

LCOY USA

20
23

NATIONAL YOUTH CLIMATE STATEMENT

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What is LCOY USA?

The Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) is an event under the umbrella of YOUNGO, the official youth constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Its aims are to strengthen local youth climate action and create a Statement as input into international climate conferences (i.e. COP). It represents a national version of the international Conference of Youth (COY), which takes place immediately before the Conference of Parties (COP), the annual UN-Climate Change Conference.

This year, LCOYUSA brought together over 150 young people (14-35 years old) from across the country at American University from October 20th to 22nd. Educational panel sessions, negotiation and advocacy trainings, and policy workshops were convened to prepare all delegates to create the 2nd ever National Youth Statement.

Overview of the Youth Statement

This Statement provides key policy recommendations, called demands, from young people to US climate policymakers and implementers. It starts with a preamble that leads into young peoples top ten demands for improvements to domestic climate action efforts, international mitigation, adaptation, and just transition policy, and youth inclusion practices.

Preamble

Acknowledging that the Conference that conceived this document took place on unceded Nacotchtank (or Anacostans), Piscataway, and Pamunkey peoples' native land, and recognizing that this is only one of the over 500 recognized, yet underrepresented, Indigenous communities in the United States;

Honoring the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), immigrants, frontline communities, most vulnerable people and areas, and poor working class youth participants that joined us at LCOY USA 2023, and those who were not able to participate in person but whose experiences are represented in the statements and demands below;

Recognizing that young people are valuable knowledge holders and are considered anyone up to the age of 35 per the UNFCCC definition;

Upholding the values, history, and traditional knowledge of nature of all Indigenous nations and communities and recognizing that the current exploitative relationship to nature and natural resources cannot be sustained any longer;

Noting the importance of creating a youth declaration in the UUS, in the form of a National Youth Statement, listing equitable and just demands for all communities affected by climate change;

Recognizing the need for meaningful youth participation in climate action dialogues, policy-making, and implementation in the United States of America as stated in the ACE Action Plan (Decisions 23/CP.27 and 22/CMA.4);

Claiming our right to a livable Earth and sustainable future; an equitable phase-out of fossil fuels complemented with a just transition for frontline communities; and proactive, well-funded climate adaptation activities at home and abroad;

And emphasizing with certainty that not only the future, but the present, belongs to the youth, we demand:

Domestic Climate Justice: Commit to a national equitable phase-out of all fossil fuels, an end to new fossil fuel projects, and a transition of subsidies from fossil fuels to climate resilience and climate action efforts (regardless of COP28 outcome);

Domestic Climate Justice: Commit to including young people in consultations and research groups in the development of the 2025 NDC;

Mitigation: To urge parties, especially those in the Global North and in oil-wealthy countries blocking progress, to commit to an equitable fossil fuel phase out by 2050 and peak emissions by 2025, as per the IPCC 6th Assessment Report, as part of the COP28 Decision;

Adaptation: To address the climate refugee crisis, starting with establishing a mandated dialogue on climate refugees at SB60, further calling upon the UNFCCC, in partnership with the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Climate Change, to create a report from the dialogue with recommendations on next steps;

Just Transition: To adopt a Just Transition Action Plan and annual Dialogues to enable consistency and rights-based approaches for action;

Youth Inclusion: Establish a National US Youth Office, complementary to the Global Youth Issues Office, where young people serve as inter-agency liaisons in climate decision-making and implementation process in Congress, EPA, NOAA, Office of Global Change, and the White House;

Youth Inclusion (White House Climate Office): Create a Cabinet Position on US Youth Climate Issues and Solutions that has a responsibility to meet with youth across the country and connect them with policymakers;

Youth Inclusion (Office of Global Change): Produce an annual report on key youth inclusion in climate policy making efforts with an indication for how youth priorities were included in key positions and implementation strategies;

Youth Inclusion (Office of Global Change & White House Climate Office): Build an official relationship with LCOY USA, including providing at least \$30,000/year for five years and an official endorsement on social media and press conferences; and,

Climate Education Engagement and Training (NOAA & Congress): Establish a National Climate Education Office within NOAA and follow through on promoting the adoption of the Climate Change Education Act.

Climate Action in the USA

Guarantee the right to a clean and healthy environment in national law for present and future generations (e.g. Held v. Montana).

Commit to including young people in consultations and implementation in the development of the 2025 NDC and beyond, such as through workshops, consultative virtual sessions, and active recruitment of young leaders.

Prioritize funding allocations to projects which alleviate health, environmental, and climate risks in frontline communities (e.g. Justice40 only calls for benefits, funding must be included).

Commit to a national equitable phase-out of all fossil fuels, an end to all new fossil fuel projects, and a transition of subsidies from fossil fuels to climate resilience and climate action efforts (regardless of COP28 outcome).

Establish a National Climate Education Office within NOAA and follow through on promoting the adoption of the Climate Change Education Act.

Establish half a percent tax on big corporations/individuals that make \$1B a year to go towards a revolving sustainability and climate justice fund (e.g. Portland Big Box Retailer Tax).

Create a National Climate Adaptation Plan (NCAP).

Establish a national cooling center and resilience hub network by setting up a National Climate Resilience Office within NOAA.

Scale adaptation funding and co-benefits with mitigation (e.g. only \$0.10 of the IRA went to adaptation, yet it's considered our largest climate investment).

Optimize the power grid by establishing a standard for grid efficiency, microgrids, and climate vulnerability assessments required from utilities (e.g. NYC).

Establish a national moratorium on building infrastructure, such as home, in climate vulnerable areas.

Increase methane reduction goal to 50% from 2005 levels by 2030 with an improved accountability mechanism.

Subsidize electrification of small businesses and new job training for communities impacted by the Just Transition (potentially offered via the Civilian Climate Corps).

Mandate climate education in public schools, post-incarcerated schools, and trade schools; and operationalize a national training program for adult education on climate resilience.

Invest in bus and rail rapid transit systems and public transportation improvement programs to shift reliance away from airplanes and cars.

Ensure that 100% of federally funded infrastructure projects incorporate climate resilience measures by 2025.

Pass a national Carbon Fee and Dividend (e.g. a steadily rising carbon price starting at \$15/ton and increasing by \$10/ton each year to reduce domestic greenhouse gas emissions by 30% in the first five years and 90% by 2050 ([Kaufman, et al. 2019](#)), putting the US on a path to keep 1.5 °C alive.)

Climate Action in the USA

Benefits:

- Minimizes climate and environmental health risks to all, but especially historically marginalized communities, for present and future generations
- Empowers young people to shape their futures and feel ownership to keep our democracy strong into the future
- Strengthens access to information and knowledge on climate justice to ensure we safeguard communities now and into the future
- Addresses domestic climate justice actions from an intergenerational perspective (see benefits of Youth Inclusion)
- Prepares our economy, infrastructure, and communities for current and future risks of climate change

Mitigation & Global Stocktake

Urge parties, especially those in the Global North and in oil-wealthy countries blocking progress, to commit to an equitable fossil fuel phase out by 2050 and peak emissions by 2025, as per the IPCC 6h Assessment Report, as part of the COP28 Decision.

Release yearly progress reports to achieving previous US climate commitments (e.g., the Global Methane Pledge, US NDC).

Commit to a moratorium on fossil fuel expansion projects by 2025 in the COP28 Decision and commit to an equitable fossil fuel phase-out by 2050.

Acknowledge that Carbon Capture & Storage cannot be an alternative to an equitable fossil fuel phase-out and to decarbonization and that any emission reduction projections cannot include potential CCS sequestration.

Acknowledge the need for the implementation of carbon pricing with carbon border adjustment mechanisms (CBAMs) based on common but differentiated responsibility.

Establish a stronger Conflict of Interest Policy banning all fossil fuel lobbyists and executive employees from sponsoring or participating in formal climate negotiations – at the very least, climate negotiations must provide transparency and disclosure of industry connections, including financial support of parties, to identify any potential conflict on interest.

Establish the need for an "anti-greenwashing standard" and call for global standards for corporate emission and climate risk disclosure enforced by the Security and Exchange Commission.

Develop a Food Loss and Waste Reduction Action Plan by 2025 including composting and circular economy programs to honor commitments made at NALS stating the US would reduce food loss and waste 50% by 2030.

Benefits:

- Reduces U.S. contribution to further acceleration of global warming and supports an equitable fossil-fuel phase-out to minimize loss and damages worldwide
- Ensures accountability for U.S. climate ambition on the global scale through progress-tracking, separation of biased and conflicting interest parties/ideologues, and prioritization of scientifically-backed and results-based actions against climate change.
- Demonstrates strong position for mitigation of climate change in the near- and long-term, especially for climate policy and action on the global stage
- Reduces the conflict of interest in the UNFCCC to keep 1.5 degrees alive
- Centers the needs of frontline communities and work towards achieving environmental justice on the international scale

Climate Adaptation

Acknowledge the need to address the climate refugee crisis and establish a mandated dialogue for addressing this issue at SB60, further calling upon the UNFCCC, in partnership with the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Climate Change, to create a report from the dialogue with recommendations on next steps.

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Acknowledge that loss and damage is a product of failure to equitably phase-out fossil fuel emissions and adapt to climate change, therefore, emphasizing the need for early investments in adaptation efforts in partnership with subnational governments (e.g. national climate vulnerability and health assessments, planning efforts, and implementation monitoring) and the need to cancel debt in climate vulnerable countries to ease their financial burden for implementing adaptation solutions.

Enhance climate information and knowledge sharing through streamlining the incorporation of ACE activities into the GGA, including climate risk awareness campaigns, community-based adaptation training, and early warning systems.

Adopt the GGA as a permanent negotiation item.

Adopt global indicators for adaptation focused on resilient agriculture and infrastructure (e.g. national infrastructure resilience plans), health and well-being, climate refugee support systems, and climate resilience design guidelines.

Establish a global moratorium on new development in climate vulnerable areas, including flood zones and sea-level rise exposure areas.

Support the meaningful representation of Global South actors in the implementation of the Loss and Damage Fund (e.g. percentage is similar to the level of representation of the GS at COP).

Benefits:

- Prioritization of climate adaptation, regular monitoring and updating of adaptation activities as climate impacts unfold to evolve actions, and ensure vulnerable communities are protected and safeguarded from them
- Reduce potential climate refugees and provide support for refugees experiencing loss despite climate refugees not being considered a "refugee" under the 1951 definition
- Strengthen knowledge and power of vulnerable communities to implement climate adaptation solutions

Just Transition

Adopt a Just Transition Action Plan and annual Dialogues to enable consistency and rights-based approaches for action.

Recognise access to green energy as a fundamental need for all, including by incorporating the Just Transition within NDCs and call for a fossil fuel phase out as recommendations in the Global Stocktake.

Streamline ACE within the Just Transition and NDCs, most notably, implementing the principle of public participation and procedural justice for most impacted communities, especially fossil fuel workers in the Just Transition.

Acknowledge the connections between SDG8 and the Just Transition and the need for social protection schemes, including job security guarantees, decent work opportunities, occupational health and safety, non-discrimination on the basis of age, freedom of union membership, and access to collective bargaining.

Establish a meaningful dialogue on the adaptation of education and vocational training to future skills and practical demands of the labor market in a transformed economy as well as provision of climate education in schools and apprenticeships.

Establish specific indicators to define a just transition using the Energy Equity Project Framework with the universal pillars of justice.

Benefits:

- Identification of barriers and sharing of solutions to ensure equitable energy access and reduced inequality of the placement of renewable energy sources as fossil fuels are phased out
- Tax credits and financial incentives to support workers leaving the fossil fuel industry
- A new wave of green jobs, in particular, that inspire and empower young people to join the workforce
- Strengthened bridges between the SDGs (i.e. and climate justice
- Ensure new renewable energy systems do not continue to harm people in sacrifice zones and vulnerable areas

Youth Inclusion (National)

Establish a National US Youth Office, complementary to the Global Youth Issues Office, where young people serve as inter-agency liaisons for youth inclusion in climate decision-making which and implementation process in Congress, EPA, NOAA, Office of Global Change, and the White House.

Create a Cabinet Position on US Youth Climate Issues and Solutions that has a responsibility to meet with youth across the country and connect them with policymakers on issue areas.

Youth Inclusion (National)

Urge the White House to create an inter-agency Youth Advisory Council with regional representation to advise climate decision-making and implementation efforts.

Propose a line item in the Congressional Budget to make federal funding available for young people to apply for climate-related project funding (e.g., IRA ECJ grants).

Establish a national youth congress (e.g. Guam).

Commit to and execute a strategy to include young people in the development and implementation of subnational climate action and adaptation plan, starting with including criteria on youth inclusion for funding opportunities and training services on effective youth inclusion strategies.

Allocate funding in FEMA, DOH, and NOAA for social and mental services to make sure youth are adequately prepared for the climate crisis.

Conduct a National Youth Climate Perspectives and Literacy Survey to better understand youth needs, priorities, and climate literacy as a tool for shaping youth-centered programs.

Remove restrictions for the government to partner with youth organizations on outreach events (e.g. NOAA was not allowed to partner with youth organizations to conduct youth sessions for the Climate Literacy Guide).

Elect a Youth Ombudsperson in Congress who sits on the energy and climate committees (example in Sweden).

Youth Inclusion (International)

Produce an annual report on key youth inclusion in climate policy making efforts with an indication for how youth priorities were included in key positions and implementation strategies.

Build an official relationship with LCOY USA, including providing at least \$30,000/year for five years and an official endorsement on social media and press conferences.

Propose a line item in the Office of Global Change budget for funding youth attendance at COP.

Collect written submissions from young people regarding the US position on international climate topics.

Host monthly office hours in partnership with engaged youth NGOs for civil society to discuss progress, barriers, and solutions for addressing the climate crisis through the international climate diplomacy process.



Benefits:

- Includes youth in discussions and decisions that they will be responsible for upholding or altering in the future
- Creates more justice-oriented, creative, and realistic policies, giving policy-makers a gut check in ensuring policies today reflect the needs of tomorrow's generations
- Activates youth as participatory citizens, while teaching them about our system of government
- Empowers young people to engage in civic responsibilities
- Prepares youth for government positions they may hold in the future
- Passes down generational knowledge and preserving democracy

Indicators of Success:

- Establishment of a dedicated office or individual for young people to engage with who can elevate their perspectives and needs
- Number of young people with specific roles related to youth and climate justice
- Amount of funding accessible to youth for climate-related projects, including education-based projects
- Number of youth partnerships formed to design and implement climate programs
- LCOYUSA is strongly supported by the US government

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