

PRESS RELEASE (for immediate distribution)

16th UN Climate Change Conference of Youth delivers ambitious Global Youth Statement to keep Global Warming at 1.5 degrees

Glasgow, Sunday 31st October 2021

- *16th Conference of Youth, a youth-led climate event, challenges world leaders to keep their promise of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius,*
- *Over 40,000 young people deliver a Global Youth Statement on climate action to COP26 President Alok Sharma,*
- *Mandatory climate education, loss and damage finance and true representation of Most Affected Peoples and Areas (MAPA), Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPoC) and other vulnerable groups featured in youth priorities for COP26.*



Figure 1: Young people gather in Glasgow ahead of COP26, Glasgow, UK

The 16th UN Climate Change Conference of Youth (COY16) took place from 28th Oct 2021 - 31st Oct 2021 at Strathclyde University, Glasgow. Young changemakers from all over the world came together for 4 days - full of sessions, workshops and speakers from different geographic and thematic backgrounds, cutting across sustainability, climate change, youth empowerment, policy making and more.

The opening ceremony was addressed by the First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon. She added that, “the leaders of the world arriving in Glasgow over the next few days have a massive amount of work to do and their job is to commit to the finance that is needed by the developing world to limit global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius and that, that fund can help repair the loss and damage that is already suffered.”

The UN Climate Change Conference of Youth (COY) is an event under the banner of YOUNGO – The Official Youth Constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). COY serves as a space for capacity building and policy training, in order to prepare young people for their participation at the UN Climate Conference (COP). This year, COY was in its 16th year, gathering about 500 hundred young climate leaders from more than 130 countries.

Over the 4 days, the conference equipped the youth delegates on various topics. There were policy making hackathons, capacity building sessions for COP26, performances by indigenous people, art spaces to showcase climate action through art and culture and several sessions that immersed them in different topics such as food, energy, decarbonization, nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and more.

The closing ceremony welcomed a speech from Lord Provost of Glasgow, Lord Philip Braat, who highlighted the importance of integrating youth voices into the climate debate. He furthered to emphasize that, regardless of the outcome of COP26, decision makers should realize that young generations are going to be the ones to inherit this outcome. His speech set the scene for Alice Pataxo, a youth activist representing the indigenous people of Pataxo, Brazil. She emphasized that indigenous youth, particularly women, have been living in harmony with nature for centuries and their experiences can play an important role in finding solutions to the climate crisis.

To climax COY16, young climate leaders from around the world presented the [Global Youth Statement](#) - the main output of COY16, which is a policy document developed by youth voices globally, which outlines the priority areas for action by young people. The policy document, tagged Global Youth Statement, will also serve as the foundation for lobbying and advocacy for the youth community during negotiations at COP26. Synthesizing inputs from over 40,000 young people over several months, the statement covered several crucial topics on climate negotiations such as the need for clean and *just* energy transition, loss and damage financing,

technology transfer, adaptation, article 6 of the Paris Agreement and more. A significant aspect of the youth conference was featured in the Global Youth Statement:

“We call for real representation according to the justice, equality, diversity and inclusion (JEDI) principle and urges for financial support for Most Affected Peoples and Areas (MAPA), Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPoC) and other vulnerable groups in the form of scholarships, grants, and opportunities to be heard in the national and international decision-making process.”



Figure 2: COY16 brought over 400 young climate leaders to empower them ahead of COP26 negotiations

The statement was presented to the COP President Elect, Alok Sharma over an emotional request demanding Alok Sharma to read the document and advocate for the climate action priorities of young people listed in the document. He acknowledged that the demands in the Global Youth Statement were in line with COP26 priority areas and therefore, young people can count on his presidency and the Government of UK to champion these demands which ultimately has the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees.

COY16, which was endorsed by the Office of the UN Secretary-General’s Youth Envoy, received a solidarity message from the Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres. The Secretary-General once again emphasized the critical role of youth voices and the need for COP26 to fulfil the pledge of \$100 billion by developed countries. Ms Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), also delivered a keynote remark in solidarity to the youth climate leaders, affirming

that climate action is not just a single event, it is a process that has to take place all year round and engaging different voices. Ms Jayathma Wickramanayake, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, congratulated YOUNGO for the successful organization of COY16 despite the COVID-19 pandemic and pledged her support to carry the key messages of the Global Youth Statement throughout her engagement at COP26.



Figure 3: Young people presents the Global Youth Statement to Ms Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC.

The Global Youth Statement is currently live on [COY16 website](#) and over the next two weeks the youth constituency will be holding bilateral meetings with heads of states, government officials, businesses and other stakeholders to raise ambition for climate action. The statement was also presented to the President of the United Nations General Assembly, Abdulla Shahid, on 31st October, the opening day of COP26.

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Media files for COY16 and the Global Youth Statement:

[COY16](#)

[Global Youth Statement](#)