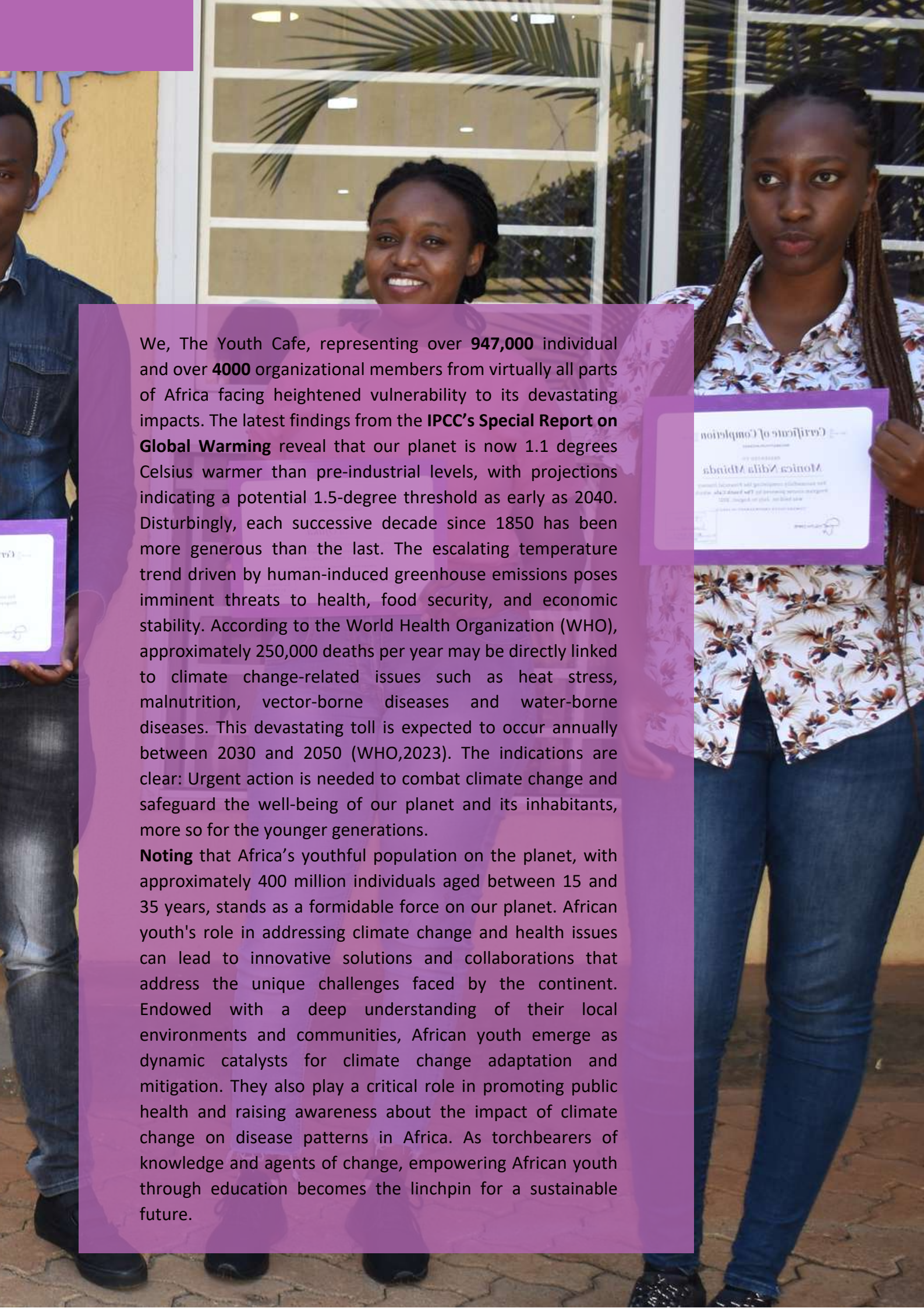


YOUTH CAFE AFRICAN YOUTH POSITION STATEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH FOR COP 28



From Policy to Action for
African Development: Youth
Cafés Statement at COP 28



We, The Youth Cafe, representing over **947,000** individual and over **4000** organizational members from virtually all parts of Africa facing heightened vulnerability to its devastating impacts. The latest findings from the **IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming** reveal that our planet is now 1.1 degrees Celsius warmer than pre-industrial levels, with projections indicating a potential 1.5-degree threshold as early as 2040. Disturbingly, each successive decade since 1850 has been more generous than the last. The escalating temperature trend driven by human-induced greenhouse emissions poses imminent threats to health, food security, and economic stability. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 250,000 deaths per year may be directly linked to climate change-related issues such as heat stress, malnutrition, vector-borne diseases and water-borne diseases. This devastating toll is expected to occur annually between 2030 and 2050 (WHO,2023). The indications are clear: **Urgent action** is needed to combat climate change and safeguard the well-being of our planet and its inhabitants, more so for the younger generations.

Noting that Africa's youthful population on the planet, with approximately 400 million individuals aged between 15 and 35 years, stands as a formidable force on our planet. African youth's role in addressing climate change and health issues can lead to innovative solutions and collaborations that address the unique challenges faced by the continent. Endowed with a deep understanding of their local environments and communities, African youth emerge as dynamic catalysts for climate change adaptation and mitigation. They also play a critical role in promoting public health and raising awareness about the impact of climate change on disease patterns in Africa. As torchbearers of knowledge and agents of change, empowering African youth through education becomes the linchpin for a sustainable future.



However, climate change also poses significant challenges for today's youth. As the generation most likely to witness the long-term impacts of climate change, young people are at the forefront of the battle for a sustainable future. They face the daunting task of mitigating the effects of climate change and addressing the health consequences associated with it, both physically and mentally. Some major challenges that young people face linked to climate change are increased risks of heat-related illnesses, exposure to vector-borne diseases, malnutrition, advocacy issues, limited finances for adequate health care services, limited capacity and skills, impacted livelihoods and economic opportunities, inadequate information on climate change and being locked out from the decision-making arenas. The traditional power structures often underestimate the power of young voices, making it difficult for them to shape the very future they will inherit.

Recognising Different Climate Change and Reactions African countries have been active in global climate change negotiations, such as the **Paris Agreement adopted by nearly 200 nations** in December 2015, as an international treaty aimed at addressing the global issue by strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change. This treaty brought all nations into a common cause to undertake efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, with **enhanced** support to encourage developing countries to do so. Indeed, many African countries actively contributed to global efforts to address climate change for a sustainable carbon future.

THE AFRICAN UNION CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN (2022-2032)


aimed to address the pressing challenges posed by climate change and foster a sustainable, prosperous, equitable, and climate-resistant Africa. This involves developing and implementing adaptation strategies, such as sustainable land management practices, improved water resource management, and promoting climate-smart agriculture. These measures aim to reduce the vulnerability of African countries to climate change impacts, such as droughts, floods, and changing rainfall patterns, which can have devastating effects on food security, livelihoods, and overall development. AU initiative is focused on building climate resilience at the local level, which involves empowering local communities, promoting knowledge-sharing and capacity-building, and ensuring the inclusion of vulnerable groups, such as women and youth, in decision-making processes. By prioritising local resilience, the AU acknowledges the unique challenges faced by different African regions and communities and seeks to tailor solutions that are context-specific and effective in addressing the diverse impacts of climate change across the continent.

The African Union Adaptation to Climate Change in Africa Plan of Action for the Health Sector encourages the development of country-specific health risks associated with climate change in all African countries to assist in strengthening systems in health and climate outcomes-specific countries.

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Clim-HEALTH Africa conducts research and generates evidence on the health risks associated with climate change in Africa. This initiative recognises that climate change affects various aspects of health, including vector-borne diseases, malnutrition, mental health, and air pollution-related illnesses. By understanding the magnitude and nature of these risks, Clim-HEALTH Africa can provide valuable insights for policymakers and public health practitioners, aiding in the development of effective interventions. It focuses on promoting capacity building and knowledge exchange among African researchers and policymakers. This initiative recognises the importance of empowering local institutions and individuals to tackle the complex challenges posed by climate change and health. By fostering collaboration and providing training opportunities, Clim-HEALTH Africa aims to enhance the region's ability to respond effectively to the health impacts of climate change. This approach is intellectually stimulating and ensures that the solutions are context-specific, sustainable, and rooted in local knowledge and expertise.





The African Group of Negotiators, under the AU's leadership, advocates for the continent's priorities, such as access to climate finance and technology transfer. Through these partnerships, the AU strengthens Africa's voice and influence in global climate discussions, ultimately leading to more inclusive and effective climate policies. The AGN has continually demonstrated its intelligence and comprehension in various spheres of negotiation, including trade, climate change, and peacekeeping. African negotiators thoroughly understand their countries' needs and challenges, strategic thinking, and comprehensive knowledge of global issues. Their intellectual acumen enables them to analyse complex situations, propose innovative solutions, and negotiate effectively to secure favourable outcomes for their respective countries and Africa as a whole. Moreover, the AGN draws upon their diverse experiences and expertise, harnessing their collective intelligence to address African-specific concerns and advocate for fair and equitable agreements.

Also, recognising the different climate action and networks in Africa;



The African Youth Climate Assembly (AYCA) is an important initiative that seeks to address the pressing issue of climate change in Africa. As a platform that empowers young individuals, AYCA allows African youth to engage in meaningful discussions and take collective action towards a sustainable future. One of the key objectives of AYCA is to amplify the voices of African youth in global climate negotiations, ensuring that their perspectives and concerns are taken into account when shaping policies and strategies to combat climate change.

The Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change (YAGCC) provides a platform for young people to share their perspectives and contribute to climate change discourse. It recognises the unique insights and fresh ideas that the youth bring to the table. Through this group, their understanding of climate change's scientific, social, and economic aspects can be utilised to develop innovative strategies for mitigation and adaptation. Furthermore, the comprehension of the YAGCC is evident in its efforts to make youth voices heard at both local and international levels. By collaborating with policymakers, NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders, this group ensures that the recommendations and perspectives of young people are integrated into climate change policies. This approach recognises that tackling climate change requires a multifaceted and inclusive approach encompassing diverse opinions and expertise.

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Recalling the Agenda 2063 sets forth a comprehensive roadmap to drive sustainable development, foster regional integration, and achieve peace and stability across the African continent by the year 2063. Key among Africa's 2063 aspirations is Africa as a united continent with a common identity. This entails strengthening pan-Africanism, promoting cultural exchange, and nurturing a sense of African pride and ownership. This aspiration recognises unity is essential for fostering peace, stability, and development. Another important aspiration is Africa's development as a knowledge-based society, which involves building a robust education system, increasing investment in research and development, and promoting access to information and communication technologies. Lastly, Africa 2063 Aspirations aims to achieve an inclusive and sustainable continent by eradicating poverty, improving healthcare systems, and ensuring environmental sustainability. It recognises the need for economic growth to be inclusive, leaving no one behind.

The Africa Climate Change Fund (ACCF) was established in 2014 by the African Development Bank and primarily focuses on raising and disbursing funds to support African countries in building climate resilience and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. One of the key aspects of the ACCF is its innovative financing approach, which brings together various funding sources from national governments, international organisations, and public and private sector stakeholders. This pooled funding mechanism enables the ACCF to address the diverse climate change challenges faced by different countries in Africa. The fund ensures that there is a comprehensive and strategic approach to climate finance, resulting in more effective and impactful interventions.

Reaffirming: The global commitment to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** provides a framework for international cooperation and encourages countries to adopt national policies and strategies to mitigate climate change. The **Global Youth Climate Action Declaration** represents a crucial step towards addressing the urgent issue of climate change. This declaration aims to unite young people from around the world in demanding transformative changes in policies and practices to mitigate climate change and secure a sustainable future.

The Paris Agreement

is an international treaty that was adopted by 196 countries in December 2015. It aims to combat climate change and limit global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The agreement sets out a framework for countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, enhance their adaptive capacities, and provide financial and technological support to developing nations in their efforts to tackle climate change. While the agreement's primary focus is reducing greenhouse gas emissions and limiting global warming, its effects on human health cannot be understated. The detrimental impact of climate change on health is multidimensional and includes increased heat waves, extreme weather events, food insecurity, and the spread of infectious diseases.

Universal Health Coverage (UHC)

The Universal Health Coverage Declaration, adopted by the United Nations in 2012, is a crucial milestone in advancing this fundamental right globally. The declaration recognises the importance of health as a driver of sustainable development and emphasises the need for governments to provide essential healthcare services for their citizens. It underscores the importance of reducing inequalities in access to healthcare, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised populations.

The International Declaration on Youth Mental Health:

The declaration emphasises the urgent need to prioritise mental health in young individuals due to its pervasive impact on their overall well-being. It highlights the importance of early intervention and prevention strategies and the inclusion of mental health education in school curriculums. Engaging in open discussions, organising workshops, and raising awareness through social media platforms can help diminish mental health stigma and encourage others to seek help.

The Global Climate and Health Alliance (GCHA)

is an international organisation that aims to promote the understanding of the health impacts of climate change and advocate for sustainable and climate-resilient health systems. The alliance comprises health organisations, NGOs, and professionals from across the globe who recognise the urgent need to address climate change as a public health crisis. By bringing together expertise and knowledge, the GCHA works towards creating partnerships and influencing policies to ensure a healthy and sustainable future for all.

The WHO Youth Council

was established in 2020, this council comprises individuals aged 15 to 30 years from around the world, selected for their passion, expertise, and commitment towards promoting health and well-being among young people. Through this platform, the voices of youth are heard, their opinions valued, and their recommendations seriously considered when it comes to shaping policies and programs relevant to their own lives. This council serves as a platform for youth to voice their concerns, share their experiences, and propose innovative solutions to address global health challenges. The World Health Organization recognises the importance of their contribution and empowers them to become agents of change. It also presents an opportunity for young people to develop leadership skills, foster international collaborations, and inspire their peers to take proactive steps towards better health and well-being.

The Global Health Workforce Network (GWHN)

Youth Hub is an initiative that aims to engage and empower young health professionals and students to address the challenges and opportunities in the global health workforce. As the future leaders of the healthcare sector, young individuals play a critical role in shaping the agenda for a sustainable and equitable health workforce. The GWHN Youth Hub provides a platform for youth engagement, connecting young professionals and students from around the world, fostering knowledge exchange, and supporting initiatives that promote health workforce development. Global Youth Mobilization is an emerging movement that is gaining traction across the globe. It is a powerful force driven by young people determined to address the pressing challenges humanity faces today. This mobilisation is characterised by the active involvement of young individuals from all corners of the world, working together to bring about positive change in areas such as climate action, social justice, and human rights. The Global Youth Mobilization amplifies young voices and empowers them to take action and become key contributors in shaping a better future for all. Through youth-led strikes, protests, and advocacy campaigns, the youth demand policy changes, push for renewable energy initiatives and promote sustainable practices. Reaffirming The Climate Ambition Summit 2023 is a crucial global event that aims to accelerate climate action and enhance countries' ambition to address the climate crisis. This summit brings together world leaders, policymakers, businesses, and other stakeholders annually to discuss and commit to ambitious climate targets. The summit plays a pivotal role in shaping global climate policy and fostering collaboration between countries to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. It encourages governments to strengthen their climate commitments and set more ambitious targets to limit global warming and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It provides a platform for leaders to present their new or updated climate plans and initiatives that contribute to the worldwide effort in combatting climate change. By making ambitious pledges, countries demonstrate their commitment to a sustainable, low-carbon future, inspiring others to follow suit.



The Climate Ambition Summit facilitates international cooperation and exchange of best practices. During the summit, countries have the opportunity to showcase their successful climate projects, share knowledge, and learn from each other's experiences.

Furthermore, the declaration recognises the importance of strong health systems that can effectively respond to and manage climate-related health issues. It calls for increased investment in public health infrastructure and capacity-building, particularly in developing countries. This includes improving surveillance systems, enhancing early warning systems for extreme weather events, and strengthening healthcare services to address climate-sensitive diseases and conditions.



The COP28 Health Day:

The event offers a platform for scientists to present their latest research findings and propose interventions that can help reduce the burden of these diseases. It also allows for discussions on the need for effective surveillance systems, early warning mechanisms, and improved healthcare infrastructure to better respond to emerging infectious threats. In addition to communicable diseases, COP28 Health Day focuses on the broader health consequences of climate change. Extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, heatwaves, and floods, have been linked to a range of adverse health outcomes, including injuries, mental health issues, and long-term chronic conditions. Moreover, COP28 Health Day emphasises the importance of promoting clean and sustainable energy, transportation, and food systems to mitigate climate change and improve public health outcomes.

Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate Change and Health (ATTACH):

The Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate Change and Health (ATA-CCH) is a powerful global initiative to address the urgent challenges climate change poses on human health. ATA-CCH brings together governments, international organisations, NGOs, and academia to promote sustainable development, advocate for climate policies, and safeguard public health. In addition to raising awareness, the alliance also works towards building resilience in communities to withstand the impacts of climate change. This involves developing and implementing strategies that enhance the adaptive capacity of vulnerable populations, improving access to healthcare, and promoting climate justice.

The Climate Change Negotiations and Health e-course

provides countries with valuable resources and capacity-building support, enabling them to integrate health considerations into climate change policies and strategies. The course covers climate change adaptation, risk assessment, and monitoring and evaluation of health impacts. By equipping individuals with knowledge and skills, they become empowered to implement effective interventions safeguarding public health in the face of climate change.



Referencing, The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

are a set of 17 global objectives established by the United Nations in 2015 to address the world's most pressing social, economic, and environmental challenges. Among these goals, three distinct areas have received significant attention: youth empowerment, health promotion, and addressing climate change. These three issues are interconnected and play a crucial role in achieving sustainable development worldwide.

Youth empowerment is crucial for the achievement of SDGs as young people constitute a significant portion of the global population. Investing in skill development and providing opportunities for young people to participate in decision-making processes can help tackle poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. Empowered youth can be agents of change, contributing to sustainable development through innovative solutions and active engagement in their communities. Health is another vital aspect of the SDGs. Ensuring access to affordable and quality healthcare for all is necessary to achieve sustainable development. This requires prioritising initiatives to eradicate diseases, promote mental health, and strengthen healthcare systems. By investing in health and addressing the underlying determinants such as poverty, education, and gender equality, we can create a healthier and more equal society.

Addressing climate change is a core component of sustainable development. The effects of climate change, such as extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and ecosystem degradation, threaten human well-being and exacerbate social inequalities. Achieving sustainable economic growth while mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and promoting renewable energy sources is essential in fostering environmental sustainability. Furthermore, initiatives to adapt to climate change impacts, such as improving disaster preparedness and investing in resilient infrastructure, are crucial in protecting vulnerable communities.

The African Youth Charter Article 10, which is dedicated to development, emphasises the crucial role of member states in empowering youth organisations to spearhead impactful youth programs. It is imperative that these organisations ensure the full exercise of young individuals' right to development. Moreover, member states are encouraged to provide comprehensive information, education, and training to equip the youth with a profound understanding of their rights and responsibilities within democratic educational processes.

Furthermore, it is essential to recognise and uphold the youth's right to citizenship, decision-making, governance, and leadership. By granting youth fundamental rights, their confidence and skills improve towards better research, leadership, and decisions towards different themes.

Also, Article 11 of the African Youth Charter focuses on the participation of young people in decision-making processes at all levels. It calls for the inclusion of young people in decision-making bodies, such as parliaments, cabinets, and local government structures. By having a voice at these levels, young people can contribute their fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and unique experiences to address the challenges faced by their communities and affect positive change.

Moreover, Article 13 of the African Youth Charter underscores the need to provide training and capacity-building programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of young people in political and leadership roles. This enables them to participate and contribute to national development effectively. The African Youth Charter also calls for integrating civic education in school curricula to equip young people with the necessary knowledge and understanding of their rights and responsibilities as active citizens.

Furthermore, referencing The African Youth Charter Article 16, which focuses on health as an essential provision that aims to address the health needs of African youth. It recognises the importance of promoting young people's physical, mental, and social well-being, ensuring their right to access quality healthcare services. This provision highlights the need for equitable and affordable healthcare and the prevention and treatment of diseases that affect young people in Africa.

It emphasises sexual and reproductive health. It recognises that young people have the right to access comprehensive sexual education and reproductive healthcare services. This provision is particularly significant in a continent where adolescent pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, and unsafe abortions are prevalent. By guaranteeing young people's access to sexual and reproductive health services, the African Youth Charter aims to empower them to make informed decisions about their bodies and lead healthy lives.

Recommendation and Resolutions

We call upon all parties, including governments, the United Nations (UN), the African Union, financial institutions, decision-makers, and other stakeholders, to give utmost consideration to the following demands and recommendations. It is crucial that we collaborate with African youth as partners in addressing the intersection of climate change and health. By doing so, we can tap into the transformative power of youth and achieve the goals outlined in Agenda 2030 while adapting to a changing climate and improving health outcomes. Further,

1. We urge improved inclusivity in decision-making and action across advocacy to protect and promote health, especially among the youth. This requires a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach to climate action. The protection of human health necessitates accelerated progress across all dimensions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) policymaking, coordination, and action across sectors.

2. We encourage better adaptation planning and monitoring that centres on health and wellbeing outcomes in accordance with the **Global Goal on Adaptation Framework** at COP28 and the National Adaptation Plans that focus on healthy outcomes such as water and sanitation, agriculture, and housing.

3. We urge a bottom-up approach involving diverse stakeholders like local communities, youth, women and indigenous groups to ensure the **Global Goal on Adaptation Framework** at COP 28 is sensitive to ground realities and the vulnerabilities of these groups.

4. We advocate for rapidly- scaled climate finance strategically allocated for health outcomes and youth, which offer high returns on investment due to improved physical and mental health outcomes and associated economic savings. Additionally, more financial targets should be agreed upon for the **post-2025 New Collective Quantified Goal**, covering mitigation, adaptation, loss, and damage, particularly for developed countries.

5. We encourage more inclusion of youth participation in climate action and health outcomes through advocacy, governance, education, green development and awareness in youth leadership positions, including Youth Boards, Youth Councils and Youth Ambassadors, as stated under the African Union's Youth Division.

6. We call upon partnerships between academic and research institutions, governments, research funding agencies, and the private sector to make substantial investments in youth-led research, innovation, and data-gathering initiatives that can reduce the effects of climate change and increase better health outcomes in Africa.

7. We urge Youth activism in addressing climate change and its impact on health. Youths can effectively advocate for sustainable solutions and policies that prioritise both the environment and public health. Engaging in climate activism can take various forms, from organising educational events on the digital space participating in climate networks, and lobbying youth elected officials for stronger environmental regulations.

8. We encourage the establishment of an African Youth Health Fund, which can be a huge component of healthcare financing for promoting accessible and quality healthcare. This fund serves as a financial safety net, ensuring that individuals have access to medical services when they need them, regardless of their socio-economic background, with the aim of achieving universal health coverage.

9. We urge the establishment of additional “ Youth Climate and Health Days” as a rallying cry for global youth. A day where young minds spanning the continents engage in diverse activities that fervently advocate for climate change solutions. This initiative's heartbeat pulsates through the vast realm of social media, uniting voices under the impactful banner #Youthclim-health.

The YouthCafe

Empower Amplify Connect

Africa's largest and most diverse convening community of professionals harnessing youth advocacy, policy, and research for socio-economic impact.