

NATIONAL YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S CLIMATE CHANGE STATEMENT - UGANDA 2025



"From Play to Policy: Young Minds
with Green Solutions"

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Preamble

We, the children and youth of Uganda, united under the Youth Climate Council (YCC) and inspired through the Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) 2025 and regional consultations held across the country, present this National Youth and Children's Climate Change Statement as a collective declaration of our voice, our lived realities, and our vision for a just, green, and inclusive Uganda. As the largest demographic group, constituting 78% of the national population, we demand to be seen, heard, and meaningfully engaged in shaping Uganda's climate future.

We are living in a time of cross cutting socio-economic crises characterized by extreme climate conditions, youth unemployment, and growing eco-anxiety are threatening our survival, our dignity, and our dreams. Yet, despite being among the most affected, children and youth continue to be excluded from policy spaces and implementation processes. This statement reflects the shared priorities, grounded experiences, and bold solutions of young people from all corners of Uganda including refugee host communities.

We are the power house exuding energy for climate action driving bold solutions through innovations, entrepreneurship, advocates, artists, and community builders. We are not just the leaders of tomorrow; we are the change makers of today.

We rise as key actors with the potential to shape a sustainable future through innovation and advocacy. We recognize that green jobs are a powerful solution addressing both unemployment and climate crisis by creating sustainable livelihoods that protect and restore our ecosystems. That is why this year, we have placed special emphasis on three core thematic areas: **Carbon Markets, Renewable Energy, and Green Jobs.**

Under the theme, ***“From Play to Policy: LCOY 2025 – Young Minds with Green Solutions,”*** we highlight the importance of engaging both children and youth in building pathways for a just green economy where our creativity fuels climate resilience and sustainable development.

At a time when Uganda is undergoing significant transitions in its climate policy landscape, particularly in the development of its third Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs 3.0), we, as the youth and children of this nation, forward our demands to the negotiating table. We have already taken the first step: organizing and leading consultations across Uganda to gather youth perspectives on climate action as well as **Youth engagement in NDC Monitoring and Implementation.** These dialogues were more than events; they were an expression of ownership and a call for justice.

As we present this statement, we urge all stakeholders, including the government, development partners, civil society, and the private sector, to respond not just with recognition, but with a commitment. We have laid the foundation and now we invite you to join us in building a future where youth and children are intentionally and consistently included in Uganda's climate policy processes, implementation, and accountability frameworks.

Let this be more than just a document. Let it be the beginning of shared ownership of our climate future.

Our Vision

We envision a Uganda where children and youth are not only at the heart of climate solutions but are recognized as strategic partners in shaping a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future.

We envision a nation where:

- Young people are meaningfully represented and actively lead in climate governance, from **grassroots to** national policy platforms.
- Green entrepreneurship thrives, powered by youth-led climate solutions for dignified green jobs that address both climate challenges and unemployment.
- Biodiversity is protected and ecosystems restored, with young people serving as stewards of nature.
- Every child and youth has access to climate change knowledge, resources, and financial support that is needed to take bold climate action.
- Youth are systematically included in the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting of Uganda's pledges to address climate change, as outlined in its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

Methodology

The Uganda National Youth Climate Statement 2025 was developed through a participatory, inclusive, and youth-led consultation process coordinated by the Youth Climate Council Uganda between May and July 2025. The process engaged over 500 young people from across Uganda's five major regions Eastern, Western, Northern, Central, and West Nile alongside a dedicated refugee youth consultation in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement to ensure refugee perspectives were represented.

Each regional consultation was hosted in collaboration with local youth-led and youth-serving organizations. Through in-person dialogues, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and interactive brainstorming sessions, youth participants deliberated on the climate impacts affecting their communities and proposed realistic, context-specific solutions. Special attention was given to include youth from marginalized communities to ensure the process was representative and inclusive. Data from each region was synthesized and validated by regional youth leads, with technical guidance from the Youth Climate Council. This rigorous process ensured that the final commitments, concerns, and recommendations presented in the statement are grounded in lived realities and aligned with Uganda's climate priorities.

Following the regional consultations, **a national youth consultation** was held to synthesize regional findings, validate national-level climate priorities, and identify cross-cutting issues that affect young people throughout Uganda. This national platform created space for interregional learning and unified action planning.

As part of the national preparation, selected youth and child delegates received **capacity-building trainings** on the UNFCCC negotiation processes and thematic areas, including Mitigation, Adaptation and Loss & Damage, Climate Finance, Gender, Technology Transfer, and Capacity Building. Delegates were also introduced to sustainable livelihood alternatives such as green jobs, renewable energy, circular economy solutions, and climate-smart agriculture helping them connect climate policy with practical implementation pathways.

Finally, the various inputs were consolidated into a single draft of the National Youth and Children Statement on Climate Change in Uganda 2025

KEY THEMATIC AREAS

Adaptation And Loss And Damage (L&D)

1. What key developments have taken place under Adaptation and Loss and Damage in Uganda?

Uganda has made significant strides in fulfilling its climate commitments through its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), targeting a 24.7% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below the Business-As-Usual (BAU) scenario by 2030, an increase from the initial 22% target set in 2016. However, Uganda, through the Ministry of Water and Environment's Climate Change Department (CCD), has launched the development of its third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0), aiming to further strengthen its climate strategies. Below are key developments in adaptation and loss and damage:

Increased Youth Participation in Global Climate Change Processes: Ugandan youth have become more active in global climate negotiations, including UNFCCC processes and Conferences of Parties (COPs), advocating for adaptation finance, climate justice, and equity in loss and damage discussions. However, their participation is often individual-driven, underfunded, and lacks systematic government support.

- Relocation of Landslide Victims in Elgon region : The government of Uganda through Office of the Prime Minister Republic of Uganda has prioritized relocating communities, particularly in high-risk areas like Bududa, to safer regions to mitigate the impacts of landslides. While lifesaving, these efforts have faced challenges, including limited participation and inclusion of youth in planning and insufficient focus on ensuring livelihood continuity post-relocation.
- Formulation of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP): The NAP provides a strategic framework to address vulnerabilities in key sectors such as agriculture, health, water, infrastructure, and ecosystems, serving as a cornerstone for operationalizing national adaptation strategies.

Strengthening Meteorological and Hydrological Services: Enhanced early warning systems for floods and droughts have been developed through improved meteorological services. Weather prediction tools and alert communication have advanced, particularly in urban centers, though rural areas still face gaps in outreach and implementation

2. What are youth currently doing under Adaptation and Loss and Damage?

Ugandan youth are at the forefront of grassroots and community-driven efforts to address climate adaptation and loss and damage, demonstrating resilience and innovation despite limited recognition and resources. From local environmental initiatives to global advocacy, their actions are critical in building climate resilience, though challenges like underfunding and lack of institutional support persist. Below are key youth-led contributions:

I. Protecting Riverbanks and Ecosystems: In southwestern and western Uganda, youth are leading tree planting, reforestation, and environmental education campaigns along rivers like Rwizi and Nyamwamba, stabilizing ecosystems and reducing downstream flood risks.

II. Leveraging Technology for Early Warnings: Young people are utilizing mobile phones and social media to disseminate early warning messages and disaster preparedness information, filling gaps where official communication channels are slow or ineffective.

III. Engaging in Global Climate Advocacy: Ugandan youth are increasingly participating in international platforms, such as UNFCCC side events and COPs, advocating for adaptation and loss and damage solutions, though their efforts are often fragmented due to limited training and institutional support.

IV. Driving Youth-Led Organizations: Numerous youth-led organizations focus on sustainable agriculture, water access, and climate education, but their impact is constrained by isolation and insufficient funding, limiting their ability to influence policy or achieve large-scale outcomes.

3. What priority areas do young people want national and international actors to urgently address?

Ugandan youth are urgently calling on national and international actors to address critical gaps in adaptation and loss and damage frameworks to enhance climate resilience. Their priorities emphasize empowering youth-led initiatives, ensuring inclusive participation, and integrating their contributions into formal climate strategies.



National Level

I. Strengthening Youth-Led Structures: Youth call for investment in existing youth-led civil society organizations (CSOs) to enhance their capacity to implement, monitor, document, and scale up adaptation interventions, leveraging community-level efforts rather than creating new initiatives.

II. Meaningful Engagement in the National Adaptation Plan (NAP): Youth demand active involvement throughout the NAP lifecycle—design, budgeting, implementation, and review—with structures like the National Youth Council (NYC) and Youth Climate Council (YCC) integrated into decision-making bodies for adaptation programming.

III. Formal Recognition of Youth-Led Early Warning Efforts: Youth are using Artificial Intelligence for good use in different sectors of the NDCs for example in AFOLU, waste; tourism sector etc ; SMS and social media to share climate alerts, but these efforts lack acknowledgment in national disaster preparedness frameworks, NDC Monitoring and evaluation . Policy support and resource allocation are needed to formalize and scale these contributions.

IV. Increased Funding for Youth-Led Adaptation Projects: National actors should allocate dedicated budgets to support youth-led initiatives in sustainable agriculture, water management, and ecosystem restoration, addressing the current funding gaps that limit scalability.

V. Establishment of Youth Climate Innovation Hubs: Youth advocate for the creation of national hubs to provide training, resources, and mentorship for developing climate-smart solutions, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in adaptation and loss and damage responses.

VI. Integration of Climate Education in Curricula: Youth urge national education authorities to incorporate climate change adaptation and loss and damage concepts into school curricula to build long-term awareness and capacity among young people

.VII. Capacity Building for International Negotiations: Youth seek training and mentorship in international negotiation processes, protocols, and resource mobilization for loss and damage, enabling them to advocate effectively at platforms like the UNFCCC for fair adaptation finance, just relocation, and climate reparations.

VIII. Access to Global Climate Finance: Youth call for simplified access to international climate funds, such as the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund, to support youth-led adaptation and loss and damage initiatives in Uganda, ensuring funds reach grassroots organizations.

IX. Inclusion in Global Climate Platforms: Youth demand greater representation in global climate forums, including COPs and UNFCCC side events, with support for travel, accreditation, and preparation to ensure meaningful participation.

X. Support for Youth-Led Loss and Damage Advocacy: International actors should provide platforms and funding for Ugandan youth to lead advocacy campaigns on loss and damage, focusing on climate justice and reparations for vulnerable communities.

XI. Technology Transfer for Adaptation Solutions: Youth request international support for transferring climate-resilient technologies, such as drought-resistant crops or flood-resistant infrastructure, to enhance local adaptation efforts led by young people.

XII. Global Mentorship and Exchange Programs: Youth advocate for international programs that connect Ugandan youth with global climate leaders to share best practices, build networks, and strengthen their capacity to address adaptation and loss and damage challenges.

Mitigation

1. What key developments have happened on Mitigation?

Uganda has made substantial progress in its efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in alignment with the goals outlined in its Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). One of the most notable developments is Uganda's increased ambition to reduce emissions by 24.7% below the Business-As-Usual (BAU) scenario by 2030, up from the original 22% in the 2016 NDC. This includes an unconditional target of 5.9% using domestic resources, and a conditional target of 18.8% that will require international support in the form of climate finance, capacity building, and technology transfer. Sector-specific contributions have also been prioritized, with Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) accounting for 82.7% of Uganda's total mitigation potential. Other key sectors include transport (7.56%), energy (6.36%), waste (3%), and industrial processes and product use (IPPU) (0.4%). The country has also developed a Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategy (LT-LEDS), reflecting a whole-of-society and gender-responsive approach. Furthermore, financial planning has been done, with the total estimated cost for full mitigation implementation projected at USD 10.3 billion by 2030. However, domestic resources can only cover about USD 1.6 billion (15%), highlighting the critical role of international support.



2. What are the youths currently doing under Mitigation?

Youth across Uganda are actively engaged in contributing to the country's mitigation targets, though their impact remains limited by systemic barriers.

Many youth-led initiatives are advancing reforestation, agroforestry, and the promotion of climate-smart agriculture, directly supporting the AFOLU sector. In urban and peri-urban settings, young people are involved in cycling campaigns, promoting energy efficiency, and spreading awareness on the importance of transitioning to clean energy solutions, such as solar energy and clean cookstoves. Waste management and recycling. Youths are leading the way in Zero waste programs, including recycling, composting, briquette making and promotion of bio-latrines. However, many young people still lack the scientific knowledge, technical skills and adequate financing to scale up and make substantial contributions to climate change mitigation.



3. What priority areas do we want attention paid to by international and national actors?

- Youth in Uganda call for urgent and structured support from national and international actors to ensure their meaningful involvement in mitigation efforts through the following demands. There is a pressing need for financial and technical investment in youth-led climate solutions, particularly innovations in solar irrigation, clean cooking technologies like briquettes, and climate-smart agriculture.
- Capacity building. Young people need training on climate science, negotiation processes, policy advocacy, and soft skills to navigate national and global climate decision-making arenas.
- Youths demand formal inclusion in the implementation and periodic review of Uganda's NDCs. This should include establishing multi-level youth engagement platforms and ensuring that structures like the National Youth Council (NYC) are empowered to represent youth climate voices.
- Third, technology transfer and digital access must be prioritized for rural youth, especially in the promotion of clean energy and sustainable transport solutions.
- Lastly, gender-sensitive and inclusive frameworks must be mainstreamed in climate mitigation strategies to ensure that girls, marginalized youth, and rural communities are not left behind.

1. What key developments have happened on Climate Finance?

Uganda has made important strides in planning and mobilizing climate finance, particularly through the integration of climate change into national planning and budgeting processes.

The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) established a Climate Change Financing Unit (CCFU) to coordinate resource mobilization and ensure that climate priorities are reflected in the national budget framework. Uganda was also one of the early countries to conduct a **Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Review (CPEIR)**, which helped highlight financing gaps and track climate-related investments across sectors. Furthermore, Uganda is implementing the **Climate Finance Delivery Plan** and has developed sector-specific climate investment plans, such as the **Water and Environment Sector Climate Change Financing Strategy**.

At the international level, Uganda has received support from global funds including the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Global Environment Facility (GEF), and Adaptation Fund. However, climate financing remains grossly inadequate. Uganda's updated NDC estimates a total cost of USD 28.1 billion for mitigation and adaptation by 2030, yet current domestic and external flows fall far short of this target, and access to international funds remains slow and bureaucratically demanding. Youth-targeted financing mechanisms are either non-existent or insufficiently supported.

2. What are the youths currently doing under Climate Finance?

Ugandan youth are increasingly engaging in climate finance-related activities, though their contributions are often under-resourced and poorly coordinated.

- Young innovators and entrepreneurs are developing small-scale green businesses in areas such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, waste recycling, and eco-tourism.
- Some youth-led organizations have begun accessing microgrants or seed funding through international NGOs or accelerator programs to scale their climate-smart initiatives. Others are
- Actively participating in training and dialogues around climate finance literacy, advocating for transparency and equitable access to climate funds. Still, the majority of youth remain locked out of climate finance due to a lack of technical capacity, limited knowledge on proposal development, and poor access to financial services particularly in rural areas.
- Furthermore, youth structures such as student associations, climate clubs, and youth-led CSOs often operate informally and are ineligible for large-scale funding opportunities. Without deliberate inclusion mechanisms and dedicated funding windows, youth involvement in national climate finance planning and implementation remains tokenistic at best.

3. What priority areas do we want attention paid to by international and national actors?

Ugandan youth demand urgent and meaningful reforms in the way climate finance is structured, accessed, and utilized.

- National and global actors must prioritize the creation of dedicated youth climate finance mechanisms including youth-targeted grant schemes and revolving green funds that support youth-led climate action at the grassroots.
- The government should institutionalize youth involvement in national climate finance governance, such as including youth representatives in the Climate Finance Steering Committee and consultations related to resource allocation and monitoring.
- Investments are needed in climate finance literacy and proposal development training for youth, particularly targeting underrepresented groups such as rural youth, young women, and persons with disabilities.
- There must also be increased transparency and accessibility of climate funding processes, with simplified application and reporting requirements for youth-led organizations.
- International donors and global finance institutions must fulfill their commitments to climate justice by delivering predictable, adequate, and youth-inclusive climate finance, aligned with the principles of intergenerational equity and the common but differentiated responsibilities enshrined in the Paris Agreement.

Gender in Climate

1. What key developments have happened on Climate Finance?

Uganda has made important strides in planning and mobilizing climate finance, particularly through the integration of climate change into national planning and budgeting processes. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) established a Climate Change Financing Unit (CCFU) to coordinate resource mobilization and ensure that climate priorities are reflected in the national budget framework. Uganda was also one of the early countries to conduct a Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Review (CPEIR), which helped highlight financing gaps and track climate-related investments across sectors. Furthermore, Uganda is implementing the Climate Finance Delivery Plan and has developed sector-specific climate investment plans, such as the Water and Environment Sector Climate Change Financing Strategy. At the international level, Uganda has received support from global funds including the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Global Environment Facility (GEF), and Adaptation Fund. However, climate financing remains grossly inadequate. Uganda's updated NDC estimates a total cost of USD 28.1 billion for mitigation and adaptation by 2030, yet current domestic and external flows fall far short of this target, and access to international funds remains slow and bureaucratically demanding. Youth-targeted financing mechanisms are either non-existent or insufficiently supported.

2. What are the youths currently doing under Climate Finance?

Ugandan youth are increasingly engaging in climate finance-related activities, though their contributions are often under-resourced and poorly coordinated. Young innovators and entrepreneurs including women are developing green businesses in areas such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, waste recycling, and eco-tourism. Some youth-led organizations have begun accessing microgrants or seed funding through international NGOs or accelerator programs to scale their climate-smart initiatives. Furthermore, youth structures such as student associations, climate clubs, and youth-led CSOs often operate informally and are ineligible for large-scale funding opportunities. Without deliberate inclusion mechanisms and dedicated funding windows, youth involvement in national climate finance planning and implementation remains tokenistic at best.

3. What priority areas do we want attention paid to by international and national actors?

Ugandan youth demand urgent and meaningful reforms in the way climate finance is structured, accessed, and utilized.

1. National and global actors must prioritize the creation of **dedicated youth climate finance mechanisms** including youth-targeted grant schemes, innovation labs, and revolving green funds that support climate action at the grassroots.
2. The government should **institutionalize youth involvement** in national climate finance governance, such as including youth representatives in the Climate Finance Steering Committee and consultations related to resource allocation and monitoring.
3. Significant investments are needed in **climate finance literacy and proposal development training** for youth, particularly targeting underrepresented groups such as rural youth, young women, and persons with disabilities.
4. There should be **increased transparency** and accessibility of climate funding processes, with simplified application and reporting requirements for youth-led organizations.
5. International donors and global finance institutions must fulfill their **commitments to climate justice** by delivering predictable, adequate, and gender-inclusive climate finance, aligned with the principles of intergenerational equity enshrined in the Paris Agreement.



Technology Development And Transfer

1. What key developments have happened on Technology Development and Transfer?

- Uganda has made significant progress in advancing climate-related technology development and transfer, guided by national policies and its commitments as a signatory to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Article 10 of the Paris Agreement specifically addresses technology development and transfer, outlining a framework for promoting and enhancing the development and transfer of technologies to support climate action, particularly in developing countries. These efforts focus on deploying environmentally sound technologies to bolster mitigation and adaptation, particularly in key sectors like agriculture, energy, and water. Despite notable achievements, challenges such as high costs, limited infrastructure, and slow localization of technologies continue to hinder equitable access, especially in rural areas. Below are the key developments in this area:
- I. Adoption of Renewable Energy Technologies: Uganda has promoted accessible renewable energy solutions, including solar power systems and improved cookstoves, to enhance energy security and reduce environmental impacts in local communities.
- II. Implementation of Early Warning Systems: Grassroots initiatives have rolled out mobile-based climate information tools and early warning systems, enabling communities to better prepare for climate-related disasters like floods and droughts.
- III. Technology Needs Assessment (TNA): Conducted with support from UN Environment and the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN), the TNA has prioritized agriculture, energy, and water sectors, shaping Uganda's strategy for technology development and transfer.
- IV. Expansion of Climate Information Platforms: The government has scaled up mobile-based platforms to deliver climate and weather information, improving agricultural planning and disaster preparedness nationwide.
- V. Alignment with UNFCCC Technology Framework: Uganda's commitment to the UNFCCC drives its efforts to facilitate the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, aligning with global climate mitigation and adaptation goals.
- VI. Partnerships for Technical Support: Collaboration with international bodies like UN Environment and CTCN has provided technical expertise and funding to pilot climate technologies, though challenges in localizing these solutions persist due to reliance on imported technologies.

What are the youths currently doing under Technology Development and Transfer?

I. Developing Low-Cost Climate Technologies: Youth innovators are creating affordable solutions such as low-cost solar irrigation pumps and plastic recycling technologies to address local challenges like water scarcity and urban waste management.

II. Promoting Community-Based Tech Awareness: Youth are organizing local campaigns to raise awareness about climate-smart technologies, using community tech centers to promote digital literacy and eco-entrepreneurship among rural and urban youth.

III. Establishing Youth-Led Innovation Hubs: Youth are driving eco-entrepreneurship through innovation spaces in universities and community tech centers, fostering the development and testing of climate-friendly technologies.

IV. Participating in Technology Exhibitions and Hackathons: Young people are showcasing climate-smart innovations at national exhibitions and hackathons, facilitating intergenerational knowledge exchange and promoting scalable solutions.

V. Engaging in Global Climate Tech Platforms: Youth are participating in international technology forums and competitions to showcase Ugandan innovations, seeking partnerships and exposure for their climate solutions.

VI. Advocating for Technology Transfer: Youth are calling for increased international support to bridge connectivity gaps and provide access to advanced tools, laboratories, and intellectual property protection to scale up grassroots climate technologies.



3. What priority areas do we want attention paid to by international and national actors?

Ugandan youth are calling for transformative actions from national and international actors to amplify their role in climate technology development and transfer. By prioritizing inclusive innovation, capacity building, and equitable access, stakeholders can empower youth to lead sustainable climate solutions. The following priority areas, outlined for national and international levels, aim to address barriers and foster youth-driven technological advancements:

National Level

I. Scaling Up Investments in Youth-Led Innovation Hubs: National actors should provide grants, incubators, and technical mentorship programs tailored to climate technologies to support youth-led innovation hubs and foster eco-entrepreneurship.



II. Developing a National Climate Technology Roadmap: Uganda needs a clear framework that positions youth as co-creators in the design, localization, and sustainable implementation of climate technologies, reducing reliance on imported solutions.

III. Updating Technical and Vocational Education: Integrate green and digital skills training into national educational curricula to equip young people with the expertise needed to design, adapt, and deploy climate-smart technologies across sectors like agriculture, energy, and water.

IV. Promoting Public-Private Partnerships for Youth Innovation: Encourage collaborations between youth, government, and private sectors to provide resources, infrastructure, and market access for scaling climate-smart technologies developed by young innovators.

V. Establishing Youth Technology Advisory Boards: Create formal platforms within national climate bodies to include youth voices in policy-making and technology deployment, ensuring their perspectives shape adaptation and mitigation strategies.

International Level

VI. Including Youth in International Technology Transfer Dialogues: Young Ugandan innovators must be meaningfully engaged in global platforms, such as the UNFCCC Technology Executive Committee, to share their perspectives and influence technology transfer mechanisms.

VII. Enhancing Access to Climate Finance for Youth Initiatives: International actors should simplify access to climate funds, such as the Green Climate Fund, to support youth-led technology projects, ensuring resources reach grassroots innovators.

VIII. Prioritizing Rural and Marginalized Youth in Technology Access: International programs should target rural and marginalized youth with technology access initiatives, bridging the digital divide and promoting inclusive innovation.

IX. Facilitating Technology Transfer for Local Adaptation: International actors should support the transfer of climate-resilient technologies, such as drought-resistant crops and flood-resistant infrastructure, tailored to Uganda's local needs and youth-led implementation.

X. Creating Global Mentorship and Exchange Programs: Establish international programs to connect Ugandan youth with global climate technology experts, fostering knowledge exchange, skill development, and networking opportunities to strengthen their capacity.

Capacity Building & Compliance

1. What key developments have happened under Capacity Building and Compliance?

Capacity building and compliance are vital to the UNFCCC process, strengthening developing nations like Uganda through enhanced knowledge, skills, and resources, while ensuring adherence to climate commitments under the Paris Agreement. Uganda has advanced these areas through national legislation and international partnerships, though youth-focused initiatives and local resource constraints remain challenges. Below are the key developments:

I. Enactment of the Climate Change Act (2021): This legislation establishes institutional responsibilities and mandates the integration of climate change into national and subnational planning, providing a legal foundation for compliance.

II. Development of National Climate Frameworks: Through the Ministry of Water and Environment's Climate Change Department (CCD), Uganda has implemented the National Climate Change Policy, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems to track climate progress and ensure compliance.



III. International Support for Capacity Building: Partnerships with organizations like GLZ, UNDP, and the African Development Bank have facilitated training for policymakers, local government officials, and select civil society actors to enhance climate governance.

IV. National Climate Change Learning Strategy: In collaboration with the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), Uganda has established a strategy to mainstream climate knowledge into education and workforce development.

V. Strengthening MRV Systems: Robust MRV systems enable Uganda to monitor and report on climate actions, ensuring accountability and alignment with UNFCCC commitments.

VI. Challenges in Youth-Specific Capacity Building and Local Compliance: Youth-focused capacity-building programs remain limited, and local-level compliance enforcement faces constraints due to insufficient funding and human resources.

2. What are the youths currently doing under Capacity Building and Compliance

Ugandan youth are playing a pivotal role in advancing capacity building and compliance within the climate change framework, leveraging grassroots initiatives and global platforms to enhance climate literacy and advocacy. Despite their efforts, challenges such as limited funding, isolation, and lack of integration into formal systems persist. Below are the key contributions of youth in this area:

I. Organizing Climate Literacy Initiatives: Youth-led civil society organizations, climate hubs, and student movements are conducting climate literacy training, workshops, and awareness campaigns in schools and communities to build local knowledge and resilience.

II. Participating in Regional and Global Climate Forums: Young people are engaging in events like the Local Conference of Youth (LCOY), COPs, and Youth Climate Summits, gaining negotiation and advocacy skills to influence climate policy.

III. Creating Platforms for NDC Accountability: Youth networks, such as the Youth Climate Council – Uganda, have established platforms to track Uganda's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and engage local government structures in monitoring climate commitments.

IV. Advocating for Youth Inclusion in Decision-Making: Youth are pushing for greater involvement in national climate decision-making processes, though their efforts remain fragmented and lack formal integration into national capacity-building systems.

V. Challenges in Access to Data and Tools: Limited access to credible data and tools hinders youth's ability to effectively monitor compliance and assess government performance on climate commitments.

VI. Exclusion of Rural Youth: Many rural youth face barriers to formal training, digital access, and participation in national climate processes, limiting their contribution to capacity building and compliance efforts.

3. What priority areas do we want attention paid to by international and national actors?

Youth in Uganda urge both national and international actors to prioritize **structured and sustained investment in youth-led capacity-building programs** that are linked to Uganda's climate policy framework. This includes **tailoring the National Climate Change Learning Strategy** to include youth-specific content and methodologies that empower young people to act as climate monitors, educators, and innovators.

- **Institutionalised youth involvement in compliance monitoring and reporting mechanisms**, including participation in NDC review processes, environmental audits, and MRV systems.
- **Decentralised climate training** is urgently needed to ensure equitable access for youth in rural and underserved regions.
- Capacity building should be accompanied by **access to information**, such as open-access data platforms and climate knowledge portals designed with youth in mind
- International actors should support **regional knowledge exchanges, peer learning platforms, and intergenerational dialogues** that enable Ugandan youth to learn from global best practices while contributing local solutions that foster stronger compliance and accountability in climate governance.



GREEN INNOVATIONS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YOUTH CONSULTATIONS

1. Green Jobs and Youth Livelihoods

In the face of climate change and soaring youth unemployment, green jobs offer a dual solution, restoring ecosystems while creating dignified work for Uganda's young population. Across the country, youth are already demonstrating innovation and resilience through green entrepreneurship activities, such as tree nurseries, kitchen gardening, and clean cooking technologies for example, clean cook stove production, fuel briquettes making and training. They also manage school woodlots that serve both economic and educational purposes.



We call for the creation of a National Green Youth Fund dedicated to supporting early-stage climate solutions from grassroots innovators. Green entrepreneurship should be integrated into formal education and vocational training programs, with targeted support for rural youth, girls, and youth with disabilities. Uganda must invest in local green value chains such as recycling, ecological farming, and climate-smart construction. Youth have already proven they can lead. What we need now is sustained support to scale.

2. Renewable Energy and Energy Justice

Reliable, clean energy is a building block for climate resilience, education, health, and economic opportunity. However, many communities, particularly in refugee settlements and rural areas, still lack access to renewable energy sources. Youth are already stepping in to close these gaps. In the Mt. Elgon sub-region, young volunteers use energy-saving stoves to reduce reliance on charcoal and firewood. Youth lead climate enterprises and organizations such as Asili Kwanza, are leading in production of clean cooking and post harvest handling technologies. Despite these efforts, energy poverty persists due to the high cost of renewable technologies and lack of local infrastructure. We call for support to scale up such youth led interventions.

3. Carbon Markets and Climate Finance

Uganda's increasing participation in carbon markets offers potential resources for climate resilience; however, young people are often excluded from both the design and benefits of these climate programs. Across the region, youth have expressed concern about the limited awareness, unclear benefit sharing, and lack of access to climate financial opportunities associated with carbon markets. Yet, youth-led organizations are already engaging in projects with potential for carbon finance.

KEY ISSUES FOR YOUTH IN CLIMATE POLICY AND ACTION

1. Tracking and Implementing Uganda's NDCs: A Call for Youth Inclusion

As Uganda prepares to transition from its second Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC2) toward the development of NDC3, children and youth across the country have stepped forward to reflect on their role in achieving Uganda's climate goals. Through a national youth-led consultation process spanning eastern, northern, and western Uganda, as well as refugee-hosting districts, young people have taken the initiative to assess how their everyday actions contribute to the nation's climate commitments and how they can be better included in policy monitoring and delivery.

Across Uganda, youth are already advancing the goals of the NDCs, often without realizing it. In eastern Uganda, young people are actively engaged in climate-smart agriculture, operating tree nurseries, installing energy-saving stoves, and maintaining kitchen gardens, all of which are supported by community savings groups. In mountainous regions, youth are spearheading agroforestry campaigns, planting trees in schools, and supporting smallholder farmers with knowledge and tools for sustainable farming. In refugee-hosting communities, youth and women are leading waste management efforts, organizing dialogues on local environmental issues, and calling for inclusion in adaptation planning. In urban and peri-urban areas, young innovators are developing environmental scorecards to track policy implementation and organizing climate debates to raise awareness among school communities.

These actions reflect real, measurable contributions to Uganda's NDC targets; yet, most youth are unaware of the term "NDC" or what it stands for. Many have never seen the document, and very few understand how progress is reported. This disconnect limits youth engagement in national climate processes and weakens the government's ability to capture the full extent of local action. At the same time, youth-led innovations remain undocumented, underfunded, and excluded from official reporting frameworks.

To close this gap, we urge the Climate Change Department and development stakeholders to establish structured mechanisms for youth participation in the implementation and monitoring of the NDC. Specifically, we recommend:



- Establishing a **national youth climate reporting portal**, allowing young people to submit geotagged evidence of climate-related activities that align with NDC targets, including photos, stories, and community-level data.
- Conducting **youth mapping** exercises at district level to identify ongoing youth-led climate activities, particularly in underserved areas, and integrating them into national reporting systems.
- Developing a **youth-friendly NDC toolkit**, translated into local languages, which explains Uganda's climate commitments and how youth contributions are measured.
- Building youth capacity in **climate data collection, digital monitoring tools, and policy literacy**, with a focus on rural youth, youth in informal settlements, and those in refugee-hosting areas.
- Embedding youth representatives in **district-level environment task forces and national NDC review platforms**, ensuring young people can co-design, track, and influence the NDC delivery roadmap.

To support these actions, targeted investment is needed in four key areas:

- **Climate Literacy and Education:** Most young people are not taught about the NDCs in school. There is a critical need to integrate climate education into curricula and use community radio, visual materials, and digital platforms to enhance awareness.
- **Documentation and Visibility of Youth Action:** Many impactful youth efforts remain invisible to national systems. Developing simplified reporting templates, accessible databases, and mentorship programs will help bring these stories to light.
- **Financial Access for Youth-Led Initiatives:** A lack of funding blocks many youth from scaling their innovations. Small grants, climate funds, and seed capital must be made accessible to youth-led groups, especially those outside major urban centers.
- **Inclusive Structures for Marginalized Youth:** Youth with disabilities, refugee youth, and young women face additional barriers to participation. Tailored engagement strategies, translated materials, and inclusive design are essential to ensure that all youth can contribute meaningfully to the process.

Uganda's youth are ready and already making contributions planting trees, building clean energy solutions, restoring degraded lands, collecting community data, and raising awareness. What is missing is a system that captures, supports, and scales this energy

As Uganda enters a new phase of climate planning under NDC3, we urge a national commitment to **recognize youth as active partners, not passive observers**. It is time to count what youth are doing, invest in what they are building, and include them in every step of this country's climate journey.

We are not just helping Uganda achieve its climate goals. We are already doing the work.

2. Refugee Youth Invisibility in Climate Action

In 2025, we deemed it prudent to highlight the role of youth in the climate space of Uganda, specifically at Kyangwali Refugee Settlement, as Uganda is currently home to over 1.7 million refugees, making it one of the largest refugee-hosting countries in Africa and globally. These refugees primarily settle in areas that are already vulnerable to climate-related risks, such as flooding, drought, land degradation, and unpredictable weather patterns. Despite facing some of the harshest environmental challenges, the refugee youth, the fastest-growing demographic in these settlements, remain largely invisible in climate action spaces and decision-making platforms.



Because of this, we demand that to build an inclusive and effective climate response, refugee youth must be recognized as equal stakeholders in climate governance at the district, regional, and national levels. Policies must be translated into accessible languages and culturally appropriate formats. More importantly, refugee-led youth groups and organizations should be actively engaged and supported to participate fully in climate policy planning, implementation, and monitoring.

What We Need to Ask Ourselves: Why Focus on Refugee Youth?

Focusing on refugee youth as a distinct group is not just a matter of equity; it is a strategic

imperative for Uganda's climate resilience and social cohesion. Uganda's progressive refugee policy framework has earned international praise for its openness and hospitality. Refugees are granted freedom of movement, access to education, healthcare services, land for agricultural purposes, and the right to work. These policies reflect Uganda's commitment to human rights and inclusive development.

However, this leadership comes with its share of responsibility and challenges. Refugee youth face multiple intersecting vulnerabilities:

- **Environmental vulnerability:** Refugee settlements are often located in marginal areas prone to environmental degradation and climate hazards. This exposes youth to risks that threaten their livelihoods, health, and prospects.

- **Social and political marginalization:** Despite legal protections, refugee youth are frequently excluded from meaningful participation in local governance and climate decision-making due to language barriers, lack of information, and limited integration opportunities.
- **Untapped potential:** Refugee youth possess unique knowledge, adaptive capacities, and innovative ideas that emerge from navigating complex challenges in displacement and environmental uncertainty. Their inclusion can lead to more context-specific and sustainable climate solutions.

By focusing on refugee youth, we recognize the intersectionality of displacement, youth, and climate vulnerability. We challenge the status quo of exclusion and advocate for climate governance that is truly inclusive and just. This focus also aligns with Uganda's vision of a society that supports the dignity, rights, and agency of all people within its borders, citizens and refugees alike.

3. Poor Climate Literacy and Education

Climate education in Uganda remains insufficient, particularly among children and young people, both in formal educational settings and out-of-school contexts. Many young people lack a comprehensive understanding of climate change, its causes, impacts, and the practical actions they can take individually and collectively to mitigate and adapt to it. This knowledge gap reduces youth's ability to engage confidently in climate discussions or to develop grassroots solutions aligned with national climate priorities. To address this, climate change education must be integrated into primary and secondary school curricula in a way that is age-appropriate, interactive, and contextually relevant. Equally important is the training of teachers and educators to deliver this content effectively. Beyond formal education, investment is needed to support child-centered eco-learning programs and community outreach initiatives that raise awareness and empower youth with the knowledge and skills necessary for climate action. Utilizing digital platforms, radio programs, and visual materials in local languages will further expand the reach of climate literacy, ensuring no young person is left behind in understanding the climate crisis and their role in solving it.

4. Gender Inequality and Disability Exclusion

Children, women, and youth with disabilities face systemic exclusion in most climate action spaces in Uganda. Social norms, infrastructural barriers, and lack of targeted programming often result in these groups being underrepresented in decision-making, training opportunities, and access to resources. This exclusion diminishes the diversity of perspectives and innovations needed for holistic climate solutions and perpetuates existing inequalities. To promote equity and inclusivity, it is crucial to ensure participation quotas for girls, young women, and youth with disabilities in climate programs and governance structures. Training programs should be tailored to address the specific needs and barriers of each individual, providing accessible content and flexible formats that meet their unique requirements. Moreover, all climate initiatives must adopt inclusive design principles that consider physical accessibility, communication needs, and cultural sensitivity. By amplifying the voices of all youth, especially those marginalized by gender and disability, Uganda can build a more just, representative, and effective youth climate movement that truly leaves no one behind.

VOICES FROM REGIONS

Western Uganda

Western Uganda is facing an increasing frequency of climate-induced disasters, including landslides and soil erosion, in districts such as Kabale, Kisoro, and Bundibugyo, as well as prolonged droughts in areas like Kasese, Kyenjojo, and Rukungiri. These challenges have been worsened by extensive deforestation and wetland degradation, particularly in Bushenyi, Ntungamo, and Rubirizi, resulting in the loss of ecosystem services and biodiversity. Additionally, the glacial retreat of the Rwenzori Mountains is threatening water sources and wildlife, affecting agriculture and tourism.

Young people across the region are rising to the occasion by leading tree planting initiatives, advocating for community-based renewable energy adoption, and calling for government-supported green job creation. However, significant policy gaps remain in ensuring youth participation in local climate adaptation strategies, equitable access to climate finance, and support for youth-led innovations in renewable energy, particularly in hard-to-reach mountainous and rural areas.



Eastern Uganda

The Eastern Region faces severe climate challenges, particularly the prolonged dry spells in Teso, which have significantly impacted crop yields and exacerbated food insecurity. In the Bugisu sub-region, heavy rains combined with extensive deforestation have led to landslides, loss of life, and destruction of homes. Busoga grapples with industrial pollution, land degradation, and the adverse effects of monoculture farming practices, further destabilizing its food systems. Despite these hardships, youth in the region have stepped up by organizing awareness campaigns, promoting agroecological practices, and engaging in climate adaptation activities, such as promoting solar energy and flood mitigation.

Nonetheless, youth continue to face limited access to climate information, inadequate participation in district-level environmental planning, and minimal support to scale their grassroots innovations. Young leaders from Eastern Uganda are calling for targeted policy support to amplify youth roles in green enterprises, integrate environmental education into formal curricula, and improve access to climate finance for community-led projects.



Northern Uganda

In Northern Uganda, climate change is manifesting through unpredictable rainfall, recurring droughts, and degraded natural resources, particularly affecting farming communities. A primary concern among youth is the limited understanding and accessibility of carbon markets and climate finance mechanisms, which have resulted in missed opportunities for green investment. The region also suffers from inadequate infrastructure for renewable energy uptake and a general lack of youth-targeted skilling in the green economy. Compounding these issues is

the underrepresentation of women, girls, and persons with disabilities in climate decision-making spaces. Despite these barriers, youth are initiating clean energy cooperatives, participating in reforestation efforts, and building digital platforms to educate peers on sustainability. However, they demand stronger institutional support through inclusive policies, vocational training in green sectors, and localized climate data to empower informed decision-making and enhance youth participation in Uganda's climate governance processes.



West Nile Region

The West Nile Region, home to large refugee and host populations, is confronting a unique set of climate challenges driven by increasing waste, deforestation, and energy poverty. The high dependency on biomass for cooking has contributed to the escalation of deforestation rates. At the same time, limited access to clean energy continues to put pressure on natural ecosystems, leading to poor waste management and significant health and environmental risks. In response, young people are actively promoting solar energy alternatives, conducting awareness campaigns against plastic pollution, and pioneering organic waste recycling projects. However, the lack of tailored climate policies for refugee-hosting communities, insufficient funding for youth-led solutions, and weak coordination between humanitarian and environmental actors are impeding progress. West Nile youth call for integrated climate-resilient infrastructure, clean energy incentives, and the inclusion of refugee voices in national climate action planning, especially in the context of Uganda's NDC commitments.



Kyangwali refugee settlement representing refugee communities

Kyangwali Refugee Settlement faces unique and pressing climate-related vulnerabilities due to its growing population and limited infrastructure. The settlement is struggling with deforestation, energy insecurity, and insufficient climate-resilient waste management systems. Access to clean water is inconsistent, and overreliance on firewood for cooking has led to the degradation of the surrounding forests. Youth in Kyangwali are taking the initiative through tree-planting drives, clean energy advocacy, and climate education



workshops within both refugee and host communities. Yet, they remain underrepresented in national and local climate policy frameworks and often excluded from broader youth climate financing opportunities. To enhance their role in climate resilience, Kyangwali youth call for specialized support that recognizes the settlement's distinct challenges, increased investment in solar technologies, and deliberate inclusion in Uganda's national climate adaptation and green jobs strategies.

OUR COMMITMENTS

As the youth of Uganda, working in collaboration with government institutions and development partners, we are charting a bold new path, one that redefines the role of young people in climate action. We are no longer scattered voices, but a united front committed to building a sustainable and climate-resilient future for our country. In this renewed spirit, we are organizing ourselves under a single, coordinated, youth-led structure to track, monitor, and evaluate youth climate activities nationwide. Through this platform, we seek to bridge the gap between policy and action, ensuring that young people are not only heard but empowered to lead.

We reject the long-standing notion that Uganda's youth are disorganized. Instead, we rise with clarity and purpose, committing to strengthen our individual and collective capacities across key climate thematic areas. Whether in carbon markets, renewable energy, green jobs, or ecosystem restoration, we are equipping ourselves with the skills, knowledge, and networks to drive change from the grassroots to the national level.

As Uganda's youth and children, we solemnly commit to:

- **Advocate for climate justice in** our schools, communities, and homes, ensuring equity, accountability, and intergenerational responsibility guide all climate action.
- **Participate actively in local, regional and national dialogues,** amplifying youth voices and perspectives in every space where decisions are made.

- **Develop and scale youth-led innovations** that support both climate adaptation and mitigation, drawing from indigenous knowledge, technology, and creativity.
- **Promote climate literacy and mental health awareness** among our peers, acknowledging the emotional toll of the climate crisis and the importance of holistic well-being.

YOUTH CALL TO ACTION

We, the youth and children of Uganda, stand ready to make meaningful contributions to the country's climate resilience, green economy transition, and achievement of its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Our generation is not waiting; we are organizing, learning, building solutions, and tracking progress. But we cannot do this alone.

We call on you to rise with us, act with us, and believe in us.

1. Institutionalize and Fund Youth Participation at all Levels

- Recognize children and youth as equal stakeholders in climate decision-making.
- Embed youth representation within climate governance structures, from district environment committees to national steering groups.
- Allocate dedicated budget lines in climate programs for meaningful youth involvement, rather than just a tokenistic presence.

2. Create and support climate learning opportunities

- Co-create national and community-level eco-literacy programs, integrating climate education into formal and informal learning systems.
- Develop regional youth training hubs in collaboration with vocational institutions, CSOs, NGOs, and the private sector to equip us with skills in: Renewable energy, circular economy and carbon market system, geoecology and climate-smart agriculture.
- Promote peer-to-peer education and intergenerational mentorship for sustained knowledge transfer.

3. Invest in Youth-Led Innovation and Local Action

- Establish a Youth Climate Innovation Fund that supports youth-led adaptation and mitigation solutions.
- Strengthen youth access to climate finance by simplifying application processes and building capacity in grant writing, monitoring, and reporting.
- Prioritize community-rooted solutions that are scalable and sustainable, such as climate-smart farming, low-cost renewable energy tech, and mental health support systems.

4. Translate, Simplify, and Localize Climate Policies

- Ensure that all national climate documents, including the NDCs, are translated into local languages and simplified for use by youth, schools, media, and community groups.
- Disseminate this information through radio, digital media, youth centers, and schools to ensure that no one is left behind.
- Collaborate with youth to develop community-based monitoring tools to track the implementation of national climate goals.

5. Foster cross-sector partnerships with the youth

- Build long-term partnerships that don't just involve youth but equip, mentor, and finance climate action.
- Encourage private sector involvement through green job creation, internships, mentorship, and youth innovation.
- Strengthen collaboration between government ministries, departments and agencies, CSOs, academia, and youth-led organizations to deliver joint projects with shared accountability.

ENDORSEMENTS

This statement is endorsed by youth and children across Uganda through; Youth Climate Council Uganda (YCC)

With support from: Green Africa Youth Organization (GAYO), German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) Uganda, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Uganda, British High Commission Kampala, National Youth Council (NYC) SOS Children's Villages, COLEIN Aid, Youth Leading Environmental Change (YLEC), Solve and Flourish Africa (SOLFA), Rafik Justice and Environment Organization (RAEJO), Vision For Children and Youth.

