



AWARENESS OF YOUTH IN UZBEKISTAN ABOUT CLIMATE

ACTIONS AND STATEMENT ON
YOUTH VIEWS ON CONTRIBUTIONS
TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

TASHKENT – 2022



UNDP/FCDO project “Policy action for climate security in Central Asia Phase II”

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UNDP assistance to Uzbekistan is aimed at achieving common interrelated goals: supporting the Government in accelerating reforms in the field of sustainable economic development, good governance, climate change adaptation and environmental protection.

List of used abbreviations

COP26 26th Conference of Parties under the UNFCCC

NDC Nationally Determined Contribution

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Introduction

As part of the UNDP / FCDO project “Political”, on May 24, 2022, a study was conducted to determine the level of awareness of youth in Uzbekistan about measures and actions aimed at combating climate change, as well as the outcomes of 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. As a result of this study, a youth-view statement on its potential contributions to tackle the global climate change challenge at the national level was formulated.

WHAT DO THE YOUTH KNOW ABOUT REQUIRED ACCLIMATE ACTIONS?

As part of the project activities, a survey of young people was conducted, in which more than a hundred students from various universities of Uzbekistan participated, who expressed their opinions on the climate change at the national and global levels.

The approach to the development of the youth-views survey was based on its goal that is to engage youth in the implementation of the climate agenda in Uzbekistan aimed at combating the global climate change challenge at the national level. The responses of young people to the survey’s questions allowed to collect their opinions and determine the level of awareness about the required measures and actions to combat climate change, to which youth can make big contributions. Within the survey, participants also acquired basic knowledge of the outcomes of the 26th Conference Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Glasgow, UK in 2021 that were adopted by the world community. Moreover, the youth awareness about climate change was raised through participation in seminars, round tables and study tours to renewable energy sites conducted withing this project.

SURVEY’S STRUCTURE

The survey’s questionnaire consisted of the four interrelated sections:

Section 1: Demographic information about the participants: age, gender and geographic location as participants could participate remotely from any region of Uzbekistan through the online training course developed within the framework of this project.

Section 2: Participants concerns about climate change impacts that are already observed and about the forecasted ones with consideration of their age, gender and geographic location as well as the climate change impacts on their personal and nationwide wellbeing in the years to come.

Section 3: Opinions about the COP 26 outcomes and government action related to the climate change adaptation and mitigation. Examining the perceptions of participants and their attitude towards the country’s contribution to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions with consideration of the national circumstances that were declared by Uzbekistan at COP 26. The committed actions were assessed regarding the appropriateness, scale and priority to achieve the indicated climate targets.

Section 4: Personal actions and contributions to solving the climate change related problems. An opinion on how much the new information received through the online training course was helpful to form their perception and vision of the climate change in Uzbekistan.

INFORMATIONAL CHANNELS USED FOR SURVEY AND ITS FINDINGS

The survey was conducted using various information channels:

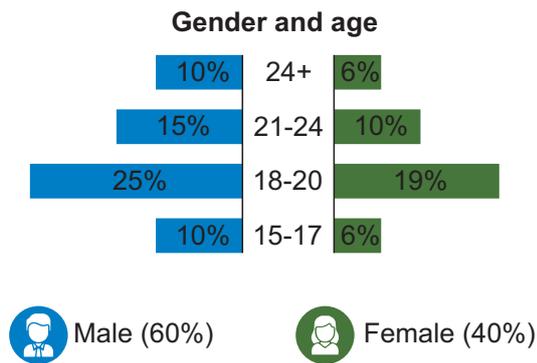
- Using the Moodle platform, as part of the online “Climate Change Negotiations and COP26 outcomes” course developed within the project;
- Using Google forms through telegram-channels created for participants of various youth-focused events such as field trips and workshops that were taking place within the project implementation course.

Overall, 109 responses were collected, out of which 14 were in English, 55 in Russian and 40 in Uzbek languages.



Section 1. Gender, age and regional distributions

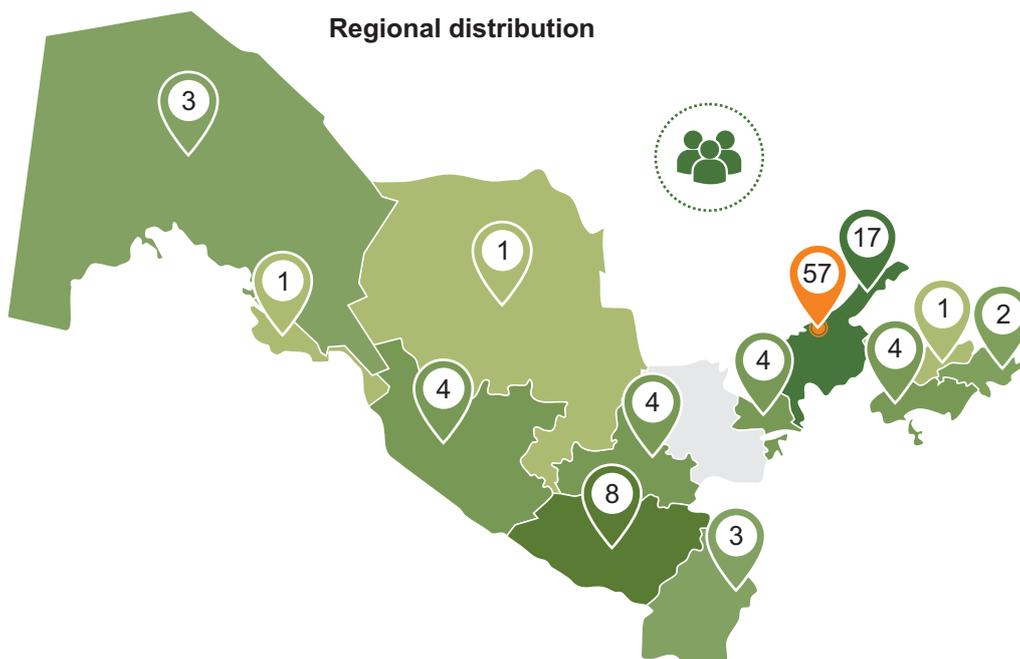
Figure 1: Gender and age distribution



The survey sample is relatively well-balanced in terms of gender and includes 44 females and 65 males (Fig. 1). Around 84% of them fell in the age range of 15-24, so can be classified as 'youth' as per commonly accepted UN definition¹.

Regional distribution map shows the number of respondents from each region. Most of the project activities were implemented in Tashkent (due COVID19 related restrictions), there is a significant disproportion in the regional representation. Slightly more than a half of respondents are from Tashkent, while another 15% of youth were from the Tashkent region. However, the sample still covers all regions but there were no respondents from the Jizzakh region (Fig. 2).

Figure 2: Regional distribution



¹ <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/youth>



Section 2.

Participants' concerns about climate change

Over 90% of respondents are either deeply or somewhat concerned with the climate change, with no significant difference between the respondents from Tashkent City or from regions. When it comes to gender differences, though, only 2% of females responded that they are 'not concerned' with climate change, while for males this number is 12.3% (Fig. 3).

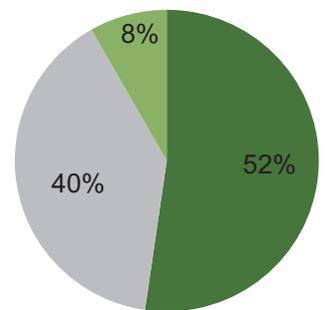
Key Conclusion: Young people in Uzbekistan are seriously concerned with the climate change and its impacts already observed. They believe that it will significantly affect their lives in the next 10 years.

Increasing water scarcity, human health impacts and aggravated desertification were identified as top three concerns expressed by the respondents (Fig. 4).

No gender or regional differences were observed in terms of the average numbers of concerns or their relative weight.

Figure 3: Degree of climate change concerns

How concerned are you about climate change?



■ Deeply concerned
 ■ Somewhat concerned
 ■ Not concerned

Figure 4: Major concerns

What are your major concerns?

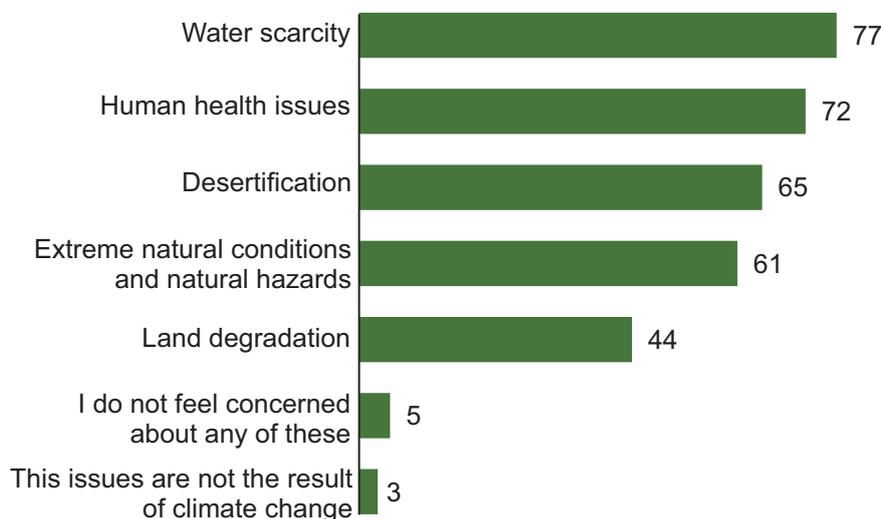
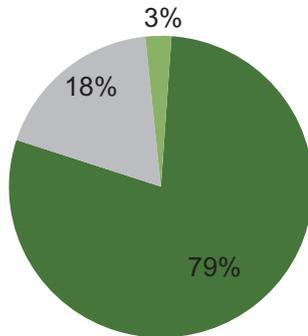


Figure 5: Opinions on the impact of human actions on climate change

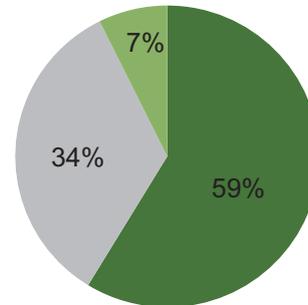
Do you believe that climate change resulted from human activity?



- Yes, human activity significantly contributes to climate change
- Human activity has moderate impact on climate change
- Human activity has no impact on climate change

Figure 6: Opinions on the impact within next 10 years

In your opinion, will there be a significant impact of climate change on you personally in the next 10 years?



- Yes
- There will be some not very significant impact
- Climate change will not affect me in any way

Within the sample, only 3% of respondents replied that, in their opinion, human activity has no impact on climate change (Fig 5).

The fact that over 90% of respondents believe that there will be significant or at least some climate change impact on their lives proves that youth in Uzbekistan are seriously concerned about climate change. It is noted that only 2% of girls believe that climate change will not affect their life, in contrast with almost 11% of boys (Fig.6). There is also an interesting regional difference: among youth from Tashkent city only 3.5% indicated that there will be no impact, in contrast with 11.5% of youth from other regions of the country.



Section 3.

Opinions about COP 26 and government action in climate change adaptation and mitigation

The opinions of respondents regarding COP26 outcomes and their potential to accelerate the climate actions are mixed. Majority (75%) agrees that COP26 was a success in terms of initiating significant climate actions (Fig. 7). However, the results are doubtful as 51% of them said that they have not seen or heard anything about COP26 prior to taking this survey.

Vast majority (95%) of the respondents stated that they support new and more ambitious targets for GHG emission reductions stated in the NDC2 committed by Uzbekistan (Fig.8).

From the measures and actions indicated the updated NDC2, the respondents identify the use of renewable energy and alternative clean fuels as the two most important actions, which are followed by improvements in the water resources management and expanding forest covered areas.

Figure 7: Opinions of the actions resulting from COP26

Do you agree that COP26 outcomes initiate significant actions in Uzbekistan and worldwide?

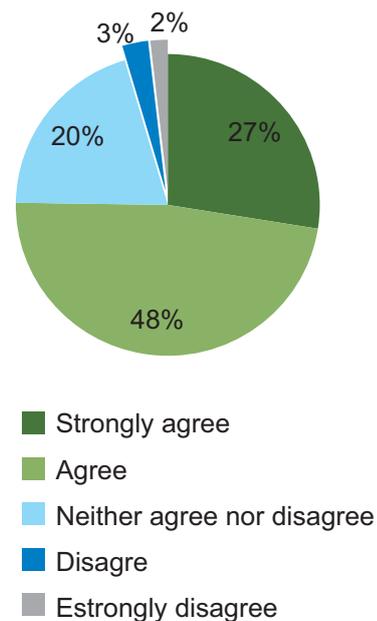
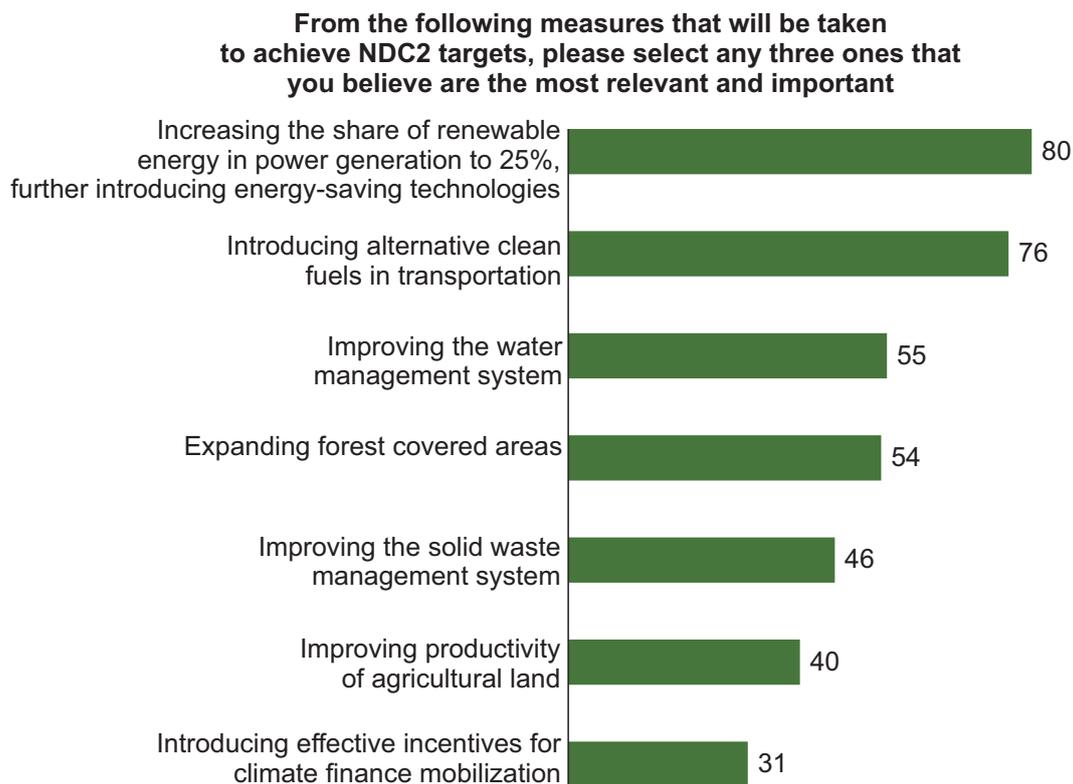


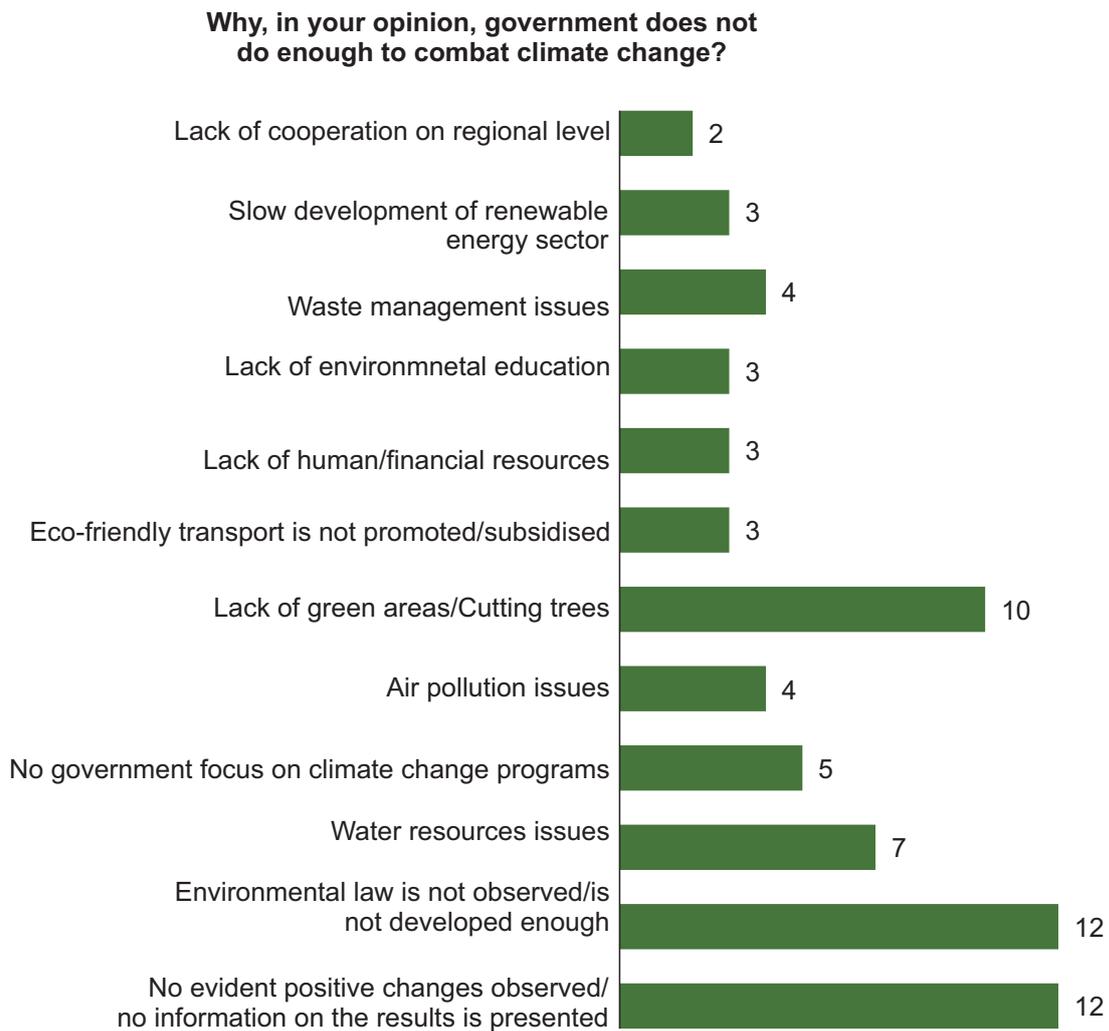
Figure 8: Relative importance of the measures listed in NDC2

However, 46% of the respondents still do not feel that enough is being done by the government to mitigate climate change impacts observed in the country. There is a slight difference in the opinions of young people from Tashkent city and from other regions in Uzbekistan. Over 52% of the respondents from Tashkent City said that they do not think that government is currently doing enough, while this opinion was shared by only 38.5% of young people from other regions. Gender differences are also present, with females being more critical about the scale of the current actions – over 52% of girls indicated that more should be done, compared to 41.5% of boys.

When asked to justify on why they think so, respondents were providing various answers that can be classified into few common categories that can be seen in the diagram (Fig. 9)

Most of the respondents refer to the observed lack of results from the climate action, specifically pointed out lack of green areas, increasing water resource deficiency and air pollution, and significant problems in solid waste management. One respondent shared his opinion: “Water resource management leaves much to be desired. There is still no project to build a nuclear power plant, which would reduce the load of TPP/HPP, which generates GHG emissions into the atmosphere in Uzbekistan. Tashkent is still one of the worst cities in terms of air quality.”

Figure 9: Opinions on why the government does not do enough to combat the climate change



Also, twelve respondents (or a quarter of those who are not fully satisfied with the government actions), state that environmental legislation in general needs further improvements and development, and/or more strict procedures need to be established to enforce implementation of the existing environmental and energy laws. For example, one of the respondents wrote: “In Uzbekistan, trees are cut down every day. The state has of course declared a moratorium on cutting down trees, but it doesn’t work effectively. The punishment for cutting down trees is negligible, you can just come and cut it down and no one will know about it unless it’s a very big tree and is in a famous place...”

Key Conclusions: Young people in Uzbekistan firmly support new and more ambitious climate targets set in NDC2/ They would like to see more government actions, programmes and projects focused on promotion of renewable energy, clean energy, increasing afforestation, reducing air pollution and improving water resources management. Existing legislative framework should be improved and further developed but the existing laws should be strictly enforced.



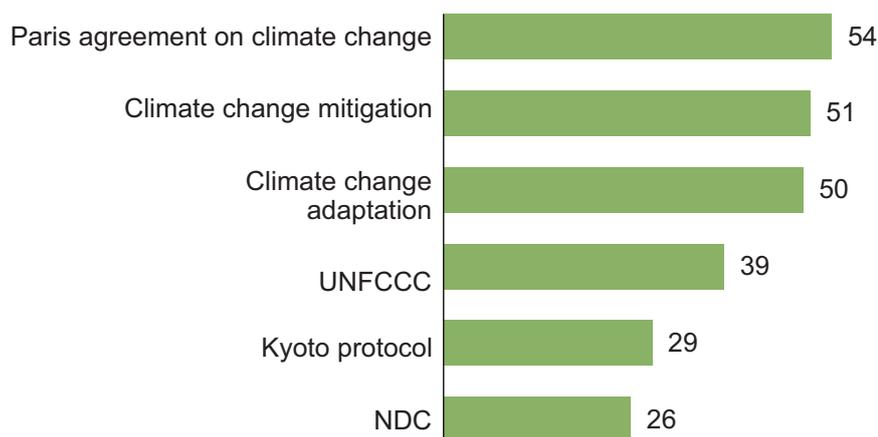
Section 4. Personal knowledge and actions

Respondents were asked if some basic climate change related terms were familiar to them prior to taking the survey.

It should be noted that 44% of young people in this sample knew only one term, with significant difference between the respondents from Tashkent city and other regions (Fig. 10). Slightly over 35% of the respondents from Tashkent city did not know more than one term, while this number reached nearly 54% for the young people from other regions. This might partially reflect the access to information (also in Uzbek and Russian languages) and educational programs differences. When grouped by gender, the results are also not quite homogenous: around 56% of male respondents have not mentioned more than one term, while only 29% of females did so.

Figure 10: Knowledge of the basic climate-related terms

Before taking part in this survey, did you know about (select all that apply)

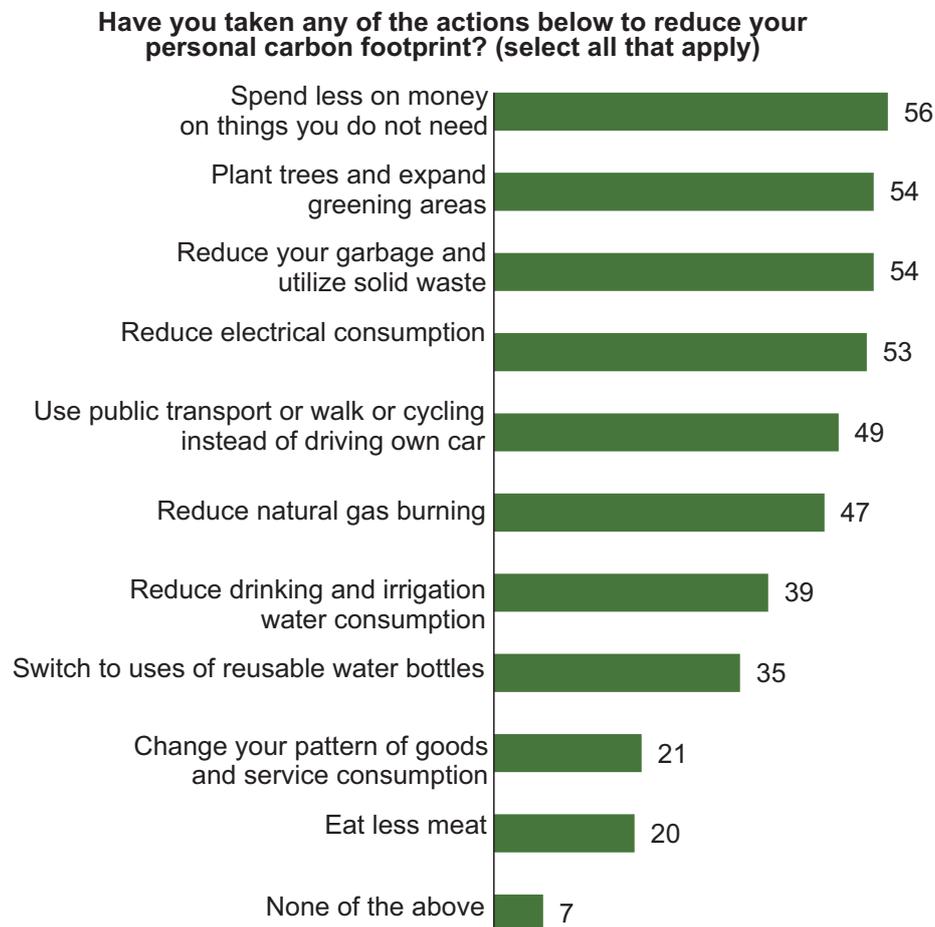


Given sample of young people seem to be very active in their attempts to taking climate actions to combat climate change.

Around a half of them undertake conscious effort to reduce unnecessary consumption, plant trees and expand greening areas, and reduce their solid waste.

Around 70% of respondents have selected three and more actions, and young people of all genders and from all regions are equally active (Fig. 11).

Figure 11: Personal actions



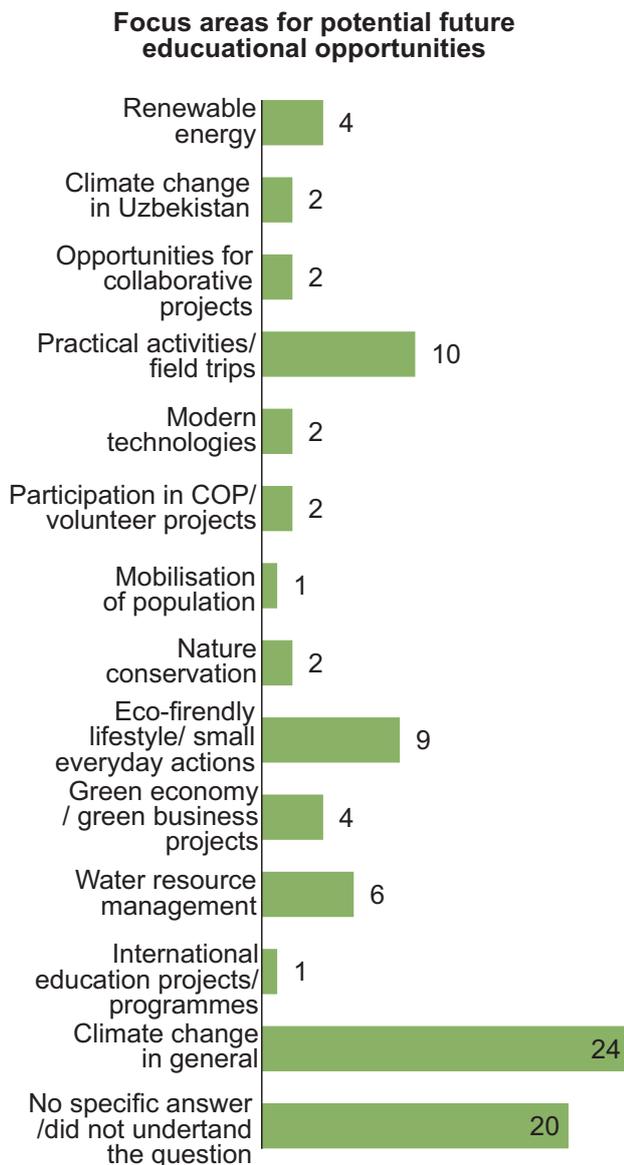
When asked on what more could they potentially do to contribute to combating climate change, the most respondents considered as complicated to respond or to share some more options (34%).

Most of the answers to these questions were put in categories that resemble the list provided in the previous question, and most popular items were increasing walking, saving water, expanding green areas and improving solid waste management.

However, 14 respondents (or 13%) mentioned that they would like to participate in the projects included raising awareness about climate change and disseminating existing knowledge about the climate. One of the respondents has mentioned that they want to “Teach your children about care of nature and environment, reusable bottles and bags, about sensible consumption...” and another wants to “write about it” meaning writing about the climate change problem.

There were also some answers to this questions that are specific to the respondents’ fields of study. Student from a course related to architecture plans to “Create a more environmentally friendly city. Establish big eco-parks but amusement parks. As a designer to design eco and

Figure 12: Focus areas for potential educational opportunities



smart homes”, while a future lawyer would like to “...contribute to the creation of more effective legal framework”.

When asked about what support would they like to get from the government/NGOs to proceed with their further climate actions, the most of respondents mentioned that no specific support is needed (60%), 14% said that more various financial incentives should be provided, and another 12% would like to see more educational opportunities being available, with some specifically mentioning the opportunities for international climate education.

Over 87% of respondents have mentioned that they would like to be engaged in further educational events and activities (Fig. 12).

When asked on what should be the main focus of those activities, answers of most respondents fell into ‘general climate change’ category, followed by being engaged into practical activities/field trips and events focused on “Stories about everyday things that would make a difference”.

Key Conclusions: Significant proportion of young people is not aware of many basic terms and concepts related to climate change, but they are anyways eager to put in a lot of effort to contribute to tackle this global challenge. Young people are active in their learning and take a range of steps they can help to combat climate change. They are eager to learn more about climate change and are willing to be involved in practical activities.

LIMITATIONS RELATED TO SURVEY’S APPROACH

Though this questionnaire was designed to cover a range of areas related to COP26 outcomes and climate action, the generalizability of the results seems to be an issue:

- First of all, sample of 109 respondents is still quite small to make inferences about the youth opinion and attitudes in general, as well as about any considerable regional and gender differences.
- Second, voluntary response sampling was used, so the sample is not random, and self-selection bias is a point of concern. It might be that those young people most interested in the climate change issue were taking part in the activities and decided to take part in the survey.

Formulation of Youth-Views Statement on Potential Contributions to Climate Action in Uzbekistan

The students from seven different universities in Tashkent City participated in the formulation of the Youth-Views Statement on their potential contributions to tackle the global climate change at the national level within the framework of a dedicated final youth-focused workshop. The workshop was held in two languages - Uzbek and Russian - to ensure the full involvement of all participants.

In the introductory part of the event, the participants had the opportunity to familiarize with the Youth Statement formulated within the first phase of this regional project in 2021, thanks to joint efforts of students from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. It was helpful for the workshop participants in their discussion and identification of those climate change issues that could be supplemented or updated based on the climate actions and targets identified in the new and more ambitious NDC2, as well as outcomes of COP26 held in end-2021.

Participants formulated the sections of a new Statement through working in groups, discussing the required measures and actions that youth can implement and undertake to achieve the ambitious climate targets committed by Uzbekistan to contribute to the global GHG emission reductions pledges under the ratified Paris Agreement.

During the implementation of the second phase of the project in 2022, the youth audience identified as priority actions the increasing use of renewable energy sources and energy efficient technologies, which is in line with the following targets announced in the updated NDC2²:

- further increasing utilization of renewable energy sources to bring their share to 25% in the national energy mix;
- ensuring an access to modern, affordable and reliable energy supply for up to 100% of the population and sectors of the economy;
- upgrading the infrastructure of industrial enterprises, ensure their sustainability by increasing energy efficiency by at least 20% and by wider use of clean and environmentally friendly technologies and industrial processes;
- expanding production and use of motor fuels and vehicles with improved energy efficiency and environmental indicators as well as developing electric transport;

As a result of group discussions, the Youth-Views Statement on Potential Contributions to Climate Action in Uzbekistan presented below was formulated.

Dear UN Community!

We, the youth of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the representatives of the seven universities, wanted to express our views on post-COP26 climate actions in Uzbekistan, with a particular focus on promoting greater utilization of renewable energy sources and increased energy efficiency in all sectors of economy of Uzbekistan.

²https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-06/Uzbekistan_Updated%20NDC_2021_EN.pdf

We consider that solar, wind and hydro sources of energy to be the sources with the highest potential in our country. Among them, we consider that solar power shall be a priority for the renewable energy programs, followed by hydro-power and then by wind energy. There are more than 300 sunny days annually in Uzbekistan. Therefore, the most favorable energy source is the sun, especially in the southern regions of the country. The availability of two main rivers in Uzbekistan and the large number of small mountain rivers provide ample opportunities for the use of hydropower. However, due to the fact that Uzbekistan is located in the east and south of the mountainous areas that are the catchment area of rivers, it limits the hydropower ability to be used throughout the country. In the central and western parts of the country, wind energy can be used widely.

Professional education is the foundation for using these energy resources wisely. There will be a need for more practical training in the education system and introduction of new disciplines related to climate change science. More qualified professional will be required to manage innovative technologies and equipment in the sector of renewable energy. We believe that climate science should be introduced into the state educational programs on all levels, starting from pre-school education. We also believe that climate education should be practice-based, and energy efficiency and overall environmental protection and conservation should be a compulsory point of focus of all university programmes and projects, be it architecture, transportation, agriculture, IT or entrepreneurship.

The next step is to liberalize electricity generation. The country has created conditions for independent power (energy) producers to sell the surplus energy to the grid. However to make these technologies cheaper, electrical equipment should be exempt from taxes and duties, and we should open special research departments at our universities to increase the energy efficiency of equipment. We need government financial support for such research centers. At the same time, we need to achieve greater local manufacturing of the required innovative equipment in Uzbekistan.

It is also important to provide additional incentives for the development of electric transport. Currently, electric buses are piloted in Tashkent City, and the development of electric transport charging infrastructure is mandatory for dissemination of e-transport throughout the country.

Local production of liquid synthetic fuels should be improved and expanded, moreover their widespread introduction into the transport system should be promoted. We need to ensure that fuels for private vehicles are produced using environmentally friendly alternative energy sources. At the same time, our car industry needs to be reformed to produce hybrid cars.

In order to rationally finance the technologies that contribute to climate change mitigation, we need to support and strengthen efforts in attract climate financing from a variety of sources to introduce modern green technologies, including through their exempting from import duties.

