Gen Z Leaders on Climate and SRHR

Climate Justice, Youth Leadership & Reproductive Rights

Building a healthier, safer and more climate-resilient future for every young person.

How climate change affects young people's lives

- **Health, food and water**
- Heatwaves, droughts, floods and pollution threaten physical and mental health, food security, safe drinking water and sanitation.
- **Education and livelihoods**
- Disasters interrupt schooling, destroy family income and farming livelihoods, and reduce access to decent jobs and economic independence.
- **Inequality and future opportunities**
- Young people with fewer resources, including those in vulnerable rural communities, often have less support to recover and adapt.

Climate change is not just an environmental issue. It affects whether young people can stay in school, earn a living, remain healthy and plan for their future

The connection between climate change and SRHR

- **Extreme heat and pregnancy**
- Heat exposure is associated with adverse maternal and newborn health outcomes.
- **Displacement and disrupted services**
- Floods and other emergencies can interrupt access to contraception, antenatal care, HIV/STI services and safe childbirth.
- **Gender inequality and safety**
- Displacement, poverty and unsafe journeys to collect water or fuel can heighten exposure to gender-based violence and harmful practices.

❖Climate emergencies can undermine young people's ability to make informed reproductive choices and access essential, confidential, non-discriminatory health services

❖SRHR must be included in climate preparedness and disaster response—not treated as an optional service that can wait until the crisis is over.

How Gen Z is responding in our communities

- **Community action:** Tree planting, restoring local ecosystems, waste management and water conservation.
- **Youth-led innovation:** Climate-smart farming, recycling enterprises, renewable energy and digital climate awareness.
- **Health and rights advocacy:** Sharing accurate SRHR information, challenging stigma, promoting gender equality and connecting young people to health services.
- **Accountability:** Using social media, youth networks, community dialogues and policy forums to demand action.

❖**Our message:** Young people are not just victims of the climate crisis. We are innovators, advocates and partners in developing solutions.

What can the Global South and Global North learn from each other?

Global South: Community wisdom and resilience

Learn from locally led adaptation, indigenous knowledge, community networks, low-cost innovations and approaches designed around the needs of those most affected.

Global North: Resources and systems change

Share technology, research, climate finance, clean-energy solutions and stronger institutional mechanisms for accountability and implementation.

Note:The Global South should not be portrayed only as vulnerable, nor the Global North only as a source of solutions. Both have valuable knowledge and responsibilities. The strongest partnerships are built on mutual respect and fair financing.

What policies and investments are needed?

1. Climate-resilient health services

- Keep youth-friendly SRHR services, contraception, maternal care, HIV/STI services, menstrual products and essential medicines accessible during emergencies.
- **2. Direct investment in youth leadership**
- Fund youth-led organizations, community adaptation, green jobs, entrepreneurship and climate education.
- **3. Rights-based, gender-responsive policies**
- Integrate SRHR, gender-based violence prevention, disability inclusion and youth priorities into climate and disaster plans.
- **4. Meaningful youth participation**
- Give young people decision-making power, representation in climate forums and transparent mechanisms to track public spending and commitments.

❖We need to move beyond promises to implementation. Governments and development partners should allocate measurable budgets, support local organizations and assess whether investments improve young people's health, safety and opportunities.

Our call to action: The future must include us

- **Three commitments for a healthier future**
- **Protect young people's rights**
- Climate action must safeguard health, dignity, bodily autonomy and reproductive choices.
- **Invest in young people's solutions**
- Fund youth-led ideas and make essential health and education services resilient to climate shocks.
- **Share power and responsibility**
- Make young people partners in policy design, implementation and accountability.

Nothing about our future should be decided without us.

Closing Remarks

As Gen Z leaders, we understand that climate change is not only about the environment. It is about our health, our education, our livelihoods, our dignity and our rights.

When climate disasters disrupt health services, young people must not lose access to essential sexual and reproductive healthcare. When communities face droughts, floods and displacement, young people must not lose their opportunities to learn, work and lead.

My call to governments, development partners and fellow young leaders is simple: **connect climate justice with reproductive justice, invest in youth-led solutions, and give young people a meaningful seat at the decision-making table.**

We do not want to be consulted only about the future. We want to help shape it.

Thank you.