

COP28, December 2023



## She Leads Climate Cohort Youth Manifesto

We, a group of girls and young women climate advocates from Africa and the MENA region, stand united with girls and young women across the globe in our commitment to shaping a planet that thrives on equity, inclusivity, and environmental stewardship. In the face of unprecedented challenges, we come together not just as victims of the climate crisis but as catalysts for a future we believe in—one where climate justice is not just a goal but a lived reality for all.

Climate-induced events such as extreme weather events, sea-level rise, and droughts can force communities, especially girls and young women to increased risks of violence, human trafficking, and exploitation.

Addressing the unique needs of women and girls in a climate crisis empowers us, girls and young women, to actively participate in decision-making processes, adapt to changing environments, and build resilience within our communities.

### Our voices matter, our call to action

The **She Leads Climate Cohort** is urging all Parties at COP28 to listen to our voices and include us in decision-making processes, as we bring fresh perspectives, innovative ideas and a determination to shape our futures. Therefore, we would like to demand **FIVE tangible solutions** to address the challenges we face in this global climate crisis.

#### 1. Support and resource girls' leadership in climate action and policy processes

Those on the frontlines of the climate crisis should not be side-lined when it comes to

decision-making. Yet, young women and girls are woefully under-represented in climate negotiations and decision making as active stakeholders. The rights of children and youth, in all their diversity, must be at the heart of all levels of climate action decision-making.

#### We are calling for governments to:

- a. Meaningfully involve girls and young women in shaping and implementing ALL climate and UNFCCC policies and strategies at local, national and international level and support in making climate processes inclusive. The perspectives and solutions of girls and young women are crucial in addressing the unique challenges faced by girls and young women affected by climate migration.
- b. Allocate additional budget and strengthen capacity of governments at all levels to ensure effective engagement of girls and young women in climate-related decision making.
- c. Increase public education and awareness on gender and social equality, climate change and disasters, to create a welcoming, open civic space for girls and young women to lead climate movements.

## 2. Invest in resilient and inclusive Climate Education

Governments should know that countries that have focused on girls' education have suffered far fewer losses from droughts and floods than countries with lower levels of girls' education.

### We insist on:

- a. Recognizing the importance of and integrating strategies to build climate resilience across education aligned with climate policies, plans and actions at all levels, including in National Adaptation Plans.
- b. To invest more in and strengthen Comprehensive and inclusive climate education. Girls and Young women need to be informed and engaged in climate action from an early age, ensuring they play a vital role in shaping the future.
- c. Strengthening and funding education as well as health systems to be more resilient, in the face of climate shocks that affect education and sexual and reproductive health rights of adolescent girls and young women.

## 3. Ensure Youth Centric Just Transitions

In order for the Green Deal's ambitious objectives to be achieved, the transition to a climate-neutral economy needs to be just and inclusive, leaving no one behind.

### We call for:

- d. Recognise and facilitate girls' right to participation in all forms of climate action, in a meaningful and safe way.
- e. Government-backed guarantee of green jobs for youth, make funding flexible and accessible to ensure decent employment opportunities in sustainable industries during the transition to a low-carbon economy.
- f. Ensuring information on disaster risks, climate impacts, risk reduction measures and relevant policy frameworks is easily accessible, and age- and gender- responsive and acknowledges governments' role in providing this information.

## 4. Increase Climate Finance: Give access to Youth-Led Climate Funds

Because we, girls and young women, are most at-risk and affected by climate change, we are best placed to identify our problems, and suggest and come up with solutions to address these unwelcome happenings, also to prepare our communities before a disaster strikes, but we need resources.

### We therefore demand:

- a. Equitable access to climate finance. Many in the Global South lack the resources to adapt to the impacts of climate change. We must ensure that financial support is distributed fairly and reaches those who need it most and who know best what is needed, including girls and young women.
- b. We call for the establishment of dedicated gender- and age- responsive climate funds managed and directed by youth-led organizations to support grassroots climate projects and innovations. This funding must be granted, flexible and accessible.
- c. Scale up funding for Anticipatory Action (AA) programming that is designed to strengthen existing systems to prevent climate-induced shocks from escalating into severe crises. Programming must be participatory and co-created with local communities, inclusive of diverse needs and able to reach the most marginalised.



## 5. Include child & women rights in Loss and Damage finance and decision-making

The impacts of loss and damage that we, girls and young women, are experiencing in our everyday lives as growing inequality, hunger, lack of access to education and health services, threats to livelihoods, risks of gender-based violence, child, early and forced marriage, and loss of loved ones must be recognised and addressed by all stakeholders.

### In addressing loss and damage, we call governments to:

- Adopt the assets of indigenous knowledge of African nations in the design, monitoring and implementation of Loss and damage processes, as well specifically include girls and young women in these decision making processes.
- Fund local adaptation and resilience building initiatives that guarantee sustainable, inclusive and green infrastructure.
- Deliver climate funds primarily in the form of grants, particularly for adaptation and loss and damage in countries in the Global South and fragile contexts.

## Conclusion

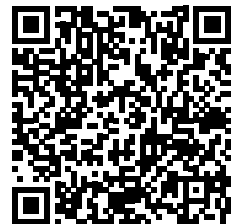
It's high time we ALL embrace a collaborative meaningful approach involving both finance providers and recipients in all their diversity like us in the LDCs from grass root to national level.

In conclusion, Girls and Young women deserve a seat at the table, not just as observers but as decision-makers, with their perspectives valued and integrated into climate policies and actions.

In a quest for a world so green,  
Where the skies are clear  
and the waters clean,  
Empower the future, hear the call,  
Together we rise, in unity we strive.  
Gender sensitivity actions,  
to all we derive.  
For I am a girl, my voice is my right.

Poem by Hadizatou, a She Leads youth advocate

Scan the qr-code to  
download the manifesto



## Youth climate advocates

Hadizatou, 24  
Esther, 24  
Emma, 20  
Farah, 25  
Fatoumata, 21  
Regina, 18  
Shamim, 21  
Kassier, 21  
Reem, 18

Habibatou, 22  
Ghiwa, 19  
Nissreen, 16  
Gloria, 25  
Mikre, 23  
Linda, 23  
Maggie, 16  
Jumah, 19  
Mayamah, 22



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