

Toolkit for Young Climate Activists  
in the Middle East and North Africa Region/Arab States Region

**VOLUME III :WHAT IS  
CLIMATE GOVERNANCE?**



# PREFACE

The Toolkit for Young Climate Activists in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region was created by young people who, like you, are concerned about our planet's situation and who, as activists, have faced many challenges when advocating and taking action.

The toolkit was originally developed by young people in Latin America and the Caribbean and has been updated and revised for the MENA region based on feedback from young people in this region.

Our goal is to share clear, concise, easily understandable information that describes the course that global, regional, and national climate action is taking, in order to prepare you for meaningful and informed participation.

The toolkit booklets interrelate and are designed so that you can read them in succession and progressively deepen your knowledge of each of the topics. You can also consult them independently, according to your needs.

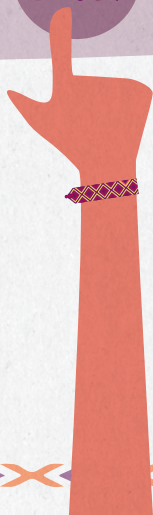
THIS BOOKLET USES THE TERMS YOUTH AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO REFER TO ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE BETWEEN 10 AND 24 YEARS OLD

0 TO 17

10 TO 18

10 TO 24

15 TO 24



## Volume I

### **Climate glossary for young people:**

Important concepts and definitions that every climate activist needs to know.

## Volume II

### **Tools for climate action:**

Key tools for making progress towards the global climate action goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, including the Paris Agreement, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and other tools.

## Volume III

### **What is climate governance?**

Information about climate governance and the decision-making process at the national and international levels, including the Framework Convention on Climate Change, how it works and the mechanisms for participation.

## Volume IV

### **The Paris Agreement for young people:**

Details of the Agreement, its importance, and all its articles in simple language.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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This toolkit has been updated and revised for the MENA region based on feedback from young people in this region.



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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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<b>AC</b>	Adaptation Committee
<b>ACE</b>	Action for Climate Empowerment
<b>AILAC</b>	Independent Association for Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>ALBA</b>	Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America
<b>AOSIS</b>	Alliance of Small Island States
<b>BINGO</b>	Constituency Business and Industry NGOs
<b>CACAM</b>	Group of countries of Central Asia, Caucasus, Albania and Moldova
<b>CMA</b>	Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement
<b>COP</b>	Conference of the Parties
<b>COY</b>	Conference of Youth
<b>CTCN</b>	Climate Technology Centre and Network
<b>EIG</b>	Environmental Integrity Group
<b>ENGO</b>	Constituency of Environmental NGOs
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse Gas
<b>IPCC</b>	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
<b>IPO</b>	Indigenous Peoples Organizations
<b>LCIPP</b>	Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform
<b>LGMA</b>	Local Government and Municipal Authorities
<b>LMDC</b>	Like-Minded Developing Countries



<b>MOCIC</b>	Citizen Movement against Climate Change
<b>NAMA</b>	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action
<b>NAPA</b>	National Adaptation Programmes of Action
<b>NDC</b>	Nationally Determined Contribution
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organization
<b>PCCB</b>	Paris Committee on Capacity Building
<b>Pre-COP</b>	Preparatory meeting for the Conference of Parties
<b>RINGO</b>	Research and Independent NGOs
<b>SBI</b>	Subsidiary Body for Implementation
<b>SBSTA</b>	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice
<b>SCAC</b>	Civil Society for Climate Action
<b>SCF</b>	Standing Committee on Finance
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SICA</b>	Central American Integration System
<b>TEC</b>	Technology Executive Committee
<b>TUNGO</b>	Trade Union NGOs
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>WGC</b>	Women and Gender Constituency
<b>WIM</b>	Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage
<b>YOUNGO</b>	Constituency of Youth NGOs



# INTRODUCTION

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Building climate solutions is a complex, global-scale process that involves and is relevant to all sections of society. Climate change governance is linked to countries' development, and the well-being of nature and people.



For processes to be participatory and result in efficient and effective climate action, people's rights and the regulations that protect them must be taken into account. It is also vital that climate decisions and policies are sensitive to the perceptions, interests and rights of vulnerable populations. Young people are important actors for climate action success, and their participation in climate decision-making processes is a human right.

This guide focuses on the climate negotiation and decision-making processes that impact our well-being and set the course for climate action.

## It covers the following topics:



What multilevel climate governance is and its implications for climate change decision-making processes.



How climate governance is developed at the national level, analysing who its actors are and which processes may offer opportunities to participate.



How international climate change negotiations are carried out: this section gives a detailed explanation of how negotiation processes work, the relevant agencies and how social actors get involved.





# WHAT IS MULTILEVEL CLIMATE GOVERNANCE

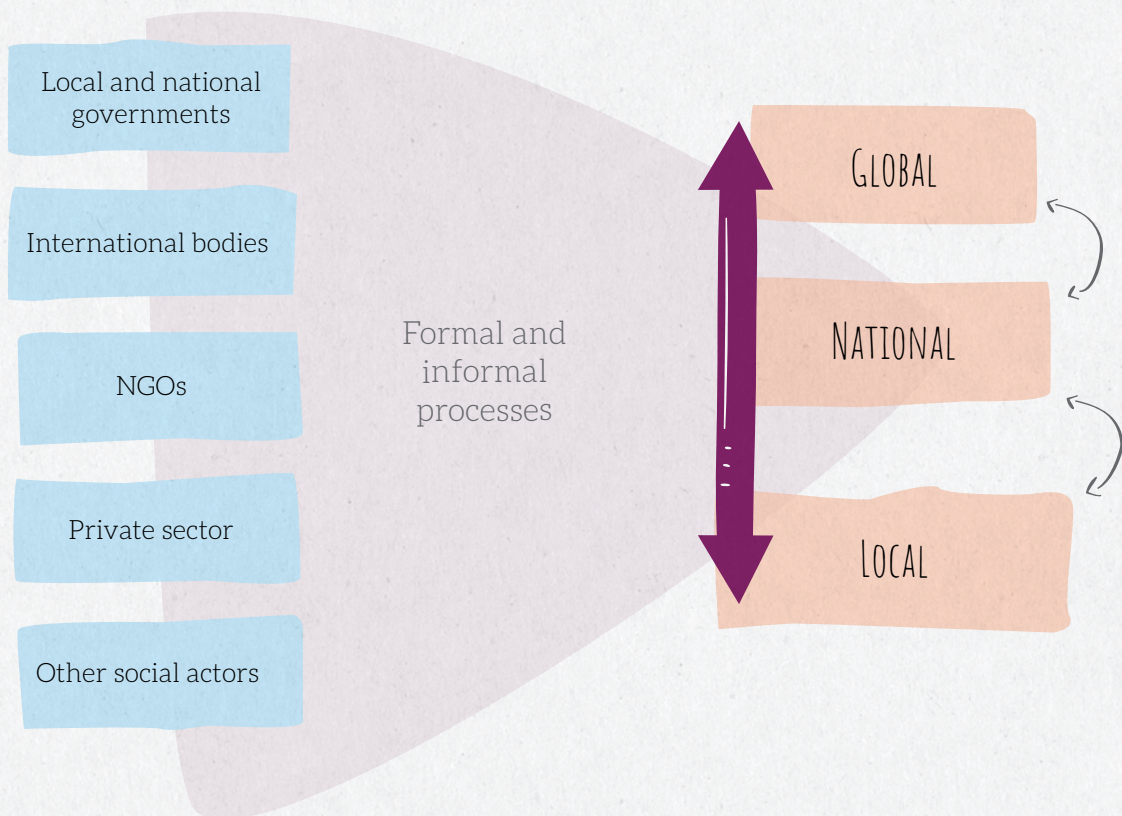
Multilevel climate governance is a continuous process of discussions and negotiations involving a diverse group of national and local governments, international organizations, the private sector, NGOs and other social actors.

Its purpose is to promote opportunities and prompt action to address climate change. These decision-making and discussion processes may be formal or informal, flexible and adaptive, and take place at various levels: local, national, regional or international.




Given the global, national and local reach of the impacts of climate change, multilevel governance is crucial to address its multilevel causes and impacts, and the participation of all social actors is necessary to provide an effective response.

## Multilevel climate governance<sup>1</sup>




The comprehensive nature of multilevel governance also means that it strengthens and promotes innovation, problem-solving capacity, knowledge sharing, and the development of solutions that benefit additional sectors. In addition, it can make decision-making and public policy processes more efficient and create mechanisms that can be adapted to specific contexts and a wide range of topics. Therefore, when trying to understand climate-related decision-making processes, we need to bear in mind their multilevel nature.


### Multilevel climate governance:




Ensures coherence between local, national and international plans and policies.




Promotes collaboration, innovation and learning among actors and authorities at various levels.




Integrates the knowledge, ideas and perspectives of the different levels and sections of society.



Establishes objectives, mechanisms, policies and solutions jointly, ensuring that they maintain a certain level of harmony.



Establishes tools or structures for information exchange, decision-making, follow-up, monitoring and reporting.



Enables better collaboration between actors at different levels through the agreement of clear roles, relationships and responsibilities.<sup>2</sup>





# NATIONAL OR SUBNATIONAL CLIMATE GOVERNANCE

Many decision-making processes take place at the national level or subnational level (meaning a country's territorial divisions), especially on the creation of programmes, public policies and regulations. Climate action is mainly implemented at these levels.

Actors from various levels and subject areas are involved in the dialogue and negotiation processes, regardless of the decision maker's level of authority. These national and subnational decision-making spaces are opportunities for public participation, which youth organizations can take advantage of.

Let's start by getting to know the different social actors and their roles in national climate governance.

## Social actors and their roles in decision-making

Participation in environmental and climate decision-making processes is a human right. All people, including young people and the organizations that represent them, have the right to participate in climate decision-making processes, and the State has a duty to ensure that this right can be exercised.

This list of actors is helpful for understanding who is involved in climate-related decisions:



### Public sector

This includes public institutions, ministries and other entities that represent the national government or other State powers. These actors are responsible for the development of public policies, regulations and decision-making at the national or subnational level.<sup>3</sup>



### Local governments

This is the level of public administration closest to citizens. Their role is to make locally implementable decisions that fit within climate action, including within the objectives of international agreements such as the Paris Agreement.<sup>4</sup>



### Civil society

This includes various types of organizations that represent the people, who have the right to participate in climate decision-making processes. These organizations contribute to decision-making processes with comments, opinions and proposals based on their local, ancestral, traditional, technical and scientific knowledge and experience. They can influence decision-making processes by contextualizing discussions within citizens' experiences, interests, rights and opinions. Civil society also drives local-level action that helps improve the conditions for community adaptation. Organizations for children and young people are also part of civil society and have the same right to participate.<sup>5</sup>





## Private sector

This is one of the sectors that generates the most greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, meaning that the action it takes to reduce these emissions is an important component of climate action. Action that should be prioritized includes changing production patterns, modifying energy matrices, and developing more sustainable production cycles (or distribution and marketing systems). Because of its responsibility for emissions and its potential to create mitigation and adaptation technologies, the private sector is an essential actor in climate action.<sup>6</sup>



## Academia

This sector provides knowledge and research that enables informed decisions to be made based on scientific knowledge. It also makes essential resources and spaces to strengthen education by creating new opportunities, increasing capacities and promoting understanding of the changes needed, making the process more effective and efficient.<sup>7</sup>



# Key processes and agencies for advocacy

Participatory processes may involve developing workshops, surveys, consultations, receiving documents or studies and even virtual participation spaces. They may also promote the creation of permanent spaces for citizen consultations and participation in climate governance. These processes are opportunities for young people to participate at the national or subnational level.

This section describes the main fora, so that you can set out your strategies and advocacy action. Bear in mind that these spaces may vary from country to country.

**1** Creating public policies and making decisions that directly relate to the international climate governance processes of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): For example, the national communications that each country must present to the UNFCCC may be a starting point for climate activists to request spaces for accountability regarding climate ambition in their countries. These communications include a national inventory of GHG emissions and other details on climate action implementation.

**2** Updating the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs): All countries must update their NDCs every five years. To enrich this process, different social sectors, local governments, ministries, public institutions and international organizations should participate. Young people should be part of any consultations or workshops so that they can add their comments and perspectives and increase the ambition and effectiveness of the new NDCs.

**3** Creating or updating other climate action tools: in addition to the NDCs, there are other tools for climate action that enable us to participate in national climate governance:

- **Nationally Appropriate Mitigation actions (NAMAs):** These sectoral processes should be linked through consultations with the relevant social actors. Young people in the sectors linked to these processes should be guaranteed participation.<sup>8</sup>

- **Long-term strategies:** Because they are long-term, these spaces do not come up frequently, but there is great potential for participation since very few countries have developed long-term strategies. Young people can participate to ensure that these strategies are sensitive to young people's rights and needs.<sup>9</sup>

- **National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs):** These are created voluntarily by the least developed countries because they are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Their implementation enables participation in the national or subnational consultation process through contributions and proposals.<sup>10</sup>

- **Adaptation Communications under the Paris Agreement:** These provide an opportunity to discover the status of adaptation actions implemented in your country. Information gained from this will enable you to advocate and request spaces for dialogue with the authorities.<sup>11</sup>

**4** Creating framework laws, regulations or public policies on climate change: these processes can generate dialogue and consultations that may inform the development and regulation of standards. They regulate climate governance at the national level and set out duties and rights that people can claim on climate action.

**5** Decision-making on issues less directly related to climate change: climate change must be considered a cross-cutting issue that can be included in the processes of other important issues, such as water, education, gender, energy or finance.

## More opportunities to make a difference

Climate action is directly related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 13 on climate action calls for urgent measures to address climate change and its effects. However, climate action can also be linked to all the other SDGs. You can influence their implementation processes, which contribute to the socioeconomic transformation needed to address climate change.

# INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE GOVERNANCE

International climate negotiations are the processes developed to create agreements between countries to promote and ensure ambitious action against climate change and its effects. Negotiations within the international framework are important because they set out the guidelines to be followed at the global level under the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities aimed at ensuring sustainable development.<sup>12</sup>



The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities is a fundamental principle of the UNFCCC that recognizes countries' different capacities and responsibilities in the face of climate change.

What happens during climate negotiations has consequences for now and the future. That is why young people can (and should) have their say in negotiation processes, sharing their perspectives and knowledge and participating in discussions on the various issues.

Conferences and meetings related to climate negotiations have certain mechanisms that regulate participation, and it is important to understand them. In this section you will learn about the process and how you can get involved.

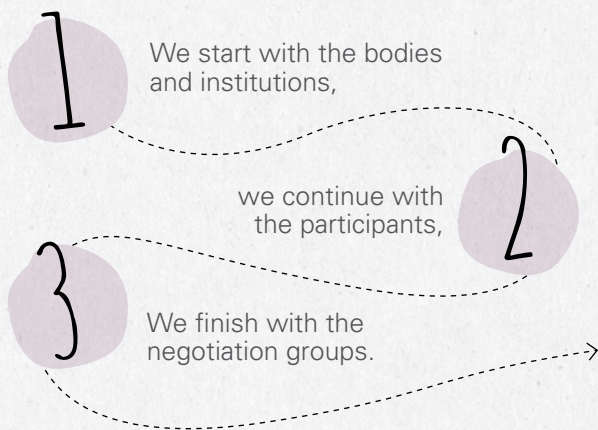
## The negotiation process

The decision-making processes of the UNFCCC climate negotiations bring together local, national and international actors. Climate summits and related activities are attended by actors from local governments, international or national NGOs, international organizations, the national or transnational private sector, and organizations representing children and young people.

These actors, or the groups that represent them, can participate in side-discussions and conferences, request bilateral meetings, intervene during plenary sessions or during meetings of the Convention bodies alongside country delegations. In these spaces, actors from different areas of influence, such as industry, academia, agriculture or biodiversity, all mix. They can also take action at the international, national or local level to reinforce the multilevel nature of climate governance.<sup>13</sup>

While the official delegations of each country have the power to make decisions in UNFCCC climate negotiations, active exchanges with the different actors are fundamental for influencing and advancing the decision-making process.

You already know that climate negotiations take place in the UNFCCC<sup>14</sup>. Now let's look at its structure and its members and participants, under the following headings:



# 1 Bodies and institutions

## → Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC:

This is made up of all the countries that are part of the UNFCCC. It is the supreme body which regulates the implementation of the Convention and any related instruments.

## → Conference of the Parties serve as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA)<sup>15</sup>:

This consists of all the countries that have signed the Paris Agreement. Countries that are part of the UNFCCC but have not signed the Paris Agreement can participate as observers. The role of the conference is to monitor the Paris Agreement's implementation and make decisions to promote its implementation.

## → Bureau:

This is made up of country representatives assigned by the five regions. It provides advice and guidance on the work of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

## → Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA):

Advises on climate science, environment and technology matters. It adopts conclusions which are then submitted to the Conference of the Parties.







## 2 Participants

Climate negotiations involve different participants with different roles.

### → Countries:

In the UNFCCC, a Party is a country. All countries can participate in the climate negotiations. Countries that have signed and deposited the official UNFCCC document only intervene in decisions or agreements once they have carried out the corresponding ratification process.

Countries that have not done so can only participate as observers.

*Countries meet through the Conference of the Parties (COP). They are divided into five regional groups:*

- › Africa
- › Asia
- › Central and Eastern Europe
- › Latin America and the Caribbean
- › Western Europe along with other countries (Australia, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and the United States).

These groups do not function as negotiation groups, but are used to elect the Chair and Bureau for each session of the COP. The presiding officer usually coincides with the regional rotation. This rotation is important because countries agree on a country within their region to host the COP and elect a Chair from that same country to facilitate the session. Sessions of the COP rotate by region to ensure greater representation and participation.<sup>16</sup>

If your organization is admitted by the COP, do not hesitate to contact the constituency focal points, whose contact details are available on the UNFCCC website.



### → Observers:

There are several groups of observers who attend negotiations but cannot vote or object to proceedings. *This category includes:*

- › People from the General Secretariat
- › United Nations organizations
- › Intergovernmental organizations
- › Non-governmental organizations

For NGOs to be admitted to a negotiation as an observer, they must submit their application to the relevant COP. They must fill out a form with the organization's contact details and express whether they wish to join a constituency.

Admitted NGOs are grouped into constituencies according to interests and perspectives. Each of these constituencies has a focal point who interacts with the Convention Secretariat.<sup>17</sup>

*The constituencies are as follows:*

- Business and Industry NGOs (BINGO)
- Environmental NGOs (ENGO)
- Local government and municipal authorities (LGMA)
- Indigenous peoples organizations (IPO)
- Research and independent NGOs (RINGO)
- Trade union NGOs (TUNGO)
- Women and Gender Constituency (WGC)
- Youth NGOs (YOUNGO)



It is not mandatory for NGOs to join a constituency, but it makes participation more effective. NGOs can participate in the following negotiation spaces:

- › Development of statements and interventions made by groups in the negotiation bodies.
- › Meetings, when the terms of reference allow observers to participate.
- › Side events and exhibitions.
- › Provision of written input on their views and information on various issues under negotiation.



You have the right to participate in decisions regarding climate action. As a young person, you can join international negotiations through your country's official delegation, join the NGOs admitted to the UNFCCC, or participate through YOUNGO, which is the official youth representation group at the UNFCCC.



Accredited journalists can participate in negotiations as observers. The number of spaces given to the press depends on the issues being discussed in the negotiations and their relevance.

The Secretariat has encouraged journalists from developing countries to attend negotiation sessions to promote media coverage in these countries, where awareness of the climate change process is often low.

### ➔ **Non-state actors:**

To strengthen processes, non-state actors can participate in UNFCCC dialogue spaces, which may include civil society, the private sector, financial institutions, cities and other subnational authorities, local communities and indigenous peoples.<sup>18</sup>





# Negotiation groups<sup>19</sup>

In international negotiations, countries have historically organized themselves into coalitions or negotiating blocs to align their positions and make the process more viable, since there must be consensus among all countries for an agreement to be reached.

Blocs are organized according to geographic areas and positions on specific issues, power-based coalitions, or institutional or political groups. Groups are as follows:

## 1 Arab States

*Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen*

## 2 Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)

*It is a coalition of 40 islands, the majority are from the G-77 and they are very vulnerable to sea levels rising*

## 3 Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America - ALBA

*Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua y Venezuela*

## 4 Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean - AILAC

*Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay and Peru*

## 5 G77 and China

*Developing countries and China*

## 6 African Group

*A subgroup within the G77 consisting of 53 African countries*

## 7 BASIC Group

*The emerging countries of Brazil, South Africa, India and China*

## 8 CACAM Group

*A group of countries of Central Asia, Caucasus, Albania and Moldova*

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## Like-minded Developing Countries (LMDC) Group on Climate Change

*Algeria, Bangladesh, Bolivia, China, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mali, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela and Vietnam*

10

## Environmental Integrity Group (EIG)

*Georgia, the Republic of Korea, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Monaco and Switzerland*

11

## Umbrella Group

*Australia, Belarus, Canada, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Norway, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United States*

12

## Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)

*Algeria, Angola, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela*

13

## Least Developed Countries

*A subgroup within the Group of 77 (G77) made up of the 48 least developed countries, as classified by the United Nations*

14

## Central American Integration System (SICA)

*Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama*

15

## European Union (EU)

*The 27 EU countries*

These are the groups that have historically participated in international climate negotiations. A country can be a member of one or more negotiation groups, and other groups emerge as negotiations progress. We suggest that you investigate the interactive digital platforms which are regularly updated and show the dynamics between the different groups.

## Advocacy and negotiation spaces

International climate negotiations and advocacy take place in different spaces under the UNFCCC framework and can be formal or informal. There are also other related spaces that influence decision-making. You can make an impact in the following spaces:

### **Plenaries:**

Formal negotiations take place in the plenary sessions of the COP and the Agreements of the UNFCCC (such as the CMA). They also take place in plenary meetings of the subsidiary bodies. During formal negotiations, positions which have been informally determined and negotiated are consolidated. Simultaneous interpretation services are provided so that negotiations can be followed. All countries and representations can participate. Accredited observers and the press may also participate if the Chair of the COP allows it.

### **Informal groups:**

The purpose of these is to achieve consensus on the different issues before the formal sessions. Informal sessions have fewer observers and are held in small rooms. Observers may attend, unless the host or moderator asks them to leave. The sessions are usually in English and happen at the same time as other similar sessions, so delegations can attend them all. If this happens, absent parties may be excluded from some of the decisions made.

Informal sessions are organized by the Chair of the COP or by the Chair of the supporting bodies. There are different types of informal groups:

- **Contact groups:** these are convened by the COP or the supporting subsidiary bodies.
- **Joint contact groups:** these are multiple contact groups joined together.
- **Drafting groups:** these are made up of delegates who volunteer or convene to help draft the text to be discussed.
- **Friends of the Chair:** the Chair may invite a group of prominent negotiators to help achieve informal consensus on certain issues.
- **High-level segment:** these are the segments that occur in the key decision-making bodies. Political leaders from each country come together and give the political support needed to reach agreements.

## Other advocacy and negotiation spaces

### **Sidebars:**

Negotiations sometimes happen informally at cafes, dinners or receptions organized with key governments.

### **Bilateral meetings:**

The aim of this type of negotiation is to understand a country's position and a negotiation's progress.

### **Side events and exhibitions:**

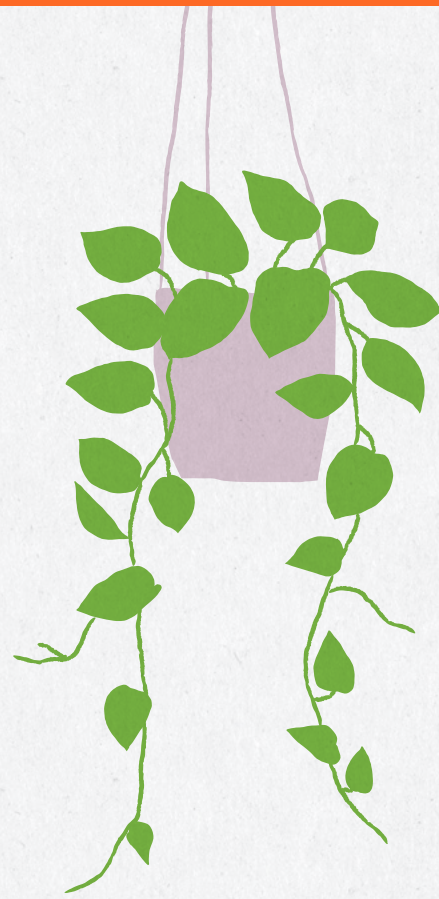
These are intended to benefit people who attend the COP or subsidiary body spaces, through information and debates on matters related to the issues of their own negotiations. There are also external events and conferences that take place prior to the COP, such as the COY organized by YOUNGO.

### **Press conferences:**

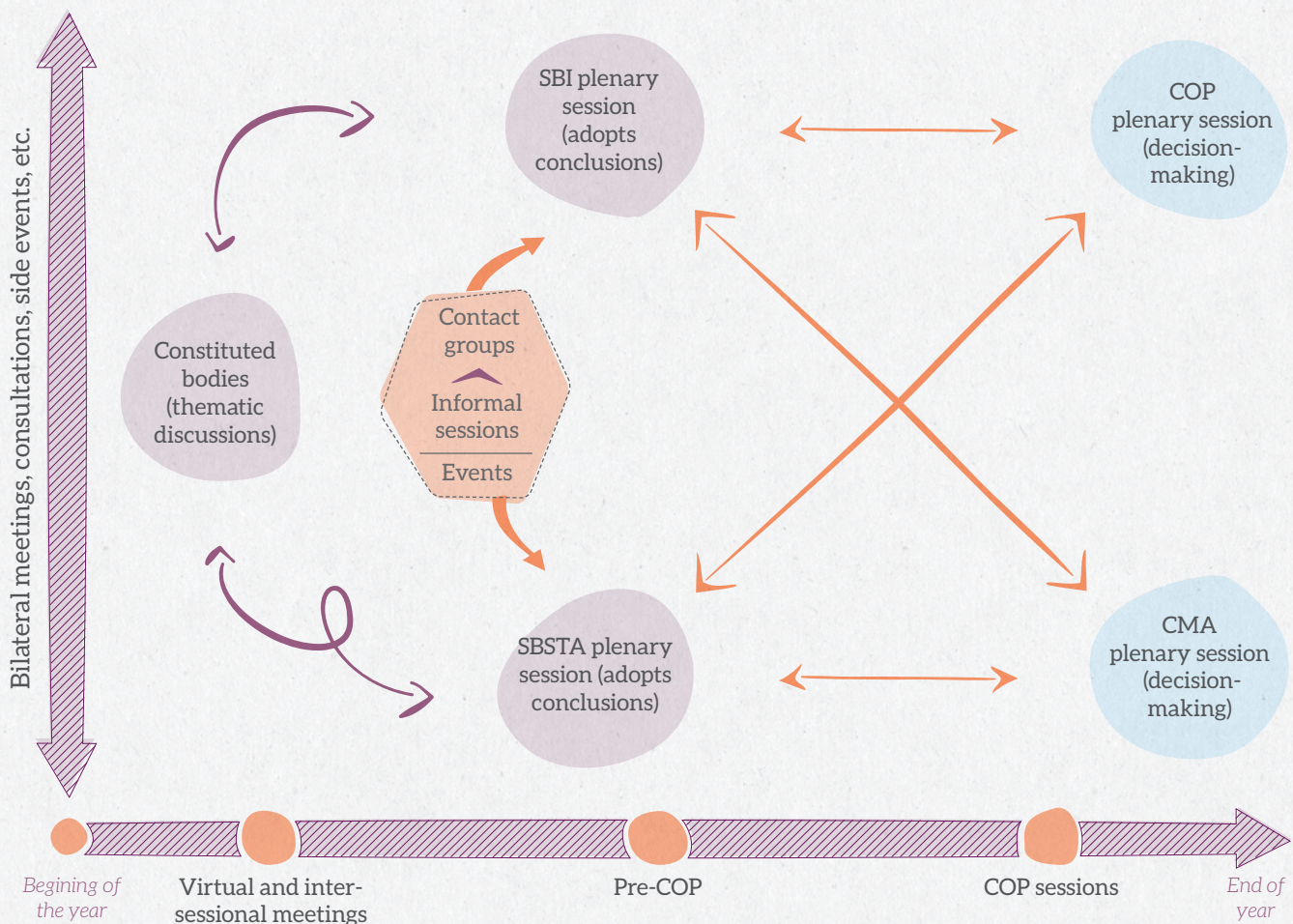
Countries can present press reports on the negotiations that are taking place. Reports should present the position of the country or negotiation group, be easy to understand and include an account of how the negotiations may affect the people's lives in each country or countries. These press reports may advance important issues, or obstruct them.

# The negotiation process

We have covered the institutions that make up the UNFCCC, which are necessary for countries to reach agreements and for these agreements to be implemented. We have also looked at which actors participate in and influence negotiations and the formal and informal negotiation spaces where you can have an impact. Now let's broadly look at the negotiation process. It is important to know that international climate change negotiations are a year-round process which culminates in the COP.



## The negotiation process<sup>20</sup>



Subsidiary bodies and working groups within the IPCC hold meetings to discuss and debate the issues that fall within their area of expertise and reach conclusions that will be brought to the attention of countries at the COP.

The constituted bodies (created under the framework of the UNFCCC or the adopted agreements) meet to make progress on the corresponding issues and to reach a consensus among different countries. The groups in charge of the negotiations also meet to discuss positions and to develop joint positions.

Prior to the COP, the Preparatory Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Pre-COP) is held. In this space, countries start to prepare the agreements to be presented at the COP and try to reach a consensus. During the Pre-COP, some political positions may come to light on the different issues.

At the end of the year, the COP takes place, starting with a plenary session where the meeting agenda is approved. This agenda includes the conclusions of the supporting bodies and the IPCC.

The work then passes to the plenaries of the subsidiary bodies and to the formed working groups. Depending on the issues included in the agenda, informal groups may be convened to seek consensus among countries on those issues.

The Chair of the negotiations decides when to start drafting a negotiating text, which may serve as a basis for the negotiations. This is done once they have received enough proposals from countries. The Chair may hold informal consultations with the negotiating blocs, with the aim of identifying issues of concern and finding common ground between the various positions. Similarly, the Chair may also make proposals when they consider countries ready to commit and agree to a text.

When the informal groups reach an agreement on the text, they pass the document to the supporting bodies and working groups so that they can present it in the respective plenary. If the informal groups have not reached an agreement, they continue negotiating. The Chair may convene a small group of negotiators, such as the so-called "Friends of the Chair", to reach a consensus. In the final plenary, the decisions agreed upon are adopted.

Activists are often involved in accountability for the functioning of the UNFCCC bodies and working groups and for the agreements adopted (such as the Paris Agreement).

# Key issues in international climate change negotiations

Issues in international climate change negotiations relate to the structure and the functioning of the UNFCCC and to the implementation of the agreements adopted by UNFCCC countries. Negotiations also take place on cross-cutting themes, such as inconsistent climate action among countries and the need to be more ambitious on climate action.

The main issues are:

## **Mitigation:**

Negotiations focus on efforts to reduce GHG emissions and to enhance sinks or natural areas that capture GHGs.

## **Adaptation:**

Climate change adaptation is discussed with a focus on how and how much the climate will change and adaptation needs and costs. Means of adapting, evaluating impact and vulnerabilities, and funding issues are also included in this issue.

## **Loss and damage:**

No official definition has been established for loss and damage, but it is commonly described as the adverse effects of climate change that people have been unable to cope with or adapt to. Discussions concern disaster reduction strategies and the means or mechanisms that can be implemented to address loss and damage, but it is important to bear in mind that this issue has different approaches.

A controversial issue has been "compensation" for loss and damages. Despite efforts to establish different shares of responsibility for the impacts, industrialized countries argue that these shares are difficult to assign.

## **Financing:**

Negotiations are based on financing mechanisms and on monitoring of financial support given and received. There is controversy over the definition of "particularly vulnerable countries", because these countries are to be given preference in the allocation of climate fund resources.

## **Transparency:**

Transparency has been a cross-cutting issue in international climate change negotiations since they began (when the UNFCCC was created). Transparency is essential for the measuring, reporting and verification of actions. Without it, the implementation of climate actions cannot be monitored. The entire collective effort depends on robust transparency.

## **Technology development and transfer:**

Countries discuss measures to promote, facilitate and finance the transfer of (or access to) technologies and appropriate practical knowledge to developing countries. They also discuss cooperation on developing and implementing technologies, practices and processes that may help to mitigate human-induced GHG emissions.

The issue of existing barriers to technology implementation, such as intellectual property rights, are also included in negotiations. To date, some low-carbon technologies have high costs and funding for new technologies is difficult to obtain.

## **Action for climate empowerment (ACE):**

Education, training and public awareness issues are also discussed in the negotiations, which are priority areas for ACE. Other issues include access to information on climate change, and international cooperation to generate materials, information and action to promote climate empowerment.

## **Gender:**

Countries have recognized the importance of involving women and men equally in UNFCCC processes and in the development and implementation of gender-sensitive national climate policies, which is why the Gender Plan of Action was adopted.

Countries also review progress made on gender balance targets and the implementation of a gender-sensitive climate policy.





### **Indigenous peoples:**

issues negotiated include the need to strengthen the knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and indigenous peoples regarding addressing and responding to climate change. The Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform was established for the comprehensive exchange of experiences and good practices on mitigation and adaptation, as a way of supporting the negotiation process.

### **Agriculture:**

Negotiations include agriculture-related issues through expert workshops and meetings and work with UNFCCC supporting bodies, which consider the vulnerabilities of agriculture to climate change and approaches to tackle food insecurity.

### **Cooperative implementation:**

Countries may choose to cooperate voluntarily to support the implementation of NDCs, with the aim of making climate action more ambitious. Negotiations are based on cooperative approaches and mechanisms that countries can implement, which are included in the Paris Agreement (article 6).

### **Capacity-building:**

Capacity-building is fundamental to achieve the objectives of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. Countries discuss ways in which this capacity can be built in each country through international cooperation.

### **Science:**

Effective interaction between climate science and policy is important for progress to be made in climate negotiations given that scientific observations, research and assessment continue to inform the international climate regime.



# BE INSPIRED!

Youth participation experiences at the regional and international levels

## The Official Youth Constituency at the UNFCCC (YOUNGO)

Young people are officially represented in UNFCCC climate change processes by YOUNGO. YOUNGO began as an organized initiative of young people who were attending the COPs, but could not find a space for representation during the 2009 climate negotiations. As a result, prior to COP11 in Montreal, young people met at the first COY and began the process of making an official space dedicated to young people at UNFCCC events. YOUNGO was officially recognized in 2011.



### Action taken

- YOUNGO holds the COY in the COP host country every year to empower children and young people around the world to take climate action.
- During the COP, YOUNGO takes part in plenary and negotiation sessions, organizes and participates in side events with countries and non-state actors, and advocates at negotiation meetings.
- Throughout the year, it participates in events and organizes webinars for capacity development.

### Challenges faced

- The inclusive participation of young people from the Global South in the negotiations.
- The inclusion of young people's input in final decisions.
- Language and connectivity barriers.

### Outcomes

- YOUNGO has empowered nearly 30,000 young people since 2009 of over 130 nationalities.
- The Katowice Rulebook, which recognizes the key role that young people play in implementing ACE and YOUNGO's participation in the ACE Youth Forum.
- We were consulted in multiple decision-making processes on the youth agenda's position on issues related to climate change.



## Guardians of Nature: Omar Kaziz

“Coming from Syria, we have little being done on climate action, as a country that has come out of a devastating decade lasting civil war and currently facing one of the worst modern history economic catastrophes. The climate crisis is a secondary issue for both the people and the government. Regardless, fires have been haunting our coasts and not much action is being taken or done.



This was Omar Kaziz's motivation to found Guardians of Nature, a movement that aims to raise awareness of the environment and sustainability and to promote climate protection. Omar is a young environmental and climate activist from Damascus (Syria). Based on an initiative developed by Omar in a three-day workshop, the movement now connects young Guardians of Nature who advocate for environmentally friendly policies and climate action.

### Actions taken

- Guardians of Nature started by fighting the issue of plastic bags by developing reusable and modern tote-bags that have multiple social impacts, such as supporting women in need.
- Guardians of Nature won funding of 1,000 USD from the UNICEF's Generation Unlimited program.
- Omar represented Guardians of Nature in several events, such as the One Young World Summit in Munich, a workshop with UN Envoy on Youth, UNDP's Youth Leadership Program and the Youth4Climate event.

### Challenges

- The main challenge Guardians of Nature faced is the instability of life in Syria that caused the team to disassociate several times due to travel, etc.
- Bureaucratic problems prevented Omar from attending the international Youth4Climate meeting in Milan in person, and he could only participate online.

### Outcomes

- The main outcome so far is raising awareness between youth leaders, changemakers, and NGOs in Syria. This step is important as inspiring young leaders and educating them about the importance of climate action makes them Guardians of Nature.
- The Guardians of Nature team is currently working to officially launch the movement, having built a strong base and plan.

# Youth4Nature

Youth4Nature is a youth-led, international non-profit organization that educates, empowers, and mobilises young people to lead on solutions to the ecological crisis that are science-based, aligned with traditional, local and indigenous knowledge, and grounded in climate and intergenerational justice. Its focus is on nature-based solutions, climate justice and indigenous rights to nature. This is done through three pillars: knowledge-sharing to build a strong knowledge base among young people, capacity-building to equip young leaders with the skills and resources they need to effect change, and storytelling to digitally share stories together with the storytellers at high level decision-making events and connect storytellers for peer-to-peer learning and support. Youth4Nature hosts a team of volunteers, called the Global Ambassadors. In West Asia, this team is represented by members from Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, and Jordan and is always looking for more members.



## Action taken

- The West Asia Regional Engagement team amplifies stories from young storytellers in West Asia through microfunding, project support, and building further capacities.
- The team hosts the Ajyal Podcast, which is intended as a hub for knowledge sharing between West Asian youth and youth from around the world on nature and climate issues. So far, the Ajyal Podcast hosted three series on climate justice, nature-based solutions and decision-making in the Arabian Gulf region.
- In addition, team members from Syria and Yemen were sent to COP26 to build the capacity of young activists for climate negotiations.

## Challenges

- Youth4Nature is looking for further support from high-level decision-makers and regional donors in order to strengthen its work and scale its efforts.

## Outcomes

- Youth4Nature sent a delegation representing all five UN regional groups to the Climate Action Summit in New York in 2019, where the young environmental and climate activists advocated for nature-based solutions and youth engagement.
- Youth4Nature also hosted a global youth delegation that attended COP25 in Madrid to ensure that young people are heard and involved in climate decision-making.
- Youth4Nature was represented at COP26 in Glasgow with 24 young members to advocate for the inclusion of young voices in climate policies.
- Youth4Nature is in the process of scaling its work, building stronger regional connections with youth-led movements and increasing youth-led work on the ground.







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