

# **Pre-COP26 Youth Position Paper**

## **Ethiopia**

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## **Introduction**

This document presents the position paper from the perspective of the youth for Ethiopia's current and future strategy and plans on climate change impacts, mitigation and adaptation measures. The document outlines four major themes of discussion that the Pre-COP26 is focusing on this year. These four areas are Youth Driving Ambition, Sustainable Recovery, Non-state Actors Engagement, and Climate Conscious Society. Ideas, comments and solutions are discussed under each of the four areas. In addition, organizations and individuals who have been actively participating in the movement in combating climate change and who are part of the climate-conscious society in Ethiopia have been consulted to give a comprehensive stance on this subject and represent their concrete ideas to climate solutions they would like to see put on the table.

Students in Addis Ababa university were consulted to add innovative climate solutions to the position paper. Young Women for Climate Justice, a newly formed group committed to climate justice, women's engagement in climate policy development, and recognition of their vulnerabilities to climate change, were also consulted. Involved young individuals such as Seble Samuel, an environmentalist and founder of Menged Le Sew and Lem Ketema, and Greta Iori, Director of Program Development at Elephant Protection Initiative Foundation and Women for the Environment (WE) Africa 2021 Fellow were consulted in the writing of this position paper. We also reached out to non-state actors like Kefta Real Estate which is the first residential building in Ethiopia to incorporate green building technologies that minimize carbon footprint and maximize inbuilt and natural efficiencies, and Kuriftu Resort, which is striving to incorporate eco-tourism and sustainability in their operations.

Ethiopia has been currently leading campaigns and joining the movement for a green and circular economy. Green Legacy, an initiative that was launched in 2019 to plant 20 billion trees across the country over four years, has gained popularity not only in our region but across the globe, inspiring nations like Canada and the UK to join the movement. Moreover, establishment of the national strategy Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) gives a strong indication of Ethiopia's high ambitions and strive to move towards a greener economy. From an environmental, social and economic perspective, being the leader in the CRGE and the Green Legacy initiative has had many benefits; job creation, diplomatic advantages and protection of the environment are only a few. In addition, a large percentage of Ethiopia's energy comes from renewable sources; hydropower is important for Ethiopia and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is expected to be a large source of energy, not only for the country but for the region as well. All of these climate conscious actions taken by our government can help our country foster green and environmental diplomacy in the continent which will inspire more nations.

Although our country is making more climate conscious activities, we still face many challenges in terms of lack of human and financial capacity. Environmental governance needs to be improved at all levels. Weak capacity in environmental management, law enforcement, monitoring and implementation are key challenges that need to be addressed.

Ethiopia's newly updated Nationally Determined Contributions emphasizes the country's aim for a climate compatible development which stands as hope that there will be solutions to the previously stated challenges. The 2021 NDC updated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions projections using the most recent national and sectoral emissions inventory data and even though Ethiopia's contribution to global GHG emissions is tiny, the country has increased its overall mitigation ambition with a commitment to reduce economy-wide emissions by at least 68.8% by 2030 against the business-as-usual projection. The NDC also integrates the country's national climate and development objectives by aligning the GHG emissions pathways with national development priorities and sectoral targets from Ethiopia's new 10-year development plan.

In this position paper, Agenda 2063 the master plan to transform our continent to the *Africa We Want*, Ethiopia needs to actively participate in the green economy and climate conscious development plan and ensure the lasting protection of our natural resources.

## **Youth Driving Ambition**

This theme focuses on encouraging the participation of young people in decision-making processes, with the aim of contributing to the increase of climate ambition and implementing concrete actions to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement. Under this major theme, there is a theme of local, national, and multilateral dimensions.

There is a lack of representation of young people in important offices where decision-making for important matters relating to the climate crisis occurs. We would like to see meaningful youth participation; we do not want to only be invited to meetings but be part of the planning, reviewing, and implementation processes of the climate actions. Ethiopia and the entire continent of Africa have a population with a large percentage of youth who are the future leaders and the decision-makers of tomorrow. Therefore, it is vital to educate and involve youths meaningfully in processes of decision-making processes such as policy making, reviewing, and implementation.

- ❖ We urge our governments to accelerate their actions and come up with a financial system in which youth can have access to climate finance in line with the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance (SCF) that considers climate finance to include all finance that specifically targets low-carbon or climate-resilient development. This could include domestic budget allocations, public grants and loans from bilateral and multilateral agencies, and private sector investment.
- ❖ In order to educate the future leaders and the younger generation, we urge the government to introduce education on environmental science, climate, and global change in the secondary school curriculum to educate the next generation on the issue and injustice that is most important to the future.
- ❖ We want our government to support us in having the opportunity to join global and regional platforms, for us to participate in activism and be at the forefront of standing against climate injustice.
- ❖ It is important to include the youth in mitigation and adaptation activities currently in progress by the government; this can be by allowing the youth to participate in volunteerism or internships with the Environmental Forest and Climate Change Commission and other governmental bodies like the Mayor's Office, Ministry of Transportation etc. which are currently leading green campaigns/projects for the country.

## Women's Involvement

When discussing the importance of youth participation, it is vital to focus on the participation of young women. By consulting Young Women for Climate Change in Ethiopia, these were some ideas and solutions presented from the young women on the issue of climate change.

- ❖ Since climate change/disasters cause differential impact across gender, gender perspective should be included in intervention policy and programs. As women are best to speak on women's issue, they should be given the opportunity to advocate for their own needs and concerns
- ❖ Climate resilience policy suggestions should recognize the disproportionate adverse impact climate change causes on different parts of the populations: gender, socio-economic status, livelihood, urban-rural location, etc. The disadvantaged and more vulnerable parts of the population suffer the risks of climate change and climate disasters more severely than others. Therefore, no one size fits all approach with climate resilience solutions.
- ❖ In central Addis Ababa – Assist parks/green areas to promote themselves as viable leisure areas. Allow private entities to open cafes, restaurants, photo opportunities, games, rock climbing, etc.
  - Youth can spend time there instead of locations that lead to temptations for substance abuse (ie. Chat, alcohol, drugs)
  - Create events for infants to get involved today on caring about the planet (plant trees, care for trees)

## **Sustainable Recovery**

This theme focuses on combining economic recovery from the pandemic with the implementation of the objectives of the Paris Agreement. The sub-themes include energy transition and green jobs, adaptation and resilience, nature based solutions, financial flows and tourism. Adaptation and mitigation measures can in themselves be a source and drive job creation, through investment in renewable energy, eco-, and energy-efficient construction, or improved waste management.

- ❖ There are multiple opportunities to boost the economy by placing an incentive for sustainable and eco-friendly businesses, enterprises and startups.
  - For example, the government can place tax incentives by lowering the amount of taxes sustainable businesses have to pay to the government as compared to how much regular fuel-consuming businesses pay tax. This will slowly allow the businesses to shift to adapting climate-conscious strategies and becoming sustainable.
- ❖ Every undergoing project and system under different ministers of the government can have a specific guide and checklist they have to go through and make sure that the project/campaign does not violate any of the environmental laws and regulations placed under the constitution.

- ❖ There needs to be a specific body in the government responsible for the implementation of environmental laws and regulations along with research on current environmental problems and climate change by collaborating with research institutions and universities. This will create more job opportunities and open doors for academic development.
- ❖ Ethiopia, including the rest of Africa, has rich natural resources which are being threatened by the dangers of climate change. Sustainable recovery, proper management, and protection of our natural resources from the government is necessary.
  - We want our government to support the deployment of measures to manage existing human wildlife conflict and to avoid the conditions that could lead to future conflicts.
  - Facilitate short and long-term resource mobilisation, including through advancing successful conservation governance models.
- ❖ Government should have resources accessible to businesses and industries that want to enter the climate conscious society by making sustainable production choices. Following the sustainable route for businesses should never be difficult as it will discourage more entrepreneurs.
  - For instance, Kefita Real Estate wanted to have materials of the building be eco-friendly and sustainable. However, there was difficulty in sourcing eco-friendly construction materials in the country which made it difficult for them to achieve their mission.
  - Government needs stricter regulation on construction as currently in Ethiopia, construction accounts for 35% of the industry and emits a vast amount of greenhouse gases while being the source of a large amount of the country's waste.

### **Nonstate Actors engagement**

This theme focuses on the role played by non-governmental actors in the fight against climate change and in sectors that impact the daily life of young people such as food, entrepreneurship, sport, fashion, arts. Art and entertainment are a great way to involve young people and the public in general. Through entertainment, we can look at mass media such as TV, radio, and more importantly social media. Through arts, education in climate change can get to the youth whether it be visual arts or music.

- ❖ The government can support young green entrepreneurs by providing access to funding, network resources, and tax incentives.
- ❖ Governmental mass media should carry out campaigns on the environment and have a show led by youth on climate injustice as it pertains to Ethiopia and the country's strive to green the economy by incorporating it with the Green Legacy Initiative.

- ❖ Restaurants and entrepreneurs can promote a green and circular economy by helping the youth be involved in helping them make green consumption choices for both food and items. This helps achieve the sustainable development goal (SDG) 12 which is promoting sustainable consumption and production.
- ❖ Before new businesses could get their license, the government body issuing the license should stress using recyclable or recycled products as a preferred alternative that comes with incentives.
- ❖ Environment Social and Governance (ESG) scoring and tight implementation of the Environment Impact Assessment (EIS) should be accessible and mandatory from the government to help the increasing number of investors to apply these non-financial factors as part of their analysis process to identify material risks and growth opportunities.
  - The Ethiopian Investment Commission should create a financial or non-financial incentive for investors investing in eco-friendly products and services in the country now.
  - Investors and entrepreneurs who are making environmentally conscious actions should have something that differentiates them from regular counterparts.
- ❖ There needs to be organization in capturing and documenting information on green initiatives and investments done by the private sector in order to encourage more non-state actors to join the movement and improve the network between these stakeholders.
- ❖ According to study on climate based investment by non-state actors in Ethiopia, it is stated that not all expenditures of climate finance are spent on climate change activities as some expenditures on programmes /projects are spent on activities that are weakly related to climate change or at least not directly related to climate related activities.
  - Climate finance should be strongly regulated and expenditures should be directly related to climate change activities. This will also encourage more climate justice activities to grow in the country.

## **Climate Conscious Society**

This theme focuses on building a society that is more aware of climate challenges and showcasing impacts and solutions, education, public awareness and mobilization, and media. In order to build a climate conscious society in Ethiopia, there needs to be a strong movement on educating the public on climate change and how we are impacted by it.

- ❖ We also need to create awareness on current adaptation and mitigation plans the country currently is conducting.
- ❖ We need educational contents and campaigns translated into our languages so that we reach a wider audience.

- ❖ We call upon governments to take urgent action to integrate formal and non-formal environmental education programs such as capacity building programs on the 4 major topics which are Agriculture, Waste, Industries, and Energy.
- ❖ There needs to be more coverage about the current climate and global matters on mass media to educate the public. A lot of people are not 'climate conscious' or they do not show care about the issue of climate change because they have not been exposed to the problem and they do not know how it can affect them.
- ❖ Training and education should be given in all parts of the country to people in different age groups, especially community leaders. The government by leading this program can have the trained individuals to train and educate more people to have it be a cascade training program.
- ❖ As stated above under the Youth Driving Ambition theme, climate education should be incorporated into the secondary school curriculum.
- ❖ The government and other stakeholders should encourage volunteerism in environmental activities by providing us the platform to do so. These activities can either be carried out by NGOs or the government and can be specifically catered to the youth.
- ❖ Government office workers should be given adequate amounts of training and education on this matter so they can be more receptive to new ideas.

## **Youth and Innovation**

Youth should be encouraged by the government and have access to resources such as research laboratories in universities or research institutions to develop innovative technologies and solutions to fill the gap that we see in environmental governance such as monitoring and implementation of environmental laws and regulations.