had taken the floor on a particular topic.<sup>16</sup> Host countries have also encouraged parallel events, such as the Global Civil Society Forum during the CBD COP.

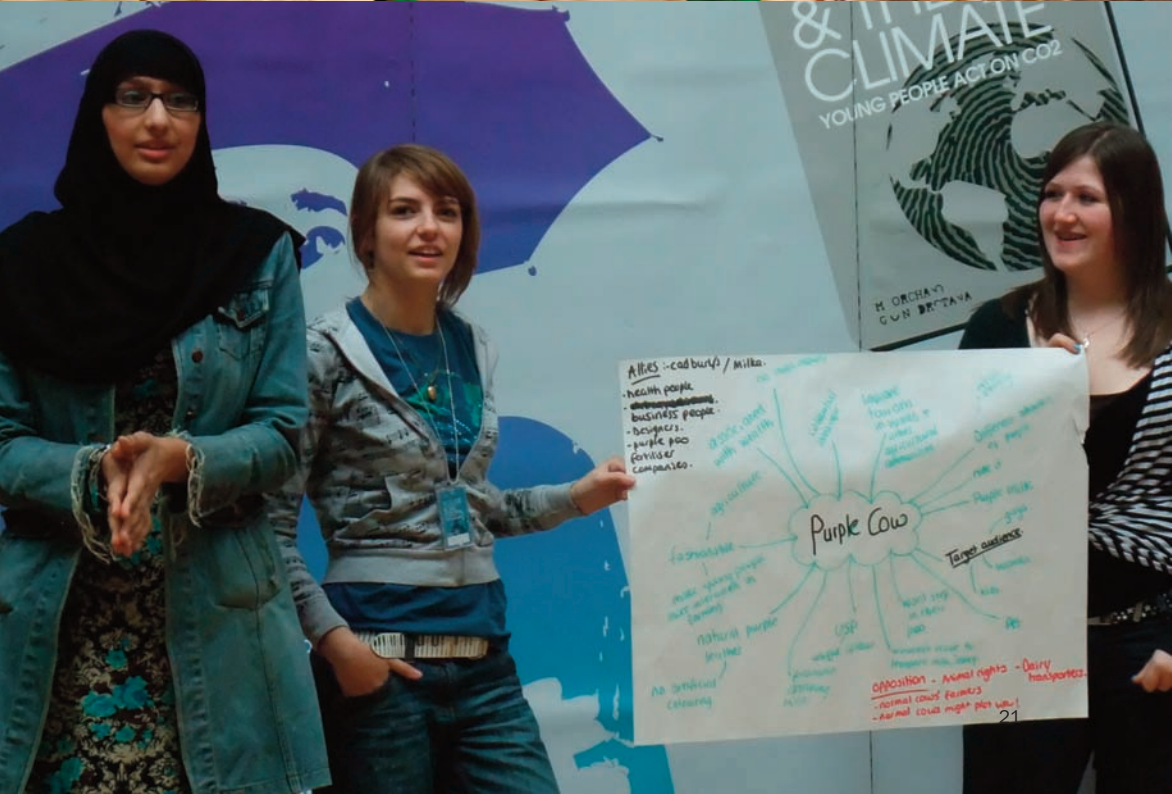
**The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)**

holds open dialogue sessions with civil society organizations (CSOs), including the active participation of young people, during its Conference of the Parties. The UNCCD also holds a dedicated session for CSOs during its High-Level Segment in order to ensure effective input by civil society to the deliberations of the Conference of the Parties.<sup>17</sup> Parties provide their regular contributions to a supplementary fund, reserved to ensure wider participation of civil society organizations in the official UNCCD meetings. By decision 5/COP.9, Parties to the UNCCD adopted the proposal that a joint panel composed of representatives of civil society organizations and the secretariat be formed in order to apply the selection criteria for financial support for their participation in UNCCD meetings and processes, consistent with the established rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties. Furthermore, by decisions 11-12-13-14/COP.9, CSOs of all constituency groups were called to contribute to the national reporting and review process by providing input to best practices on Sustainable Land Management and the iterative process.<sup>18</sup>

*Our commitment  
as UNEP is to  
bring the voices  
and energy of  
young people to  
provide leadership.  
They will succeed  
where we have  
failed.*

**ACHIM STEINER**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT  
PROGRAMME AT COP 15/CMP 5





# The Way Forward: Enhanced Youth Participation in the UNFCCC Process

Based on a series of interviews with government delegates, United Nations officials, representatives of NGOs and with young people themselves, the following suggestions are developed as a way forward to enhance youth participation in the UNFCCC negotiations. They are presented on a *short-, medium- and long-term* basis and could be adopted by governments, the United Nations family, NGOs and young people in their efforts to promote and facilitate youth participation in the UNFCCC negotiations.

## **Short term:**

- A. Schedule plenary interventions earlier in each session of the UNFCCC constituted bodies:** As noted by some Parties, a greater number of government delegates will be able to take youth interventions into consideration if these statements are made at the beginning of the sessions.
- B. Allow YOUNGO to make statements in contact groups open to NGOs, when appropriate:** Chairs of negotiation groups could allow YOUNGO representatives to provide inputs throughout the meeting, if possible, to address the issues at hand and thereby avoid general references to procedural issues.
- C. Regularly schedule informal meetings between YOUNGO representatives and officials such as the UNFCCC Executive Secretary and members of the Bureau of the COP/CMP and of its subsidiary bodies:** Young people have recognized that informal meetings allow them to gain a better understanding of the status of the negotiations, plan their activities accordingly, and provide timely input in a constructive manner.
- D. Organize briefings and informal meetings for YOUNGO representatives with key negotiators during UNFCCC meetings:** During such briefings, invited negotiators could make short interventions on the status of the



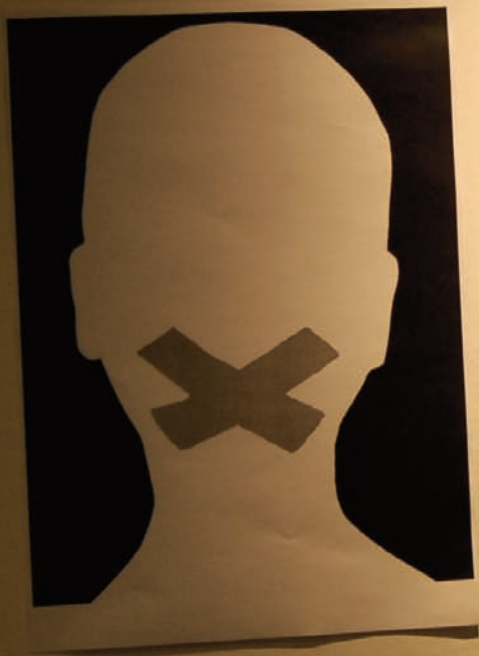


negotiations. This would be followed by questions from young people. Informal briefings could provide YOUNGO representatives the opportunity to openly share points of view with negotiators. These meetings could also leverage existing video conferencing technologies and foster participation by young people not present at the sessions.

- E. Liaise with YOUNGO representatives about logistical issues that may limit their effective participation at UNFCCC meetings:** Access to venues holding UNFCCC sessions may be limited due to space constraints tied to the increasing number of participants at these events. During interviews, young people requested that specific steps be taken to address logistical issues at future meetings. It would be pertinent to help them plan strategies to effectively and constructively participate at UNFCCC negotiations.
- F. Ensure continued logistical support from the secretariat at UNFCCC meetings, including office space and an identifiable area in the exhibit hall:** It was noted how well this worked for the first time at COP 15/CMP 5, especially as young people were able to create a youth arcade.

- G. Increase the number of official youth delegates in government delegations to UNFCCC meetings and establish guidelines for their participation:** Having official youth delegates in government delegations promotes communication and mutual understanding between negotiators and youth civil society participants. Official youth delegates facilitate communication flow as well as understanding of respective positions, roles, and constraints between government negotiators and civil society actors. Governments also stated the need for guidelines that could help them identify and recruit official youth delegates.
- H. Provide funds to support attendance by young people at UNFCCC meetings, including intersessionals and regional workshops, without affecting the level of support for eligible Parties:** Youth and other groups have often cited lack of funds as the main impediment to their participation at UNFCCC meetings. The support of the Government of the Netherlands for youth activities at COP 15/CMP 5 demonstrated that targeted funds for youth participation can increase the quality and impact of youth activities as outlined in previous sections.

**HOW CAN YOU  
DECIDE  
ABOUT US  
WITHOUT US?**



**CIVIL  
SOCIETY**

**HAS BEEN  
REMOVED**

**FROM  
THE**

**NEGOTI-  
ATIONS.**

**Medium-term:**

**A. Hold multi-stakeholder forums, roundtables and/or civil society hearings prior to UNFCCC meetings:**

Multi-stakeholder forums can range from short meetings to long-term processes that can take months to implement. Scope of the activities would have to be determined keeping in mind time constraints. Roundtables provide a forum to encourage high quality discussion, which are directly linked to the negotiation process. However, skilled facilitation and reporting is required to guarantee effective participation by stakeholders. Civil society hearings could differ in format, but tend to last between 1–3 hours and allow participants between 2–3 minutes for each statement. The content of the discussions is usually recorded in written summaries and/or could be captured via webcast. The outcomes of these hearings could be included in the official documentation of the appropriate body (i.e. Subsidiary Body on Implementation or COP/CMP).

**B. Enhance existing clearing house systems such as the Climate Change Information Network (CC:iNet)<sup>18</sup> to support information sharing, networking and collaboration by youth participating in the UNFCCC negotiation process:**

The resources offered by CC:iNet could be utilized to support the work of young people by

retaining institutional memory, sharing information among them, and interacting with government officials on an on-going basis.

**C. Provide technical support for the preparation of, and follow-up to, youth activities at UNFCCC meetings:**

Youth, especially from developing countries, have stated that their ability to provide technical input on specific issues is sometimes hindered by lack of resources and access to negotiators in their countries. By receiving technical support related to climate change, such as access to latest scientific findings and up-to-date policy research analysis, youth will be able to provide more constructive and targeted input into the negotiation process.

**D. Provide timely and accurate information on the status of the negotiations through daily NGO briefings with the secretariat staff:**

Young people have identified the need for timely and accurate information during the proceedings of UNFCCC meetings as essential to their ability to effectively participate in the negotiation process. Other forums such as the UN CSD have already established similar practices.

**Long-term:**

- A. Hold a special session with youth participation during high-level segments of the meetings of the COP/CMP:** Given the increasing importance of climate change issues, special activities may be required in the long term as a way to provide youth with the opportunity to effectively participate at high-level segments of the sessions of the COP/CMP.
  
- B. Establish a process to review the effectiveness of youth participation in the UNFCCC negotiations:** The secretariat could be requested to regularly review actions taken by governments, the United Nations system, NGOs and young people to promote youth participation in the UNFCCC negotiations.
  
- C. Create a trust fund to support youth activities in preparation of, during and following UNFCCC meetings:** The Convention on Biological Diversity currently holds a general voluntary trust fund to support the work of indigenous peoples and local communities to facilitate their participation at meetings of its COP. Such arrangement could be adapted to support the work of youth within the UNFCCC negotiation process.





## End notes

- 1 United Nations General Assembly, A/36/215 and Resolution 36/28, 1981.
- 2 Convention on the Rights of the Child  
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>
- 3 Guidelines for the Participation of Representatives of Non-governmental Organizations at Meetings of the Bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change  
[http://unfccc.int/files/parties\\_and\\_observers/ngo/application/pdf/coc\\_guide.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/parties_and_observers/ngo/application/pdf/coc_guide.pdf)
- 4 Decision 1/CP.13  
<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/cop13/eng/06a01.pdf>
- 5 Non-governmental organization observer constituencies  
<http://unfccc.int/resource/ngo/const.pdf>
- 6 60 children and young people from non-Annex I Parties were able to participate COP 15/CMP 5 through this arrangement.
- 7 United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development  
<http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/index.shtml>
- 8 Stakeholder Empowerment Project Case Study on the UNEP Ministerial Roundtables
- 9 UNEP/GC.25/17  
<http://www.unep.org/GC/GC25/Docs/Proceeding-FINAL.pdf>
- 10 UNEP/GC.22/3/Add.1/Rev.1  
<http://www.unep.org/gc/gc22/Document/k0263641.pdf>
- 11 United Nations Environment Programme TUNZA Network  
<http://www.unep.org/tunza/youth/Home/tabid/3731/language/en-US/Default.aspx>
- 12 For more information on UNESCO's Youth actions  
<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/social-transformations/youth/>
- 13 More information on the UNESCO Youth Forum  
<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/social-transformations/youth/youth-forums/6th-unesco-youth-forum-in-2009/>
- 14 Proposed arrangements for the high-level meeting for a comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS  
<http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/letters/letter110408.pdf>
- 15 Stakeholder Empowerment Project Case Study on the UNAIDS Civil Society Hearing during the High-level Meeting on AIDS, 2008.
- 16 The Convention on Biological Diversity: Understanding and Influencing the Process  
[http://www.ias.unu.edu/resource\\_centre/A%20Guide%20to%20Understanding%20CBD.pdf](http://www.ias.unu.edu/resource_centre/A%20Guide%20to%20Understanding%20CBD.pdf)
- 17 ICCD/COP(9)/18/Add.1  
<http://www.unccd.int/cop/officialdocs/cop9/pdf/18add1eng.pdf>
- 14 ICCD/COP(9)/4/Add.1  
<http://www.unccd.int/cop/officialdocs/cop9/pdf/4add1eng.pdf>
- 19 Climate Change Information Network (CC:iNet)  
[http://unfccc.int/cc\\_inet](http://unfccc.int/cc_inet)





The logo for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It features the acronym "UNFCCC" in a bold, red, serif font. The text is positioned to the left of a large, solid red circle. A thin, red, wavy line curves across the bottom of the circle, starting from the left and ending on the right.

**UNFCCC**

FOR INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT  
[GROWING.TOGETHER@UNFCCC.INT](mailto:GROWING.TOGETHER@UNFCCC.INT)