

20 YOUTH SOLUTIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

PREAMBLE

The time for statements, petitions and lobbying is running out. Now is the time for solutions. These 20 solutions form a manual for our planet. It is for everyone and we, youth from around the world, have already begun to implement them...

Climate change threatens all of our proposals for creating a sustainable world. The importance and urgency of reducing emissions and promoting mitigation and adaptation cannot be overstated.

The world we currently live in lacks equity, justice and sustainability.

We need science- and equity-based decision-making now.

We invite the youth of the world to confront this.

Act now! – and reclaim the future for generations to come.

Act now! – and make these solutions your own.

OUR SOLUTIONS

1. **EDUCATION – Put sustainability at the centre of education:** Sustainability must be seeded in young people's minds through a compulsory series of classes in primary and secondary schools around the world.
2. **YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP – Make it easy for youth to start businesses by providing capital, tax-breaks and reducing administrative bureaucracy:** Youth must be empowered to become entrepreneurs through tax breaks, incentives, and fewer administrative burdens on their businesses. Young business owners must create a platform to encourage youth entrepreneurship through peer-to-peer mentoring.
3. **ENERGY SOURCES – Shift to the use of renewable resources, and effectively use non-renewable resources to make this happen:** The world must make a dramatic shift away from fossil fuels and cease certain harmful policies like the granting of fossil fuel subsidies. Youth must be at the forefront of this shift towards renewable energy, and be encouraged to develop and implement new energy solutions.
4. **ENERGY EFFICIENCY – Make the best use out of energy – be efficient:** Governments must impose energy efficiency taxes to inefficient companies, and use the revenue to support programs that fund the transition. They must also lead by example, and adopt energy efficiency measures on all of their property, according to international standards.
5. **AGRICULTURE – Restrict transnational corporations' power over food systems:** Government must craft programs to educate farming communities on new agricultural technology and techniques, to improve food production and distribution. They must also encourage the establishment of sustainable farmers and producers' cooperatives. Youth must demand an end to land grabs and participate in more sustainable systems of meat and vegetable production.

6. **WASTE MANAGEMENT – Reduce your footprints, soundly manage the waste you leave:** Life-cycle thinking must be implemented in waste management policies, and appropriate technology transfer measures must be implemented to foster an effective waste management private sector. Youth must develop action projects to ensure increased education and responsible management of waste, opening economic and entrepreneurial opportunities in the process.
7. **OCEANS – Enforce regulations against pollution, exploitation and degradation of our oceans:** Promote sustainable fishing and stricter regulations against pollution in our oceans, through enforcement of international law or, when relevant, adoption of effective national regulations. Such efforts will ensure a sustainable regeneration of fish stock, and conservation of the ocean's resources, enhancing its role in maintaining the ecosystem balance on our planet.
8. **YOUTH REPRESENTATION – Promote democratic youth representation amongst societies' decision-making processes:** Our future depends on the ability of young people to cultivate meaningful lives and livelihoods, and influence decision-making. We must prioritize meaningful youth employment through education and training, reduce restrictions on labour mobility, and appoint Ombudspersons for Future Generations in national and international institutions.
9. **ECONOMY – Redesign our economies to be sustainable and to make people happy by moving away from insatiable consumption practices:** The biosphere is Earth's largest system, the economy must fit within it, and the end of all economic activity must be human well-being. Youth must be at the forefront of the shift to an economy that promotes happiness, health, and relaxation. Financial institutions must promote sustainability, and not an endless series of bubbles.
10. **PEACE – Make the world a non conflict zone led by youth peacemakers:** Societies must address conflicts which threaten the right of individuals to happy, peaceful lives. Young people are entitled to war-free living areas – demilitarization and nuclear disarmament would largely contribute to this end.
11. **HEALTH – Respect the right to healthcare:** Human health is one of the paramount concerns of sustainable development. Development must promote youth to engage in healthy lifestyles and encourage them to adopt careers in the health field.
12. **FOOD SECURITY – Produce food for people and the planet, and not just for money:** There is currently enough food supply to feed the world's population, but the distribution is unequal and inefficient. Youth must reduce their meat consumption so that our production is going to people and not to animals.
13. **GENDER RIGHTS – Recognize gender empowerment and freedom of sexual and gender choice in a society free of discrimination:** Men and women are still not treated equally in society. There also exists much prejudice and discrimination based on sexual orientation. Children must grow up in a society free of gender discrimination, where people are free to love who they choose, and where legislation reflects and encourages appropriately such personal preferences.

14. **BIODIVERSITY – Demand biodiversity conservation, the ending of mass species extinction and habitat degradation**: Biodiversity is paramount to the well-being of all life on Earth, including that of humans. Young people must advocate for drastic measures that end mass species extinction as well as severe ocean degradation.
15. **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE – Recognize ecocide as a crime against humanity and nature**: Ecocide, must be recognized as a crime by international law, so that individuals and corporations can be held accountable for their actions, instead of simply incurring in administrative sanctions.
16. **HUMAN RIGHTS – Acknowledge that the respect of human rights is the integral part of sustainable development**: Sustainable development is not possible without respect for human rights. Global forums must be established by youth to promote, discuss and incorporate international and personal partnerships that strive for equality for all people regardless of their race, gender, sex, religion, sexual preference and nationality.
17. **WATER – Sustain what all life is based on – water**: Water scarcity is rapidly becoming a threat to sustainable development. Existing technology to collect water at a small scale must be adopted through existing public infrastructure, such as government buildings and public schools.
18. **DISASTERS – Recognize the links between development and vulnerability to natural disasters, to integrate place-based disaster risk reduction and sustainable development**: Natural disasters can undermine decades' worth of efforts towards sustainable development. Youth must be the spark for integrated disaster relief programs across boundaries, and preventive measures.
19. **CLIMATE CHANGE – Recognize the realities and impacts of climate change, take responsibility, demand accountability and act to reduce emissions**: Climate change threatens all of our proposals for creating a sustainable world. The importance and urgency of reducing emissions and promoting mitigation and adaptation cannot be overstated. Governments must adopt science- and equity-based decision-making now.
20. **BEHAVIORAL CHANGE – Let youth lead governments, corporations and society into sustainability**: Media must focus part of their output on initiatives promoting conscious consumption. Corporations must implement compulsory employee training on sustainability practices.

Signed:

The Delegates of the 6th World Youth Congress representing 114 countries

*Sitio das Pedras, Barra da Tijuca,
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Tuesday 12th June 2012*