

Submission to OHCHR

Call for inputs on the topics to be discussed during the fifth session of the Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law on the theme “Democracy and climate change: focusing on solutions”

in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 52/22

Submitted to the OHCHR on May 15, 2025

I. BACKGROUND

IIMA - Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice is an international NGO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. IIMA is present in 97 countries where it provides education to children, adolescents, and youth to build up strategies for youth empowerment and participation worldwide.

VIDES International - International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education, and Development is an NGO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, which works in 49 countries worldwide. It was founded in 1987 to promote youth volunteer service at the local and international levels for ensuring human rights, development, and democracy. Through its network of young volunteers worldwide, VIDES promotes best practices on active citizenship among youth.

IIMA and VIDES, together with other NGO partners, have been working for the empowerment of young people worldwide, not only by reporting existing protection gaps in the implementation of human rights with regard to youth, but also by greatly valuing the crucial role of youth in the promotion of human rights for society at large. Accordingly, both NGOs have been active in calling the attention of the Human Rights Council and other UN human rights bodies on the specific situation of youth in order to ensure that the rights of youth are placed high on the list of priorities.¹

II. PRELIMINARY REMARKS: A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

The present joint contribution intends to respond to the call for inputs launched by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the topics to be discussed during the fifth session of the Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law on the theme “Democracy and climate change: focusing on solutions”, as requested by Human Rights Council Resolution 52/22.

¹ Further information on IIMA and VIDES work in promoting human rights is available at <https://iimageneva.org/youth/>.

The main purpose of this contribution to the abovementioned call for inputs is to **bring the youth perspective and insights on the main theme**, to ensure that they are reflected and taken into account in the discussions during the upcoming Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law.

To this end, IIMA and VIDES Human Rights Office created and disseminated an online survey within its local youth network, the results of which are given below in the present submission.

Between May 6 and 12, 2025, **513 replies** to the survey were received from over 33 countries² across the 5 continents.

Respondents to the survey belong to the following groups:

- **Adolescents (14 - 17 years old)**
- **Youth (18-25 years old)**
- **Young Adults (26-35 years old)**
- **Educators working with adolescents/youth (over 35 years old)**

The suggestions on specific topics revolve around two main questions:

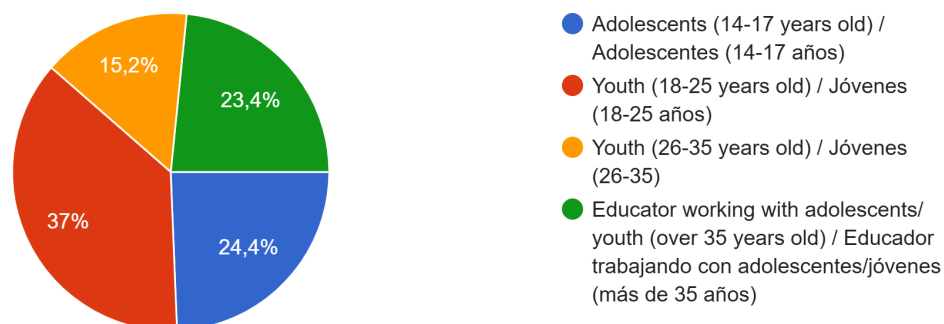
1. While discussing the main topic of "Democracy and Climate Change" at the United Nations, what are the **top priority topics** to be addressed from a youth perspective? (3 possible replies allowed)
2. While discussing the main topic of "Democracy and Climate Change" at the United Nations, what are the **main challenges** to be addressed from a youth perspective? (2 possible replies allowed)

III. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

A. Info on respondents to the survey

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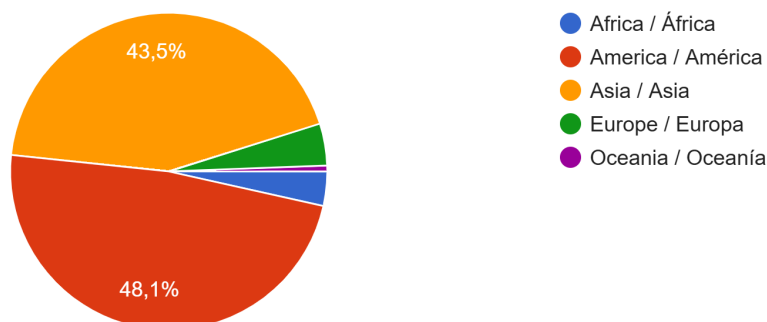
513 réponses



² These include: Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, USA, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, Burkina Faso, Kenya, South Africa, and Zambia.

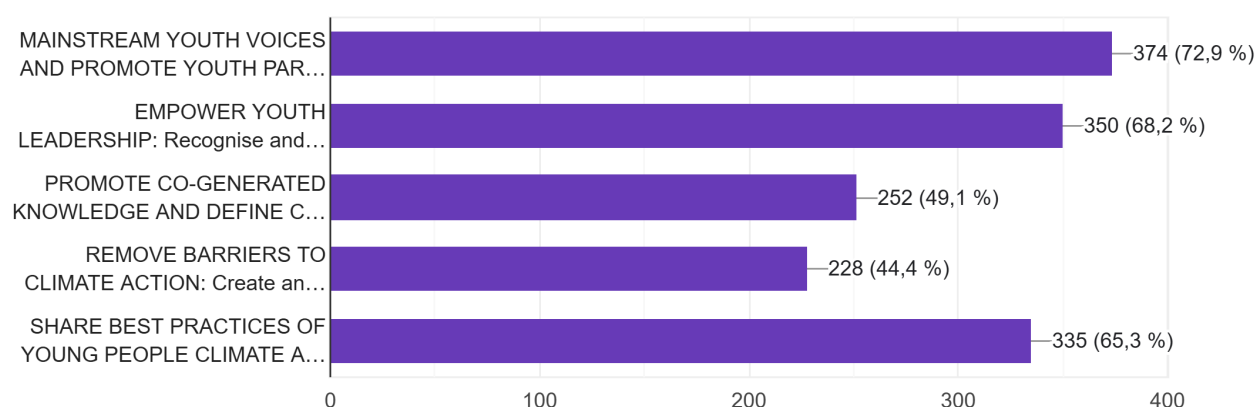
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513 réponses



B. Key topics related to Democracy and Climate Change

While discussing the main topic of "Democracy and Climate Change" at the United Nations, what are the **3 top priority topics** to be addressed from a youth perspective? (3 possible replies allowed)



Short description of the proposed options:

- **MAINSTREAM YOUTH VOICES AND PROMOTE YOUTH PARTICIPATION INTO CLIMATE ACTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS DECISION:** In line with the Human Rights Council biennial panel discussion on youth and human rights held in October 2024 (HRC resolution 51/17), focusing on young people's engagement with climate change and global environmental decision-making processes, **there is a need to integrate youth perspectives into climate policy and practice**. Among other things, this can be achieved by: (i) including youth in advisory boards, consultative processes and policy development teams; and (ii) systematically mainstream youth rights through existing UN Human Rights mechanisms, especially the UPR and the Treaty Bodies.
- **EMPOWER YOUTH LEADERSHIP:** Recognise and support youth leadership in climate action by providing resources and platforms for young activists to lead initiatives, share their perspectives and drive change. Protect and support youth environmental defenders and activists.

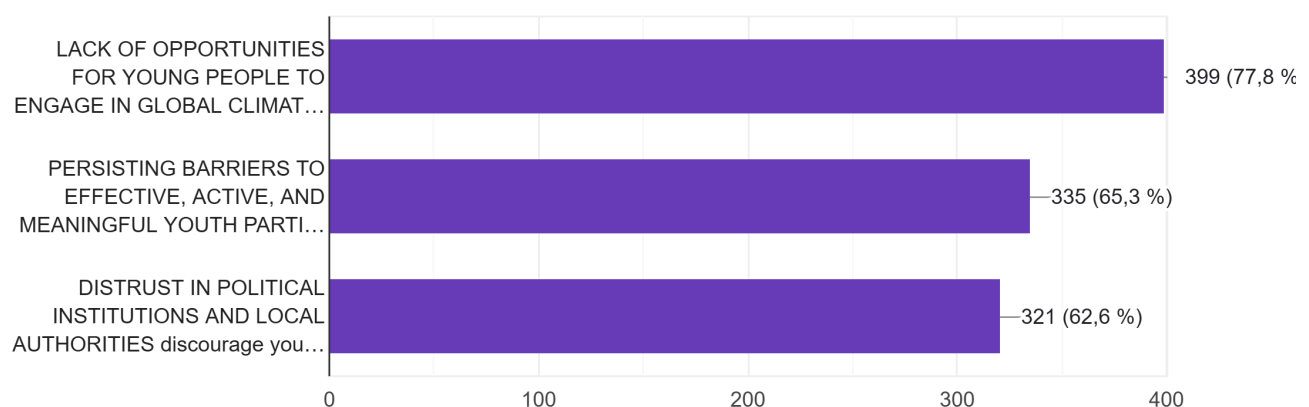
- **PROMOTE CO-GENERATED KNOWLEDGE AND DEFINE COMPREHENSIVE SUCCESS INDICATORS** for climate initiatives, prioritizing participatory approaches that draw from youth's lived experiences. Involve youth in research, data collection and analysis processes. Prioritize participatory approaches and develop a set of comprehensive success indicators for climate initiatives, encompassing environmental, social and governance outcomes that take onboard the lived experience of young people. Strengthen monitoring and evaluation processes on progress made, by using these metrics to ensure well-rounded impact assessment.
- **REMOVE BARRIERS TO CLIMATE ACTION: Create an environment where creative solutions by young people can thrive.** Identify and address barriers that hinder innovation in climate action spaces, such as restrictive regulations, limited access to funding, or bureaucratic obstacles.
- **SHARE BEST PRACTICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE CLIMATE ACTION:** Underscore key actions undertaken by young people to address climate change at the local and international level, including the key role of youth in decision-making processes related to environmental protection.

Other topics suggested by the respondents:

- ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR BREACHES OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAW.
- ENSURE SYSTEMATIC AND MORE EFFECTIVE SENSITIZATION ON CLIMATE ACTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION THROUGH THE EDUCATION SYSTEM.
- INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY: ENSURING POLICIES THAT SECURE THE RIGHTS OF THE YOUNG AND UPCOMING GENERATIONS.
- PROMOTE YOUTH PEER EDUCATION ON CLIMATE JUSTICE (Youth for Youth Action).

C. Main challenges related to Democracy and Climate Change

While discussing the main topic of "Democracy and Climate Change" at the United Nations, what are the main challenges to be addressed from a youth perspective? (2 possible replies allowed)



Short description of the proposed options:

- **LACK OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO ENGAGE IN GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTIONS:** Youth care about environmental and climate change challenges but lack opportunities to engage through global actions with a wider impact and outreach.

- **PERSISTING BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE, ACTIVE, AND MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION** in climate change and global environmental decision-making processes. Even when formal participation is ensured, youth lack real influence on decision-making processes.
- **DISTRUST IN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES** discourages young people to engage in climate action.

Other topics suggested by the respondents:

- LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL VIOLATIONS.
- POOR MANAGEMENT OF FUNDS AND INSUFFICIENT BUDGET ALLOCATIONS TO PROMOTE CLIMATE ACTIONS BY YOUTH.
- LACK OF INFORMATION ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY YOUNG PEOPLE.
- NEGATIVE IMPACT OF CORRUPTION ON EFFECTIVE CLIMATE ACTION.
- SOCIOECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND DIGITAL DIVIDE: Youth from marginalized or low-income communities often face greater climate impacts but have fewer resources and platforms to participate in democratic processes. Limited access to technology, internet, and representation hinders their ability to engage in global climate discussions and actions.