

Small Hands, Big Impact: How Children Are Driving Climate and Clean Air Action

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Children and Youth Major Group (CYMG) to UNEP

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Equity in Clean Air Investments and Decisions Event

12th Better Air Quality Conference, March 12th, 2026



About CYMG | We are mandated to coordinate youth engagement in UNEP's processes



Mandate

CYMG is a **formal youth engagement mechanism** to UNEP, deriving our mandate from S.3 of Agenda 21 adopted at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit



Membership

CYMG has universal membership and represents **1,500+** youth organisations, **64** of which are UNEP-accredited, and **10,000+** individual members from **100+** countries



Mission

CYMG works to advance **empowerment, inclusion, and meaningful engagement** of youth in global environmental governance, in collaboration with other youth constituencies

CYMG in numbers

30+

Ongoing environmental governance processes

19

Regional and thematic working groups

10k+

Individual members from 100+ countries

1.5k+

Member organisations

Overview | CYMG provides inputs into 30+ processes throughout the year, centred around the UN Environment Assembly



UN Environment Assembly and core processes

UNEP is governed by **UNEA**, which meets biennially and is the world's highest-level environmental governance body

Its agenda is set by the **Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR)**, which is the subsidiary body that meets regularly over the course of the year



UNEP-administered MEAs and scientific assessments

UNEP administers Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) such as the **Montreal Protocol** which set global environmental norms

It also (co)-hosts scientific processes like the **IPCC** that communicate the latest science to policymakers



UNEP-facilitated initiatives and partnerships

UNEP facilitates multi-stakeholder forums, ranging from the **UN Environment Management Group**, which brings together all relevant UN agencies, to the **UNEP Finance Initiative** that focuses primarily on the private sector





Children as Key Stakeholders

The essential role of children in climate and clean air action

Children (<18 years old)

- Children are disproportionately impacted of the impacts of climate disaster: Preparedness, ability to navigate disaster, trauma and resilience after disaster.
- Children are also disproportionately impacted by clean air: Impact of multiple pollutants, superpollutants, and hazardous chemicals caused by various activities.

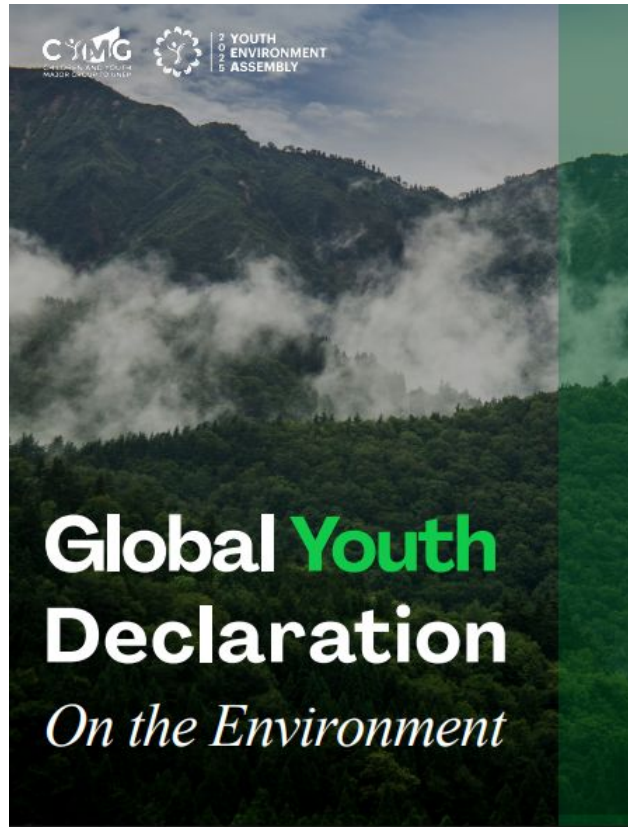
A shift from “object” to “actor”. Some points to reflect

- Demography
- Education
- Evidence-based
- Policymaking input
- Representation

Picture Source:

<https://www.shutterstock.com/editorial/image-editorial/children-soak-batok-village-north-indralaya-district-14126135a>

Pathways to action



This document was also built with including children, both in online and offline settings, during Q4 2025.

Some recommendations of CYMG that is outlined in our Global Youth Declaration on the Environment 2025 (GYD 2025):

Recommendation 4d:

Provide dedicated funding and technical support for youth-led environmental initiatives and ensure that environmental finance mechanisms and capacity-building programmes allocate resources specifically to **support children- and youth-led efforts**.

Recommendation 4f:

Promote and strengthen inclusive, **age-appropriate channels for children** to engage in environmental decision-making, such as **child-friendly consultations** and support for **child-led advocacy**, in accordance with the UNCRC and General Comment No. 26.

Full text of GYD 2025:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ClzLmXdm1WWntWy56dntI_OioVpTFWji/view

#YouthtoBEATPOLLUTION

Chemicals, Waste and Pollution Working Group to the Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP

Examples of 2025 Engagements:

- **Leading Youth Engagement for ISP-CWP:** OEWG 3.2 for the creation of the new intergovernmental science-policy panel on chemicals, waste and pollution
- **Inclusive GFC Youth Engagement:** OEWG-1 Global Framework on Chemicals
- **UNEP Nitrogen Working Group:** 6th and 7th WG meeting
- **Zero Waste:** Mottainai Declaration and Zero Waste Forum
- Regional Forums on Youth to Beat Pollution

New Engagements:

Youth to Beat Pollution Campaign

**#YOUTH TO
BEAT
POLLUTION**

#Y2BP is aimed to catalyze UNEP's existing BEAT POLLUTION campaign by creating space for youth priorities across regions, and support initiatives to tackle pollution affecting human, animal and ecosystem health.



#YouthtoBEATPOLLUTION

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*Join the
movement!*

2026 Opportunities: Share your initiatives to be featured on the new platform

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BAQ 2026

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Thank You

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