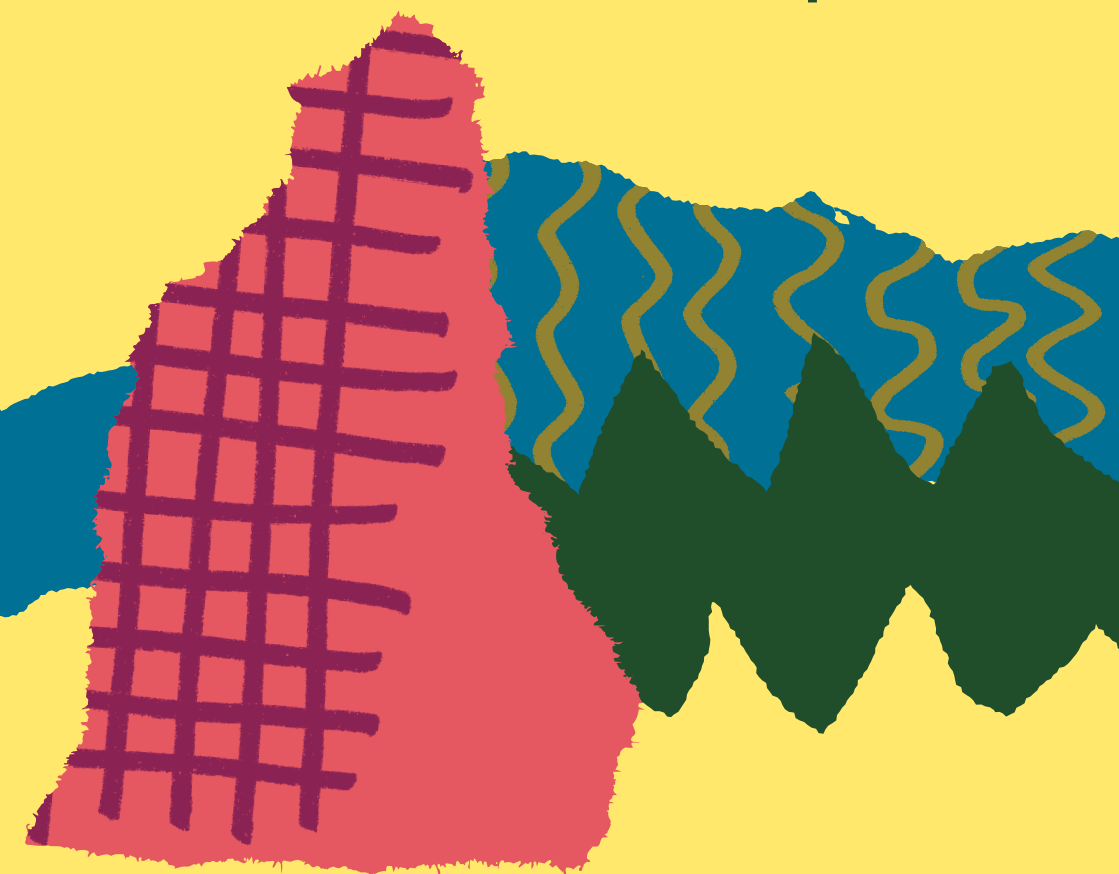


CHILDREN AND THE UNCLIMATE COPS

A primary
consideration
for their future
in the present



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CHILDREN AND THE UN CLIMATE COFS

A primary consideration for
their future in the present

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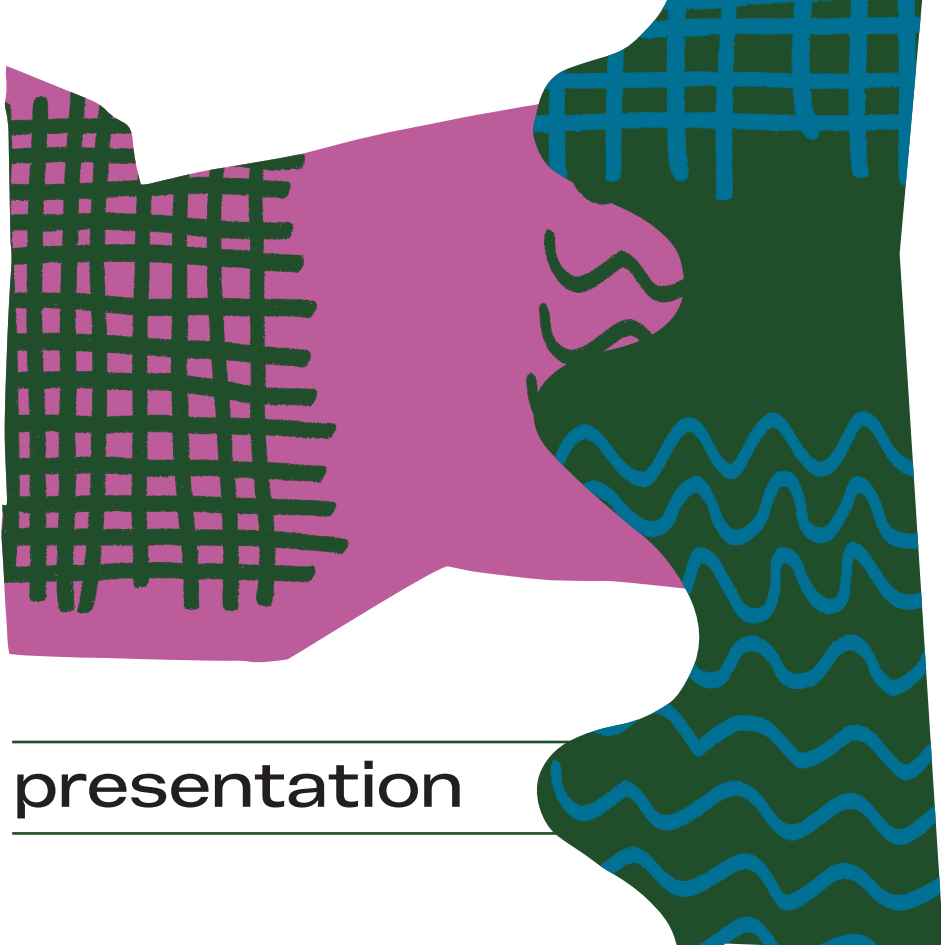


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A stylized, abstract illustration of a person's head and shoulders in profile, facing right. The person has short, dark hair with a green grid pattern. The face is a solid magenta color. The neck and shoulder area are dark green with a blue wavy pattern. The background is white.

presentation

The integration of children's rights into climate action and negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an ethical, legal, and political imperative. This policy paper adopts the definition of a child according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC): every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. Incorporating children's rights into the climate regime not only acknowledges the generation that will inherit the planet but also promotes the realization of the principle of intergenerational equity, which is frequently invoked yet still under-implemented in normative and institutional terms.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been in existence for 35 years, and its integrated application with other United Nations agendas has increasingly been emphasized, as demonstrated by the UN Secretary-General's Guidance Note on Mainstreaming Child Rights. Children make up approximately one-third of the global population—and more than half of the population in many of the countries most vulnerable to the impacts of the climate crisis. Nevertheless, they continue to be disproportionately and specifically affected due to physiological, developmental, and contextual factors, which make them more exposed and less protected in the face of extreme climate events and prolonged environmental degradation processes.

Despite this growing recognition, there remained a gap in the systematization of how children were addressed in UNFCCC decisions. In particular, there was a lack of in-depth analyses of the contexts, legal frameworks, and practical effects of references to children throughout the Conferences of the Parties of the UNFCCC regime – COP, for the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC; CMP, for the Conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol; and CMA, for the Conference of the Parties to the Paris Agreement. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly strategic to map available instruments and emerging guidelines that can guide the safeguarding of children's rights within the international climate regime, especially in the negotiation tracks currently underway—notably adaptation,

gender, mitigation and just transition, finance, loss and damage, and action for climate empowerment (ACE).

In this context, the present policy paper aims to fill the identified gap through (i) identification and analysis of the historical references to the terms children, youth, young, girl, and future generations in COP, CMP, and CMA decisions from 1995 to 2024, including the contexts in which they were mentioned and (ii) development of concrete recommendations to integrate children's rights into the UNFCCC negotiation agenda.

Given the above, this document is organized into two chapters.

The first chapter addresses the historical references to the defined key terms, which were organized into eight thematic axes based on analytical categories drawn from both the literature on climate justice and children's rights and from the UNFCCC documents themselves: (1) vulnerability and protection; (2) participation and empowerment; (3) climate justice and intergenerational equity; (4) climate education; (5) indicators, data, and monitoring; (6) adaptation and community resilience; (7) climate finance; and (8) traditional knowledge.

The analysis of the decisions considers both the normative content of the decisions (main provisions) and their preambles and annexes, with special attention to the frequency and context in which the analyzed terms were mentioned. In addition, it seeks to identify whether the expressed commitments

are merely declarative or if they result in institutional mechanisms, resource allocation criteria, or measurable indicators. This is mainly reflected in the verbs used in the decision texts. Therefore, relevant verbs are highlighted throughout the text in the first chapter.

The second chapter adopts a propositional approach. Based on the historical analysis, we present alternatives for mainstreaming children's rights in the negotiation tracks currently underway within the UNFCCC regime. These proposals are organized around thematic tracks considering their intersections with the protection and promotion of children's rights.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT: A LOOK INTO THE PAST

The analysis of references to the key terms over the period revealed that the development of the topic underwent three phases:

- I. Sporadic mentions, from 1992 to 2010;
- II. Rise of the theme, between 2010 and 2016; and
- III. Strategic mentions, from 2018 to 2024.

Table 1: number of mentions of the selected keywords in the decisions of the COP, CMP, and CMA, by period, from 1992 to 2024.

YEAR	YOUTH	CHILDREN	GIRL	YOUNG	FUTURE GENERATIONS
1992-2010	8	2	0	1	9
2011-2017	21	12	0	0	4
2018-2024	123	77	13	8	4

Although this policy paper focuses on the promotion of children’s rights in the context of climate negotiations, the analysis intentionally refers to the expressions “youth” and “young,” especially due to the way in which, between 1992 and 2010, the UNFCCC regime adopted an aggregated approach to address childhood and youth. This period highlights the need for institutional maturity that recognizes the inadequacy of treating these two age groups as a homogeneous unit.

The repeated use of the formula “children and youth” in UNFCCC decisions reflects an effort to include new generations in the climate debate. However, by grouping age ranges with different levels of development, autonomy, and forms of participation, this formulation ended up submerging children

into a broader generational narrative, making its specificities invisible and hindering the formulation of public policies anchored in appropriate normative frameworks.

This lack of distinction produces a relevant normative and institutional gap. At the legal level, there could be more explicit references to children as a rights holder with differentiated international protection, as established in the CRC and related human rights instruments. At the programmatic level, the lack of differentiation compromises the development of age-oriented measures, such as child-adjusted climate impact indicators, appropriate listening mechanisms, specific safeguards in adaptation policies, or the allocation of resources for child protection and early childhood education structures.

The absence of targeted approaches to children has compromised their effective inclusion in climate processes and weakened the fulfillment of the regime's foundational principles, such as intergenerational equity, social justice, and the mainstreaming of human rights. At the institutional level, the absence of dedicated mechanisms—including listening spaces, formal representation, or accessible participation channels—relegated children to the condition of absent subjects in international climate governance, undermining the legitimacy of actions aimed at protecting present and future generations.

Overcoming this gap requires more than terminological corrections: it demands a critical review of the normative and institutional

architecture of the UNFCCC, with a view to robustly and meaningfully integrating children specificities into decision-making frameworks, financing instruments, capacity-building programs, and monitoring and evaluation systems. Without this effort, the principle of intergenerational equity risks remaining rhetorical, disconnected from the concrete conditions experienced by millions of children already facing the disproportionate effects of the climate crisis.

From a legal perspective, children are recognized as a holder of its own rights, including at the international level. The CRC guarantees, for example, the right to special protection in situations of risk, to appropriate education, and to qualified listening in decisions that affect their lives ([art. 12](#)). The joint treatment of children and youth weakens the full application of these rights in the field of climate policies, perpetuating an undifferentiated approach that contradicts the principles of comprehensive protection and the best interests of the child.

The currently existing structures within the climate regime—such as the official children and youth constituency (YOUNGO) and the recently established role of the Presidency Youth Climate Champion (PYCC)—operate based on institutional logics geared toward organized youth, requiring levels of autonomy that are, in practice, inaccessible to most children. We acknowledge recent initiatives by YOUNGO, for example, to establish a safeguarding policy to promote greater inclusion of children, but, in

general, these mechanisms were not designed with the specificities of children in mind. The creation of the PYCC, formalized by Decision 16/CP.28, (“Presidency Youth Climate Champion,” Dubai, 2023), which addresses the Youth Champion, marks an important step. However, it is necessary that issues related to children be systematically incorporated into the PYCC’s work—something that may be hindered by the rotating nature of the role, tied to the priorities of the COP Presidency, which could potentially interfere the consolidation of structured and continuous agendas. For the PYCC to effectively contribute to promoting intergenerational equity within the climate regime, its mandate must incorporate strategies for listening to children and engage with educators, specialized agencies, and community organizations working directly with this group.

To achieve this, it is essential that the UNFCCC advances in normative, institutional, and programmatic differentiation between children and youth. This entails adopting precise language in decision-making texts, producing age-disaggregated data, establishing appropriate spaces for listening to and representing children, and ensuring dedicated funding for policies targeting this group.

CHILDREN IN THE UNFCCC: A LOOK AT THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

From the accumulated normative recognition in recent decades, it becomes necessary that the UNFCCC regime moves beyond formal mentions and promotes the substantive integration of children's rights into its negotiation tracks, institutional structures, and implementation and financing mechanisms. General Comment No. 26 by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, published in 2023, and the results of the Expert Dialogue on Children and Climate Change, held during SB 60 in 2024, offer a complementary set of legal and operational parameters that can guide this incorporation. Both reaffirm that the impacts of the climate crisis on children are disproportionate, cumulative, and still underestimated by public policies and multilateral instruments.

Recognizing children as an autonomous group implies adopting the principle of the best interests of the child as a **primary consideration** in all climate decisions, as established in Article 3.1 of the CRC. This requires that the UNFCCC regime comprehensively integrates the specificities of children into future COP and CMA decisions, National Adaptation Plans (NAP), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), financing targets, and frameworks for education and participation.

Moreover, the proposal to link the UNFCCC and the CRC represents an innovative

approach in international law, recognizing that children's rights are not a parallel agenda but a constitutive part of Parties' obligations under multiple international treaties. Establishing synergies between different legal regimes—such as the climate and human rights regimes, specifically children's rights—allows for expanding normative coherence and effective implementation, promoting a governance model that is more responsive to children's vulnerabilities and capacities. This perspective also strengthens the role of multilateral institutions as guarantors of the indivisibility of rights and the sustainability of global responses to the climate crisis.

Based on this understanding, this policy paper proposes a set of strategies distributed across some of the main UNFCCC negotiation tracks.

In the adaptation track, it is recommended to consolidate the recognition of children as a priority group, with dedicated indicators and appropriate listening mechanisms, as well as financing aimed at redeveloping educational and community spaces.

In the gender track, it is suggested to incorporate girls as children—and not just as future women—into the Gender Action Plan (GAP) guidelines, with disaggregated data and intersectional policies from early childhood.

In the mitigation and just transition agenda, the inclusion of children as beneficiaries and agents of social and environmental transformation involves guidelines on safeguards, climate education and green jobs, as well as the creation of indicators that

capture impacts on health, education and child well-being.

In the field of climate finance, the need to ensure that the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG) explicitly recognizes children as priority recipients is highlighted, with resources directed to projects focused on this group in adaptation, mitigation and loss and damage—and with governance mechanisms that are accessible, transparent and child-sensitive.

In the loss and damage track, it is proposed to consolidate children as a disproportionately impacted group by non-economic losses, such as educational disruption, forced displacement, food insecurity and symbolic losses. The proposals include specific resource allocation criteria, cooperation with specialized agencies and the construction of responses oriented towards reparation and intergenerational justice.

Regarding the ACE agenda, the document reinforces the central role of children in the six pillars of action for climate empowerment, proposing national plans and reports with an age focus, age-appropriate participatory mechanisms, dedicated financing and the creation of a permanent working group on children and youth in ACE.

Finally, within the COP action agenda, the launch of a dedicated thematic track on children is suggested, with a structured presence in Climate Action Pathways, Climate Action Outcomes and COP Presidency strategies, as well as proper institutional spaces—such as participation and listening

hubs—linked to school, community and international networks.

The proposals systematized here offer concrete and legally consistent pathways for the international climate regime to advance in the effective realization of the principle of intergenerational equity, recognizing that children are not just passive recipients of climate decisions, but legitimate protagonists in building a just, sustainable and rights-centered future.

KEY MILESTONES ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

.....**2002**

DECISION 11/CP.8

NEW DELHI, 2002

First decision to include youth as a priority audience in climate education programs (Article 6 of the UNFCCC), although it does not differentiate between children and youth.

.....**2009**

FORMAL RECOGNITION OF YOUNGO BY THE SECRETARIAT

Formal recognition by the Secretariat (2009). The UNFCCC Secretariat positively evaluated the request and, without the need for COP deliberation, formally recognized YOUNGO as a new constituency in 2009.

.....**2010**

DECISION 1/CP.16

CANCÚN, 2010

First mention of children in UNFCCC decisions.

.....**2012**

DECISION 15/CP.18

DOHA, 2012

Establishment of the Doha Work Programme on Article 6 of the UNFCCC, reaffirming the role of children and youth in education, climate communication, and leadership development.

.....**2015**

DECISION 1/CP.21

PARIS, 2015

In its preamble, links climate commitments to intergenerational equity and human rights.

... **2019**

DECISION 3/CP.25

MADRID, 2019

Includes girls as a vulnerable group in the Gender Action Plan, linking climate education and female leadership.

... **2021**

DECISION 18/CP.26

GLASGOW, 2021

Establishes the Glasgow Work Programme on ACE, with guidelines for climate education and child and youth participation, including traditional knowledge.

DECISION 16/CP.26

GLASGOW, 2021

Encourages the protection of traditional knowledge and the participation of indigenous children and youth in climate actions.

... **2022**

**DECISION 1/CP.27
AND DECISION 1/CMA.4**

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, 2022

which recognize children and youth as “agents of change,” as well as encourage the participation of young people in local and regional adaptation actions and link their contributions to intergenerational resilience.

... **2023**

**GENERAL COMMENT NO. 26 OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

Establishes that States have legal obligations to protect children from climate impacts (health, education, security).

Requires that the best interests of the child (Article 3.1 of the CRC) be a primary consideration in climate policies.

DECISION 1/CMA.5

DUBAI, 2023

Calls for a specific multilateral technical dialogue on the disproportionate impacts of climate change on children.

2024

DECISION 3/CMA.6

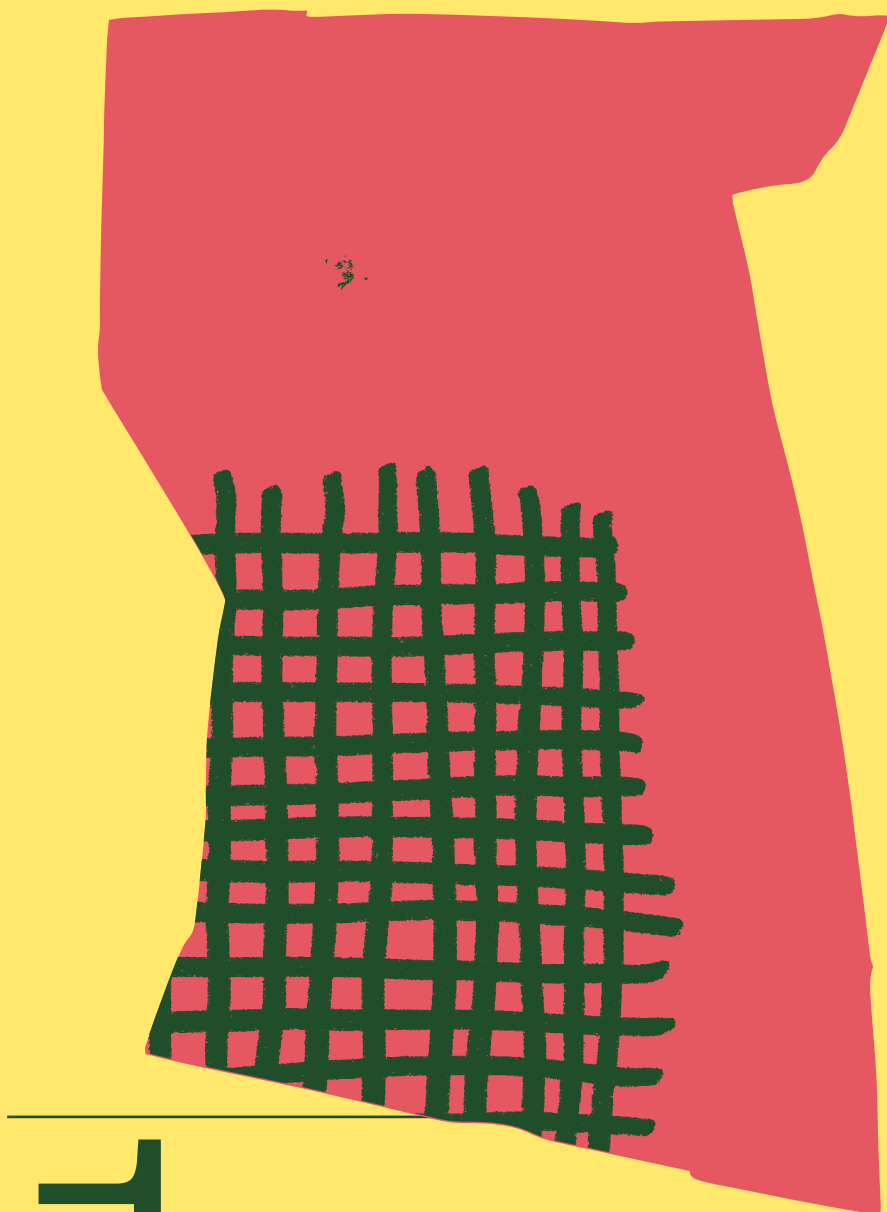
BAKU, 2024

which addresses the GGA and explicitly highlights the need for indicators on health and education focused on children and youth – including the specific vulnerability of girls.

EXPERT DIALOGUE ON CHILDREN AND CLIMATE CHANGE

SB 60, BONN, 2024

Recommends the mainstreaming of child rights in all UNFCCC negotiation tracks and decision-making processes.



1

Children, Youth and
Future Generations
in Conference of the
Parties Decisions
(1995-2024)

As highlighted in the executive summary of this policy paper, the analysis of decisions aims to identify whether the commitments made by Parties are merely declaratory in nature or whether they translate into institutional mechanisms, resource allocation criteria, or measurable indicators. This distinction is particularly evident in the choice of verbs used in decision texts.

Within the UNFCCC regime, this choice is not merely rhetorical: it represents a political and legal decision with direct implications for the degree of obligation, the type of action expected from State Parties, and the level of ambition of the commitments made. The adopted vocabulary thus reflects the outcome of complex negotiation processes and the building of compromises among countries with different levels of responsibility, capacities, and interests.

Annex I provides a detailed explanation of the main verbs used. In summary, a careful reading of the verbs in UNFCCC decisions reveals much about the degree of political consensus, the level of ambition, and the implementation potential of the commitments made. Knowing how to interpret them is essential for understanding the actual scope of decisions, both for political advocacy purposes and for the legal analysis of international climate governance.

1. VULNERABILITY AND PROTECTION

Within the UNFCCC regime, an initial approach of commitment to protect the climate system for present and future generations is identified. This determination is found in the preamble of the Convention, and in Article 3, linked to the concept of intergenerational equity and common but differentiated responsibilities. The Decision 1/CP.1 (Berlin, 1995) which addresses mitigation with a focus on reviewing developed country (Annex I) commitments, and 5/CP.7 (Marrakech, 2001), which addresses impacts of response measures and specific needs of developing countries, reiterated this mention, always linked to equity.

This same approach is also verified in the context of the Kyoto Protocol, more specifically in its Article 3.1, which adopts text similar to that of the UNFCCC. Decision 31/CMP.1 (Montreal, 2005), which addresses response measures under the Kyoto Protocol, **warns** of the commitment to “present and future

generations of humanity,” directly linking this principle to the operationalization of the Protocol.

Subsequently, children and women are explicitly recognized as groups in vulnerable situations. Decision 1/CP.16 (Cancún, 2010) mentions them as priority examples in the context of responses to climate change, and this guideline is reinforced by Decision 2/CP.17 (Durban, 2011), recommending that the social impacts of mitigation measures be duly considered.

Decision 1/CP.19, (Warsaw, 2013) , which addresses the mitigation agenda, warns that climate change is an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to future generations. In the same vein, Decision 19/CP.20 (Lima, 2014), which focuses on education and awareness, highlights concerns about the impacts of climate change on present and future generations.

Decision 1/CP.21 (Paris, 2015), which adopts the Paris Agreement, in its preamble, links climate commitments to intergenerational equity and human rights. Later, Decision 1/CP.26 (Glasgow, 2021), the cover decision of COP 26, **recognizes** the contribution of future generations and youth to climate stability, also consolidating the language of climate justice in the decision text when taking measures to address climate change.

A set of provisions for children and future generations is also identified in a more proactive context. Decision 1/CP.20, (Lima, 2014) reiterates the commitment to protect the climate system for the benefit of present

and future generations, while calling upon all Parties to **strive** to achieve climate-resilient and low greenhouse gas emission economies and societies, for sustainable development, poverty eradication, and prosperity also for the benefit of present and future generations.

The same proactive approach is identified in Decision 1/CMA.5 (Dubai, 2023) in the context of the first global stocktake of the Paris Agreement, which **highlights** the importance of global solidarity in driving adaptation efforts to reduce vulnerability, for the benefit of present and future generations. It is noteworthy that the same decision also **recognizes** the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities, gender equality, women's empowerment, and intergenerational equity, among important groups to be considered.

Although the term “girl” does not appear in these decisions on the protection of youth and children, it appears in other decisions on gender and financing, such as in Decision 1/CMA.6 (Baku, 2024), on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance, which **urges** Parties and other relevant actors to promote inclusion and expand benefits for vulnerable communities and groups in climate finance efforts, including women and girls, children, and youth. Additionally, Annex II of Decision 5/CMA.5 (Dubai, 2023) on financing arrangements under the operationalization of the loss and damage fund, **recognizes** the priority of women, children, and youth in accessing resources, especially in vulnerable developing countries.

2. PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Decision 11/CP.8 (New Delhi, 2002), which established the New Delhi Work Programme on Article 6 of the UNFCCC, recommends that educational programs be targeted especially at youth, including promoting their participation in policy-making processes and climate negotiations. This is one of the first decisions that grants political protagonism to youth in the regime and brings them as an integral part of the UNFCCC institutional mechanisms. This logic evolves gradually, with strengthening in the context of Article 6 of the UNFCCC.

However, a relevant gap is observed: the absence of explicit mention of children as a distinct and equally priority group within climate education strategies. The category “youth” is often used generically, without considering the specific needs of school-age children, especially regarding basic education, rights protection, and the differentiated impact of climate change on this age group. This omission hinders the formulation of public policies that consider childhood as a fundamental phase for building values and environmental awareness.

Moreover, with the advancement of the regime, Decision 15/CP.18 (Doha, 2012) establishes the Doha Work Programme on Article 6 of the UNFCCC, reiterating the role of children and youth in education, climate communication, and leadership training. The annex to the decision is particularly important for mentioning the United Nations Joint Framework Initiative on

Children, Youth and Climate Change, legitimizing the presence of children and youth in COPs and intergovernmental forums.

The recognition of the importance of children and youth participation in the climate regime has been progressively consolidated since the beginning of the current decade. Decision 1/CP.26 (Glasgow, 2021) **invites** Parties formally to include children and youth in their national delegations and values their active participation in UNFCCC processes. In the same year, Decision 18/CP.26 (Glasgow, 2021) establishes the Glasgow Work Programme on Action for Climate Empowerment, which proposes the creation of youth-led forums and clear guidelines to promote institutional environments conducive to their effective participation.

This commitment is reinforced in Decision 1/CMA.4 (Sharm el-Sheikh, 2022), which **recognizes** the invitation to include children and youth in delegations and highlights good practices, such as the Sharm el-Sheikh Youth Climate Dialogue. The same approach is reflected in Decision 7/CMA.4 (Sharm el-Sheikh, 2022), which ensures youth representation on the advisory board of the Article 6.4 mechanism of the Paris Agreement, alongside women's organizations and indigenous peoples.

More recently, Decision 16/CP.28 (Dubai, 2023) advances in institutionalizing child and youth participation by creating the figure of the PYCC, with the formal mandate to facilitate meaningful engagement of children and youth in the UNFCCC process, expanding

representation channels for these groups in the climate regime. The creation of the PYCC formalizes, therefore, within the Convention, a model that had already been experimented with in a non-institutionalized way in previous editions: at COP 27 (Sharm el-Sheikh, 2022), with the appointment of a Climate Youth Envoy by the Egyptian presidency, and at COP 28 (Dubai, 2023), with the designation of a Youth Climate Champion by the UAE presidency—both important initiatives but without official decision-making backing.

With the adoption of Decision 16/CP.28 (Dubai, 2023) the role is now integrated into the structure of COP presidencies, with expectations of continuity and articulation with other participatory mechanisms of the regime. This institutionalization is complemented by Decision 21/CMA.5 (Dubai, 2023), which requests future COP and CMA presidencies to strengthen coordination with YOUNGO, including through support for regional forums, child and youth pavilions, and intergenerational events.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that Decision 3/CP.25 (Madrid, 2019) on the Gender Action Plan **promotes** the leadership of girls in science and technology, and Decision 24/CP.27 (Sharm el-Sheikh, 2022) and 15/CP.28 (Dubai, 2023) **recognize** their empowerment through the Gender Action Plan. Decision 7/CP.28 (Dubai, 2023) **recommends** the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to expand its grants to youth, women, and girls, also including local communities and indigenous peoples.

Mentions of “future generations” also appear in this axis, especially in the preambles of Decision 1/CP.21 (Paris, 2015), 1/CP.28 (Dubai, 2023), with emphasis on Decision 1/CP.27 (Sharm el-Sheikh, 2022) and 1/CMA.4 (Sharm el-Sheikh, 2022), which **recognize** children and youth as “agents of change.” Decision 16/CP.28 (Dubai, 2023) consolidates this recognition by instituting the PYCC figure, with a formal mandate to facilitate the effective participation of these groups in the UNFCCC process.

3. CLIMATE JUSTICE AND INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY

The **recognition** of human rights and intergenerational equity as pillars of the international climate regime dates back to the UNFCCC, adopted in 1992. Both the preamble and its Article 3.1 establish that Parties **should** protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations, based on equity and common but differentiated responsibilities. This guiding principle is reaffirmed in Decision 1/CP.1 (Berlim, 1995), which inaugurates the Berlin Mandate and guides the negotiation of new legal instruments, such as the Kyoto Protocol.

The language regarding the protection of future generations reappears, and its ethical and intergenerational perspective is **reaffirmed** in subsequent decisions, such as Decision 5/CP.7 (Marrakech, 2001), which expresses the determination of Parties to

protect the climate system for present and future generations, and Decision 31/CMP.1 (Montreal, 2005), on the implementation of Article 3.14 of the Protocol, which addresses the issue of response measures.

In the more recent context, the Paris Agreement reinforces the centrality of these principles by **recognizing**, in its preamble, that climate actions should be conducted based on equity, human rights—including those of children—and intergenerational justice. The relevance of this recognition is amplified by the interpretive role of the preamble in the context of international treaties.

Over time, this approach has strengthened. Decision 3/CP.25 (Madri, 2019) establishes as a principle that, in addressing the climate crisis, Parties **must respect** the rights of children, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, local communities, and promote gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, and intergenerational equity. The same decision expressly mentions the rights of girls in educational and scientific contexts. At the following conference, Decision 1/CP.26 (Glasgow, 2021) also states that climate impacts should be addressed based on human rights obligations, highlighting the needs of children, girls, indigenous peoples, migrants, persons with disabilities, and vulnerable communities in general. The following year, Decision 24/CP.27 (Sharm el-Sheikh, 2022) revises the GAP and **encourages** Parties and international organizations to promote gender equality and the empowerment of all

women and girls, recognizing their strategic contribution to intersectional climate actions.

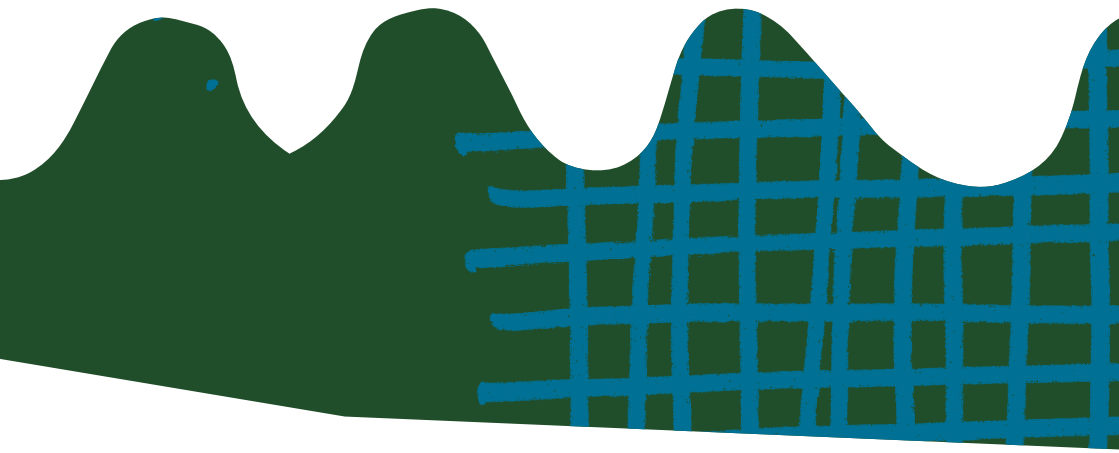
Decisions adopted in Dubai reinforce some advances from recent years. Decision 1/CMA.5 (Dubai, 2023) **highlights**, in its preamble and throughout its text, the importance of climate policies anchored in rights protection and intergenerational inclusion. This decision also advances by stating that sustainable and just climate solutions would take into account the empowerment of children and youth. Additionally, it **requests** the holding of a multilateral technical dialogue on the disproportionate impacts of climate change on childhood—an unprecedented and important recognition of the structural vulnerabilities faced by children in the climate context.

Decision 2/CMA.5 (Dubai, 2023), which deals with the Work Programme on Just Transition (United Arab Emirates Just Transition Work Programme—JTWP), recognizes the importance of inclusive and intergenerational social dialogues and the active role of children and youth in building a low-carbon economy.

Decision 3/CMA.5, (Dubai, 2023), which deals with the Work Programme on Just Transition (United Arab Emirates Just Transition Work Programme—JTWP), **recognizes** the importance of inclusive and intergenerational social dialogues and the active role of children and youth in building a low-carbon economy.

Moreover, Decision 5/CMA.5 (Dubai, 2023), which defines guidelines for loss and damage financing, **recognizes** the commitment to climate justice by determining that resources

effectively reach the most vulnerable communities, expressly mentioning women, children, youth, indigenous peoples, and climate refugees.



Education plays a fundamental role in promoting changes in lifestyles, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for sustainable development, and in preparing children, youth, women, people with disabilities, and grassroots communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

4. CLIMATE EDUCATION

The recognition of youth as a strategic part of climate education had its first formulations consolidated in Decision 11/CP.8 (New Delhi, 2002), responsible for establishing the New Delhi Work Programme on Article 6 of the UNFCCC, which addresses education, awareness, and training on climate change. This decision highlights youth as a priority audience for climate education and training actions and recommends their active participation in policy formulation. Additionally, it **directs** the preparation of national action plans with specific targets for youth and other social groups, yet again without differentiating children from other age segments, treating youth homogeneously. This lack of segmentation compromises the effectiveness of educational policies by ignoring that children require specific approaches to protection, language, and participation, especially in contexts of greater socio-environmental vulnerability.

Moreover, Decision 18/CP.26 (Glasgow, 2021) **proposes** concrete measures to engage children and youth, including an annual youth forum in collaboration with children and youth organizations, educational materials adapted to cultural and linguistic realities, communities of practice, and accessible learning environments.

Although the term “girl” is not directly mentioned in this axis, decisions such as Decision 3/CP.25 (Madrid, 2019) on the GAP, 20/CP.26 (Glasgow, 2021) and 24/CP.27 (Sharm el-Sheikh, 2022) associate the

education and leadership of girls with the strengthening of climate and gender policies, mainly in the fields of science, technology, and innovation.

The term “future generations” does not appear explicitly in decisions on education but is implicit in the entire construction of educational strategies aimed at cultural transformation, as its presence underlies the very structure of climate education strategies. These policies are conceived with a focus on long-term cultural transformations, based on the idea that citizen education and the strengthening of local capacities are essential for building resilient societies in the future.

5. INDICATORS, DATA, AND MONITORING

Only recently has the focus on indicators, data, and monitoring gained strength, with Decision 3/CMA.6 (Baku, 2024) (Baku, 2024), which addresses the GGA and expressly highlights the need for indicators on health and education aimed at children and youth—including the specific vulnerability of girls—and **recommends** the formulation of indicators that capture information on social inclusion, indigenous peoples, participatory processes, human rights, and gender equality.

6. ADAPTATION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

The involvement of children and youth in adaptation policies has gained more prominence in recent years, but its foundations were laid in earlier decisions. Decision 9/CP.24 (Katowice, 2018), which deals with the Adaptation Committee, was a milestone by **encouraging** participatory approaches that include, among others, children and youth in the planning and implementation of adaptation.

Decision 2/CMA.5 (Dubai, 2023), which establishes the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience, reinforces the role of youth by **recommending** rights-based participatory approaches with explicit attention to vulnerable groups such as children, youth, and persons with disabilities. Decision 1/CP.27 (Sharm el-Sheikh, 2022) **recognizes** children and youth as “agents of change” in addressing the climate crisis and associates this role with the promotion of climate stability and the need for multisectoral community adaptation.

Decision 1/CMA.4 (Sharm el-Sheikh, 2022) encourages the participation of youth in local and regional adaptation actions and links their contributions to intergenerational resilience. Although the term “girl” does not appear directly in this axis, gender-related decisions such as 3/CP.25 (Madrid, 2019), 20/CP.26 (Glasgow, 2021) and 15/CP.28 (Dubai, 2023), mention the role of girls in leadership for climate resilience, especially in science, technology, and education for adaptation.

7. CLIMATE FINANCE

Decision 1/CMA.6 (Baku, 2024) **urges** Parties and other actors to promote the inclusion of women, girls, children, and youth in the benefits of climate finance. This decision represents an advance in the visibility of these groups as explicit beneficiaries of financial resources.

In the context of the loss and damage fund, Decision 1/CP.28 (Dubai, 2023) and 5/CMA.5 (Dubai, 2023) state that new financing arrangements **should** direct resources to groups in vulnerable situations, expressly naming “women, children, youth, indigenous peoples, and climate migrants.”.

Decision 7/CP.28 (Dubai, 2023), in turn, **encourages** the GEF to strengthen its small grants program with a focus on youth, women, and girls, expanding these groups’ access to climate financial resources, including for community and locally led actions, without specific mention of children.

8. TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The importance of culture and traditional knowledge in the empowerment of youth and children has roots in decisions from the 2000s. Decision 11/CP.8 (New Delhi, 2002), in its implementation section, provides for the adoption of educational actions such as the involvement and participation of representatives of all stakeholders and major groups in the climate change negotiation process, with attention to youth.

Moreover, Decision 15/CP.18 (Doha, 2012) recognizes that education plays a fundamental role in promoting changes in lifestyles, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for sustainable development and in preparing children, youth, women, persons with disabilities, and grassroots communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The decision also emphasizes the importance of accessible educational materials, such as visual resources that can be translated and adapted, as well as the integration of culturally appropriate approaches to local realities.

Decision 18/CP.26 (Glasgow, 2021) goes further by proposing learning communities sensitive to cultural diversity and the protection of traditional knowledge. Decision 16/CP.26 (Glasgow, 2021), mentions that Parties **should** promote cultural rights and the role of children, youth, and persons with disabilities in preserving this knowledge.

The intersection between traditional knowledge and youth also appears in Decision 2/CMA.5 (Dubai, 2023), which highlights the importance of inclusive adaptation approaches, with attention to science, the values of indigenous peoples, and intergenerational equity. The decision also encourages the integration of youth into climate policies and actions, promoting climate education and empowering children and youth with the necessary skills to lead climate action, especially in contexts of greater vulnerability.

Additionally, although indigenous youth is already mentioned in some instruments as

a priority group, a significant normative gap is observed regarding the explicit inclusion of indigenous children in decision-making frameworks Decision 21/CMA.5 (Dubai, 2023), which addresses the PYCC, recognizes the rights of indigenous peoples as youth but does not directly contemplate the specificities of indigenous children, revealing a deficit in intersectional protection. This is a sensitive point, considering that these children face multiple vulnerabilities, not only due to age but also due to territorial, socioeconomic, and cultural conditions, exacerbated by the asymmetric effects of climate change. By failing to directly name this group, there is a risk of invisibilizing urgent demands that are not conflated with those of other segments.



2

A Look to the Future: Proposed Advocacy Strategies

Given the accumulated normative recognition over recent decades within the UNFCCC framework, it is essential to move from formal mention to the concrete inclusion of children across various climate negotiation tracks. This chapter proposes a set of strategies to deepen the presence of children in decision-making, implementation, and financing spaces of the international climate regime.

The proposals presented here engage with the existing body of decisions and align with current key debates, such as the GGA, NCQG, the Loss and Damage Response Fund, the GAP, and the Work Programs on Just Transition, Mitigation, and Action for Climate Empowerment.

The goal is to recognize children not only as vulnerable groups but as protagonists of climate action and rights-holders in the present, contributing to the construction of just, intergenerational, and transformative solutions.

The possibilities for a harmonious, coherent, and continuous integration of children's rights into climate negotiations under the UNFCCC must be built on the normative synergies between the climate regime and the CRC.

In this regard, General Comment No. 26 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, published in August 2023, stands out as a central reference for consolidating a child rights-based approach in environmental and climate policies. The document provides clear interpretative parameters for applying the CRC in the context of the climate crisis and can be recognized as a legitimate reference by UNFCCC State Parties, particularly in light of Article 3.1 of the CRC, which establishes the principle of the best interests of the child as a “**primary consideration**” in all decisions affecting them.

Progress in considering children within the climate regime is also supported by the outcomes of the Expert Dialogue on Children and Climate Change, held during SB 60 (Bonn, 2024), in fulfillment of the mandate under paragraph 182 of Decision 1/CMA.5, as part of the first Global Stocktake of the Paris Agreement. The outcomes of the expert dialogue and General Comment No. 26 form a complementary set of normative and operational guidelines that can inform future COP and CMA decisions, promoting a transversal, structured, and permanent integration of children into the multilateral climate regime.

General Comment No. 26 asserts that environmental degradation and climate change

disproportionately and cumulatively affect children's rights, establishing that States have positive obligations to prevent, mitigate, and remedy such impacts. The Expert Dialogue reinforces this diagnosis based on input from multiple stakeholders and experts, identifying structural barriers such as the lack of age- and gender-disaggregated data, insufficient mechanisms for meaningful participation, and the underrepresentation of children in national and international climate policy instruments like NDCs, NAPs, and climate finance flows.

Given this context, it is critical that future COP and CMA decisions recognize the legal obligation to **primarily consider** children's rights and best interests, as established in Article 3.1 of the CRC, while also formally acknowledging General Comment No. 26 as an interpretative guide for integrating children's rights into climate policies.

Such decisions should also encourage States to ensure active listening and meaningful participation of children in all stages of environmental and climate decision-making processes, as outlined in Article 12 of the CRC and paragraphs 26–28 of the General Comment. At the national policy level, adaptation plans, transparency reports, and mitigation strategies should include specific assessments of climate change impacts on children's rights, with particular attention to health, education, nutrition, safety, and access to clean water.

Another key aspect is the incorporation of child-specific safeguards in climate finance

mechanisms, based on the guidance of General Comment No. 26, including within the Loss and Damage Response Fund. Child protection in these mechanisms should be guided by age-sensitive, reparative approaches, focusing on the most vulnerable groups. Similarly, intersectionality must be reinforced as a cross-cutting principle of climate action, recognizing that the crisis intensifies for children due to factors such as poverty, disability, ethnic-racial background, gender, and migration status—elements that should be addressed holistically in public policies and funding frameworks.

Both documents also converge on the need to strengthen youth and child participation mechanisms, with age-appropriate, culturally situated, and institutionally protected approaches. The Expert Dialogue recommends, based on CRC obligations and UNFCCC public participation principles, that countries develop accessible, safe, and inclusive methodologies to engage children in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of climate policies, particularly during NDC and NAP updates.

By incorporating the parameters of General Comment No. 26 and the Expert Dialogue recommendations into the normative and operational framework of the climate regime—whether through a specific decision, through efforts to continue the Expert Dialogue in the context in which it was approved, or through another relevant decision—the UNFCCC can make tangible progress in implementing the principle of intergenerational equity. This

alignment between children's rights and climate policy strengthens coherence among multilateral human rights commitments and climate obligations, ensuring that children—historically marginalized or grouped with youth in this regime—are effectively protected, heard, and recognized as full rights-holders in the present and future.

In this context, we propose ways to integrate children's rights into ongoing UNFCCC negotiation tracks and suggest approaches for synergies between the climate regime and children's rights within the COP action agenda.

1. Adaptation

The adaptation track has gained strategic relevance in the UNFCCC regime, especially after Decision 2/CMA.5 which establishes the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience and advances the GGA agenda. Integrating children more robustly into this track is not only consistent with Parties' commitments under the CRC and UNFCCC but also essential for advancing rights-based, intergenerational adaptation.

PROPOSALS:

1. Explicit and transversal recognition of children's vulnerability in adaptation

- Include strong language in future GGA decisions recognizing children as a priority group in adaptation policies, based on evidence of disproportionate impacts, as highlighted in the SB 60 expert dialogue report.
- Link this recognition to the production and use of age-, gender-, race-, ethnicity-, and residence-disaggregated data, with a focus on early childhood.

2. Strengthening child participation in national and subnational adaptation processes

- Encourage NAPs to incorporate child-specific participatory mechanisms, using age- and culturally appropriate methodologies, such as Brazil's National Children and Youth Conference on the Environment.

- Reinforce the role of child rights organizations as co-authors and implementers of local adaptation strategies.

3. Child-focused adaptation financing

- Direct that resources allocated to the GGA and the Adaptation Fund include specific lines for projects that directly benefit children, such as: climate adaptation and retrofitting of schools and daycare centers using nature-based solutions; food security in school communities; protection of urban green spaces for children's use; school programs addressing food security and mental health for children affected by extreme weather events.
- Monitor resource use through child-impact indicators.

4. Education for adaptation and intergenerational resilience

- Strengthen the requirement that educational plans linked to the Action for Climate Empowerment Work Programme include specific content on adaptation, community resilience, and intergenerationally transmitted traditional knowledge, focusing on building children's capacity to: map local vulnerabilities; form school-based adaptation teams; respond to climate disaster risks; and value local cultural practices related to environmental resilience.

5. Linking childhood with the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience

- Recommend that the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience establish childhood as a central element of climate resilience by incorporating child-specific indicators, such as: number of children benefiting from adaptation measures; children's participation in local resilience planning processes; and impacts of adaptation actions on children's rights.

6. Institutional mechanisms for children in adaptation

- Promote the creation of formal consultation and listening spaces for children within UNFCCC subsidiary bodies and other relevant adaptation entities, such as the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) and the Adaptation Committee.
- Establish explicit mandates for the PYCC to implement adaptation measures in countries, including by coordinating with school networks and local child protection projects.

2. Gender

The UNFCCC gender agenda, established through the Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and its GAP, aims to promote women and girls’ full, equal and meaningful participation in climate decision-making, while ensuring gender perspectives are mainstreamed across climate policies and actions. Although the GAP mentions “girls” in its text and recent decisions (such as [24/CP.27](#) e [15/CP.28](#)), there is currently no approach that prioritizes girls’ specific needs as children, nor strategies promoting gender equity in childhood as part of climate justice. Incorporating a focus on girls’ rights as children (not just as future women) could enhance the regime’s intersectional coherence, deepen intergenerational equity principles, and amplify the structural impacts of the GAP itself.

PROPOSALS:

1. Recognizing the intersection of children, gender and climate

- Recommend that future COP decisions acknowledge that girls, as children, face specific climate vulnerabilities stemming from overlapping gender and age inequalities—including impacts on their health, nutrition, safety, education access, and exposure to various forms of violence, particularly during climate crises. This formulation should draw from General Comment No. 26.

2. Age- and gender-disaggregated data and indicators

- Include in the GAP implementation plan a guideline for States to develop age- and gender-disaggregated data capturing climate change's differentiated effects on girls across childhood stages (early childhood, middle childhood, adolescence).
- Such data should inform adaptation, mitigation and climate finance policies with specific focus on girls in contexts of poverty, migration, displacement, or from indigenous/traditional communities.

3. Transformative climate education with gender focus from childhood

- Link the GAP to the Action for Climate Empowerment Work Programme and recommend that climate education curricula incorporate gender equality components from early childhood, promoting girls' recognition as change agents while strengthening their self-esteem, leadership capacity and social engagement. Special attention should be given to climate and digital literacy for rural, quilombola, indigenous, or urban-vulnerable girls.

4. Girls' participation in decision-making and climate forums

- Establish age-appropriate consultation mechanisms for girls in national/ international climate forums, such as school conferences, NDC processes and

public policy consultations. Parties could create protected, accessible spaces where girls can express climate future perspectives, supported by pedagogical mediators. Brazil's National Children and Youth Conference on the Environment offers methodological reference.

5. Institutional strengthening and intersectional capacity-building

- Recommend that UNFCCC and Parties' gender focal points receive training on gender-children-climate intersections, and that the GAP facilitates exchanges with rights agencies to develop operational guides promoting gender equality from childhood within climate action.

6. Age- and gender-responsive climate finance

- Include in GAP guidelines a recommendation that international/national climate financing incorporate age and gender dimensions, prioritizing programs for vulnerable girls. Parties should ensure resources for: girls' climate education; mental health; gender violence prevention; and local climate leadership development.

3. Mitigation and Just Transition

In the mitigation track, the traditional focus falls on emission reduction commitments, market mechanisms, inventories, energy transition, and more recently, just transition—themes that may initially seem distant from children’s reality. However, historical analysis shows the UNFCCC has progressively recognized children as agents of change, with principles like intergenerational equity, climate justice and rights-based approaches being directly linked to mitigation action, particularly when considering new generations’ role in transforming production models and building low-carbon societies. Incorporating children’s rights perspectives in these tracks contributes not only to protecting a vulnerable group, but to building sustainable solutions generating lasting social and environmental co-benefits.

PROPOSALS:

1. Inclusion of children as beneficiaries and actors in just transition

- Strengthen intergenerational equity language in JTWP decisions, per Decision 3/CMA.5, including explicit references to children as part of communities affected by structural economic changes and women’s central role in care economies and community resilience.

2. Participation in NDC formulation and review

- Recommend that NDCs incorporate consultative mechanisms for children, with structured listening to their priorities and proposals.
- Include references to children as strategic stakeholders in NDC update guidelines, linking their participation to promoting climate justice and social co-benefits.
- Recommend that NDCs specify adopted/ planned public policies and actions specifically protecting children from climate change impacts.

3. Education for mitigation and just transitions

- Include in JTWP text a recommendation for developing national curricula on just transition from childhood, covering for example: vocational training for adolescents/youth in renewable energy, energy efficiency, regenerative agriculture and sustainable waste management. Additionally, promote leadership development for girls and young women in STEM fields through inclusive pedagogical practices strengthening gender equity and active participation of historically underrepresented groups in the transition.

4. Child-focused mitigation indicators

- Include in JTWP text a recommendation/ encouragement for developing age- and gender-disaggregated social indicators

for mitigation, assessing for example: mitigation measures' effects on children's rights and health (e.g., reduced air pollution); education (e.g., school dropout post-mitigation measures); youth access to green jobs/vocational training; and children/youth engagement in carbon offset/reforestation programs.

5. Market mechanisms with child and youth inclusion criteria

- Include guidelines in Paris Agreement Articles 6.2 and 6.4 recognizing children's role in market-mechanism-funded climate projects, through for example: prioritizing projects with child co-benefits;
- Ensuring youth participation in local carbon offset project governance; and allocating portion of resources to child-focused educational/community actions.

6. Strengthening children's participation in mitigation governance

- Enhance children's role in advisory bodies of relevant mechanisms (as envisaged in Decision 7/CMA.4 for Paris Agreement Article 6.4), ensuring deliberative voice in decisions directly impacting future generations.
- Encourage active PYCC participation in mitigation technical dialogues, including Global Stocktake and Mitigation Work Programme (MWP) discussions, and new ambition cycles.

4. Climate Finance

The climate finance track, particularly within the NCQG context, is strategic for ensuring that children's inclusion in UNFCCC decisions translates into concrete, funded actions. While decision history shows progress (e.g., Decisions 1/CMA.6, 5/CMA.5, and 7/CP.28), significant opportunities remain—especially through the Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3T, which will guide technical and political negotiations toward potentially establishing a new finance target at COP30. This offers a critical window to institutionalize prioritization of vulnerable groups (children, youth, girls, and Indigenous peoples) in designing and implementing international financial flows.

PROPOSALS:

1. Explicit recognition of children as beneficiaries and strategic agents of climate finance

- Incorporate binding language in the Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3T recognizing children as priority beneficiaries of climate finance flows, especially in developing countries and contexts of multidimensional vulnerability.
- Link climate finance to child co-benefits (health, education, food security, and social rights).

2. Targeted resource allocation for child/youth projects across mitigation, adaptation, and loss & damage

- Create dedicated lines within major financial mechanisms—(GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF), Adaptation Fund, Loss and Damage Response Fund—focused on children such as, for example, child-led projects, protection and safeguards for children against extreme weather events, community climate education, school adaptation, shelters and child health equipment, especially through nature-based solutions.
- Facilitate, across the different funds available under the UNFCCC regime, access to dedicated lines for financing climate action projects for child protection, granted through grant instruments or highly concessional terms.
- Prioritize proposals that strengthen community resilience with an intergenerational focus, as provided for in Decision 5/CMA.5.
- Develop targeted training programs for stakeholders, including NGOs and other relevant parties, to support the development and submission of project proposals aimed at securing funding for climate action initiatives focused on protecting children.

3. Inclusion of children and youth in governance and resource allocation processes

- Ensure representation of youth and children in multilateral fund boards and committees, in line with the precedent of Decision 7/CMA.4 on Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement.
- Strengthen, in the Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3T negotiations, the need for structured public consultations with children and youth in defining national financing priorities.

4. Development of indicators to track financing impacts on children

- Propose, as part of the NCQG implementation assessment system, age- and gender-disaggregated indicators capable of assessing, for example: the volume of climate finance with direct impact on children; the accessibility of funds for child protection organizations; and the effects of financing on children's social rights, health, education and food security.
- Promote alignment with age- and gender-disaggregated data from the GGA and the global stocktake for integrated monitoring.

5. Strengthening small grants and direct financing programs for children

- Expand the scope of the GEF Small Grants Programme with a specific focus on children, as already suggested in Decision 7/CP.28, to, for example: ensure simplified access mechanisms for child protection organizations; provide child-friendly and accessible tutorials for easy program understanding; allow support for low-cost but high community and educational impact projects.
- Stimulate national and regional funds (including from the private sector and philanthropy) to co-finance child rights initiatives with criteria aligned to the UNFCCC climate regime.

6. Transparency and accountability with a child focus

- Establish active transparency mechanisms on how NCQG resources are (or are not) benefiting children.
- Propose periodic reports, with the participation of child and youth civil society, on access, impacts and bottlenecks faced by this group in climate finance.

5. Loss and Damage

The loss and damage track is one of the most sensitive to children's rights issues, given the disproportionate nature of climate impacts on these groups—both in extreme events and long-term losses such as displacement, loss of cultural identity, access to education, and breakdown of community ties.

Decision 5/CMA.5, which structures the new Loss and Damage Response Fund, already expressly mentions children as a vulnerable and priority group. But there is still room to deepen this approach, strengthening rights protection, intergenerational justice and equitable access to resources.

PROPOSALS:

1. Recognition of children as disproportionately affected by loss and damage

- Consolidate in negotiated texts (including the Loss and Damage Response Fund board) the recognition of children as a group with specific vulnerabilities, including for example risks to physical and mental health, educational losses, forced displacement, risks of family separation, and impacts on food security and protection from violence.
- Include these elements in the definition and categorization of non-economic losses, which should be prioritized for funding.

2. Priority access to Loss and Damage Fund resources

- Ensure that resource allocation criteria include social indicators capturing children's vulnerability, especially in least developed countries, small island states and conflict zones.
- Establish dedicated lines for rapid response to impacts on schools, daycare centers, shelters, child health services and community spaces affected by extreme events.

3. Child and youth participation in formulation and monitoring processes

- Include representatives of child rights and protection organizations in the Loss and Damage Response Fund governance processes, either as formal observers or in advisory mechanisms (in line with participation under Paris Agreement Article 6.4).
- Encourage national and regional loss and damage response plans to include public consultations with children and youth, using age- and context-appropriate methodologies.

4. Integration with public protection and education policies

- Ensure Loss and Damage Response Fund resources can be used to strengthen public policies mitigating loss and damage effects on children, such as adaptive education policies including: education in shelters, emergency curricula, psychosocial and community support for youth affected by climate trauma, and reconstruction of school infrastructure using resilience and accessibility criteria, especially through nature-based solutions.

5. Production of disaggregated data and indicators

- Strengthen, in guidance to the Loss and Damage Response Fund, the importance of age-, gender-, disability- and location-disaggregated data for designing effective responses to childhood loss and damage.
- Prioritize funding for national studies and diagnostics on non-economic losses in child populations, including with support from the Santiago Network.

6. International cooperation with child and youth focus

- Encourage the Loss and Damage Fund to develop strategic partnerships with UNICEF, Save the Children, UNESCO, YOUNGO and other child rights organizations to map vulnerabilities and operationalize local responses.

- Promote cooperation with regional child rights networks to disseminate information about the Loss and Damage Response Fund and strengthen local capacity for action.
- Develop a regional program for implementing domestic public policies protecting children, youth and women affected by forced climate displacement.

7. Intergenerational justice and reparation

- Introduce language on intergenerational justice as ethical and political foundation of the Loss and Damage Response Fund, especially to ensure damages suffered by children and youth don't perpetuate cycles of climate exclusion and poverty.
- Discuss mechanisms for symbolic and material reparation, such as: educational scholarships for displaced children, memorialization of territorial losses in indigenous communities, and programs to reestablish cultural and linguistic ties for children in forced migration contexts.

6. Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE)

The ACE track is among the most powerful for deepening the inclusion of children in the climate regime, as it directly addresses education, public awareness, access to information, participation and capacity building—all fundamental pillars for children’s climate empowerment.

The Glasgow Work Programme on Action for Climate Empowerment Decision 18/CP.26 and its most recent action plans and guidelines already explicitly mention children as a central audience. However, there is room to make inclusion more systematic, structured, budgeted and sensitive to diversity.

PROPOSALS:

1. Explicit recognition of children’s centrality across all ACE areas

- Establish children as cross-cutting priority groups across all six ACE elements: education, training, public awareness, public participation, access to information, and international cooperation.
- Encourage all ACE implementation reports to include specific sections on children, with age- and gender-disaggregated data.

2. Strengthening child participation in national ACE plans (ACE Action Plans)

- Reinforce that national and subnational ACE plans should be developed through active consultation with children, using

age-appropriate methods such as: school workshops, play-based spaces, student assemblies, child-friendly materials, and adapted online consultations.

- Promote co-creation of targets and indicators by local children and youth committees, especially from indigenous, marginalized and vulnerable territories.

3. Creation of specific institutional mechanisms for children under ACE

- Propose the institutionalization of a Working Group on Children and Youth in ACE, linked to the SBI with direct participation of youth and experts in education, children's rights and community psychology.
- Consolidate the PYCC's role as institutional bridge between children and ACE implementation, with a mandate to: organize regional children forums, ensure child and youth inclusion in constituted bodies' deliberations, and promote good practices in national contexts.

4. Child-specific financing and indicators for ACE

- Include clear funding targets for child-focused ACE actions, including under the NCQG, GEF and GCF scope, with specific budget lines for: formal and non-formal education, educational materials, child and youth forums/events, and inclusive communication.

- Propose child- and youth-focused ACE success indicators, such as: reach of educational programs, number of trained children/youth, child/youth presence in public consultations, and impact on school/university communities.

7. Action Agenda

The COP Action Agenda, under the leadership of the High-Level Climate Champions (HLCs) and with support from the Marrakesh Partnership for Global Climate Action, has sought to catalyze ambitious climate action by non-state actors and strengthen implementation of the Paris Agreement with a focus on transformative, multisectoral and intergenerational solutions. While concepts such as “just transition,” “nature-based solutions” and “climate-resilient development” are increasingly present, children’s rights have not yet been fully incorporated as a cross-cutting axis in the formulation, monitoring and communication of these actions.

PROPOSALS:

1. Formal recognition of children as a priority group in climate action

- Recommend that future COP action agendas include, in the strategic documents of the HLCs and the Marrakesh Partnership for Global Climate Action, explicit recognition of children as a vulnerable group and rights-holders, with direct reference to the principles of intergenerational equity, human rights-based climate justice and the normative parameters of General Comment No. 26 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

2. Launch of a specific thematic track on children in the COP Presidency agenda

- Encourage the COP Presidency to create a dedicated children thematic track, coordinated in collaboration with UNICEF, OHCHR, among others, and local networks, focusing on: climate adaptation of education systems; child participation in local climate policies;
- Rights protection in loss and damage contexts; social co-benefits for children in just transitions; and child- and adolescent-led innovation.

3. Integration of children in Climate Action Pathways and Resilience Frontiers

- Recommend that technical documents of “Climate Action Pathways” (in areas such as energy, transport, health, land use, infrastructure) incorporate indicators, examples of good practices and specific targets for child protection and empowerment, such as: access to clean energy in schools; safe mobility for children in urban heat zones; or climate retrofitting of daycare centers and child health facilities.
- Include comprehensive protection of children’s rights as one of the dimensions of resilient and regenerative futures, based on intergenerational knowledge and child-led social innovation, in the Resilience Frontiers initiative that envisions systemic solutions until 2050.

4. Inclusion of specific commitments to children in the Presidency's "Climate Action Outcomes"

- Encourage that political messages from the COP Presidency and HLCs (such as Climate Action Outcomes and Presidency Outcome Statements) include concrete commitments to children's rights, such as: child-focused climate finance; universal access to quality climate education; and child safeguards in mitigation and adaptation projects.



Annex I

Below is a detailed explanation of the key verbs used within the UNFCCC framework.

The verbs ***shall*** and ***should*** deserve special attention. Both appear frequently in decision texts but carry distinct normative meanings:

- ***Shall*** carries a binding character, creating formal obligations for States Parties. Its use is reserved for mandatory and legally enforceable commitments, which may have implications for monitoring, review, and accountability mechanisms.
- ***Should***, on the other hand, indicates guidance, expectation, or recommendation. While it represents a political commitment, it is not legally binding, allowing States greater flexibility.

In addition to these two, a variety of other verbs are used to express different degrees of commitment, recognition, or encouragement. Below, we have grouped some examples, organizing them along an approximate scale of normative and political intensity:

1. Verbs with Stronger Legal or Political Weight:

Shall – Imposes a binding obligation.

Requests – Implies a clear expectation of action, though not necessarily binding. Also used to request actions by the Secretariat.

Urges – Strongly pressures Parties to adopt certain conduct, with an emphatic political tone.

Warns – Indicates a serious alert with a tone of demand.

Calls upon – Makes a direct appeal, often associated with mobilizing actions by specific actors.

Directs – Indicates a specific order, common in climate funds.

2. Verbs with Moderate Weight, for Guidance or Reinforcement:

Should – Strong recommendation but non-binding.

Recommends – Signals a good practice or suggested path.

Encourages – Encourages positive actions, with greater flexibility.

Invites / Encourages – Similar to the above, with a positive and mobilizing tone.

Proposes – Points to possible directions, often as a basis for future negotiations.

Invites – Open tone, without explicit demand.

3. Verbs of recognition, reaffirmation or appreciation:

Acknowledges – Admits the existence or relevance of a certain theme, fact, or principle.

Reaffirms – Reiterates commitments already made in previous decisions.

Highlights – Gives political emphasis without obligation.

Reiterates – Reinforces the continuity of a certain position.

Appreciates – Expresses appreciation, usually for initiatives, contributions, or results.

Commends – Praises a specific action, with a political or symbolic function.

Promotes – Stimulates or favors a certain approach or practice.

Consolidates – Confirms and stabilizes advances or previous decisions.

Annex II

<u>Decision 1/CP.1</u>	The Berlin Mandate: Review of the adequacy of Article 4, paragraphs 2(a) and (b), of the Convention, including proposals related to a protocol and decisions on follow-up measures.	Berlin, 1995
<u>Decision 5/CP.7</u>	The Berlin Mandate: Review of the adequacy of Article 4, paragraphs 2(a) and (b), of the Convention, including proposals related to a protocol and decisions on follow-up measures.	Marrakech, 2001
<u>Decision 11/CP.8</u>	New Delhi Work Programme on Article 6 of the Convention.	New Delhi, 2002
<u>Decision 31/CMP.1</u>	Matters relating to Article 3, paragraph 14, of the Kyoto Protocol.	Montreal, 2005
<u>Decision 1/CP.16</u>	The Cancún Agreements: Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention.	Cancún, 2010
<u>Decision 2/CP.17</u>	Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention.	Durban, 2011
<u>Decision 15/CP.18</u>	Doha Work Programme on Article 6 of the Convention.	Doha, 2012
<u>Decision 1/CP.19</u>	Further advancing the Durban Platform.	Warsaw, 2013
<u>Decision 19/CP.20</u>	Lima Ministerial Declaration on Education and Awareness-raising.	Lima, 2014
<u>Decision 1/CP.20</u>	Lima Call for Climate Action.	Lima, 2014
<u>Decision 1/CP.21</u>	Adoption of the Paris Agreement.	Paris, 2015

<u>Decision 9/CP.24</u>	Report of the Adaptation Committee.	Katowice, 2018
<u>Decision 3/CP.25</u>	Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and its Gender Action Plan.	Madrid, 2019
<u>Decision 1/CP.26</u>	Glasgow Climate Pact.	Glasgow, 2021
<u>Decision 18/CP.26</u>	Glasgow Work Programme on Action for Climate Empowerment.	Glasgow, 2021
<u>Decision 16/CP.26</u>	Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform.	Glasgow, 2021
<u>Decision 20/CP.26</u>	Gender and Climate Change.	Glasgow, 2021
<u>Decision 1/CMA.4</u>	Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan.	Sharm el-Sheikh, 2022
<u>Decision 1/CP.27</u>	Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan.	Sharm el-Sheikh, 2022
<u>Decision 7/CMA.4</u>	Guidance on the mechanism established by Article 6, paragraph 4, of the Paris Agreement.	Sharm el-Sheikh, 2022
<u>Decision 24/CP.27</u>	Intermediate review of the implementation of the Gender Action Plan.	Sharm el-Sheikh, 2022
<u>Decision 1/CMA.5</u>	Outcome of the first global stocktake.	Dubai, 2023
<u>Decision 5/CMA.5</u>	Operationalization of new funding arrangements, including a fund, for responding to loss and damage as referred to in paragraphs 2–3 of Decisions 2/CP.27 and 2/CMA.4.	Dubai, 2023
<u>Decision 2/CMA.5</u>	Global Goal on Adaptation.	Dubai, 2023

<u>Decision 1/CP.28</u>	Operationalization of new funding arrangements, including a fund, for responding to loss and damage as referred to in paragraphs 2–3 of Decisions 2/CP.27 and 2/CMA.4.	Dubai, 2023
<u>Decision 16/CP.28</u>	Presidency's Youth Climate Champion.	Dubai, 2023
<u>Decision 21/CMA.5</u>	Presidency's Youth Climate Champion.	Dubai, 2023
<u>Decision 15/CP.28</u>	Gender and Climate Change.	Dubai, 2023
<u>Decision 7/CP.28</u>	Report of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the GEF.	Dubai, 2023
<u>Decision 3/CMA.5</u>	United Arab Emirates Just Transition Work Programme.	Dubai, 2023
<u>Decision 1/CMA.6</u>	New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance.	Baku, 2024
<u>Decision 3/CMA.6</u>	Global Goal on Adaptation.	Baku, 2024

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AUTHORS

André Castro Santos

Eneas Xavier

Maria Gabriella Souza

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INITIATIVE:



PRODUCED BY:

