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YOUTH
FORUM**

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8th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

ONLINE REPORTING

SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change
and its impacts

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Trusteeship Council Chamber, 4-6 p.m.
United Nations Headquarters, New York

IDENTIFICATION	
Session focus	SDG 13 “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”
Session lead	Marine Collignon, UN Environment
Session rapporteur	Ms. Valery del Carmen Salas Flores, Latin American and Caribbean Youth Climate Movement (CLIC!), YOUNGO
Session moderators	Mr. John Sutter, CNN Environment Journalist Ms. Fatou Jeng, University of the Gambia / Plant-for-the-Planet/ YOUNGO
Session note-taker 1	Ms. Brittany Champey, UN Environment
Session note-taker 2	Ms. Valery del Carmen Salas Flores, Latin American and Caribbean Youth Climate Movement (CLIC!), YOUNGO
<u>CURRENT LANDSCAPE</u>	
What is the current landscape for this SDG, including issues, opportunities, recent trends, gaps, challenges?	

- Climate change is “the defining threat of our time”. It should stop being treated as a “future” threat: its impacts can already be seen now (water scarcity, increase of extreme natural disaster, etc.).
- The recent 1.5°C report of the International Panel on Climate Change is very clear: only a few generations that can act and make the necessary transformative actions to prevent irreversible consequences.
- The main barriers identified for the implementation of SDG 13 are lack of political will and lack of financial resources.
- Young people are especially impacted by climate change. It is their future that is at existential risk. Intergenerational justice is therefore fundamental for climate action.
- Young people, including people under 18, must have access to formal decision-making processes, especially the most vulnerable (indigenous peoples, disabled people, etc.) and be able to hold their government accountable to their commitments.
- Youth are also powerful agents of change, driving important conversations and actions today on critical issues and bringing innovative solutions to the discussion. They are ready for ambition and make concrete changes in their daily life towards sustainable lifestyles.

YOUTH SOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS

(What are youth doing to address the current situation and leverage opportunities? And what are some of the most transformative solutions?)

Young people are engaged in many ways to demand bold climate action and are already actors of changes themselves. The following best practices and solutions were highlighted:

- civil and political engagement: many young people highlighted the power of mobilization to increase pressure, increase awareness and change the narrative. The importance of voting as well as making sustainable consumption choices was underlined by many. The added-value of youth-led constituencies (e.g. national youth forum, youth advisory group, organization of open debates, etc.) to advise the governments, local and regional authorities and international fora on climate change was also underlined. Intergenerational dialogue is key.
- Individual actions and actions on the ground: There are many solutions developed on the ground by young people, including using traditional knowledge. These small-scale local projects (through entrepreneurship, NGOs, etc.) need to be publicized and scaled-up. Youth and young scientists are also conducting research and innovation that can improve decision-making and be mainstreamed to address climate change. The creation of knowledge exchange platform on climate action are very useful in that regard.
- Education and increasing awareness: young people are calling on their schools to mainstream sustainability and climate ambition into curriculum as well as working with them to improve sustainable campus practices. Young people are increasing awareness through social media and

campaigns. They are connected throughout the world and are ready and able to harness this power for grassroots change.

- The economy needs to be transformed, eliminating subsidies for polluting industries and making green alternatives affordable and accessible. Young people are emphasizing the importance of using climate action as an opportunity to drive economic transformations.

LOOKING TO THE HORIZON

What can the UN and youth do together to make sure young people's contributions have a deeper and wider impact, and that they are better served and engaged by member states?

2019 will be a decisive year to act engender transformative changes on climate change with the HLPF (July and September) and the SG climate summit. The session showed there is no one-fit for all solution and many avenues can be used by young people to leverage climate action and put pressure on governments to increase ambition and hold them accountable for their commitments.

In terms of key recommendations, the following elements were highlighted:

-Young people would like to see youth-led platforms strengthened through capacity building and included in key international processes, including summits, forums and decision-making processes (e.g. negotiations). There should be stronger partnerships between youth-led organizations and governments/those in power.

- Education systems should mainstream sustainability and climate change awareness into curriculum at all levels of education, starting from the youngest ages. Schools should prioritize building young peoples' capacities to become agents of change, in their communities and in the world.

-There must be support and capacity building for young people, by promoting and investing in youth entrepreneurship and ensuring access to green technology, especially in developing countries and LDCs.

-Governments must increase political will and enact transformative changes. They must prioritize financing for climate action and invest in renewable energies while ending fossil fuel subsidies. Climate ambition should coincide mobilization of resources for on-the-ground action.

-Governments must create normative frameworks that allow sustainable lifestyle practices to be affordable and accessible to all.