# EMPOWERING GHANA'S YOUTH THROUGH CLIMATE AWARENESS (POST COP27)

KEY OUTCOMES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND ROADMAP TO ACCELERATE CLIMATE ACTION



# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Twenty-Seventh Conference of Parties (COP27), hosted in Sharm El-Sheikh, brought together a large number of climate advocates, world leaders, scientists, the business community and the media to deliberate on the important actions for addressing the climate. A key group at COP27 was the youth, who are deemed climate catalysts in accelerating global ambition and actions to meet net-zero emissions.

COP27, dubbed "African COP" and "Implementation COP," raised expectations that decisions from previous conferences, reflecting the needs and priorities of the most vulnerable countries, will begin to be implemented. After two weeks of negotiations, COP27 adopted the Sharm El-Sheikh Implementation Plan "SHIP" as the main decision for guiding ambitious climate actions.

The highlight of COP27 was the historic decision to establish a fund for responding to loss and damage. It is a significant milestone because it comes after almost three decades of asking and it sets a precedence for climate justice.

The outcomes of COP27 were discussed in a consultative meeting in Ghana to align Ghanaian youth with global climate actions and regional peculiarities.

In a bid to help strengthen the voice of youth from Ghana at COP28, the Roadmap to COP28 delivered the need to ensure that youth views and proposals are fully integrated into national and global climate policymaking and dialogues; build youth skills, capacity, knowledge, and networks, particularly in the most impacted communities, to engage in climate processes and finally provide a model for the COP process in Ghana on youth inclusion.

# **INTRODUCTION**

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) holds annual Conferences of Parties (COP), unless otherwise decided by parties and since the first COP in 1995, the world has seen a series of COPs. The Conference of Parties is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention, Kyoto protocol and the Paris Agreement with a major task of reviewing the national communications and emission inventories that Parties have prensented. Based on this data, the COP evaluates the outcomes of the actions taken by Parties and the advancements made toward fulfilling the primary goal of the Convention<sup>1</sup>.

The 27<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP27) took place in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, where nations came together to discuss and address the global issue of climate change. The main objectives of the conference were to take stock of the implementation of the Paris Agreement, enhance the level of ambition and address the urgent needs of countries most affected by climate change<sup>2</sup>. In light of proceedings from COP27, the Ghanaian youth climate movement held a post COP27 consultative meeting where the outcomes of COP27 were discussed and youth perspective on some key issues elaborated.

This policy brief aims to outline the recommendations put forward by youth in Ghana for enhancing climate action and uniting to implement the outcomes of COP27. The implementation of COP27 decisions remains a crucial issue for youth who are affected by the impacts of climate change in their communities and understand the urgency of taking action. A critical component of the Ghanaian youth is their role. There is an urgent need to amplify youth voices through a conscious effort of inclusion, capacity building and scaling initiatives in order to ensure the success of the global fight against climate change and locally build community resilience.

# **OUTCOMES OF COP27**











COP27 focused on adaptation, mitigation, loss and damage, climate finance and climate empowerment (Youth in focus).

## ADAPTATION

The outcomes of COP27 on adaptation emphasized strongly on scaling adaptation actions in vulnerable regions, with negotiating parties agreeing on the implementation of the Paris Agreement Adaptation Goal. The agreement included efforts to enhance climate support for vulnerable countries with high impacts from climate change across all sectors of society despite their minute contributions, especially for Africa. This was reflected in the adoption of the Cairo Adaptation Framework, which outlines a comprehensive approach to address the adaptation needs of countries, including the provision of financial and technical support. So, at COP27 the adaptation work plan was approved, a framework was implemented on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) and four workshops were scheduled for 2023 on the framework with the aim of adopting a final decision at COP28. The GGA was significant for setting the pace to inform the first Global Stocktake at COP28<sup>3</sup>.

The Sharm El-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda outlined 30 Adaptation pillars focusing on a number of themes to build resilience in especially vulnerable communities around the world<sup>4</sup>.

Overall, the COP27 outcomes on adaptation emphasized the need for increased financial support and greater action to address the impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities.

#### **MITIGATION**

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Parties agreed to raise the level of ambition in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and limiting

global temperature to 1.5 Degree Celsius. The Cairo Mitigation Framework was adopted, setting a roadmap for countries to enhance their mitigation efforts and transition to low-carbon, resilient, and sustainable pathways. Matters relating to the work program for urgently scaling up mitigation ambition and implementation as established in COP 26 (Paragraph 27 of decision 1/CMA 3) were up for discussion since mitigation is argued to eliminate the need for Adaptation.

Key mitigation outcomes from COP27 entailed:

- Countries submitted enhanced NDCs that described their pledges to lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report says limiting warming to around 1.5°C requires global greenhouse gas emissions to be reduced by 43% by 2030 which can be achieved in large part thanks to these improved NDCs. Hopefully countries stay true to their commitments<sup>5</sup>.
- Increased pledges to implement or enhance carbon pricing mechanisms. Carbon pricing is a major internal fund generation mechanism that administers cost for carbon emission and allows for just transition to low-carbon economies. Carbon pricing also provides support for countries in meeting their NDCs.
- Lastly several initiatives were launched to promote information sharing and climate openness through the sharing of innovations and technology to enhance mitigation actions.



Despite this headway, reports on the outcomes from COP27 suggests that mitigation was grounded as compared with the push for adaptation and loss and damage<sup>6</sup>. According to this referenced report, the outcomes on mitigation saw very little efforts to limit the occurrence of Loss and Damage in the first place and efforts to limit global temperature to 1.5°C as admonished by the IPCC report.

#### LOSS & DAMAGE

In acknowledgement of the adverse effects of climate change, COP19 established the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage to provide responsive support for vulnerable communities which experience such extreme incidence of climate change<sup>7</sup>. Since the establishment of the Warsaw International mechanism for Loss and Damage at COP19, the Loss and Damage theme has seen a lot of back and forth till a breakthrough at COP27. Loss and Damage is an essential concept in the context of climate change. It refers to the negative impacts of climate change that cannot be addressed through mitigation or adaptation.

Due to the unpredictive nature of climate change and the diversified nature of its impacts, beyond adaptation and mitigation, communities are prone to experience losses and damages. These impacts disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, such as small island developing states, least developed countries, and indigenous communities, who have contributed barely anything to climate change but are the most affected. In recent years, Nigeria and Pakistan have been severely affected by climate change, causing major losses and damages to lives and properties.

Loss and damage dominated the whole of the two weeks negotiations and parties finally settled on establishing a loss and damage fund. It was agreed that the funding mechanism for loss and damage should be new, additional, predictable, and adequate. An interim committee has been set up and is currently working on the new funding mechanism for loss and damage, focusing on how the funds are going to be received, kept, and distributed, as well as which projects should have access to them. Additionally, the Santiago network for averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage was established.

#### **CLIMATE FINANCE**

In all climate negotiations and conversations, Finance is very critical. Since COP27 was an African COP, one major aim was to scale climate finance. For enhanced climate accountability and actions, climate finance must be distinguished from development finance. The global goal to keep global temperature at 1.5°C and transitioning to Low-Carbon economies would require huge financial commitments and wellstructured fund mobilization schemes<sup>8</sup>. COP27 saw increased climate pledges from parties in the Global North, more commitment towards the \$100 billion annually contribution for both mitigation and adaptation in developing countries looking at the adamant nature of the fund since COP15. Sustainable Agriculture also saw a push with the Food and Agriculture for Sustainable Transformation initiatives to provide financial support to enhance agricultural production, support agricultural economies while reducing emissions from agricultural activities to limit global temperature to 1.5°C<sup>9</sup>.



This would present a significant increase in the amount of climate finance available to developing countries to scale climate actions while reducing the vulnerability of local communities. At the same time topics of transparency, access and accountability together with Private Sector Engagement were key in the negotiations. One very important item on climate finance was the need for long term climate finance for just transition and increased economic resilience.

Some other financing initiatives launched at COP27 in Egypt include;

- African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100): to mobilize \$2 billion for an African locally-led land restoration movement
- African Adaptation Acceleration Program (AAAP): mobilizing \$25 billion to scale adaptation action across Africa

 Loss and Damage Fund; A Committee was set up to develop and look into the loss and damage fund.

#### CLIMATE VULNERABLE FORUM (CVF)

The Climate Vulnerable Forum is an international partnership of countries highly vulnerable to climate change. The CVF consists of 58 member-state countries scattered across the globe and found on various continents with its main aim of improving the accountability of industrialized countries in terms of emission and fulfilling financial pledges. The CVF advocates for ambitious and urgent action to tackle climate change and has been actively engaged in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations. Ghana currently holds the CVF Presidency.

For COP27 the CVF played a significant role in the negotiations, reiterating its call for the  $1.5^{\circ}$ C target to be enshrined in the Paris Agreement. The group emphasized the urgency of limiting global warming to  $1.5^{\circ}$ C and the catastrophic consequences that would result from exceeding this threshold. The CVF also called for more ambitious emission reduction targets, increased climate finance, urgent action on adaptation, and a just transition to a low-carbon economy.

#### Priority Areas (2022-2024)

- Climate prosperity plans (Framework to maximize development and implementation of CVF/V20 national climate prosperity plans (CPPs)) this is to help vulnerable countries create jobs, wealth, and employment in the climate change sector.
- Youth Climate Change Awareness (Create a dedicated CVF program for youth).
- Parliaments (Promote full realization of the charter of the CVF Global Parliamentary Group (GPG).
- Renewable Energy (Strive for full implementation of the CVF Vision 100% Renewable Energy Targets).
- Culture and inclusion of community/local leaders

#### ACTION FOR CLIMATE EMPOWERMENT (ACE)

COP27 saw youth participation move to another level with the ever first Children and Youth Pavilion to allow young people freely host world leaders and stakeholders to discuss and address urgent issues needed by the youth to scale climate actions. Youth empowerment as adopted under the Glasgow work program on Action for Climate Empowerment was very vital at COP27 as youth participation saw a significant increase but there is still a problem of adopting youth perspectives on climate actions for overall policy outcomes.

# WHY IS YOUTH PARTICIPATION AT COPS IMPORTANT?

Youth participation and inclusion in COP proceedings are essential for various reasons. First, young people are disproportionately affected by climate change in terms of extreme weather events, and associated health and psychological wellbeing, food insecurity, migration and forced displacements, resource conflicts and loss of cultural identity, just to mention a few. Therefore, they have a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities that come with addressing climate change. Secondly, young people have innovative ideas and solutions that can help in the fight against climate change. Youth participation presents an important platform for young people to share their ideas and solutions and engage in meaningful discussions that can influence climate policies across the various thematic areas. Thirdly, youth participation at COP is critical for intergenerational equity.



For instance, with access to the youth pavilion at COP27, an intense dialogue was raised to see how

knowledge sharing could be facilitated between both the young and the older generation.

The youth through such avenues are able to understand what has been done in the past and how youth innovation can help scale the positive ideas or reduce the negative ones.

Decisions made at COP will impact the future of the planet, and it is vital that the voices of young people were heard and considered. Youth tokenism should be put away and the diverse and unique views of the youth paid peculiar attention to, because the potential to attain net zero and reduce emissions below  $1.5^{\circ}$ C is embedded in the youth.

#### PERSPECTIVE OF GHANAIAN YOUTH ON COP27

The Ghanaian youth were optimistic about the opportunities presented by COP27. They believed that their participation at COP27 was crucial in shaping climate policy in Ghana and Africa. As the impacts of climate change sores, the impacts are directly felt by the youth whose livelihoods and life support depends on the stability of the environment and climate. They recognize that Ghana and Africa are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and that very quick and stringent actions are required to mitigate and more proactively adapt to these impacts. COP27 presented an opportunity as well for African youth to unite and amplify their voices for climate action.

#### **OUTCOME OF DEBRIEF SURVEY**

The survey mainly seeked to assess the knowledge of applicants on COP, scale of understanding, their expectations for the consultation, gender and age. The knowledge of applicants on a scale of 1-5 and the gender are shown in the figures below.

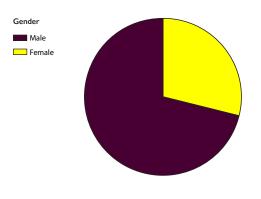


Figure 1: Percentage of young people (males or females) who registered for the post COP27 debrief Out of a total of 204 applicants.

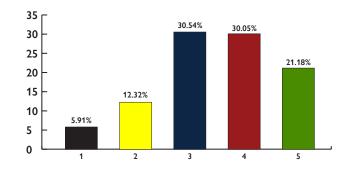
The results on the gender of applicants for the consultation showed how young girls and young women are less represented in climate dialogues. This emphasizes on the need for continuous capacity building of young girls and young women to build both their interest and capacity on such issues.

Applicants fell within the year range of 1989-2002, with one outlier in 1985, depicting that the bulk of the applicant fell within the youth range of 18-35 years.

#### How well do you knowabout COP?

Figure 2: Knowledge on the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP) on a scale of 1-5, with 1 representing Very Low and 5 representing Very High

Figure 2, depicts that the participants of the post COP27 debrief had a good understanding on climate change and the UNFCCC COPs and its importance for climate actions for the globe.



# **ROADMAP TO COP28 & RECOMMENDATIONS**

The next UNFCCC Conference of Parties, COP28, is scheduled to take place in Dubai in 2023. The conference is expected to build on the progress made at COP27 and deliver even more ambitious climate action<sup>10</sup>. The Road map to COP28 and the recommendations made by the Ghanaian youth are critical for the attainment of Ghana's NDCs and building the capacity of the young population to fully understand and apply innovative community-based solutions to address climate issues. The YCC as a Youth Hub is looking to collaborate with the government on new climate policies and strategies to implement interventions from COP27 to put Ghana at a much better place to leverage for more opportunities. The discussion of the road to COP28 looks at measures the Ghanaian youth seeks to be in place looking forward to COP28

Below are seven recommendations for Ghana's preparation to COP28 from the lens of youth engagement with key quotes from the post COP27 youth consultation.









#### **1** SHARED DEVELOPMENT AGENDA AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

The Ghanaian youth is very ambitious and highly motivated to effect change and build the resilience of their various communities against climate impact. Despite the zeal, knowledge and direction from experts is highly needed to build the professional capacity of the Ghanaian youth for climate dialogue at all levels. The youth negotiator trainee program was an initiative of the YCC in partnership with EPA to train youth climate negotiators Out of the ten youth trainees only two were supported with the help of the YCC and UNICEF Ghana to have a practical experience of the negotiations at COP27.

I anticipate that the general COP27 outcomes and Ghana's strategy would be well disseminated to provide specific doable advice on how to use the findings to advance the goals and objectives of the various youth-led initiatives.

#### Michael Ackon

Moving forward to COP28, the Ghana youth climate movement calls on the government through the state agencies to scale support and partnership with the YCC to expand the Youth Negotiation training program to be able to support a minimum of one negotiator trainee per UNFCCC's thematic area. Young people in Ghana are also willing to undertake strategic research on community adaptation and climate resilience problems and come up with innovative solutions. These solutions would need directions and guidance on how to fine tune them for implementation in the various communities. Project implementation mostly comes with funding issues, the youth climate movement is soliciting for deliberate youth funds. Young Ghanaians are coming up with Climate smart Agriculture projects, sustainable energy initiatives and nature based solutions to various environmental crises and pushing for support from Government and donor organizations. This could include grants, loans, and other forms of financial assistance that are accessible to young people. Additionally, the government could provide technical assistance and capacity building support to youth-led initiatives to ensure that they are effective in achieving their objectives. Further on climate finance, the youth is already positioned and making great impacts, as Ghana gets ready to access climate grants to champion the climate agenda, we request that there should be a deliberate attempt to invest in youth innovation and continuous monitoring to amplify local innovations. This is first because of how expensive starting green enterprises are, and looking at the rate of unemployment in the country, we call on the government to make a conscious effort to scale and support green initiatives/jobs to give hope to climate, environmental and natural resource scientists.

I expect information sharing on Ghana's Agenda at COP27, the specific contributions and resolutions made at COP. What made Ghana's participation in COP27 different and better than previous ones?

Bernie Owusu-Ansah

On inclusivity, the young climate activists entreat the government to include the youth in all climate discussions and implementation. We call for transparency, information sharing, and a special call for climate justice and openness nationally.

#### O COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING

The Ghanaian youth movement in preparation towards COP28 and implementing COP27 outcomes as discussed in the Post COP27 Ghana youth debrief sees an urgent need for strong collaboration among the youth movement, CSOs and other youth movements across the world who are also pushing for greater government support and intentional capacity building for the youth. This can help to amplify youth voices and increase influence on the international stage. Collaboration and networking is important for replication of climate solutions and building the solidarity of the youth climate movement for shared opportunities. Moving forward Ghanaian youth climate activists seek Collaboration and partnership for knowledge sharing of best practices and the creation of joint initiatives to address the impacts of climate change.

Let's not work in isolation; cooperation and networking are very important to build a united front for climate action."

Portia Adu-Mensah

#### **O** INCREASE AWARENESS AND CLIMATE ADVOCACY

A major move for climate action and implementation of Ghana's strategies Post COP27 negotiations is amplifying youth voices through movement building, education and intensification of climate advocacy. The Ghanaian climate movement including the youth group keep engaging themselves, but to implement climate intervention and see the impact spread beyond the activist is to engage the majority of the population who have little or no knowledge on climate change and its various impacts. This should be done through various channels such as junior and secondary schools, universities, and community organizations.

When we buy a product and it has defects, we complain so necessary changes are made; when we see actions that have negative effects on climate, we have to also raise concerns so the right actions are taken. Our social media handles can be the leading voices in the fight for climate justice; let's not be passive.

Daryl Bosu

#### That we as youth would share insights on the major outcomes, climate trends, implications and suggested solutions of COP27 widely as drivers of these solutions and to kick-start or operationalize these solutions since it's long overdue. I also expect setting targets for ourselves and assembling once again to report on how well those targets have been realized

**Richmond Amarnor Nartey** 

### INTENTIONALITY OF THE YOUTH TO VOTE FOR INCREASED CLIMATE **IMPACT & ACCOUNTABILITY**

One major part that the youth has ignored for a while, is intentional voting, and pushing for leaders to have high climate ambitions, in looking for whom to vote in the next election in 2024. The young Ghanaian is admonished to pay close attention to leaders who seek to champion climate actions, if really we are the most affected by climate change. In working towards a sustainable future, it is important to ask for accountable climate actions and disbursement of climate finance, while building our capacity as youth led climate organizations to take up major roles during such discussions.

My expectation post COP27 is to see youth discussion geared towards how we can influence government and civil society initiatives to push for the implementation of COP outcomes.

Lucrecia Maame Nante-Bonsra

The youth should vote like our lives depend on it, as the leaders we elect will determine what kind of climate policies are made.

#### Daryl Bossu

#### **G** CREATION OF THE CVF YOUTH GROUP

Taking advantage of Ghana hosting the CVF presidency, the Ghanaian youth climate movement is calling on the CVF secretariat through the EPA, to establish the CVF youth forum. There are a number of young climate champions, the Ghanaian youth calls for a global youth forum and not just one person representing the youth. The young Ghanaian believes that we as a continent can achieve this much with an individual but far more can be achieved when the CVF engages the youth climate movement.

> We need a platform for young people in the climate space to scale our contribution to fulfilling the goals of COP27 and future ambitions.

> > Esther Lovia Dankyi

#### O PUSHING FOR MARGINALIZED YOUTH GROUPS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The global south keeps ringing for community inclusion and climate justice for marginalized groups. Moving away from COP27 to COP28, young people are pushing for channeling resources to the communities most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and engaging with those groups on the ground problems and supporting community led-initiatives. The youth is calling on the government to consider including local leaders and groups in climate negotiations to tell their own stories, because mostly their representatives who are not directly exposed to the problems are unable to tell it well as they would.

Translate COP27 outcomes into locally engineered climate initiatives.

Thomas Abugah

Capacity building for young people on how best to leverage outcomes of COP to maximize local impact.

Peter Bulimo

#### **O** EARLY PREPARATION BY ALL CLIMATE GROUPS FOR A COMMON GOAL

Lastly young climate actors are calling on the government, CSOs, and donor organizations for early collaboration and resource mobilization to enhance early preparation through early access to accreditation, sponsorship opportunities, capacity building and training on COP negotiations. Still emphasizing on support to scale the youth negotiator trainee program to be able to support additional trainees to cover all of UNFCCC negotiation areas.

Availability of structured financial support and capacity building schemes for young people championing climate action like the youth negotiator training prior to COP28.

Patricia Odeibea

# CONCLUSION

COP27, presented the world with a huge responsibility to shift from chit chatting to real ground actions to advance efforts to meet Net Zero, while the outcomes from COP27 seems disappointing owing to the fact that it was supposed to be an implementation COP, the bulk of the work is on us as youth climate actors to push for the implementation we want while building solidarity to champion for more implementation coming COP28 in Dubai. The road map to COP28 for the Ghanaian youth climate actor is implementation of climate actions, early preparation and cooperation among climate actors to intensify climate education and build capacity for a sustainable economic development. Post COP27, the Ghanaian youth is excited about the future since climate change has moved from being a fringe issue to a major global indicator of national development. Although scared for the ground actions to address climate change issues in Ghana, the youth is calling to work with governments to roll out and support climate change interventions across the belt of the country.



#### Endnotes

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# NOTES



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