

# Commonwealth Youth Policy Recommendations on Climate Change



The Commonwealth

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commonwealth youth  
climate change network

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Commonwealth Secretariat  
Marlborough House  
Pall Mall  
London SW1Y 5HX  
United Kingdom

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# Acronyms and abbreviations

AEYN	Asian Environmental Youth Network
CYCN	Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGO	non-governmental organisation
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals

# Executive Summary

*'Assigning responsibility to the youth makes them feel included and makes them generate brilliant ideas when it comes to tackling climate change. It is important to separate emotions from logic when tackling climate change issues ... [and] to localise climate facts to a country context. Copying exactly from the West is being emotional and not logical because the contexts vary. There is a need to use logic when adopting international policies.'* — Youth voice from Nigeria

Across the world, young people are uniting their voices in the fight against climate change, standing up for social injustices and calling out the lack of action and accountability in protecting their future — a future that relies on the health of our planet and its valuable ecosystems. Despite intensifying social, economic and environmental impacts due to the changing climate, the spirit of hope prevails. Youth from diverse backgrounds seek equal access to platforms to engage in constructive dialogues to freely share their lived experiences, showcase their actions and influence significant policy and practice.

Climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies must be inclusive and involve stakeholders at all levels and scales. Young people in particular should play a central role, given that they are predicted to inherit the dire consequences of a burning planet. In efforts to foster enabling environments, policymakers in the public and private sector are encouraged to create favourable conditions for youth to contribute to the establishment of strong institutions and formulate good legislation and policies.

For them to succeed, young people need to be given opportunities to amplify their voices, articulate their concerns and be taken seriously within the policymaking space and processes. Putting youth at the centre of climate action is key to promoting intergenerational equity.

The production of this document was spearheaded by the Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network (CYCN), guided by the Commonwealth Secretariat. It provides an evidence base on climate vulnerabilities and risks as well as environmental problems from a youth perspective. It also presents a set of 30 actionable policy recommendations from youth across the Commonwealth and beyond to guide the process of building resilient futures.

The policy recommendations provide the building blocks for youth engagement in climate-related policymaking and advocacy at local, national, regional and international levels. They are intended to stimulate dialogues for policy engagement between young people and decision-makers on climate change and sustainability issues.

The recommendations are summarised under different themes as follows:

## Direct engagement and active participation

1. **Include young people from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds in policymaking processes** to make meaningful and tangible contributions during policymaking processes in climate resilience, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.
2. **Engage youth actively in multi-stakeholder dialogues and platforms at all levels – local, national, regional and global –** including by providing funding for young people to attend meetings so that they can negotiate with leaders and policymakers.



3. **Support youth activists to raise and amplify their voices at the highest levels** to engage openly with the leaders from their respective countries and regions and promote safe spaces for youth to stand up and speak out against climate injustices.
4. **Support community-level youth volunteering in climate change action**, particularly in promoting environmental conservation and sustainability through tree-planting exercises, ocean cleaning, clearing solid wastes in urban areas and many others. This work often goes unrecognised with minimal to no compensation.

### Knowledge, capacity and information management

5. **Promote diverse green curricula by integrating climate education in schools from early childhood** to promote climate literacy and create awareness about climate risks and vulnerabilities as early as possible so that young people have the capacities to address climate change issues.
6. **Design diverse, creative and innovative methods for promoting climate information services** that incorporate diversity and creativity in climate knowledge systems from production and dissemination to consumption, including integrating indigenous knowledge systems.
7. **Build and strengthen the capacities of all stakeholders to tackle climate change from grassroots to decision-making levels**, particularly vulnerable and under-represented groups including young people, women and low-income and rural communities as well as indigenous groups who live in harmony with the natural world.
8. **Establish effective knowledge and information management systems for climate change, biodiversity conservation and sustainability** so that young people are equipped with accurate and updated information on climate change to give them confidence in decision-making.

### Communication and networking

9. **Design effective and efficient communication strategies to bridge knowledge gaps and create awareness among youth on climate change** and its socio-economic, cultural and environmental impacts.
10. **Design effective multi-way dialogues between youth, scientists, researchers and policymakers to promote common understanding of climate risks and vulnerabilities** and ensure that dissemination of climate information is not top-down but flows in both directions.
11. **Promote communication strategies that are tailored to young people's needs and incentivise youth action against climate change** to make them appreciated by other actors such as policymakers, researchers, the private sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).
12. **Promote effective and inclusive networking platforms for youth to share their knowledge and lived experiences.** The power of social media as an effective channel for knowledge transfer has been demonstrated and, although such channels tend to oversimplify climate news, it spreads faster on social media and has more impact compared to formal channels.

13. **Support youth-led networking platforms to facilitate peer learning and exchange of ideas and lessons learned** so that they can learn from each other about what works and what does not work in different contexts and settings.

### Innovation, technology and infrastructure

14. **Promote localised green technologies across sectors and create opportunities for young people to showcase their knowledge and skills,** particularly in sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, energy, manufacturing, tourism, housing and construction.
15. **Promote sustainable socio-economic and environmental urban planning to create income opportunities for young people** and to increase environmental inspiration in and around cities.
16. **Create favourable conditions for youths to foster partnerships and collaborative initiatives,** including with civil society organisations, governments, the private sector, researchers and donors, to upscale innovations and technologies.
17. **Create favourable conditions for youth to access technological innovations** to bridge the digital divide between the poor and the rich and between rural and urban communities.

### Business and entrepreneurship

18. **Support programmes that promote sustainable businesses for young entrepreneurs** such as green entrepreneurship, which would change mentalities and allow them to move away from capitalist to circular economy systems.
19. **Create opportunities for sustainable careers in green jobs for young people.** They also need policies that support strong and meaningful collaborative initiatives between youth and public and private companies.
20. **Facilitate the practical and technical skills development of young people for a skill-based economy** through capacity-building workshops, apprenticeships, student placements, etc.

### Fundraising and access to climate financing

21. **Devolve climate financing to the lowest level possible to fund grassroots youth-led actions on climate change and sustainability,** paying attention to grassroots level organisations that do not have the technical capacities to write proposals to seek and secure large grants for climate change and environmental conservation activities.
22. **Foster new pathways to finance and scale-up sustainable financing for youth-led climate resilient and sustainability projects** to avoid over-reliance on grants from external sources (NGOs, governments or the donor community).
23. **Support strong mechanisms for equitable and sustainable access to climate financing to ensure inclusivity and fairness in youth-led projects** by eliminating political bottlenecks associated with distributing financial resources.

## Enabling environment for legislation, policies and institutions

24. **Develop context-dependent and localised policy and legislative frameworks that suit a given setting and promote specific youth-led initiatives** to address local needs, priorities and expectations.
25. **Provide a clear statement on the position of youth in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)**, the lack of which young people feel is a huge barrier to their contribution towards combating climate change.
26. **Mainstream youth action into national, regional and international policies** by interlinking climate change with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 on climate action as well as the other SDGs, including poverty and inequality, gender, health, literacy, security and conflicts.
27. **Mainstream gender action into policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks** to ensure that girls and young women obtain training and formal education to strengthen their capabilities and build their confidence in climate change action.
28. **Strengthen policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks that address loss and damage caused by extreme weather events**, including defining terms of compensation and how to prevent further such loss and damage and minimise risks and vulnerabilities that are inherent in Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
29. **Promote a multisectoral approach to policymaking processes to promote integrated adaptation and mitigation strategies.** Climate change is complex and multifaceted and requires governments to tackle it from a broad perspective, including by addressing issues of health, education, gender and inequality.
30. **Create a favourable environment for young people to hold leaders accountable for their climate commitments and actions.**

## Lessons learned and conclusions

### Aspects of climate change policy that have worked well in integrating the views, ideas and actions of young people:

1. Capacity building: Capacity building for youth should start from an early stage in schools to prepare them to make meaningful and informed career choices that make impactful contributions. The use of diverse and mixed methods approaches to capacity building to educate and enlighten the minds of young persons on climate change issues has worked well in certain Commonwealth countries. Strengthened capacities have granted youth the confidence to exercise their agency, as demonstrated by young people being at the forefront in advocating and lobbying for climate action.
2. The importance of digital climate activism: The use of digital and social media platforms has been impactful. Digital activism via social media has worked well because it is a very powerful tool for mobilising youth into action.
3. The power of collaboration and networking: A supportive and collaborative environment where young people learn from each other has catalysed collective action against climate change. They have formed coalitions with other stakeholders in the public, private and civil society spaces. Some have engaged directly with local governments before moving to tackle their national governments.

4. Recognition of the multi-dimensional and multi-faceted nature of climate change: Many young people are appreciating climate change's intimate connection with all the other SDGs including health, gender, poverty and inequality, education and others. Some youth-led projects and initiatives are taking a holistic, integrated approach to combating climate change impacts by embracing multi-layered solutions in different sectors including eco-tourism, smart housing, etc. and this is working; however, they still need strong policies to support such initiatives.
5. Functional platforms for inclusivity and representation: Young people in the Commonwealth from diverse backgrounds are sharing their lived experiences on climate change risks and vulnerabilities with the global community through multi-stakeholder dialogues, thereby creating opportunities for personal and professional growth. Some youth leaders have strengthened their interpersonal skills through networking via these platforms, which has enabled them to mobilise their peers at the grassroots levels and represent them in high-level meetings.
6. Seeking home-grown solutions: Certain youth groups are localising climate change issues to implement homemade solutions that are better suited to their local needs and avoid a one-size-fits-all approach.
7. The need to develop a realistic plan of actions: Some young people are formulating realistic plans of action to suit their specific context, taking into account resource availability. This has worked well because they know that implementation plans should have a realistic approach and should be achievable within a given time frame using available resources.
8. The power of progressive and long-term negotiations: Negotiating climate change can be a long process because climate risks and vulnerabilities cannot be tackled overnight. Some young people are patient and are moving with a realistic pace and are not over ambitious because they know that it may take time before the desired outcomes are achieved. However, they keep going and are consistent with their demands at the negotiation platforms.
9. Be open-minded and flexible: The world is dynamic and things are ever changing. Anyone joining the climate action space must be persistent to win the fight. Being open to opportunities has worked well for some young people in different Commonwealth regions. Young people appreciate the fact that there is always room for improvement and that any engagement is a learning process towards the achievement of desired goals and outcomes.
10. Opportunities are limitless: Taking advantage of available opportunities and creating more has worked well for some young people. They believe that opportunities are limitless, and no one should be discouraged to act because of their age, gender, socio-cultural background, education level etc. Factors such as age or levels of literacy should not be a barrier to climate action as no one is too young or too old or too smart or too dumb to generate an impact.

**Aspects of climate change policy that continue to pose barriers and hindrances in integrating the views, ideas and actions of young people:**

1. Translating theory into real action: Some young people are good at describing what needs to be done when it comes to climate change but have to translate theory into practice to effectively fight it. The youth observe that there are a lot of discussions all over the world, but these have not translated into real action. Many young people have not yet turned their frustrations into actions.
2. Copying and pasting has not worked: Copying exactly from the West is being emotional and not logical because the contexts vary. There is a need to use logic when adopting international policies and plans as some of them have proven impractical in a different context.
3. Building trust with the untrustworthy: Youth should be cautious regarding with whom they share their ideas and innovations. 'Youth washing' is a big problem that has caused failure and frustration.
4. Adequate representation in decision-making: In some contexts, the involvement of youth in policymaking is not working due to traditional systems that do not create spaces for young people to present their views.
5. Raising voices in high-level platforms: Some goals have not been achieved because the voices of the youth have not reached the government and those responsible for climate injustice, and most of the time their views are ignored and/or taken for granted.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background and context

Combating climate change requires active and meaningful participation by all actors at different levels and scales, with young people at the centre as key stakeholders. Worldwide, young people are disproportionately affected by climate risks and vulnerabilities, and current trends and projections show that climate change will have more profound effects on them. This highlights the need to mainstream youth-led climate action into sustainable development programmes.

Globally, young people are raising their voices to protect their future, a future that relies on the health of our planet and its valuable ecosystems. The role of young people in combating climate change is underscored by increasing calls for youth participation and the need to build their capacities and amplify their voices so that they can become key players and leaders in designing and implementing mitigation and adaptation strategies.

For young people to succeed in this fight, they need a favourable environment to elevate their voices to take urgent action. Central to this is the formulation of strong policy directives and recommendations that echo the voices of young persons from diverse regions and backgrounds. Appropriate platforms are needed to engage constructively with youth and create spaces where they can freely share their lived experiences and vulnerabilities, to showcase their actions and to influence policy and practice without fear. Governments worldwide must develop climate adaptation and mitigation strategies that promote the active participation of young people, especially those who are vulnerable including people living with disabilities (PLWDs).

'Opportunities for the current generations of young people to prevent climate change from becoming a global disaster are limitless.' This was a popular narrative that was reiterated by young people at the virtual Summit on Youth, Climate Change and Sustainability (October 2021) organised by the Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network (CYCN). This policy document echoes the voices of the youth across the Commonwealth member countries, the majority of which are members of the CYCN.

In their voices, young people from different Commonwealth countries asserted that they are in the best positions to find solutions to climate change considering their lived experiences. The key step is to act now.

### The Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network (CYCN)

The CYCN was established in 2009 to provide a platform for young climate actors to collaborate and advocate for climate action. The network aims to build the capacity of young people in their endeavours to address climate change and other environmental issues and advocate on climate change action from a youth perspective. The CYCN supports actions that empower young people to translate environmental programmes into effective policies that have a measurable impact on youth well-being. It also links projects implemented by its members towards developing common actions and campaigns. The Network endeavours to make climate change a top priority for young people across the Commonwealth and to engage them as key stakeholders in addressing the threat at grassroots, national and regional level through individual and collective sustainable solutions.

The CYCN provides spaces for young people in the Commonwealth to devise and collate policy recommendations and strategies on climate change actions at all levels. The policy recommendations presented in this document echo the voices of youth representatives mostly from the Commonwealth regions – Africa, Asia, Europe, Canada, the Pacific and the Caribbean – as well as from other parts of the world.

Mechanisms and initiatives within the Commonwealth Secretariat that support the CYCN include the:

- i. **Commonwealth Blue Charter** — helps Commonwealth countries to collaborate on fair, inclusive and sustainable approaches to ocean protection and economic development.

- ii. **Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub** — helps countries to unlock the available climate finance so that small and vulnerable member countries can bid for and gain increased access to climate finance.
- iii. **Commonwealth Disaster Risk Finance Portal** — helps member countries pinpoint the right type of financing to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural disasters.

## 1.2 Purpose, objectives and scope of the policy recommendations

### Purpose and objectives

The aim of this policy paper is to generate a set of policy directives informed by the collated narratives of young people about their lived experiences with climate change, their perspectives and lesson learned. Key proposals and actionable recommendations are outlined to guide policy- and decision-makers from governments to the private sector at local, regional and international levels across the Commonwealth on climate and sustainability issues related to youth programmes and activities.

Key objectives of the policy paper are to:

- Provide an evidence base and identify actionable policy recommendations on climate change and sustainability from a youth perspective
- Stimulate youth engagement in climate-related policymaking and advocacy, particularly at the national level
- Provide an evidence base for updating the Commonwealth Secretariat's work on the relationship between climate change, building resilience and youth
- Increase the level of interest and political goodwill for climate action and enhance member countries' climate action through civic participation led by youth
- Provide a reference point for current and future negotiations on climate change and environmental sustainability.

### Scope of the policy recommendations

A multidisciplinary research exercise was conducted to explore the role of young people in policy and advocacy processes. Mixed-method data collection

was used, including literature reviews, in-depth interviews and consultations with key stakeholders, including leaders of CYCN and youth-led organisations and platforms (see Chapter 2).

In their own voices, young leaders identified climate risks and vulnerabilities such as prolonged drought and flooding, high temperatures, cyclones, pollution, deforestation and habitat and species loss. They also discussed issues related to technology and innovation, climate financing, markets, entrepreneurship, information and knowledge management. The scope of this research was wide, taking into account all these issues and considering diverse youth actors/stakeholders from different sectors and occupying different geographical spaces, as explained below.

- i. **Subject matter/themes:** First, the research explores knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of climate change vulnerabilities and risks in different geographical contexts and establishes how they affect young people in their everyday lives. For example, how do extreme weather conditions such as prolonged drought or flooding affect youth differently compared to older people? How do they affect young men vs young women or youth living with disabilities? Second, the study explores youth participation in adaptation and mitigation towards building resilience and strengthening disaster preparedness. Third, it explores enablers and barriers to climate change action by the youth framed around youth participation and representation, communication and networking, technology, innovation, market, entrepreneurship, infrastructure, financing, information and knowledge management and policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks. Fourth, the study explores lessons learned from successes and failures in youth activism.
- ii. **Stakeholders/respondents:** A stakeholder mapping exercise was conducted in the Commonwealth and beyond of stakeholders involved with climate change and sustainability issues. A list of youth-led organisations, networks, programmes and platforms that deal with climate change and sustainability was generated and included their goals/objectives, programmes and actions. The list is diverse, showing youth-led organisations at different levels (grassroots/

local, national, regional and global) covering different thematic areas. It helped in identifying the key respondents for this research exercise.

- iii. Sector: Through mapping stakeholders, multiple sectors were identified to explore how climate change affects them. These included agriculture, fisheries and marine resources, forests, small and medium businesses, etc. For instance, extreme

weather conditions seriously affect the fisheries and agriculture sectors from which most young people derive their livelihoods.

- iv. Geographical scale: The research gathered experiences and insights mainly from the regions in the Commonwealth (Asia, Africa, Europe, the Caribbean and the Pacific). However, it also covered some experiences and insights from countries outside these regions.



## 2. Methodology

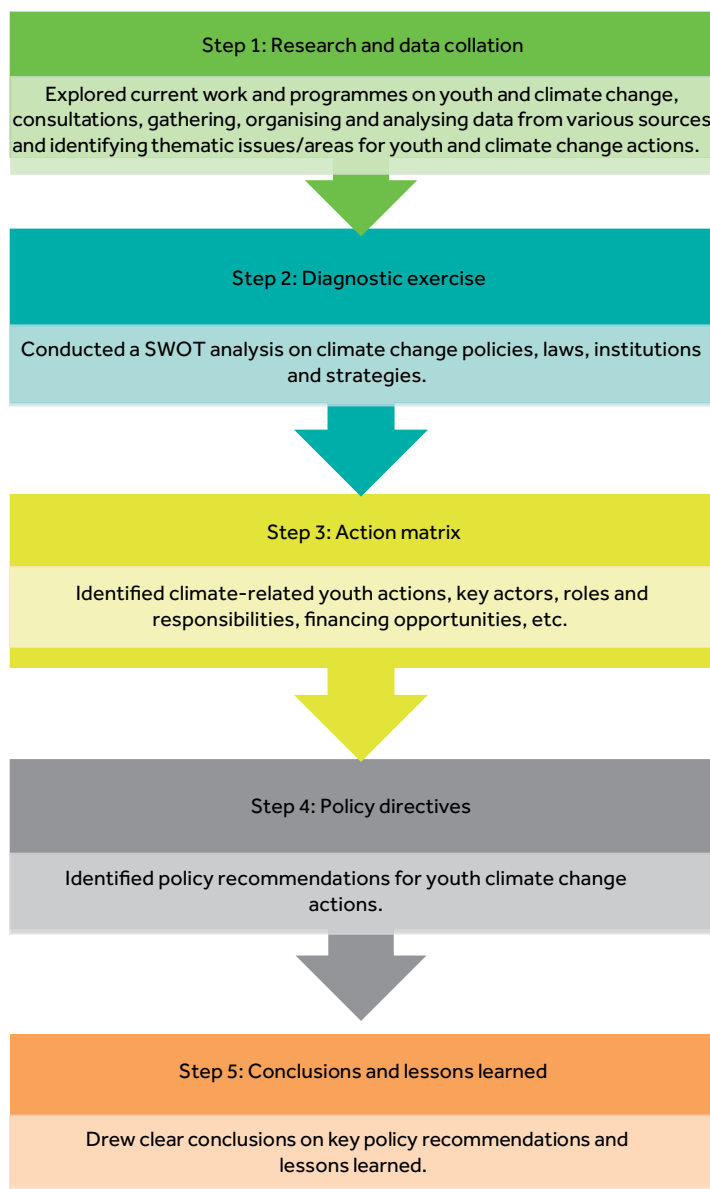
The main research activities for this assignment were designing sampling strategy and data collection tools, conducting research, collating and analysing data and writing a report. The study applied a diagnostic tool to develop a set of policy directives and recommendations (see [Figure 2.1](#)). The tool helped to organise the data gathered from different sources.

Annex 1 contains the guiding questions for the research.

### 2.1 Sampling strategy and selection criteria

The research exercise applied a purposeful sampling technique whereby all respondents were selected in consultation with the members of the CYCN. A snowball sampling technique was then used to recruit more respondents to participate in this study. The total number of people who participated in the research exercise

**Figure 2.1. A diagnostic tool for developing policy directives for youth climate change action.**



is 32. Data protection rules were followed, and respondents were asked to give consent (written or verbal) indicating their willingness to participate.

## 2.2 Data collection methods

*Literature review:* In-depth document review on linkages between youth and climate change was conducted. The literature was derived from reports, journal articles, policy briefs, technical briefs, media articles, blogs, videos, podcasts, etc.

*Consultative meetings:* Consultations were on-going throughout the assignment period, with experts from the Commonwealth Secretariat and beyond, to gain a deeper understanding of the Secretariat's work and programmes around climate change and youth. Consultations with youth leaders at the CYCN helped in designing the key questions that were asked during data collection.

*Semi-structured in-depth interviews:* Interviews were conducted with key informants including CYCN members, youth leaders, experts, development practitioners, climate champions and policymakers to gather information on linkages between climate change and youth, including their perspectives, climate impacts and actions (e.g., adaptation and mitigation), the dis(enabling) environment for climate policies, and best practices.

*Focus group discussion:* A virtual focus-group discussion was facilitated to engage with representatives from various youth-led groups, organisations and platforms to discuss climate-related policymaking and advocacy.

*Surveys:* An online questionnaire was administered mainly to representatives of youth groups from all the Commonwealth regions to collect quantitative data. A knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) survey was used to gather the realities and lived experiences of the youth in relation to climate change risks and vulnerabilities, environmental degradation, natural resources exploitation and management, land use change, financing, regulations and other issues.

## 2.3 Data analysis

The qualitative data were categorised and coded using a data matrix in themes and sub-themes to give a precise description of a subject matter, such as youth participation and representation (thematic analysis). A SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) was applied to assess national policies on climate change. A diagnostic exercise was conducted using quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis (see [Figure 2.1](#)).

## 2.4 Limitations

There was a small challenge of scheduling interviews with respondents, which took longer than expected. Nevertheless, the data collected were sufficient and the insights from respondents were rich and were supplemented with narratives from the virtual Youth, Climate and Sustainability Summit hosted in October 2021 by CYCN.

## 3. Youth and Climate Change

### 3.1 Some aspects of climate change and their impacts on youth

Climate change is causing socio-economic and environmental vulnerabilities across the world. Extreme weather events have become much more frequent and intense, affecting livelihoods and leading more people to live below the poverty line. Young people are one of the most affected groups by climate change and face challenges in accessing key economic and social capital, such as education, private savings and mobility (Cauchi et al. 2019). These sectors are occupied by young people in many of the low- and middle-income countries in the Commonwealth (ibid.).

Climate change is a barrier to education around the world, threatening attendance as well as school stability and access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, which are especially crucial for keeping girls in school once they begin to menstruate (Giovetti 2019). Extreme climate events leave millions of the world's most vulnerable populations facing global hunger. Many citizens of the Commonwealth and beyond rely on the land for their food and livelihoods. Their abilities to feed themselves and to provide financial security for their families are threatened when crops and livestock are decimated (McCarthy 2020). People with disabilities are at an increased risk in the event of adverse weather conditions due to a lack of transportation infrastructure available to them. The social impacts of climate change are intricately linked with many issues such as health, safety, conflicts and security. For example, when water resources are scarce and access is limited, this causes health problems and even loss of human life (Jones et al. 2007).

*'Girls are the ones who often face the worst challenges of climate risks — water scarcity, job loss from disasters, insufficient food systems. Typically, girls are the ones who have to go the extra mile to resolve these issues, and it takes away from our education, our independence, and more.'* — Youth voice from Hong Kong

#### 3.1.1 Prolonged drought and aridity

Aridity and prolonged drought often have huge impacts on agricultural production. Low yields create and worsen poverty traps and hunger, exposing young children and adolescents to all types of risks and vulnerabilities. In Pakistan, for example, the drought spell is worsening in provinces such as Sindh and Balochistan (DAWN 2019). Prolonged drought is a major cause of food insecurity in the agricultural sector. Agricultural crops are becoming less resilient in countries such as Kiribati, making young people, who mostly depend on agriculture for their livelihoods, economically vulnerable (Cauchi et al. 2019).

Food insecurity is associated with adverse health and developmental outcomes in youth, including poor academic performance and decreased access to health care (FRAC 2017). Prolonged drought also leads to conflicts in pastoralism, tourism and agricultural sectors, all of which are areas where young people are occupied. For example:

*'Climate change affects food security. Boys who assist their parents in the farm to plant crops for food can no longer harvest good crops due to drought and desertification. Harvests are rapidly reducing, leading boys to turn to alternative means of providing for their families and earning income. Since the Government is doing so little to support them, militants end up recruiting them. They fall victim to terrorists.'* — Youth voice from Nigeria

*'In less developed countries with patriarchal societies, stress will affect men as their family is dependent on them for food from hunting or gathering which will lessen due to climate change. Drought, heatwaves, storm surges can all affect the disabled as they are not properly provided for in the event of extreme events and because of this they are more likely to be abandoned or left behind in poor conditions.'* — Youth voice from Trinidad and Tobago.

Empirical evidence shows that young people tend to be implicated in violent conflicts and suffer from its devastating impacts (see, for example, GSDRC 2014; Giovetti 2019). Conflict also disrupts access to services such as health and education. For example, prolonged drought in East Africa has fuelled ongoing conflicts over natural resources

between Somalia and Kenya (GSDRC 2014). In 2016, ongoing droughts in Malawi led to the country's worst crop failure in a generation, leaving an estimated 4 million people in need of assistance. Subsequently in 2019, torrential rains across southeast Africa affected more than 922,000 Malawians (Giovetti 2019).

### 3.1.2 High temperatures, heatwaves and wildfires

Globally, rising temperatures pose a threat to people, ecosystems and economies. The warmer a climate gets, the warmer the freshwater also becomes — leaving it more susceptible to bacteria and other disease-causing agents that can contaminate drinking water. This can lead to sanitation challenges especially for poor people (Jones et al. 2007). High temperatures are associated with pests and diseases, which affect socio-economic activities such as crop and poultry farming, livestock and pastoralism (Agol et al. 2021). Rising temperatures are melting glaciers, causing a massive rise in sea levels and the submersion of coastal areas, affecting the youth living in coastal areas and island states (Lashari 2019).

Climate change exacerbates drought as well as hot, dry conditions that, in turn, create wildfires and this affects young boys. For example:

*'Young men are more present in physical labour work and since they are young, they tend to be at the bottom of the hierarchy, e.g., in forestry, agriculture, mining sectors. This does not give them a lot of security as these are all fields directly dependent on the environment. If the forest burns, they will be the first to lose their jobs.'* — Youth voice from Canada

### 3.1.3 Extreme flooding and rising sea levels

Extreme flooding adversely affects all socio-economic sectors in a number of Commonwealth countries. Young people are very much aware that climate change is the principal cause of extreme flooding events, which continue to increase.

*'Take Nigeria as an example, flooding has become the norm when it rains, and yes you can attribute it to other factors such as poor drainage and non-maintenance, but climate change is also an inherent cause. While in the north, desertification is leading to many herdsmen migrating to the south.'* — Youth voice from Nigeria

Extreme flooding events have become common as a result of large storms and snow melt causing loss of property, displacement, stress and anxiety. They affect infrastructure whereby school buildings tend to be inundated, affecting youth and their access to education. In the arid and semi-arid lands of north-western Kenya, for example, children cannot attend school because roads and bridges become flooded and impassable (Agol et al. 2020). In India, warm temperatures and changes in monsoon periods continue to cause extreme precipitation events (Walker 2016).

During extreme flooding, children and youth struggle to access proper health care as thousands of people become homeless and displaced. Many people lose family members and friends, and cases of cholera, malaria, diarrhoea and respiratory infections increase due to poor living conditions (Reid 2020).

In Southeast Asia, rising sea levels are intensifying the migration/refugee crises, while melting sea ice in the Arctic is opening new shipping lanes, creating the potential for tensions among competing powers at the top of the world (GSDRC 2014). Rising sea levels tend to submerge territories and worsen storm surge and erosion, threatening settlements and infrastructure as well as sectors such as tourism, fisheries and agriculture that support youth livelihoods. Storm surges can cause coastal flooding leading to displacements, which causes psychological distress among the youth. In Kiribati, the sea level rise washes saltwater onto agricultural lands and pollutes fresh sources of drinking water.

### 3.1.4 Cyclones, hurricanes and storms

Hydrometeorological events are increasing and are becoming more devastating, with huge impacts on agriculture and livestock that affect the many young people working in this sector. The consequences include lack of income and psychological distress among displaced families and young people. The effects of Hurricane Dorian in The Bahamas in 2019 were among the worst experienced for any natural disaster in the country. The recent Tropical Cyclone Harold in April 2020 was so severe and powerful that it caused widespread destruction in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu (Salloum and Powell 2019).

In March 2019, Cyclone Idai tore through communities in southern Africa, wiping out homes, crops and important infrastructure such as roads, bridges and dams (Reid 2020). It made landfall near Beira city, Mozambique, where its heavy rains and strong winds led to flash flooding, hundreds of deaths and massive destruction of property and crops. Less than six weeks later, on 25 April, Cyclone Kenneth dealt a hard blow to the country about 600 miles north of Idai's impact zone. It was estimated to have destroyed about US\$100 million worth of homes, crops and infrastructure, including boats and equipment belonging to coastal fishing villages (ibid.).

The risk of facing life-threatening problems is highest in island countries compared to other regions, as the entire island tends to be affected by sea level rise and extreme weather events. Experiences from small islands demonstrate that they are more at risk from changing weather.

*'We, on a small island state, are particularly at risk from changing weather — more cyclones, droughts and floods with unknown, but severe, impacts on ecosystems, biodiversity, infrastructure, economy and livelihoods.'* — Youth voice from Samoa.

### 3.1.5 Ocean acidification

Climate change causes ocean acidification that hinders ecosystem services including fishing and tourism. Countries in the Pacific with vast coral reef areas, including Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tonga, are seriously affected. As acidification worsens, many countries will suffer economic and food insecurity as well as a loss of coastal storm protection and tourism revenue. The ocean's capacity to store carbon dioxide and help regulate the climate is compromised as acidification increases. Consequently, it exposes the youth to other effects of climate change (Gattuso and Hansson 2011). It decreases local water quality and contributes to poor health in local populations in small island countries such as Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Fiji, Mauritius, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Saint Lucia and Singapore among others (Lashari 2019).

### 3.1.6 Loss of biodiversity

Our flora and fauna depend on water for sustenance, but when a drought occurs, their food supply shrinks and their habitat can be damaged (McCarthy 2020). The effects of climate change

on our natural resources are huge and are leading to rapid biodiversity loss. During extreme flooding, intense soil erosion occurs leading to the depletion of soil fertility. Many young people depend on natural resources for their livelihoods. For example, corals are a common source of income for coastal communities. In countries such as India, Kiribati and Singapore, biodiversity loss is causing a reduction in agricultural production, exposing the youth to food insecurity challenges (see, for example, Ainsworth et al. 2013).

Over 700 million people live in water-stressed areas, and by 2025 this number is expected to grow to 1.8 billion — about 25 per cent of the world population (see, for example, Frayne et al. 2013). According to a report by Global Citizen, 1 in 4 people around the world already face dire water shortages (McCarthy 2020). By 2050, it is predicted that as many as 50 per cent of the population could face these.<sup>1</sup> In recent years, major cities such as São Paulo and Cape Town have almost entirely run out of water, giving the world a peek into a future where water rationing will become the norm. Water shortages also threaten regional security in parts of the world (ibid.).

## 3.2 Other risks and vulnerabilities

Psychological risks: The narratives of youth across the Commonwealth have revealed that some of the greatest impacts of climate change are those related to mental health and well-being. Young people are exposed to psychological risks because they are experiencing trauma arising from fear and uncertainty — they do not know what the future holds for them. The intensity of psychological risks is high in vulnerable groups such as people living with disabilities who already face societal exclusion.

Gender-based violence: Voices from India reveal that climate change has exacerbated gender-based violence. When men lose their livelihoods — for example, during extreme weather conditions — their distress is a contributing factor to violence towards their female counterparts. Wives, partners and children may experience increased physical, mental, financial and verbal abuse at the hands of men.

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<sup>1</sup> Water scarcity refers to the volumetric abundance, or lack thereof, of freshwater resources. "Scarcity" is human-driven. While "water shortage" refers to the ability, or lack thereof, to meet human and ecological demand for freshwater. Compared to scarcity, "water shortage" is a more inclusive and broader concept.

Physical health risks: The increasing range and duration of insect and disease activity will lead to the spread of pests to crops and livestock products and the outbreak of diseases. This will have a significant impact on food security, leading to poor diets and undernourishment and affecting women and children in particular. Rising food prices are already affecting food choices and changing eating behaviours across the world. Research conducted by the African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC) shows that more people are eating unhealthy foods because they cannot afford to buy healthy, nutritious food (Kimani-Murage et al. 2014). Many developed nations depend on food imports, and young people foresee that unpredictable weather events will result in lower yields and higher costs due to poor harvests, which interrupt the stable supply of food and result in a lower standard of living.

Livelihoods and economic risks: Experiences show that the agriculture, fishing and tourism sectors are the most vulnerable to climate change, affecting young men. For example:

*'The majority of our fisherfolk in St Vincent and the Grenadines are men and have reported a decline in their seafood catch.'* — Youth voice from St Vincent and the Grenadines

*'Climate change affects all genders considerably, but from the African perspective, men are seen as the breadwinners and become vulnerable to climate disasters e.g., a fisherman not being able to fish because of flooding or loss of marine animals or a farmer without adequate rain.'* — Youth voice from Nigeria

In Commonwealth developing countries, young people are struggling in the face of unemployment that, combined with rapid urbanisation, fuels poverty and crime. Unemployment includes the inability to pursue entrepreneurship because a lot of young people have minds able to generate bright ideas, but they are hindered by their circumstances. Young people believe that climate change-induced economic recessions and reduced opportunities for free career choice can significantly deprive them, especially young women, of advancement in society.

*'... a good number of youths would like to go into farming and agriculture but there is an insufficiency of farmlands and all other necessary resources to support this due to harsh weather conditions, desertification, flooding, oil spills, etc.'* — Youth voice from Nigeria.

Child labour and employment risks: Apart from the health impacts, natural disasters have destroyed homes and schools, forcing young people to enter the work force prematurely. Consequently, rather than being able to attend a higher education institute, youth are forced to take on low-skilled jobs to financially contribute to their household and families and help provide food. Following extreme natural disasters, low-income families are unable to send their children to school as they must use funds to reconstruct their homes. Having homes impacted every few months by a natural disaster along the coast lead young people to move away from formal education and into income-earning opportunities.

Risk of cultural erosion: Indigenous knowledge, culture and practices are also at risk. Young people believe that the reduction of large ecosystems and rainforests in indigenous areas and consequent destruction of biodiversity due to climate-related events will destroy indigenous peoples' natural habitats, wiping away traditional livelihoods. The destruction of traditional livelihoods and the loss of indigenous ways of life contribute to violations of human rights.

### 3.3 Mainstreaming youth in climate action: Opportunities and barriers

#### 3.3.1 Youth in climate action

There are opportunities for the youth across the Commonwealth to act within adaptation and mitigation frameworks to combat climate change. In small island states, young people are mobilised in environmental activities such as coral restoration, awareness-raising programmes, tree planting exercises, solid waste clean-ups, switching to sustainable energy, promoting sustainable diets and presenting policy recommendations on the international stage.

This section outlines selected strategies showing that opportunities exist for young people to take action against climate change in the Commonwealth and beyond.

- i. Youth groups and networks for climate change and environmental sustainability

The Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network (CYCN) focuses on amplifying the voices of youth from diverse socio-economic and



cultural backgrounds through various strategies, including facilitating youth-led dialogues and building the capacity of youth leaders to attend meetings as active participants. As an example, the #YouthLeadSDG13 campaign called for young people to unite, take action and work together to showcase innovative ideas that combat climate change and awarded prizes to those who have presented the most innovative ideas.

Across the Commonwealth, many youth-led groups have successfully created platforms for activism and action-oriented campaigns that focus on different SDGs. Young climate champions worldwide recognise the importance of organising themselves into networks to gain publicity, granting them a greater chance to stimulate dialogue with other actors. For example:

*'I have noticed an increase in youth involvement with climate change in my country and across the world. The youths are actively participating and advocating to address climate risks and vulnerabilities in public, local and international fora and through various social media platforms. I believe there is more awareness created among the youth, with information relayed in terms of their perspectives and understandings. More importantly, there are up-and-coming young, brilliant minds with technological or scientific solutions addressing climate vulnerabilities and livelihood securities.'* — Youth voice from Fiji

Across the globe, youth groups and networks that address climate change, environmental sustainability and development challenges are increasing in number. For example:

*'In our organisation, Asian Environmental Youth Network (AEYN), we see youth from all over Asia-Pacific standing up to take action, whether that's through protests, community organising/ campaigning, policy recommendations or working as professionals in some climate-related field. Climate action represents such a broad range of things that it's hard to define what it is/isn't. I would say though that awareness-raising on social media is by far the most popular action people take, and I think our generation is becoming more aware of climate justice issues faster and faster.'* — Youth voice from Hong Kong

In Japan, the NGO University Student Chamber International (UNISC International), through its strong networks, has been reaching out to as many

youths as possible across the East Asian countries in its advocacy work by amplifying the voices of local youth on climate change at the international level.

Recently, an international Eco-Schools campaign called 'Litter Less' was launched in the United Kingdom as part of a bigger global environmental movement. All schools/students are invited to participate in various environmental activities with the goal of illustrating that small collective actions can yield huge results when multiplied.

## ii. Advocating for climate-friendly policies

More Commonwealth nationals are advocating for climate-smart policies in different sectors, including agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing, tourism, housing, construction and many others. For example, in Kenya, young people are advocating for policies that promote climate-smart food production systems. In India, young people are advocating for sustainability; they are creating opportunities for raising their voices and expressing their views on national and international platforms. They are taking actions at the local and grassroots levels while trying to influence policies at higher levels. For example:

*'We are advocating for all high schools across India to become plastic free by encouraging the use of environmentally friendly wooden spoons and utensils. We are also planting trees and encouraging the use of bicycles.'* — Youth voice from India

To advocate efficiently for policies that promote climate resilience, the African Digital Climate Project in Nigeria was created to help young Africans learn about climate change threats and seek local solutions. Through its various activities, this project advocates for local action.

*'On the local scale, the youth are very active in advocacy because they lack finances and the knowledge to influence the policymaking process, but through advocacy, they push those in power to adopt climate-friendly policies.'* — Youth voice from Nigeria

In Ghana, the Youth Environmental Network (YEN) is a social movement at the grassroots and national levels that creates opportunities for climate policy advocacy. The network promotes youth engagement and collaborations, youth activism through youth awareness creation and education on climate change for children in schools and higher educational institutions. For example, the policy advocacy actions 2018/2019 aimed to

help the Government reduce the country's carbon footprint, advocating for youth involvement in decision-making. Among the network's activities are tree planting, climate strikes, street actions, prevention of bauxite mining and natural forest conservation campaigns.

iii. Mainstreaming climate change action into educational programmes

Youth leaders from different countries worldwide have reiterated the need for a green curriculum that teaches climate change action through more creative channels and promotes diversity. For example:

*'There's no silver bullet, but making sure youth have the space to talk about it in schools and are taught about it in a formal setting is a great first step. Also, connecting them to networks like AEYN where they can meet fellow environmentalists/learn from other projects and get involved is another crucial step.'* — Youth voice from Hong Kong

In the United Kingdom, Eco-Schools is a student-led programme that provides opportunities for students to pledge to meet a variety of environmental targets. It takes a participatory approach by allowing young people to create their own ideas on how to tackle climate change issues affecting their community. The students work closely with local authorities (i.e., education board or policymakers), who are encouraged to use the seven-step Eco-School framework rather than starting from scratch.

iv. Driving Innovation and technology

'Young people are great innovators'. This was one of the many key assertions made at the 2021 Summit on Youth, Climate and Sustainability in October 2021. Young people showcased their innovations in various platforms to show the world that they can be a part of the solution. In Kenya, for example, Lean Energy Solutions is a youth-led project that filters methane from organic material collected from markets and uses it as an alternative source of fuel.

The recent Commonwealth Innovation Award was granted to a young Indian innovator for his work on low-cost housing. Kaif Ali received the award for his work on SpaceEra, a prefabricated shelter useful for the COVID-19 era and beyond that he had started working on in March 2020 during the height of the pandemic.

These examples show that young people are becoming innovative, as asserted by Rakhshinda Akhtar, a young woman from India whose organisation works on different campaigns for local environmental issues, including air and water pollution. Across the Commonwealth member countries and beyond, young people are embracing disruptive technologies because they believe that these are needed to drive climate action.

v. Capacity building and support

The CYCN has funded several youth groups to take climate action through social media advocacy. For example, it supported youth in Nigeria to assess the country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) together with the relevant SDGs to extract policy recommendations. This strengthened the young people's confidence to begin to hold the Government to account by creating the hashtag #whathaschanged. The outcome has been positive as two policies have been reviewed, including for water, sanitation and hygiene, there have been considerations for mainstreaming youth and gender within the NDCs and the Government has begun to bring solar power to vulnerable communities.

### 3.3.2 Barriers and challenges of mainstreaming youth in climate change action

i. Limited resources (financial, technical, infrastructure)

Youth-led initiatives with a common goal to combat the impacts of climate change, conserve biodiversity and natural resources and promote sustainable development range from capacity building, convening dialogues, establishment of youth networks, initiating innovative and technological solutions to creating business and entrepreneurship opportunities. However, these initiatives are limited in scale due to lack of sufficient financial, technical and human resources. Financial constraints, in particular, hinder opportunities for youths to upscale their activities.

A significant portion of youth-led initiatives remain underfunded, which limits their potential to magnify their impacts. In addition, a great number of young people lack climate literacy and have a weak understanding of climate science due to climate education not being streamlined in the national educational curriculum in the majority of Commonwealth countries.



Some young people still lack the professional capabilities to raise sufficient funds and/or apply for grants successfully to facilitate social enterprises. Many youth-led organisations lack infrastructure and services to run their everyday activities. Some may have office facilities, but the majority operate in virtual spaces, which is a drawback particularly when they attempt to meet in order to apply for grants.

Young people's access to climate information services is limited due to poor knowledge brokerage between researchers and youth – i.e., the information is packaged in ways that are not favourable for the receiver. Many young people lack the resources to upscale their innovations and start businesses, particularly young women and men living in remote areas who struggle to access market information – for example, digital market platforms – due to limited internet access.

Lack of jobs leaves many youths unemployed, which affects their ability to adapt or plan for climate events. In their own voices, young people are calling for financial support to actualise their ideas and implement climate adaptation and mitigation projects. Without financial resources, technical capabilities and infrastructure, opportunities for building resilient futures for young people remain low in the Commonwealth and beyond.

ii. *Unfavourable policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks*

From a youth perspective, many of the policy, regulatory and institutional arrangements at national levels do not sufficiently consider young people in decision-making processes. Yet, more young people are pleading to be actively engaged on issues that affect them directly. Across the Commonwealth, many youth groups are not formally recognised by their relevant ministries. Even when they are, in practice they often lack funding and facilities to execute their activities. While some apply for funding, many fail to secure it.

While a number of member countries have established National Climate Change Committees, sanctioned by the government, meaningful youth participation is lacking in national climate change policy and programme development processes. Some of the key policy gaps identified by young people include poor enforcement, limited participation of the youth in policy processes and lack of democratic accountability. For example,

many policies remain theoretical due to lack of enforcement or lack of strong democratic processes. For example:

*'There are policies, but they are only on paper and have not yet been adopted. This is quite a challenge because it makes it impossible for the youth to take advantage of policies to act on climate change. In Tanzania, the Government has committed to reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 30 per cent, but they are doing nothing to actualise this. How can they do it when they are implementing the East Africa Crude Oil Project?' — Youth voice from United Republic of Tanzania*

Even though most countries in the Commonwealth have submitted their revised NDCs to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the youth position is not clearly stated in them — a situation that will limit active youth participation in combating the crisis caused by climate change.

iii. *Lack of meaningful participation, engagement and representations (social exclusion)*

A common narrative emerging from the youth is a lack of meaningful participation in climate action by many young people partly because they are faced with other livelihood challenges that require urgent and immediate attention. For example:

*'Limited to no participation is very common in islands and small developing states as youths are faced with urgent needs and unable to participate in climate action.'* — Youth voice from Belize

*'In my country, we are surviving. The economic aspect of things is drastically declining, and many are just thinking of how to make ends meet. As such, many are not concerned with goals such as this, understandably so. Many first need to know how climate change is either a direct or an indirect reason for what is currently happening. If many see it as a cause, they will want to adequately tackle it, understanding that it can make their living standards a hundred times better.'* — Youth voice from Nigeria

These examples show that the motivation and incentives for young people to make meaningful contributions towards climate change resilience can be poor. At the same time, youth from Commonwealth states recognise that even when people from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds becoming aware of climate change vulnerabilities and risks, they remain

socially excluded from mainstream climate change dialogues. Social inclusion in policymaking process is a common and emerging theme.

*'Inclusivity brings broad perspectives together and forces policymakers to act on climate change. Inclusivity comes with massive advocacy that forces policymakers to have the youth at the table to talk about climate change.'* — Youth voice from Nigeria

The social inclusion aspects of youth engagement that would enable the collection of diverse perspectives are still limited. Although climate dialogues have been set up in some countries to allow young people to engage more with their governments and decision-makers, many still

feel that these meetings do not yet give them the space to share their views and perspectives fully. For example:

*'Young people don't feel that they are being listened to in these meetings. They feel their invitation is just tokenism, and that there is no real impact that will come.'* — Youth voice from the United Kingdom

COVID-19 restrictions also impacted youth participation in climate action, especially due to social distancing measures such as banning of public gatherings. This has been another challenge for the youth in gaining public attention and momentum for their campaigns.

## 4. Policy Recommendations for Youth Action on Climate Change

### 4.1 Direct engagement and active participation

- **Policy Recommendation #1: Include young people from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds in policymaking processes.**

Increasing numbers of young people from around the Commonwealth are emphasising the need to support youth from different socio-economic, cultural and professional backgrounds to make meaningful and tangible contributions during the processes of diplomacy, negotiation, formulating policies and legislation and designing strategies and plans in support of sustainable development. They feel that a socially inclusive approach will ensure that multiple perspectives are endorsed, especially those of the most vulnerable groups such as people living with disabilities (PLWDs), women and indigenous persons.

*'Mainstreaming youth as key stakeholders must involve two steps: firstly, to engage with youth in crafting policies; and secondly to ensure that youth perspectives are included. In Nigeria, many policies only accommodate youth for advocacy, but this is not enough... youth need to be involved in the implementation of other types of initiatives.'* — Youth voice from Nigeria

Young people argue that their governments invest resources into engagements with policymaking experts and only involve youth as an afterthought when the process is already underway or for appearances' sake. For example, while the Government of Nigeria recently invited civil society actors to participate in policy processes where 80 per cent of participants were youth, youth leaders assert that such gestures are just for optics and that their proposed policy recommendations are still missing. The youth leaders have suggested placing youth experts on government committees

so that their knowledge and ideas about fighting climate change are fully integrated into national climate-related policies, plans and strategies.

There is a need to design creative and innovative approaches to facilitate direct consultations and engagement at the highest levels of policy decision-making so that young people can become experts in climate change issues. For example, the Policy Bootcamp, initiated by the Commonwealth Secretariat in collaboration with Cambridge University, was an innovative approach that created a platform for youth of diverse backgrounds to share their top three policy recommendations on climate action.

Many young people are reluctant to participate in decision-making processes because they are treated as listeners rather than active contributors. They are calling for meaningful policy dialogues and forums that are not top-down and only engage them as passive participants but can uphold and implement their demands. They believe that a responsive government is one that creates favourable conditions for youth to feel heard and appreciated. For example:

*'Give us a place to be heard and actually listen to what we're saying. Work with us, don't just nod your heads and wave us away. Include us at the table — even if we can just learn about how things work. Provide funding and a space for us to organise. Incorporate our perspectives into policies, business strategies and other work.'* — Youth voice from Hong Kong

- **Policy Recommendation #2: Engage youth actively in multi-stakeholder dialogues and platforms at all levels: local, national, regional and global.**

Young people need to be actively engaged in multi-stakeholder dialogues. A common challenge is the exclusion of young people from high-level meetings at national, regional and global platforms. It is necessary to provide financial support for

young people's participation so that they can make tangible contributions towards building climate resilient futures. For example:

*'A youth-centred platform should be developed, tailored to youth needs — created by youth, for youth, to ensure meaningful and equitable inclusion in policy and decision-making; a platform that fosters youth innovation and supports youth in creating climate projects.'* — Youth voice from Nigeria

- **Policy Recommendation #3: Support youth activists to raise and amplify their voices at the highest levels.**

Through activism, young people are speaking out more, and it is necessary to fully support youth-led climate change activism to enable them to engage openly with their leaders and to stand up and speak up about issues that affect their environment and well-being. Unfortunately, some youth-led groups face challenges due to lack of capacity and financial resources. Youth-led groups are great platforms for organising young people to have one voice that can be amplified by higher-level institutions. For example:

*'At COP26, I saw a lot of youth in the streets of Glasgow. Glasgow was very cold, but we looked beyond the weather. We took the risk to have a protest to ensure that the youth are involved, and that the youth are heard. We were asking our leaders to act now'.* — Youth voice from Nigeria

- **Policy Recommendation #4: Support community-level youth volunteering in climate change action.**

Many youth leaders and climate champions know the power of volunteering. It can help build the resilience of youth to cope with different risks and hazards and enable them to apply their knowledge. However, to effectively engage in voluntary work they want to be supported to build their capacity to address climate change issues so that they can give back to their communities, spread the word and enlighten other minds.

Well-established international entities such as Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) already provide frameworks for voluntary activities. They create opportunities for youth to engage and partner with key stakeholders, such as local governments, the private sector and research and academic institutions, to implement adaptation and mitigation strategies as well as take part in

monitoring, evaluation and learning. Through strong volunteering mechanisms and good advocacy tools, young people can influence the policies required to promote climate justice.

## 4.2 Knowledge, capacity and information management

For young people to act, they need to understand the multifaceted nature of climate change, including its past and current impacts, risks and vulnerabilities and its implications for future generations. Yet, many young people have limited knowledge and skills required to make informed decisions and take appropriate actions. Collecting evidence on climate change and synthesising it for youth consumption is important, and there are quite a few relevant climate research initiatives in the Commonwealth and beyond. There are also programmes that provide climate information services at local, national, regional and global levels. These programmes have identified several initiatives that present information on climate change in simple and non-technical language.

- **Policy Recommendation #5: Promote diverse green curricula by integrating climate education in schools from early childhood.**

Environmental policies should promote a green curriculum to ensure that climate change education is embedded within school programmes as early as possible, preferably during early childhood education. To deliver the environmental curriculum efficiently, capacity building is key. All staff, parents and guardians should be trained on climate change issues so that they can confidently pass on their knowledge to students. For example:

*'In order to deliver a green climate change-oriented curriculum, you need a confident staff of teachers — and even students' parents. Thus, there needs to be investment in teacher training on climate change. And this training needs to be available for a variety of subjects, including arts, sports, etc.'* — Youth voice from the United Kingdom

The green curriculum will help young people choose and establish careers that are relevant for combating the impacts of climate change. Access to knowledge about career opportunities can also be facilitated via other channels, such as Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA)

and summer schools on climate change (e.g., the Summer School of Climate Justice, Kenyatta University, Kenya).

- **Policy Recommendation #6: Design diverse, creative and innovative methods for promoting climate information services.**

Young people feel that policy should allow for climate knowledge to be packaged and shared in diverse forms through deconstructing the traditional ways of sharing information that remain common within the present knowledge systems. There is a need to diversify knowledge brokerage on climate change by going beyond traditional means and instead considering more creative approaches. Climate education can be powerfully delivered to youth through creative means and should be context-specific to focus on what a community needs.

Young people are demanding policies that promote diversity and creativity within the green curriculum – for example, the need to go beyond the obvious science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subject areas and incorporate art, music and health into climate education. Using diverse methods and approaches is an important strategy/solution to youth's access to climate information.

- **Policy Recommendation #7: Build and strengthen the capacities of all stakeholders to tackle climate change from grassroots to decision-making levels.**

Capacity-building initiatives should be implemented at all levels from the grassroots communities to decision-making platforms. Young people feel that their views and ideas are not taken seriously within the decision-making spaces partly because of age discrimination but also because government officials are not sound on the subject matter. They feel that there is a need for capacity building among legislators on climate change issues because these stakeholders have limited experience or knowledge about its realities.

Many youth-led organisations at the grassroots levels still lack technical capacities and skills, such as project management, grant and proposal writing skills and practical field work experience. Young people believe that many mentorship and training programmes are not effective enough to support youth-led initiatives because youths are not taught or trained enough on how to start

building organisations, lead projects or coordinate people. They believe that equity of knowledge and information is the foundation, and yet many of the most vulnerable young people do not understand what climate change is and how to tackle it.

Young people have also pointed out the need for capacity building among community-based organisations about the socio-economic and environmental impacts of climate change. Many such organisations are not registered entities and are seen as informal. Governments tend to neglect rural communities, leaving civil society to do most of the work at grassroots levels.

- **Policy Recommendation #8: Establish effective knowledge and information management systems for climate change, biodiversity conservation and sustainability.**

*'Access to knowledge and information is the largest channel to driving meaningful and impactful climate action. Adequate access to knowledge and information about climate change will help inform a wide range of people about the threats that climate change poses and the actions taken by governments, institutions and individuals across the world.'* — Youth voice from Nigeria

Numerous knowledge and information systems on climate change and environmental sustainability exist as well as tools and methodologies for climate risk assessments. However, some may not be effective at the grassroots level. It is important that young people have access to knowledge and accurate information to ensure that their initiatives are sound and coherent with the current climate needs. For example:

*'Climate change space is heavily based on science. Information synthesis is at the core of any reasonable climate action.'* — Youth voice from St Vincent and the Grenadines

### 4.3 Communication and networking

- **Policy Recommendation #9: Design effective and efficient communication strategies to create awareness of climate change among youth.**

Young people want more effective and efficient communication and networking strategies to increase their awareness about the

socio-economic, cultural and environmental impacts of climate change. They feel that there is a knowledge gap and that it is challenging to engage young people constructively to communicate and showcase their creativity and innovativeness in combating climate change. They need to see initiatives that can close the existing knowledge gaps through awareness-creation activities. Governments and civil society can work together to infuse climate change into educational framework to create awareness on climate change risks.

- **Policy Recommendation #10: Design effective multi-way dialogues between youth, scientists, researchers and policymakers to promote common understanding of climate risks and vulnerabilities**

Young people are asking for multi-way conversations with researchers/scientists and policymakers to engage directly on the science policy and practice interfaces on climate change. Such dialogues would ensure that dissemination of climate information is not top-down but flows in both directions between governments/academia and young people. Open dialogue will bridge the gaps between research, policy and practice, promoting youth action and youth engagement while empowering the next generation of climate leaders.

- **Policy Recommendation #11: Promote communication strategies that are tailored to young people's needs and incentivise youth action against climate change.**

There is a repeated theme that youth are sensitive about being heard and having their climate change actions and the impacts of their efforts appreciated. Communication strategies that may work for older groups will not be successful/motivating for youth. For example:

*'Communication channels should be tailored to young people's needs and should be designed to empower them to make them feel valued and worth the investment. When designing communication strategies for the youth, attention should be given to the psycho-social aspects of communications to avoid patronising young people. For example, youth need to feel heard and acknowledged by the government. This will cause a ripple effect that will give*

*them the confidence that what they are fighting for is actually being addressed. That sense is so important for youth.'* — Youth voice from Rwanda

Communicating with youth needs to be designed properly, and encouragement and appreciation for their actions and efforts must be considered by other actors such as policymakers, researchers and NGOs. According to Lee Wray-Davies of Eco-schools England, young people can be discouraged to feel they are not doing enough within their communities. Within the Eco-Schools programme, administrators must remind students that their efforts have large, collective impact.

- **Policy Recommendation #12: Promote effective and inclusive networking platforms for youth to share their knowledge and lived experiences.**

Young people across the Commonwealth appreciate the Commonwealth Youth Programme as it continues to support and empower young people through the CYCN. In Ghana, for example, the Ghana Youth Environment Movement mobilises youth to take environmental action, with a particular focus on policy and advocacy. The organisation plans initiatives to educate youth about how to get involved in activism and has always advocated for young people's involvement in decision-making.

Despite these efforts, there remains a knowledge and information gap, particularly in the digital area. There is a need to promote effective youth networks across the Commonwealth and globally to share climate information and services. Access to online information is limited for many young people in resource-constrained settings – for example, in remote rural areas where internet access is poor. Lack of access to climate information leads to lack of exposure.

*'Youths are often left in the dark, with lack of exposure in their communities and on the global platform beyond grassroots level.'* — Youth voice from Ghana

For networking platforms to be effective, they need to embrace diversity. A lesson learned from Ghana is that many networks struggle with youth diversification. This is an important call as there needs to not only be youth representation but diverse youth representation. This message is reiterated by youth leaders in the Commonwealth.



For example:

*'We need networks that are inclusive, involving different socio-economic and cultural groups, including indigenous youth groups, people living with disabilities, rural and urban dwellers living in rich and poor settings and so on. Promoting diversity and inclusivity within the youth networks is very important for designing better adaptation and mitigation strategies.'* — Youth voice from Nigeria

To facilitate effective networking, young people need to acquire the skills to use the various knowledge platforms and devices or else they risk limiting opportunities for networking, including sharing ideas and experiences with like-minded counterparts who are implementing similar activities with common goals and objectives.

Young people also call for inclusive networking platforms that engage vulnerable groups. Equity of knowledge and information is the foundation for climate action. Many of the most vulnerable young people are yet to gain a deeper understanding of climate change issues and how they can assist in moving towards a climate-safe future. Hence, it is important to build their capacities to gain a deeper understanding on the subject matter and contribute actively to solutions so that they are not left behind in climate action.

- **Policy Recommendation #13: Support youth-led networking platforms to facilitate peer learning and the exchange of ideas and lessons learned.**

Young people possess a wealth of knowledge and experiences from their respective countries. However, opportunities for peer learning and exchange of ideas and lessons learned remain limited. They are asking for policies that can fully support youth-led networking platforms to facilitate peer learning, exchange of ideas, sharing their experiences and lessons learned, etc. They want to learn from each other about what works and what does not work in different contexts and settings.

## 4.4 Innovation, technology and infrastructure

Governments in the Commonwealth need to support policies that promote a green economy that promotes inclusivity and equity so that young women and men can participate fully in innovation, technology and infrastructure development in different sectors.

- **Policy Recommendation #14: Promote localised green technologies across sectors and create opportunities for youth to showcase their knowledge and skills.**

There is increasing interest in green technologies in sectors where there are great opportunities for innovation. But green technologies are still largely top down where technology transfer from the Global North and China is common. Young people in the Commonwealth believe that their potential to apply their skills, creativity and innovations remains limited due to the lack of localised green technology.

It is still largely assumed that if a technology works in the United States, then it can also work in Africa. However, there are several factors that hinder successful technological transfer, and one cannot simply adopt a new technology in a different context as it may not have the same outcome (e.g., there may be less uptake). Instead, the technology needs to fit the needs/wants of the local community. Technological transfer does not mean simply shipping it over from the Global North to the Global South.

- **Policy Recommendation #15: Promote sustainable socio-economic and environmental urban planning to create income opportunities for young people.**

Sustainable urban planning is crucial because youth's involvement in the climate movement depends on how young people relate to the environment. Many young people who are born and/or live in cities do not have as much of a relationship with the natural world as they should. They do not have opportunities to really connect to lakes, rivers etc. and therefore they cannot really advocate for their well-being. This is where urban planners should come in to create natural ecosystems for urban dwellers to connect with.

*'If cities are just concrete, then how are the youth going to advocate for more trees?'* — Youth Voice from Rwanda

- **Policy Recommendation #16: Create favourable conditions for youths to foster partnerships and collaborative initiatives.**

Partnerships and collaborations are important avenues for growth and for upscaling innovations and technologies. Policies should encourage the public and private sectors to embrace young

innovators within their processes and operations. Young people should be seen as partners and collaborators; their creativity should be encouraged because they are the future leaders. Their capacities should be built so that they can contribute towards climate-resilient technologies and infrastructure. Building partnerships with civil society organisations, national governments, Indigenous communities and international organisations is key to upscaling technologies.

- **Policy Recommendation #17: Create favourable conditions for youth to access technological innovations.**

Technology is vital for engineering solutions for climate action and to keep youth informed and connected. It plays a critical role in shaping a sustainable future, such as through the renewable energy derived from the movement of wind and water. Many youths still lack access to technology, and this has created a digital divide between rural and urban communities. There is a need to support and sustain institutions such as the African Digital Climate Project, which is committed to helping Africans learn about climate change threats and how to function as the solution.

#### 4.5 Business and entrepreneurship

- **Policy Recommendation #18: Support programmes that promote sustainable businesses for young entrepreneurs.**

There is a great need for programmes that can support young entrepreneurs to start up and run sustainable businesses. For example:

*'I believe that green entrepreneurship would change the mentality of youths. This will allow us to move away from the capitalist mentality to a circular economy system such as the green or blue economy.'* — Youth voice from Belize

*'For sustainable business innovation, you have to look at the community, identify the challenges and create solutions correctly. There are a lot of opportunities in manufacturing, renewable energy, industry, transportation (shifting from gas to electrical vehicles) and sustainable construction (converting plastic wastes into bricks). Youths need to share their passions, build networks and find opportunities for funding. There is no limit.'* — Youth voice from Grenada

Even though young people are embracing agribusiness opportunities, many are still hesitant because start-ups require capital investments that the majority still lack. Policies should support the creation of market opportunities for young people to foster successful entrepreneurs and build their capacities to engage in climate-smart agribusinesses to foster sustainable development.

- **Policy Recommendation #19: Create opportunities for sustainable careers in green jobs for young people.**

Although some countries provide career programmes in schools and higher learning institutions, vacancies for green jobs that match young people's interests are still limited. Young people are calling for more green careers that will help them secure sustainable livelihoods. This process needs to start in schools whereby young people can interact with professionals from specialised fields to gain practical knowledge and get ideas on how they can match their skills and interests to the right job.

More partnership initiatives between youth, public and private companies and NGOs are needed so that youths can share their innovative ideas while they gain work experience. For example:

*'Youth can work with the electrical automotive companies, within government ministries such as the ministry of environment, in private firms and companies leading in the manufacture of green alternatives, in farms and even as independent entrepreneurs.'* — Youth voice from Nigeria

Yet, it is observed that partnerships between youth groups and private entities are still weak. Economic development without due consideration about the implications for the environment will increase climate change vulnerability. The private sector is encouraged to move beyond profits and prioritise the planet and the people. A supportive private sector can facilitate youth climate action. For example:

*'The private sector needs to provide funding to youth-led initiatives. Without adequate funding, youth action may be limited.'* — Youth voice from Nigeria

*'There is a growing interest in the private sector to implicate green perspectives or fund a green economy. Then there is the question of integrity.'* — Youth voice from Canada



Civil society organisations remain the leading groups fostering green entrepreneurship, and strong collaboration with the private and public sectors is required in areas such as climate financing. Some young people are aware that there are green jobs for them to secure, but the existence of these may not be as well-known among those living in remote areas; these opportunities need to be publicised as widely as possible. On the other hand, there are limited opportunities for young people to work in the field of green entrepreneurship/ economy in a number of Commonwealth countries, and governments are urged to create more jobs in this area.

- **Policy Recommendation #20: Facilitate the practical and technical skills development of young people for a skill-based economy.**

The majority of young people in the Commonwealth lack skills in the green and blue economies. For example, many countries are not equipped with technicians who are competent in renewable energy sectors such as solar energy production and/or knowledgeable in fisheries management. For example:

*'The youth require technical assistance with programmes such as skill training and capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, high-level advocacy, research and knowledge generation to fully participate in the skill-based economy to become essential players in the blue economy.'* — Youth voice from Tanzania.

There is a need to create opportunities for young people to gain practical and technical skills and capacities to participate in a skill-based economy. This can be achieved through apprenticeships, student placements, internships, shadowing, etc. within companies to gain practical skills and knowledge.

## 4.6 Fundraising and access to climate financing

Among all the youth respondents, finance was considered as the key resource required for young people to take effective and efficient action on climate change and meet their expenses sustainably. They have great ideas on climate adaptation and mitigation strategies but often cannot upscale these because they lack financial resources. There are several youth groups

and networks across the Commonwealth, but many are unable to run efficiently due to lack of sustainable funding.

It is important to develop new pathways to catalyse financing to support youth-led activities in the longer term, avoiding over-reliance on external grants and funds. Projects and youth-led initiatives are often unable to access the kind of funding needed, and so grant writing and campaigning remain under-represented skillsets.

*'More funding for youth-led projects (and mentorship alongside the funding) will be vital if we want more youth in leadership roles and more impact from young people.'* — Youth voice from Hong Kong

- **Policy Recommendation #21: Devolve climate financing to the lowest level possible to fund grassroots youth-led actions on climate change and sustainability.**

Many young people feel that climate financing is not developed enough to reach the grassroots level but is designed to fund large-scale adaptation and mitigation programmes. Youth-led projects are often at grassroots levels and run on small budgets. Many of these organisations do not have the technical capacities to write proposals to seek and secure large grants or funding. For example:

*'We need more paid staff to apply for grants.'* — Youth voice from St Vincent and the Grenadines

*'When finances are limited, actions are also limited.'* — Youth voice from Nigeria

- **Policy Recommendation #22: Foster new sustainable pathways to finance and scale-up sustainable financing for youth-led climate resilient and sustainability projects.**

Many youth-led projects still rely on grants from either NGOs, governments or the donor community. Over-reliance on grants from external sources has killed many projects because they cannot sustain their activities in the mid- or long-term. It is therefore necessary to develop innovative financing mechanisms that can create new pathways to catalyse finance and scale up youth-led ideas across the Commonwealth.

Young people largely oppose investments that focus on maximising financial return while creating socio-economic and environmental injustices. They

want policies that promote sustainable financing mechanisms towards social and environmental justice resulting in safeguarded ecosystem services and the protection of human well-being.

- **Policy Recommendation #23: Support strong mechanisms for equitable and sustainable access to climate financing to ensure inclusivity and fairness in youth-led projects.**

Although most governments within the Commonwealth have created financing channels to fund environmental and development projects, inequalities in access to funding persist, especially for youth, women and girls. In many cases, securing funds for a project depends on luck or whom one knows in the higher-level institutions.

Experiences from different parts of Africa show that government officials tend to finance only the projects of colleagues and personal connections, regardless of the quality of the project. Young people are urging their governments to distribute funds fairly so that the most vulnerable community members are considered, including people living with disabilities. To promote equity and fairness, it is important for governments to strengthen accountability and transparency mechanisms and processes where projects are vetted based on a set of criteria that are commonly agreed by all stakeholders.

## 4.7 Enabling environment for legislation, policies and institutions

At the core of climate action, there must be an enabling framework of policies, legislation and institutions. Young people believe that in the absence of climate-smart policies and toolkits, commitments to climate change cannot be achieved. They know good policy frameworks create a favourable environment for them to be recognised as key stakeholders throughout negotiations. Sound policies provide the legal basis for the relevance of stakeholders at all levels — governmental organisations and NGOs, the private sector, donors — to take responsibility in promoting environmental and climate justice. An enabling

policy landscape at all levels will catalyse the action needed to combat climate change.

- **Policy Recommendation #24: Develop context-dependent and localised policy and legislative frameworks that suit a given setting and promotes specific youth-led initiatives.**

'We need to stop copying and pasting policies from developed countries.' This was a strong message given by a young Nigerian man at the Youth, Climate and Sustainability Summit (2021). Young leaders from the African region feel that their climate and environmental policies are not localised enough to engage adequately with all stakeholders to address local needs, priorities and expectations. A strategy for formulating good policies and frameworks for building resilience is to localise climate facts within a given country context. This can demystify the complexities that are inherent in climate change frameworks. For example:

*'Sometimes we overcomplicate things. We need to keep it simple. The Eco-School Framework works well and has a structure that has been implemented for years. Additionally, the structure is set up so that there is no competition among schools but rather a supportive, collaborative environment where schools learn from each other on how to improve.'* — Youth voice from the United Kingdom

The need for context-specific policy and regulatory frameworks is a recurring theme. Policies are drafted without the people they affect being involved or considered, and sometimes laws are copied from other jurisdictions and as such cannot reflect the realities of the adopting country's people.

Young people have asserted that failure to localise policies leads to wastage of money and resources. This is common during policymaking processes when decision makers want to reinvent the wheel without looking at existing structures that could benefit from further investment. In the Africa region, many young leaders are speaking out against the 'importation' of western policies, legislation, institutions and strategic plans. They believe that creating policies that reflect the current realities of the people should be done holistically.

- **Policy Recommendation #25: Provide a clear statement on the position of youth in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).**

Most countries in the Commonwealth have submitted their revised NDCs. However, they have not clearly stated the position of young people within the documents, and young people have noted that this is a key barrier to their active participation in climate action. They recognise that the Commonwealth is an institution that plays an important role in influencing national governments to mainstream youth action in their various global pledges, including the NDCs.

- **Policy Recommendation #26: Mainstream youth action into national, regional and international policies.**

Climate change is intricately linked with all aspects of environment and development, including poverty and inequality, health and well-being, gender, literacy, conflicts and insecurity and many more. Consequently, youth mainstreaming requires a deeper understanding of these interlinkages – for example, how climate change is linked with poverty and inequality.

Young people want their ideas, concerns, ideas and perspectives to be considered sufficiently in the policy and legislative processes. However, they also feel many of their peers lack opportunities to influence such processes due to their inability to analyse policies to identify which best fit their actions/agendas.

Mainstreaming youth-led action on climate requires interventions and support from the public and private sectors. Young people are asking for commitment from policymakers and businesses to mainstream all issues of climate change that affect youth into environmental conservation and development agenda. For example:

Young people are concerned that most policies that consider youth perspectives are theoretical because they are fine on paper but are not translated into action. For example:

*'I know policies and strategies on climate change and conservation e.g., carbon neutral by 2050, protection and conservation of 30 per cent of land and oceans by 2030. But these are very vague commitments that need to be fleshed out further by breaking down these long-term commitments into shorter time frames and developing explicit mechanisms to achieve intermediate targets.'* — Youth voice from Canada

*'The problem is not a lack of strategies and policies; it is a lack of action and implementation of them!'* — Youth voice from Samoa

- **Policy Recommendation #27: Mainstream gender action into policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks.**

Young women in the Commonwealth and beyond feel that their potential to act is not fully unlocked due to unfavourable policies, legislation and institutions. This is a major barrier to the achievement of sustainable development goals as women are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change. They are calling for legislation that put women and girls at the centre of climate action. For example:

*'There is a need for legislation that recognises the potential of women as changemakers. As a result, training and formal education are required to improve the efficiency, profitability and long-term viability of their operations.'* — Youth voice from Tanzania

Robust gender-responsive policies and legislation and well-established and functional institutions must recognise the potential of girls and women in combating the effects of climate change by fostering women's participation in markets and technology.

- **Policy Recommendation #28: Strengthen policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks that address loss and damage caused by extreme weather events.**

Young people feel that loss and damage associated with climate change impacts should be a key policy discourse, especially at national levels. Youth from SIDS would like issues such as the cost of damage and compensation to be discussed at international climate conferences and they want their voices to be heard at negotiation tables, including on how to minimise loss and damage associated with extreme weather events.

- **Policy Recommendation #29: Promote a multisectoral approach to policymaking processes to promote integrated adaptation and mitigation strategies.**

Policymaking processes are influenced by multiple interconnected factors, including economics, geography, politics and literacy levels. Thus solutions must be multi-layered rather than just covering one aspect of a whole web of issues.

Policymaking as well as implementation must engage with a variety of stakeholders because the nature of the climate crisis is multifaceted, requiring governments across the Commonwealth and beyond to tackle it from a broader perspective considering multisectoral implications.

- **Policy Recommendation #30: Create a favourable environment for young people to hold leaders accountable for their climate commitments and actions.**

Youths are asserting that many of the commitments made by their governments at high level meetings are unfulfilled. They are calling for strong mechanisms that give them

the power to hold their leaders accountable. During the Conference of the Parties, some young people stated their disappointment during climate negotiations because transparency and accountability were missing and the discussions bred little to no result. They also felt that their leaders were making unrealistic commitments while others showed no intention to halt unsustainable practices.

Youths will no longer tolerate the empty promises and unfulfilled commitments made by their leadership. From across the Commonwealth and beyond, they will continue to protest, taking world leaders to account for the lack of immediate and vigorous climate action.

## 5. Conclusions and Way Forward

Even though climate change is having adverse effects on our planet, there is still hope that further damage can be limited or even halted. Much of this hope lies with our youth. Opportunities to prioritise climate action are limitless for younger generations. In their own voices, young people across the Commonwealth regions are speaking out at all levels from grassroots to high-level dialogues.

The youths are calling for strong policy directives that provide favourable conditions for them to take full action against the adverse effects of climate change. Young people of diverse backgrounds require appropriate platforms to engage constructively with multiple stakeholders, including state and non-state actors. They want their governments to create conditions for them to freely share their lived experiences on climate risks and vulnerabilities, to showcase their actions and to influence policy and practice without fear.

This policy guide underscores the need for Commonwealth member governments to embrace the insights and ideas of young people from all backgrounds, demographics, cultures and belief

systems when formulating sound policies and regulations that promote sustainable climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. It highlights young voices, their lived experiences, insights and aspirations. It underscores the fact that young people want to be strategic partners in climate change actions and become effective agents of change. At COP26, there were over 14 position papers with recommendations on youth and climate change. The challenge is how to turn these recommendations into action, and this is what young people are aspiring to achieve — because without action, the theories are redundant.

The policy guide positions young people at the centre of decision-making processes, which is important in achieving the SDGs, fulfilling the Paris Agreement and abiding by the Commonwealth Charter. It can be used as a reference for formulating and/or reforming policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks for climate change action in Commonwealth states.

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# Annex 1: Interview Guide Questions

1. From your knowledge, what actions are youth taking to combat climate change? This can be within your own network or country or what you have seen across the world.
2. What are the most important policy needs and recommendations of youth action to climate change?
3. How can these policy needs be achieved?
4. What enables youth climate action (e.g., good policies, technology, finances, market and infrastructure, access to knowledge and information)?
5. How can governments and civil society better support youth organisations or individuals to empower youth to fight climate change?
6. What are the barriers to youth climate action (e.g., poor policies, lack of technology, limited finances, poor infrastructure, lack of access to knowledge and information)?
7. What key lessons have you learned i.e., what has worked and what has not worked with regards to youth action in climate change?
8. Do you have any photos you can share for our report (i.e., of climate activism, your organisation's events)?

**Commonwealth Secretariat**

Marlborough House, Pall Mall  
London SW1Y 5HX  
United Kingdom

[thecommonwealth.org](http://thecommonwealth.org)



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