

OUR CLIMATE, OUR CHALLENGE, OUR FUTURE

International Youth Declaration

We, the youth of today and leaders of tomorrow, face an unprecedented challenge as a result of global climate change and share in the responsibility of addressing it. Taking a step back from the complexities of compromise and negotiation, we cannot help but think the purpose of the Convention has been sidelined. We are frightened by the scale of this emerging global environmental crisis. We stand in solidarity with vulnerable communities who are disproportionately impacted by climate change, including low-income people, marginalized groups, indigenous peoples and people living in geographically vulnerable areas. As stewards of the Earth, we demand the right for all future generations to inherit a healthy planet. **We make this declaration knowing in our hearts that *Beyond Kyoto – It's Us!***

Our commitments

Youth around the world are committed to protecting the climate. We engage our communities in participatory action and encourage the respect of humanity's place in nature, cultural diversity, indigenous rights and traditional knowledge. We are supporting clean energy through our own consumption choices. We are moving forward to expand our involvement at the domestic and international levels and encourage broader participation on the part of our peers.

Our demands

We further the call of previous youth COP declarations for a **permanent, funded youth constituency to be included in the international climate change negotiation process by COP12.**

In accordance with scientific knowledge, **we need minimum binding emissions reduction targets of 30% by 2020 and 80% by 2050 for "developed" countries.** Moreover, agreement must be reached before 2008 and should include additional support to decarbonize "developing" countries, funded in part by penalties for non-compliance of "developed" countries.

Flexible mechanisms must supplement, not substitute, domestic emissions reductions; this requires that the vast majority of reductions be achieved at home. The additionality, monitoring and transparency of project-based flexible mechanisms cannot be compromised. The process must include a participatory role for local communities.

We ask governments for a **just transition to low-impact renewable energy** and insist on the **removal of fossil fuel subsidies.** Human rights and social justice must be included in the transition from fossil fuel dependence. Projects involving nuclear energy, large-scale hydro-electric power and waste incineration do not contribute to sustainability. Carbon sequestration is a last resort to mitigating climate change.

Adaptation options need to be addressed in parallel with mitigation. More resources are urgently needed for the most vulnerable countries with the lowest adaptive capacity, especially in the form of funding for local adaptation. Plans for both human adaptation and appropriate ecological management techniques must be incorporated into national policies.

Food and water security must be guaranteed in order to avoid conflict under a changing climate. Environmentally displaced peoples must be provided assistance.

We urge governments to refine their urban planning policies, promote green architecture, incorporate public transportation systems, and encourage non-motorized modes of transport.

Vehicle fuel efficiency standards must be enhanced. Aviation and maritime emissions must be reduced through mandatory targets.

We insist that governments incorporate an **ambitious multi-disciplinary approach to sustainable development in our education systems,** including a curriculum on climate change.

Our vision

We respect both past and future generations and recognize that humanity is part of the Earth's ecosystems. Human and ecological wellbeing must supersede economic concerns if only because economies depend on ecosystems. Technology alone is not a solution; we do not want the continuation of unsustainable habits. We value community, culture and life above superficial consumption.

Communities, each with a unique insight into their own situation, are the best producers of solutions for mitigation and adaptation. We support business initiatives that are striving to help us achieve our vision. Governments' responsibilities are to the people, before corporations.

Climate change solutions must guarantee the right to a healthy environment and the environment's right to health as well as ensure equity amongst present and all future generations. Education should promote sustainability within a diversity of cultures. The low-carbon economy is not a low-job economy.

We envision a world where all members of society have not only the right, but the means to influence the world around them, and where sustainability, equity, and justice are uncompromised values.

As youth, we have the right to shape the world we live in. We are already taking steps in our own lives and communities to realize our vision and we demand that our leaders do the same.

Montreal 2005

**Climate
change**

is an opportunity to unite. The age of competition is of the past; the age of cooperation is dawning!