

UN Secretary-General announces new youth climate advisers; calls on young people globally to ratchet up pressure this year

Young people key to keeping climate goals alive, kicking fossil fuel addiction, driving climate justice



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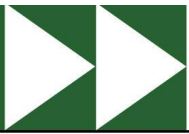
NEW YORK, 16 March 2023 — UN Secretary-General António Guterres today announced the seven young climate leaders who will form his next Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change and called on young people everywhere to ratchet up the pressure, acknowledging their vital role keeping the world’s climate goals alive.

The announcement comes as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change meets in Switzerland to finalize its landmark Synthesis Report, the first since the Paris Agreement was struck in 2015. The report is expected to confirm that the world is dramatically off-track in its climate efforts but can still keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius with deep and urgent emissions cuts in all sectors.

“Climate change is the fight of our lives – and young people have been on the frontlines leading the charge for climate justice. The unrelenting conviction of young people is central to keeping climate goals within reach, kicking the world’s addiction to fossil fuels, and delivering climate justice,” said the Secretary-General.

“Today, I am proud to announce the seven young leaders who will form my next Youth Advisory Group, working side-by-side with young climate activists and experts around the world. I thank my inaugural Youth Advisory Group for their tireless work throughout their two-year term to bring youth perspectives directly to me.”

“I urge young climate advocates everywhere to keep raising your voices. I am honoured to stand with young people around the world for bolder climate action.”



The seven members of the new Youth Advisory Group are:

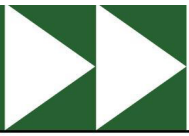
Ayisha Siddiq (United States) is a Pakistani- American human rights and tribal land defender. She is the Co-founder of Polluters Out and Fossil Free University. Her work focuses on uplifting the rights of marginalized communities while holding polluting companies accountable at the international level. She is currently a research scholar at NYU School of Law, university working to bridge the environmental and human rights sector with the youth climate movement. Ayisha was recently named a Time magazine Woman of the Year.

Benjamin Strzelecki (Poland) is a climate action and energy transition advocate. He coordinated a global network of youth-led energy organizations and worked with intergovernmental entities, including the International Renewable Energy Agency, Sustainable Energy for All, and the UN Industrial Development Organization to create opportunities for young people in the energy transition field. As a researcher, Benjamin worked on the economics of renewable power generation deployment at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and the German Institute for Economic Research. He currently co-chairs the Student Energy Summit 2023 and continues his studies at New York University Abu Dhabi.

Fatou Jeng (The Gambia) is dedicated to grassroots, national, and international mobilization as a climate educator, frontline activist, and campaigner. Fatou founded Clean Earth Gambia in 2017, a youth-led, local climate organization that has mobilized thousands of Gambian young people to help marginalized and vulnerable communities build resilience to climate change. She has served as Co-lead for the YOUNGO women and gender working group and is also a member of the African Youth Initiative on Climate Change (AYICC) where she supports the implementation of the network's projects. Fatou holds a Master's degree in Environment, Development, and Policy from the University of Sussex. She is also a gender climate negotiator for The Gambia to the UNFCCC and was recognized as TOP 100 Young African Conservation Leader by WWF in 2022.

Jevanic Henry (Saint Lucia) is a climate and development professional and advocate. He previously served as Climate Change Special Envoy for the Caribbean Youth Environment Network and was a United Nations Foundation's Next Generation Fellow. Jevanic worked as a Foreign Service Officer with the Government of Saint Lucia, as well as with the climate change unit of the Commonwealth Secretariat and co-authored a practical guide on enhancing access to climate finance. He is currently an Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) Fellow, assigned to the Permanent Mission of Saint Lucia to the United Nations in New York.

Josefa Tauli (Philippines) is an Ibaloi-Kankanaey Igorot indigenous youth activist. She is Policy Co-coordinator of the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN), which serves as the youth constituency to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). An advocate for meaningful youth participation, human rights, and Indigenous Peoples' rights and knowledge, she has coordinated the engagement of youth delegations to more than 10 rounds of CBD negotiations during the development of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. She is also the Advocacy Officer of Partners for Indigenous Knowledge Philippines (PIKP), a learning network of



organizations and individuals with initiatives on promoting and strengthening Indigenous knowledge.

Joice Mendez (Colombia/Paraguay) is a migrant, social entrepreneur, and climate advocate focused on the nexus of water, food and energy justice. Joice co-founded several local and regional youth organizations, including the Moema Viezzer Environmental Education Observatory, the Latin American Observatory of Geopolitics of Energy, and the binational Youth Collective of the Parana Basin 3 from the Cultivating Good Water Initiative– a recipient of the UN-Water Best Practice Award in 2015. Joice has also supported Paraguay's National Conference of Youth since 2016 and the National Forum of Water and Youth, and continues to be active in YOUNGO, the Climate Reality Project América Latina, SDG7 Youth Constituency, and the Youth Adaptation Network of the Global Center on Adaptation.

Saoirse Exton (Ireland) is a climate justice activist with Fridays for Future. As a proud Gaeilgeoir (Irish-language speaker), Saoirse believes that the wealth of knowledge held in traditional languages and storytelling can re-establish the vital concept of Earth as sacred within capitalism-imposed mindsets. In 2021, she was one of 100 inaugural winners of the Rise, an initiative of Schmidt Futures and the Rhodes Trust, for her work researching and rewriting Irish mythology from different perspectives, including bringing women and queer characters to the foreground.

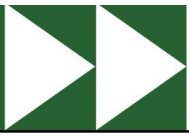
“The climate crisis is the culmination of centuries of exploitative and extractivist policy and attitudes. It is vital that we, as young people, are brought into the fray of decision-making on climate change so that we may continue to represent our generation in protecting our planet,” said Saoirse Exton.

“Young people, Indigenous peoples are hungry for social-ecological justice. I hope this opportunity to be here creates change for our communities on the frontline who are impacted the most by climate change and biodiversity loss, yet continually show us the path toward the transformation in governance and values that we urgently need,” said Josefa Tauli.

“We are facing a climate emergency that is affecting the most vulnerable people, particularly women and girls. With 7 years of climate experience, my goal is to champion climate adaptation and encourage world leaders to prioritize climate justice in their actions,” said Fatou Jeng.

“Coming from a small island developing state, the climate crisis continues to be relentless in negatively impacting lives and livelihoods. Our survival is now dependent on a global community which is unified in urgently advancing the climate agenda, with the power of young people being a catalyst to drive this much needed accelerated action,” said Jevanic Henry.

“Rapid and ambitious decarbonization of the energy sector is the backbone of meeting the climate goals and I hope that as a member of the Youth Advisory Group I will be able to bring the attention of the Secretary-General and other global leaders to priorities that we have been emphasizing as young people in the energy transition movement, ranging from access to finance



to capacity building, to creation of opportunities for young professionals," said Benjamin Strzelecki.

"As an organizer and youth activist, I have been working towards pushing the intergovernmental space further on climate ambition. It is a great honor to continue doing this work as an advisor to the Secretary-General," said Ayisha Siddiq

"I'm very thrilled to join the Secretary General in his efforts to deliver climate justice through effective loss and damage schemes, supporting access to finance to youth, and fostering energy justice frameworks for the global energy transition. As a migrant youth, I understand climate change doesn't have borders, and that we need to learn to act within the logic of nature," said Joice Mendez

The members of the Youth Advisory Group are drawn from all regions as well as small island states, and bring a wide diversity of experiences, backgrounds, and areas of climate expertise. They were short-listed and selected from a large pool of candidates nominated by respected youth and climate organization from around the world, following the same process used for selection of the inaugural Youth Advisory Group (2020 to 2022).

"The youth climate movement is not only demanding climate action, but they are also leading the charge towards a more sustainable future. Through their tireless activism, young climate leaders have successfully raised awareness about the urgent need to address the climate crisis while also calling on governments and corporations to take more ambitious action. The Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change offers one important channel here at the UN through which we can work closely with young people as part of our decision-making on climate action, channeling their passion, determination and willingness to speak truth to power to help get the world back on track to achieving the ambitions of the Paris Agreement and delivering on a better future that is equitable, just, and sustainable for all," said Jayathma Wickramanayake, the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

The members of the Youth Advisory Group will consult widely, and work collaboratively and inclusively with youth climate movements and leaders around the world, to bring youth perspectives and solutions directly to the Secretary-General, and to major climate moments and decision-making fora.

Today's announcement is part of the UN's actions to implement the recommendations in Our Common Agenda and take the UN's youth engagement to the next level in terms of diversity, inclusiveness, empowerment, and impact.

More information on the inaugural Youth Advisory Group – which served from 2020 to 2022 – as well as the nomination criteria is [here](#).

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