
DECLARATION ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND CLIMATE ACTION

FAQS

What is the Declaration?

The Declaration was launched in December 2019 during COP25, at a high-level event convened by the COP25 Presidency of the Government of Chile in Madrid, Spain.

UNICEF, in collaboration with YOUNGO¹ and the Children's Environmental Rights Initiative coalition², supported the Presidency, champion governments, and young people from around the world to launch the Declaration in a bid to accelerate inclusive child- and youth-responsive climate policies and action at all levels. The Declaration is based on core priorities identified by YOUNGO members and children and youth globally.

Why is the Declaration important?

The Declaration represents a first-of-its-kind set of commitments by States to consistently consider children's specific needs, rights and perspectives in their climate policies and action at all levels. This comprehensive framework seeks to respond to the fact that the climate crisis is a child rights crisis, while also recognizing the enormous capacity of children and youth to be powerful agents of change. It also seeks to address the widespread omission of children from climate policies, strategies and plans. It is imperative that we put children at the heart of climate action and invest in practical solutions that protect children from the effects of climate change. Operationalizing the Declaration would have a transformative effect for children's rights and our ability to meet both the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals.

How many countries have signed?

Please check the UNICEF website for the latest list of signatories.³

Can the Declaration be changed?

The Declaration is based on priorities identified by children and youth themselves, and consensus on the text was reached by the champion governments that launched the Declaration in 2019. In 2021, Governments of the Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs suggested further minor changes, which were accepted by YOUNGO. The Declaration text is therefore considered closed at this stage, however an annex to the Declaration has been developed to provide additional context and guidance on each commitment, and which can be updated at more regular intervals.

Is there any additional guidance to accompany the Declaration?

Yes, an annex has been developed to provide supporting guidance for taking forward operationalization of the Declaration's commitments. This guidance is intended to provide more context, information, and supporting resources/tools where available. It also seeks to address additional comments and suggestions received from signatory States to further strengthen certain dimensions of the Declaration. The guidance can be further updated. Please contact the UNICEF team for further information.

Signatories may wish to further adapt this guidance to the national level context in order to reflect existing priorities and initiatives. Such an exercise could provide an excellent

¹ YOUNGO is the official Children and Youth constituency to the UNFCCC

² CERI is a global multi-stakeholder coalition working to secure children's right to a healthy environment

³ <https://www.unicef.org/environment-and-climate-change/climate-declaration>

opportunity for establishing or strengthening collaboration with relevant partners including child- and youth-led organizations and networks.

As co-custodians of the Declaration, UNICEF, YOUNGO and CERI partners stand ready to support your government to realize these commitments.

How can our government sign?

Your Government can sign by sending a scanned copy of the signed Declaration to climate@unicef.org and the CERI Secretariat at secretariat@childrenenvironment.org. You will receive a confirmation email from UNICEF.

You are also kindly invited to identify a focal point and contact details for follow-up.

What happens next?

Once confirmation is received, your Government will be included on the list of Member State signatories on the Declaration [webpage](#) of the co-custodians. We will announce your commitment on social media and showcase your alignment during key moments and events around the world. We invite you to announce this news through your own channels as well, using the hashtag #MyPlanetMyRights.

While alignment with the Declaration is a critical first, step, this must be viewed as an opportunity to take stock and operationalize the commitments encompassed within the Declaration, at local, national, regional and international levels.

Signatory governments are invited to join a “High Ambition Coalition for Children” (HACC) with the aim of driving a significantly enhanced focus on the rights of children and young people to a safe climate and healthy environment moving forward in the implementation of the Paris Agreement, SDGs and other relevant policy processes. This is an exciting opportunity for progressive governments to work hand-in-hand with children and young people to realize more ambitious action that places the needs, wellbeing and perspectives of children and future generations at its heart.

It is envisaged that briefings will be convened in the margins of key multilateral events to discuss opportunities to collectively promote and fulfil Declaration commitments, and that signatories will be invited to participate in high-level events to celebrate progress, showcase best practice examples of implementation at the national level, and to call for further action.

Signatories are also encouraged to highlight their alignment with the Declaration and the action they are taking to operationalize its commitments through relevant decision-making processes and fora, and to advocate towards other countries to join.

Recognizing that the strongest way to fulfil child rights is through concrete and specific policy commitments to children at local and national levels, we hope that your alignment with the Declaration may inspire:

- Consultation and collaboration across relevant Ministries/Departments to ensure a whole-of-government, cross-sectoral approach to operationalization of the Declaration;
- Publicly announcing new and/or improved laws, policies or programmes that support the operationalization of commitments contained in the Declaration;
- Organizing a multi-stakeholder national summit or event on child- and youth-responsive climate policies and action, to promote awareness of the Declaration, showcase the work being done by your government, and identify a plan of action for next steps, with the participation of children and adolescents;
- Convening a parliamentary dialogue or debate on the Declaration and linking children’s rights, the Paris Agreement and SDGs.

How will progress be monitored?

As your Government takes steps to operationalize the Declaration, please share developments and plans with us so that we can bring visibility to exemplary work. We encourage you to make the Declaration visible on your Government website, and to inform/engage relevant stakeholders, for example through events at the national level, as suggested above.

In addition, signatories are encouraged to include information with respect to the Declaration and its implementation through relevant policies and reporting processes such as Nationally Determined Contributions, National Adaptation Plans, national Action for Climate Empowerment strategies, UNFCCC national communications, the SDG Voluntary National Review mechanism, Universal Periodic Review, and reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.