

# CLIMATE CHANGE AND ERHRT

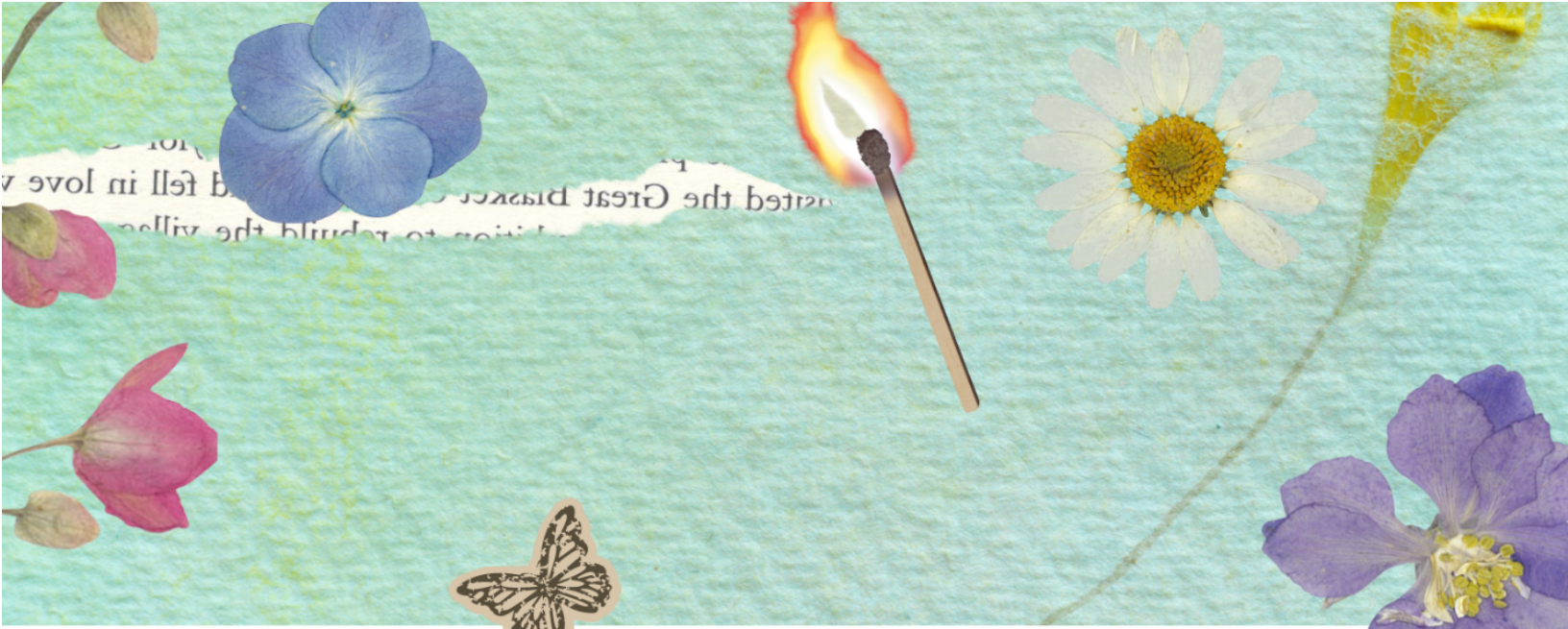


YOUTH CHOOSE!

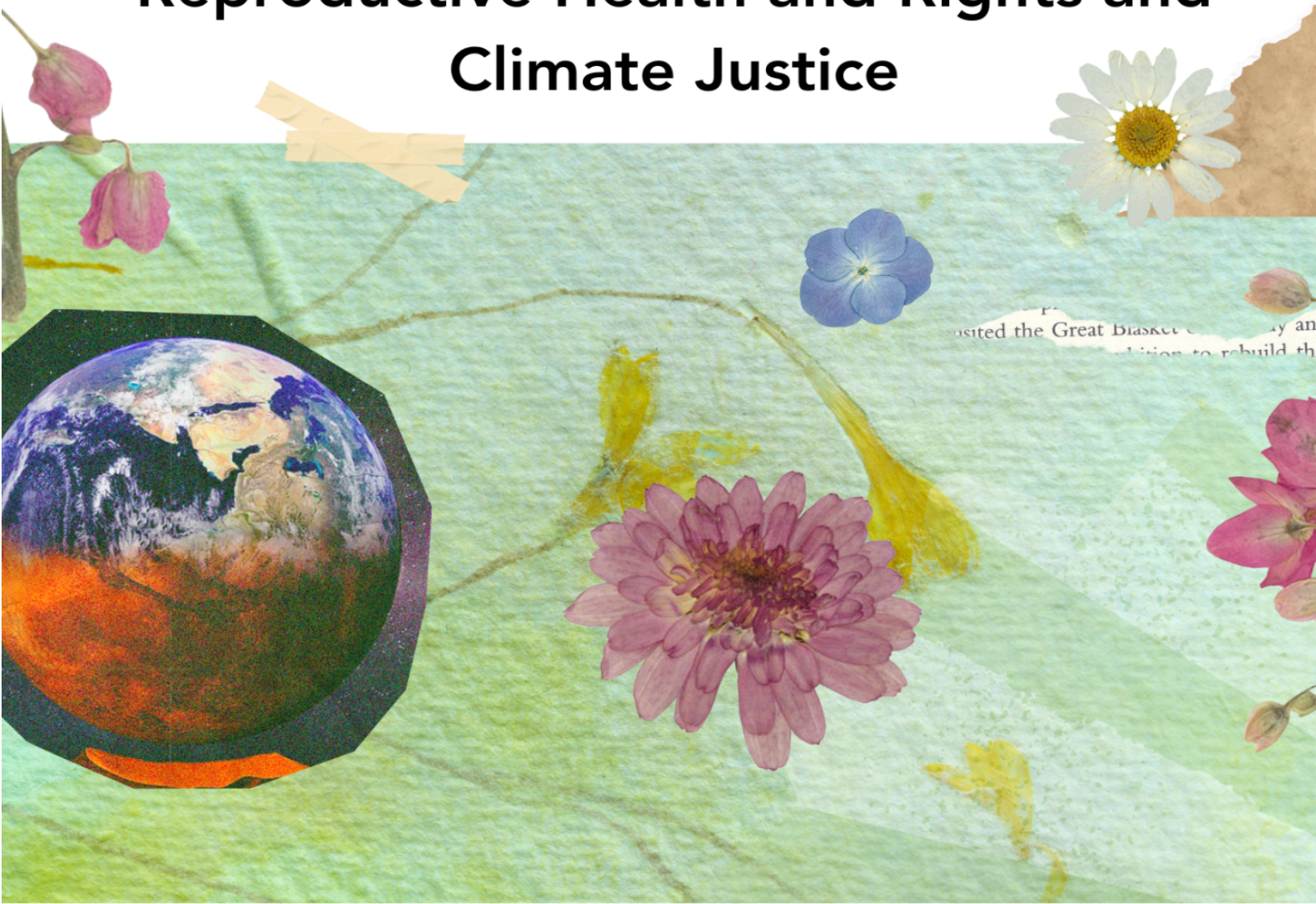
@IYAFP







# Youth Declaration on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and Climate Justice



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# Youth Declaration on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and Climate Justice

We, young human rights defenders, activists, environmental defenders, and advocates, stand united in the face of two existential threats: climate change and the erosion of our sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). We recognize with urgency the interconnectedness of these crises and their disproportionate impact on our generation, particularly those marginalized due to gender, race, class, disability, and sexual orientation.

We reaffirm the universality and indivisibility of human rights, including SRHR, which are essential for our health, dignity, and well-being. We believe that all young people, regardless of background, have the right to access comprehensive and high-quality sexual and reproductive health information and services, including contraception, safe abortion, and comprehensive sexuality education.

We are deeply concerned by the ways in which the current climate crisis is already exacerbating existing inequalities and vulnerabilities, jeopardizing our ability to exercise our SRHR. Extreme weather events, natural disasters, and environmental degradation disrupt access to healthcare services and essential supplies, leading to increased maternal mortality, sexual violence, and unintended pregnancies. These challenges disproportionately affect young people, especially traditionally marginalized groups who are already facing multiple disadvantages.

We recognize the critical role of youth leadership and participation in achieving reproductive and climate justice. We are a generation with a strong sense of justice, boundless energy, and innovative minds. We are already leading the charge for change, demanding action from decision-makers and creating solutions to address these complex challenges.

We declare our commitment to working together to build a future where climate justice and SRHR are not just aspirations, but realities. We call for urgent action from governments, international organizations, and other stakeholders to address these interconnected crises and ensure that all young people can enjoy a healthy, just, and sustainable world.



## Section 1: The Interconnectedness between Climate Change and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

The climate crisis is not merely an environmental issue; it is a profound threat to our health, well-being, and fundamental human rights, including our sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The impacts of climate change are far-reaching, cascading across our lives and disproportionately impacting vulnerable communities, including young people.

Climate change disrupts access to essential healthcare services, including those related to SRHR. Extreme weather events, natural disasters, and environmental degradation damage infrastructure, disrupt supply chains, and lead to the displacement of populations. This results in limited access to contraception, safe abortion services, and comprehensive sexuality education, putting young people at increased risk of unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and sexual violence.

In response to climate-related extreme events, governments do not adequately prioritize family planning and sexual and reproductive health and rights. Supply chains for essential products and reproductive and maternal health services affected by these events are not restored promptly, which causes increased out-of-pocket costs and unmet needs for prolonged periods.

The climate crisis also exacerbates existing inequalities and vulnerabilities. Young people from marginalized communities are often disproportionately affected by climate change, facing greater risks to their health and well-being. This includes:

- Young women and girls: Climate change can increase their vulnerability to gender-based violence, exploitation, and early and forced marriage.
- Young people living in poverty: They lack access to resources and support systems necessary to cope with the impacts of climate change on their health and SRHR.
- Young people with disabilities: They face additional barriers to accessing healthcare services and adapting to climate change challenges.
- Young people living with HIV: They face increased challenges in accessing medication and services due to disruptions.
- Young people of racial and ethnic diversity: BIPOC communities often experience a disproportionate burden of climate change impacts, with associated stressors affecting SRHR. Racism and discrimination exacerbate vulnerability, leading to disparities in healthcare access and outcomes.



Furthermore, environmental degradation directly impacts our reproductive health. Exposure to pollutants and toxins can lead to infertility, pregnancy complications, and other health issues. Climate change also disrupts food security and nutrition, which can have a negative impact on young people's reproductive health and development.

These interconnected challenges illustrate the urgency of addressing climate change and its impact on SRHR. We cannot afford to ignore the profound consequences of climate change on our health, well-being, and fundamental rights. We need a holistic and integrated approach that tackles both climate change and SRHR challenges simultaneously.

## Section 2: The Right of Young People to Participate in Decision-Making for a Holistic Response

The escalating climate crisis and the erosion of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are not just threats to our future; they are immediate challenges impacting our lives today. Yet, despite facing the brunt of these interconnected issues, young people are often excluded from the decision-making processes that shape our world. This lack of meaningful engagement and partnership is a violation of our fundamental right to be heard and to contribute to shaping the solutions that will impact our lives. Nothing about us, without us.

We assert our right to participate in decision-making for a holistic response to climate change and SRHR challenges. Our voices, perspectives, and experiences are essential for crafting effective and equitable solutions. We are not merely passive observers; we are active agents of change, brimming with innovative ideas and solutions.

We are leading by example:

- **Activism for Accountability:** Young climate activists exemplify our commitment by demanding accountability from governments and corporations. Holding them responsible for commitments and advocating for ambitious climate action plans, these activists embody the power of grassroots movements to drive systemic change.
- **Innovation in Entrepreneurship:** Young entrepreneurs play a pivotal role by developing sustainable technologies and businesses that directly address climate change and enhance access to SRHR. Their endeavors illustrate the transformative impact of innovation in tackling the interconnected challenges we face.
- **Creative Advocacy through Arts:** Young artists and communicators employ their creativity as a powerful tool to raise awareness about the intersectionality of climate change and SRHR. Through art, they inspire action and foster engagement across diverse communities, amplifying the urgency of our collective cause.



- **Community Leadership and Advocacy:** Young community leaders are at the forefront, mobilizing their peers and advocating for policies and programs that ensure equitable access to SRHR services. By addressing the specific needs of marginalized communities, these leaders embody the grassroots movements that drive policy change at the local level.
- **Digital Activism and Technology Solutions:** Young individuals leverage digital platforms and technology to create awareness and develop solutions. From building mobile applications that provide information on SRHR services to using social media for climate education, these digital activists harness the power of technology to reach a global audience and drive positive change.
- **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Young people engage in interdisciplinary collaborations, bringing together diverse skills and perspectives to address climate change and SRHR holistically. Collaborative projects may include partnerships between scientists, activists, artists, and policymakers, fostering innovative approaches that consider the complexity of the challenges we face.

These are just a few examples of the countless ways young people are actively working towards a more just and sustainable future. We are not waiting for permission; we are taking action and demanding a seat at the decision-making table. Our participation is not a mere privilege; it is a necessity.

Excluding young people from decision-making processes is not only unjust; it is also ineffective. Our unique perspectives and experiences are critical for crafting solutions that are comprehensive, equitable, and reflect the needs and realities of the future generation. By silencing our voices, we risk perpetuating the very issues we are striving to address.

## Section 3: Young People's Demands

Therefore, we demand:

- **Youth Representation in Decision-Making Bodies:** Meaningful adolescent and youth engagement in all decision-making processes related to climate change and SRHR. This includes access to information, consultation opportunities, and voting rights in relevant bodies.
- **Uninterrupted sexual and reproductive health services:** We demand that governments guarantee uninterrupted access to essential health services amidst the climate crisis, ensure adequate planning and financing for services and products during the response to catastrophic weather events, and integrate SRHR in their National Adaptation Plans and other policy instruments.



- **Phase-out of fossil fuels:** We demand governments commit to the phase-out of fossil fuels by 2050. World leaders must take action to limit global warming by 1,5 °C through bold commitments to achieve net-zero emissions by or before 2050.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** We advocate for decision-making structures that actively embrace diverse voices and perspectives from all backgrounds. By breaking down barriers, we aim to create spaces where every young individual's perspective is valued, contributing to solutions that reflect the nuanced realities of our diverse global community.
- **Capacity Strengthening for Youth-led Advocacy:** Capacity-strengthening programs and resources that enhance young people's skills and knowledge necessary to participate in decision-making processes effectively.
- **Access to funding:** We call for dedicated, unrestricted, and youth-friendly financial support for youth-led initiatives addressing the intersection of climate change and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This goes beyond monetary contributions, extending to establishing sustainable funding mechanisms.
- **Protection of Indigenous Knowledge:** Recognizing the unique contributions of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to sustainable living, we demand the protection of Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous youth should be actively involved in shaping climate and SRHR policies, respecting and integrating their knowledge into broader initiatives.
- **Self-care interventions and digital health:** We call for the accelerated implementation of self-care interventions and digital health, complementary to provider-led services in health facilities, and contribute to continued access to sexual and reproductive health services in times of crisis.
- **Legal Recognition and Protection:** We demand legal recognition and protection for the rights of LGBTIQ+ individuals in the context of climate change and SRHR. This includes anti-discrimination laws, access to inclusive healthcare, and the acknowledgement of diverse family structures in policies related to climate resilience.
- **Protection for Climate Migrants:** We call for the protection of young people who are forced to migrate due to climate change and ensure they have access to sexual and reproductive health services in both locations of transit and destination. Young people must be able to access comprehensive youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services without experiencing a financial burden that further exacerbates their difficult situation.
- **Climate-Resilient Healthcare Systems and Supply Chains:** We call for the development of climate-resilient healthcare systems and supply chains that can withstand the challenges posed by extreme weather events and climate change effects. This includes the incorporation of sustainable practices in healthcare infrastructure, the provision of essential SRHR services during and after climate-related disasters, and adequate risk mitigation in supply chain management.



By recognizing and upholding the right of young people to participate in decision-making, we can create a more just and sustainable future for all. We are not the future; we are the present, and our voices deserve to be heard.

## Section 4: Commitment to Action

We, unwaveringly commit to addressing the intricate interplay between climate change and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This dedication finds expression in a comprehensive set of actions, designed to leave an enduring impact on the intersectionality of these critical issues:

- **Advocacy and Awareness Campaigns:** We pledge to lead robust advocacy and awareness campaigns that transcend boundaries, raising the collective consciousness of the urgent need to address the nexus of climate change and SRHR. Through strategic communication and targeted outreach, we aim to amplify our message and mobilize support for transformative action.
- **Accountability of Decision-Makers:** Holding decision-makers accountable is paramount. We commit to implementing a rigorous and sustained monitoring mechanism, ensuring that leaders fulfill their commitments in the areas of climate change and SRHR. By fostering transparency and demanding accountability, we strive to catalyze meaningful change at the policy level.
- **Support for Youth-Led Initiatives:** Recognizing the power and potential of youth-led initiatives, we stand ready to offer unwavering support and collaboration. Through mentorship, resource mobilization, and strategic partnerships, we aim to amplify the impact of initiatives driven by young leaders, fostering innovation and resilience in the face of climate-related challenges.
- **Promotion of Sustainable Practices:** We advocate for and actively promote sustainable practices, emphasizing the role of environmental stewardship in safeguarding sexual and reproductive health. By championing eco-friendly solutions and encouraging responsible consumption, we strive to contribute to a world where sustainability is ingrained in every aspect of life.
- **Solidarity and Safe Spaces:** Building solidarity among youth is pivotal. We commit to creating safe spaces for young advocates to share experiences, insights, and solutions. By fostering a sense of community and mutual support, we aim to empower young people to navigate the challenges posed by climate change and SRHR, catalyzing a collective effort for positive change.

In unity, as young human rights defenders, our collective actions seek to lay the groundwork for a world where the principles of climate justice are not merely ideals but tangible and equitable

realities. Through these multifaceted actions, we endeavor to leave an indelible mark on the global landscape, ensuring a sustainable and just future for all.

## Conclusion

In unity and determination, we, as young human rights defenders, activists, environmental defenders, and advocates, have come together to articulate our shared commitment to addressing the profound challenges posed by climate change and the erosion of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The urgency of our declaration is underscored by the interconnectedness of these existential threats and their disproportionate impact on our generation, particularly those marginalized based on gender, race, class, disability, and sexual orientation.

Our unwavering belief in the universality and indivisibility of human rights, including SRHR, propels our call for comprehensive and high-quality sexual and reproductive health services for all young people, irrespective of their background. We acknowledge with deep concern the exacerbation of existing inequalities and vulnerabilities by the current climate crisis, threatening our ability to exercise SRHR rights and disproportionately affecting marginalized groups.

Our demands and recommendations outline a path forward, emphasizing meaningful participation, unrestricted access to sexual and reproductive health services, phase-out of fossil fuels, inclusive decision-making structures, capacity-strengthening programs, and dedicated funding for youth-led initiatives. We further call for the protection of indigenous knowledge, LGBTQ+ rights, climate migrants, and the development of climate-resilient healthcare systems supply chains.

The International Youth Alliance for Family Planning (IYAFF) and our allied youth networks and leaders commit wholeheartedly to taking action. Through advocacy, accountability, support for youth-led initiatives, promotion of sustainable practices, and creating safe spaces, we aim to leave an enduring impact on the intersectionality of climate change and SRHR.

In unity, we endeavor to shape a world where the principles of climate justice and SRHR are not mere ideals but tangible and equitable realities. Our collective efforts strive to leave an indelible mark on the global landscape, ensuring a sustainable and just future for all. The journey continues, and we invite governments, international organizations, and stakeholders to join us in this imperative mission.



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