



## Actionable Messages

**Message 1:** Youth should understand that climate change is not different from our lives and that our lives are not independent of climate crises. A holistic approach should be adopted to promote intersectionality and to generate youth interest in such issues.

**Message 2:** Young people are essential when negotiating climate change, and we should enable them to become decision-makers.

**Message 3:** Connecting the dots is essential, and the world should be one when it comes to combating climate change. The experienced and younger generations should promote an exchange of knowledge, actions, and progress.

**Message 4:** Young people should be provided with the right opportunities so that their voices are heard on the international platform to strengthen an action-oriented approach concerning climate change issues.

**Message 5:** Scientific research should be a lead in climate change solutions, and policies should be framed and aligned with it. Science should influence policy decisions to move faster toward solutions to climate crises.

## Narrative

'After all, tomorrow is another day': This concluding line of the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by the American author Margaret Mitchell who wrote the novel, *Gone with the Wind*, provides impetus to rise above apprehension and doubt and develop plans to adapt and adopt sustainability measures into our lives.

Building a better tomorrow is essential, since global economies have made an unsustainable world. There are several examples of how current production and consumption patterns end up exhausting or destroying ecosystems, and eventually compromise human health, development, and well-being. Plastic waste accumulation, rising emission levels, pollution, deforestation, desertification, and several other related issues owe their origin to anthropogenic causes. Ecosystem degradation will take many generations until traces of plastics and other novel entities cease to tarnish landscapes, rivers, oceans, poison food chains and bodies of living species.

It is with this intention that within the scope of the World Sustainable Development Summit, a Youth Plenary was organized to:

- Inspire the next generation of youth leaders to design innovative and cutting-edge sustainable development and climate solutions.
- Disseminate experiences to instil multidisciplinary, collective action and solution-oriented values.
- Recognize youth contribution and motivate the citizenry of tomorrow.

TERI and the EU have strong youth programmes, and this plenary session reinforced the relevance of such forums as a platform for youth to engage in constructive dialogue and push for action leading towards sustainable development and to address the global challenge of climate change.

During the Youth Climate Conclave's fourth edition, the youth got an opportunity to draft a 'Youth Pledge' which was further presented in the youth plenary focusing on the sustainable lifestyle. The plenary was organized at the World Sustainable Development Summit 2023, moderated by **Dr Livleen Kahlon, Senior Fellow, TERI**, and **Mr Edwin Koekkoek, First Counsellor, European Union Delegation**, and was graced by eminent speakers. It was further followed by the felicitation of Youth Climate Conclave winners. The first-rank holders of the Green Olympiad examination were also announced; second and third-rank holders were also acknowledged.

The panel discussion on youth leadership began with the remarks from **Ms Prachi Shevgaonkar, Founder Cool the Globe**, who shared her experience about how she is encouraging lifestyle changes through Cool the Globe application. She attempted to stimulate young people's interest in taking action against climate change by highlighting that they are the most important stakeholders. She spoke about making a change at the source and gave her own example of lowering waste generation. She added that one action could influence others, creating young people around the world the ambassadors of change. Towards the end of her address, she mentioned that when young people across the globe come together to work against one single cause, miracles happen, highlighting the energy and enthusiasm that rest with youth to bring about a change.

**Ms Heeta Lakhani, Co-Founder, Youth Negotiators Academy** talked about her experience at COP21, which was held in Paris, where she participated just out of her interest influenced by media highlights on the pressing concern of climate change. She emphasized that attending the COP21 had intensified her concern for the environment, leading her to begin volunteering in the field of climate change. While sharing her experience, she discussed how she generated youth interest in the issue and could manage to go to the next COP with the youth delegation. During her address, Ms Lakhani stressed on the visibility of youth from India at an international level. She connected youth participation at a global level to the concept of climate education in India, which currently focuses on problems but misses out on solutions; she added that climate education back in 2015 and even now doesn't inspire youth to take action. While concluding her address, she stated about the climact initiative which focuses on breaking down the world of negotiations and brings down intersectional climate education to perspective. She also mentioned using education as a tool to take action to bring more and more people into the fight against climate crises and that youth should be sitting at the negotiating tables.

**Ms Laura De Vries, European Climate Pact Ambassador**, said that people across all sectors could contribute to this cause of climate action. Her talk revolved around researching the topic from all perspectives, including scientific research. She also spoke about the crucial role of the young generation in coming up with innovative solutions to climate crises. She highlighted that youth has a unique perspective, and since this section of the population is going to live much longer, it is essential to look at climate crises from a long-term perspective. This outlook from youth might influence government decision-making towards a view that goes further from today, tomorrow, and five years later. Bringing forth youth's role in solving this issue, she highlighted the creativity, energy, and enthusiasm that rest with youth to bring about solutions to climate crises. She also stated that youth-led initiatives globally are already in place and are making a huge difference locally and nationally, where youth is contributing by giving ideas for policy changes and are driving tangible actions towards a more sustainable future. In conclusion, Ms Laura mentioned that working across borders, therefore, promoting global partnerships will enable a good representation of the community and make the voices of youth heard globally.

Post the panel discussion, the youth pledge was presented by Mr Aryan Sapra, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa college, Delhi University, Ms Lakshyashikha Pawar, Dyal Singh College, Delhi University, Mr Roshan Thakur, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University and Ms Lavnika Nanda, Tagore International School, Vasant Vihar, Delhi. In their pledge, the delegates of the Youth Climate Conclave (YCC) 2023 envisioned an inclusive world that is built on principles of circular economy, ecological consciousness, and sustainable lifestyles, drawing inspiration from the Government of India's 'LiFE' (Lifestyle for Environment) initiative.

After the pledge, the youth climate conclave winners were announced. The winners belonged to different categories of Photography and Debate competitions. The YCC was led by the Delegation of the European Union to India, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) India, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ), Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), and YuWaah with the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) as Nodal Ministry.

This platform was also utilized to announce the winners of GREEN Olympiad 2022. GREEN Olympiad is a leading school-based initiative of TERI. The journey started in 1999 as India's premier environment quiz for school students. It has since then incorporated within itself several stages of initiatives at TERI in the field of sustainability transformation to match the aspirations of the academic community to establish as an Environment Education brand. Reaching out to nearly 2000 schools annually in India and abroad, this Olympiad is designed for students of Std. 4–12. The overall objective of this initiative is to sensitize and build capacity of students on environment, sustainability, and green skills.

The importance of organizing Olympiads is articulated in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, as a medium to minimize rote learning and instead encourage holistic development and enhance 21st century skills. GREEN Olympiad is the first Olympiad on environment studies in India and draws its linkages towards 'Goal 4 - Target 7' (SDG 4.7) which states, 'Ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development' by 2030.

“ Actions can inspire young people around the world to become ambassadors of change. Of all the stakeholders in the world, youngsters have a yearning to make a difference. Conversations we have today are going to impact not only our lives but also the lives of future generations to come; and for young people, this is not just a responsibility but an opportunity to make an impact.

***Ms Prachi Shevgaonkar  
Founder, Cool the Globe***

“ It is important to integrate issues of environment, waste management, consumerism, climate justice, and sustainable lifestyle in the education sector. There is a systematic and intersectional gap for young people wanting to change and take action at the grassroots or internationally at the UN, which needs to be navigated.

***Ms Heeta Lakhani  
Co-Founder, Youth Negotiators Academy***

“ First and foremost, it is important to understand that young people have a unique perspective. Because we are going to live a long time after now, we should look at climate change from a long-term perspective.

***Ms Laura De Vries  
European Climate Pact Ambassador***