

# 2.4 CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN CLIMATE ACTION

## Key issues in East Asia and the Pacific

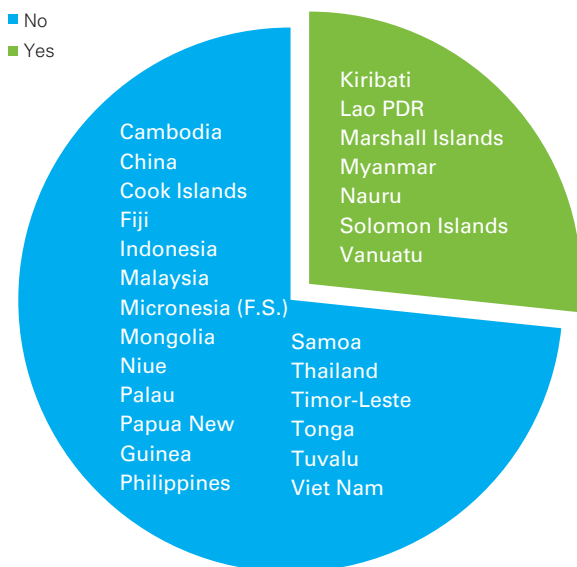
The Asia and the Pacific region accounts for 50 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. The East and Northeast Asia sub-regions are the largest emitters, while Pacific Island Countries are responsible for only 3 per cent of emissions.<sup>1</sup> While climate change affects everyone, the most affected are children and young people, resulting in increased numbers of deaths due to natural hazards, growth in non-communicable diseases, and damage to habitation and infrastructure. In recent years, the UN Human Rights Council and the Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child have reiterated that inaction on climate change violates children's right to inhabit a safe and sustainable planet. Children will inherit the consequences of climate change, even though they are least responsible for it.

Countries are laying out national priorities for climate mitigation and adaptation action through the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that are a core element of the Paris Agreement on climate change. Some have prioritized water, agriculture and health for climate adaptation.



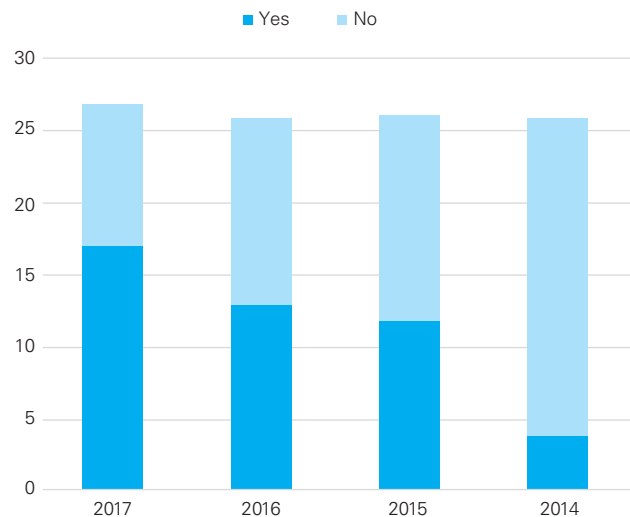
Increased synergy and integrated action between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation have also been highlighted by countries as priorities for building climate resilience. While there are some examples of children taking environmental action at community level to address climate change, environmental pollution and degradation, governments have often undermined the role that can be played by them. The focus on children's engagement is not only important to achieving Sustainable Development Goals 13,<sup>2</sup> 16<sup>3</sup> and 17,<sup>4</sup> but also central to the rights of children and adolescents as custodians of the planet, and as such, mobilizing their ideas and voices can lead to better action on the part of governments.

**Number of countries that include education and youth in national climate policies, plans and budgets**



Source of data: Nationally Determined Contributions submitted to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

**The national policy on climate change or on environment makes reference to children**



Source of data: UNICEF country offices

1 In 2012, (source: ESCAP 2017).  
 2 "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts."  
 3 "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."  
 4 "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development."

## Driving results for children

As part of the UN development system's support to help countries develop and accelerate the implementation of the NDCs, UNICEF and its partners focus on promoting child and adolescent participation at country and regional levels, in both policy design and programme implementation. This include contributing to the following results:

- Improved understanding of the role of children and adolescents in climate action;
- Child and adolescent participation mechanisms established in design, decision-making, planning and implementation of climate action at country and sub-regional levels;
- Increased climate action proposed and implemented through participation of children and adolescents;
- Enhanced transparency, responsiveness, ownership, equity and participation in the development and implementation of NDCs;
- Improved transparency and accountability of country actions in implementing their NDCs.

## Key programme strategies



### Systems and capacity

- Strengthen national and sub-national government capacity to engage children and adolescents in planning and decision making related to climate change.
- Build the capacity of formal and informal institutions to empower children and adolescents with skills related to climate change and environmental sustainability.
- Support innovative solutions developed by children and adolescents to promote climate action.



### Data, evidence and knowledge

- Identify good practices in child- and adolescent-led climate action across the region for replication and expansion, in the context of UN support for accelerating the NDCs.
- Invest in research on the impacts of climate change on child and adolescent health and well-being (looking at areas such as non-communicable diseases, violence prevention, and learning outcomes).



### Partnerships and alliances

- Work with community networks (e.g. youth groups, scouts, faith-based organizations) to promote community-level action on climate change.



### Behaviour change

- National social mobilization campaigns to raise awareness of the roles of children and adolescents in promoting accountability and transparency in national climate action.

