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THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES (LGMA) CONSTITUENCY

COP31 Guidance for Negotiators on

CHILDREN & YOUTH

The LGMA Guidance for Negotiators accompanies the LGMA COP31 Position and provides detailed recommendations, context and proposed negotiating text, setting out how each ask can be operationalized.

cities-and-regions.org/cop31-lgma-position

Background

This document outlines the central elements of the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency's position on children and youth issues and priorities to be addressed in the negotiation agenda of the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It is intended for Parties and negotiators engaging in UNFCCC processes, providing key messages and proposed negotiation language to strengthen the institutionalization of meaningful participation, decision-making power, accountability, and implementation support for children and youth across climate action.

Relevant youth-urban nexus negotiations

Climate governance should create institutional mechanisms through which young people can exercise meaningful influence and hold implementation processes accountable. Climate policy discussions often treat children and youth and local and subnational governments separately; however, their shared role in shaping and implementing climate action creates a strong opportunity to strengthen implementation across governance levels. The youth-urban nexus offers a way to build that bridge. The UNFCCC processes provide relevant entry points.

1. NDC 3.0 and multilevel implementation

National climate plans can be strengthened when subnational priorities, local knowledge from communities, and youth perspectives are incorporated into their design and implementation. The LGMA has called for a formal work programme on multilevel action and subnational contributions to be integrated into NDC 3.0 processes. **Young people can establish meaningful mechanisms to contribute to NDC development and implementation at national and subnational levels.**

> **Proposed text for negotiators**
>
> Building on the recognition of the importance of multilevel, gender-responsive and cooperative action in implementing the outcomes of the first Global Stocktake, Parties should ensure meaningful and institutionalised participation of young people in multilevel climate governance and in the implementation of NDCs 3.0

2. Cities, buildings, and urban systems

Young people are not only residents but also users of urban systems. In this context, their work as researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs, community organizers, and advocates is actively shaping future urban development. Therefore, **youth-led urban climate solutions need greater recognition and visibility, and pathways are needed for young people to contribute to local climate resilience planning and implementation.** Youth-led implementation needs to be **linked to resources, including direct and accessible finance, technical assistance, and capacity-building**.

> **Proposed text for negotiators**
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> Building on the Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme's consideration of cities, buildings and urban systems, Parties and relevant non-Party stakeholders are encouraged to strengthen meaningful youth participation in the design and implementation of urban mitigation and resilience actions.

3. Just Transition

The Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP) is critical for young people in terms of advancing social and economic justice; this includes enhanced access to decent green jobs for young people, skills, education, livelihoods, as well as meaningful participation in decisions affecting their futures. The LGMA has specifically called for a vertical integration across different government levels within the JTWP to support complementarity and coherence in implementation. Therefore, **the meaningful involvement of young people is essential in designing just transition pathways at the local, subnational, and national levels. Just Transition should go beyond jobs and skills to include social protection, livelihoods, intergenerational equity, participation, and locally specific transition pathways**.

> **Proposed text for negotiators**
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> Recognising the importance of inclusive, nationally determined and people-centred just transition pathways, Parties are encouraged to ensure the meaningful participation of young people in the development, implementation and monitoring of just transition pathways, with regard to skills, decent work, employment, livelihoods and education.
>
> Recognising the importance of the role of non-Party stakeholders in enabling inclusive and participatory just transition pathways and deciding that the mechanism's governance body shall include representatives from the nine non-governmental organisation constituencies to co-lead the activities under the mechanism together with Parties.

4. Climate finance

Access to finance is still considered a critical enabling condition for local implementation. The LGMA advocates for climate finance that enables local and subnational governments to access resources more effectively, including simplified access mechanisms. Barriers to finance are among the main issues faced by youth-led and community-based initiatives, which often operate at a smaller scale and lack access to conventional financing mechanisms. **Accessible, adequate, fast, and locally responsive fund pathways for youth climate action need to be strengthened.** For suggestions about climate finance text, see the LGMA COP31 Guidance for Negotiators on Climate Finance.

5. Adaptation and resilience

Climate impacts are often experienced locally, particularly in the Global South and in dense urban areas, yet international, national, and local funding often gives lower priority to local adaptation projects. This limits the ability of local communities to prepare for and recover from climate impacts in line with the Build Back Better principles of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. At the same time, young people are strongly involved in climate adaptation action, showcasing that it can be innovative and inclusive. **Climate adaptation and resilience projects should be granted equal recognition and funding as climate mitigation, to empower young people to shape innovative solutions for resilient cities**.

Proposed text for negotiators

Building on decision 2/CMA.5 and the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience, Parties should promote meaningful participation of young people and local and subnational actors in adaptation planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning.

6. Loss and Damage

Young people and local communities experience immediate and long-term economic and non-economic consequences of climate impacts, while local, regional and subnational governments are often responsible for responding on the ground. **Parties should therefore strengthen meaningful participation of youth and subnational governments in the design and implementation of Loss and Damage responses, including responses to non-economic losses, and ensure that finance mechanisms are accessible to actors and communities closest to impacts**. Loss and Damage needs a much stronger non-economic loss and damage (NELD) dimension, particularly youth/community participation in identifying and addressing non-economic losses.

Proposed text for negotiators

Building on decision 5/CMA.5, Parties and the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage should promote meaningful participation of young people and youth-led organisations in processes related to the design, implementation and monitoring of responses to loss and damage, including where such responses are delivered at subnational and local levels.

Further strengthen opportunities for youth-led and youth-inclusive organisations to contribute to locally led responses to economic and non-economic loss and damage, including through accessible and appropriate modalities for finance, technical assistance and capacity-building.

7. Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE)

Provides a direct entry point for strengthening youth participation through education, training, public awareness, public participation, and access to information. **Further strengthening of institutional mechanisms for youth participation and capacity building is needed at local and subnational levels to ensure that young people take part in shaping climate policies**. Youth should be recognized across the entire climate implementation cycle, i.e., planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and accountability, rather than as participants in individual processes.

> **Proposed text for negotiators**
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> Building on decision 18/CP.26 (Glasgow work programme on ACE), further enhance meaningful and inclusive participation of children and youth in climate change processes at the national, subnational and local levels; including the design, implementation and monitoring of climate policies and action.

What the LGMA can offer

Since the first climate COP in 1995, the LGMA has served as the official voice for local and subnational governments within UN Climate Change, connecting them directly to global climate processes. The 2015 Paris Agreement recognized the importance of engagement by all levels of government in addressing climate change.

The LGMA can create a bridge between subnational authorities, youth participants, and negotiators, bringing them together to connect these different perspectives and highlighting the importance of the intergenerational dimension and multilevel governance of climate policies.

Over the years, the LGMA has also developed strong expertise on the youth-urban nexus and partnership with young people, especially through collaboration with the YOUNGO Constituency.

The LGMA can share approaches, best practices, and examples from subnational authorities about meaningful participation of youth at the local and subnational level, feeding into the implementation agenda at COPs.

One such example is the organization of Town Hall COPs (formerly Local Stocktakes), supported by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability in its capacity as the focal point of the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency to the UNFCCC. These events aim to connect subnational discussions with global negotiations, while advancing youth involvement in local climate processes.

In the lead-up to COP28, more than 20 Local Stocktakes were organized, with three of them fully YOUNGO-led. As a follow-up, two side events were organized at COP28, connecting the local stocktakes with youth action. In 2025, nearly one-third of Town Hall COP applications were youth-led, with many also exploring synergies with Local Conferences of Youth (LCOYs).

Resources from the LGMA community

- ICLEI's Unlocking the Power of Youth checklist
- ICLEI's Vision on Youth Engagement in Global Sustainability
- ICLEI's Stocktake4Climate Emergency Outcomes Report
- YOUNGO and ICLEI Youth Voices Series
- YOUNGO's Youth Statement for 2026

Children & Youth Working Group

Co-Leads
John Warren Tamor, YOUNGO Cities Working Group
Lamis Elkhatieb, International Society of City and Regional Planners / Loss and Damage Youth Coalition
Sonia Ugwunna, YOUNGO Cities Working Group

Members
Ahmed Mokgopo, C40 Cities
Earl Burgos, C40 Cities
Joy Chiamaka Ogbonna, Clean Technology Hub
Leo Leong, Unlocking Abilities Together
Luciano Frontelle de Paula Filho, ICLEI Brazil
Miroslav Polzer, IAAI GloCha
Pola Zabuska, ICLEI Europe
Tashi Piprek, ICLEI Africa
Walter Osigai Etepesit, Pan-African Youth Climate Action Organization