

COP28 South African Youth Statement



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We, the youth of South Africa, encouraged by the mandate of the South African constitution to ensure the protection and conservation of the environment, balanced with sustainable development and the equitable distribution of natural resources, recognise the urgent need for accelerated climate action to build a self-actualised, climate-resilient, and prosperous society. This statement reflects the above mandate by highlighting the voices of the youth from across the country who see the future of a cleaner, greener South Africa and the world.

In taking climate action, we stress the obligation to uphold human rights with special emphasis on promoting intersectional and inclusive climate action. We call for climate justice and equity to underpin all actions toward addressing the climate crisis, catering to the issues faced by the Global South. Furthermore, we applaud the National Assembly for passing the Climate Change Act and wish to see these implementations taken further in the future of South Africa, and the context of international climate action. Building on the successful launch of the South African Youth Climate Action Plan ([SA YCAP](#)), we believe its underpinning principles should be taken up on an international platform as well and are acutely aware of the pivotal role that the South African government continues to play regarding the upcoming UNFCCC Conferences.

We are increasingly alarmed by the findings of the first Global Stocktake reports of 2023 which publicise just how far we are from reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement. But these reports also illuminate a path forward that governments must follow to combat the climate crisis. By the end of COP28, countries must agree on how they will leverage the Stocktake's findings to keep the global goal of limiting temperature rise to 1.5 degrees C alive and address the impacts of climate change.

Considering the upcoming UNFCCC Conference of the Parties taking place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, the Youth of South Africa would like to put forward the following recommendations that align with the goals set out for COP28:

1. Health, Relief and Peace

Climate change is a threat multiplier. Currently, we note with concern the growing health, relief, and peace disparities and climate change make each of these significantly worse. Climate change exacerbates each of these disparities, subjecting individuals to a diverse array of adverse impacts, including illness, forced displacement, and a surge in mental health issues. Furthermore, the potential for conflict to damage or destroy healthcare infrastructure places stress on humanitarian aid to reach its targeted populations. Not only do inefficient infrastructure, border insecurity, and decreased health workforce undermine climate action, they also lead to reduced access to finance and an increase in the number of failed climate projects. Through the following subheadings, we will make relevant observations and calls to action:

Health

Climate change presents a fundamental threat to human health. All aspects of health are affected by climate change, from clean air, water, and soil to food systems and livelihoods. Weather and climate hazards affect health both directly and indirectly, increasing the risk of deaths, noncommunicable diseases, the emergence and spread of infectious diseases, and health emergencies.

We are also seeing a noticeable impact on the health workforce and infrastructure. Furthermore, climate shocks and growing stressors such as drought, floods, and rising sea levels degrade physical and mental health. Further delay in tackling climate change will increase health risks, undermine decades of improvements in global health, and contravene our collective commitments to ensure the human right to health for all.

Health Effects of Mining

- We are deeply disturbed by the disproportionate impacts on communities living around mines, which pollutes their air and water supply and leads to adverse health impacts, particularly among women and children:
 - We call for meaningful and collaborative consultation with these communities to ensure their health and well-being are preserved; and
 - Further, we call on mining companies to take responsibility for ensuring safe living conditions for their workers;
- Call on all governments to undertake a national Health Impact Assessment to ensure that communities have a voice in negotiating agreements on

compensation, benefits, and sustainable development initiatives. The use of these findings should inform public health strategies and interventions;

- Call on government and private mining companies to invest in research and development of cleaner, more sustainable mining technologies and practices to reduce releases of harmful substances.

Menstrual and Mental Health

- Noting with deep concern the impacts that extreme weather events, such as droughts and floods, have on menstruators' ability to access essentials such as clean water, sanitation facilities, safe disposal methods, and sanitary products, we thus:
 - Urge the provision of necessary hygiene kits (including menstrual hygiene kits) thus increasing accessibility to sanitary products for communities during natural disaster relief and aid; and
 - Emphasise the need for accessible healthcare services as part of emergency relief and aid, prioritising all marginalised groups;
- We are disturbed by the minimal concern for the mental well-being of those traumatised or otherwise impacted by the effects of climate change, such as displaced individuals and families. Thus, we urge the provision of mental health support for those grappling with the trauma as a result of environmental devastation caused by climate change.

Relief Aid and Emergency Response

Climate change actively fuels humanitarian crises and human suffering, especially in the most impoverished areas. We note with regret that the impacts of climate change threaten to deepen existing inequalities, which will have dire repercussions for the world at large including increased instability, violence, and displacement of people. We call on the international community to support the work of relevant stakeholders in the response to providing relief to climate-vulnerable individuals. This includes the UNICEF 2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan and the UNICEF South Africa Emergency Action Plan.

- We call for rapid responses to climate disasters, particularly in rural areas which are especially vulnerable as a result of poor infrastructure and emergency response frameworks;
- We encourage governments to develop action plans on how to better manage emergency response funding and relief aid for efficient and equitable distribution when disasters occur;

- Finally, we see the need to prioritise resource allocation that integrates climate adaptation and resilience-building, ensuring readiness to respond effectively to climate-related disasters. This includes stockpiling climate-resilient relief supplies and investing in early warning systems and climate-resilient infrastructure.

Climate, Peace, and Security

Recognising the intricate and interdependent relationship between climate change, peace, and security, we acknowledge that climate-induced resource scarcity, displacement, and related vulnerabilities can increase conflicts and destabilise regions. Environmental degradation, food insecurity, and the economic impacts of climate change contribute to social unrest. The displacement and migration of communities fleeing climate-related disasters further strain host regions, potentially leading to tensions and insecurity. Understanding these complex links is paramount for comprehensive policy development, aimed at conflict prevention, resilience-building, and the promotion of global peace and stability in an ever-changing climate.

- We urge for peace-positive adaptation and conflict-sensitising climate policy through the following:
 - Climate policies that are informed by conflict impact assessments, where local communities are engaged in decision-making;
 - Collaboration across climate, peace, and security sectors while working in partnership with the international community to tackle climate vulnerabilities and conflicts jointly; and
 - Recognition of the transboundary nature of climate-induced challenges and emphasising diplomacy and shared solutions to promote global peace, stability, and sustainability in a changing climate.

Migrants and Refugees

The climate crisis is driving displacement and making life more difficult for those already forced to flee. Populations are suffering the impacts of climate change. Additionally, vulnerable communities living in some of the most fragile and conflict-affected countries are often disproportionately affected.

We are utterly appalled by the non-existent legal statuses of climate migrants and refugees under the current classifications of the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention, the United Nations Human Rights Council, and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Thus,

- We urge for the development of international legal frameworks that recognize climate migrants and refugees and ensure their rights, safety, and protection;
- We must raise public awareness and advocate for climate action and policies that address the root causes of displacement, emphasising a global commitment to shared responsibility;
- We demand that governments invest in data collection and research to better understand climate migration patterns, which can inform effective policy responses; and
- Finally, we support the development of programs and policies to assist climate migrants and refugees in establishing climate-resilient livelihoods, including training, access to credit, and employment opportunities.

2. Marginalised Groups

We recognise that numerous factors, such as race, gender, disability, geographical location, access, income levels, and other socioeconomic conditions, exacerbate the impacts of climate change, particularly for persons living in underserved regions. This demonstrates the complexity of the climate situation and the necessity for an intersectional perspective to identify effective solutions.

The relationship between gender and climate change is complex and multi-faceted. Women are disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change, such as droughts, floods, and other extreme weather events. For instance, responses to the impacts of climate change often include limited accessible facilities, pose threats to the safety of women and girls, and could lead to incidents of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Women are often responsible for gathering food, water, and fuel for their families, which can be disrupted by climate change. Being the primary actors in food-related chores and activities, women all too often face the harmful impacts of burner stoves (i.e. those using gas and paraffin). Furthermore, women are often on the front lines of climate action, as they work to find sustainable solutions and advocate for change.

The impacts of climate disasters lead to a negative impact on children's access to education which is their inalienable right. Increasing climate disasters in rural populations can also limit girls' access to education, as they may have to drop out to help their families cope with the impacts of climate change.

Climate change can lead to the loss of traditional lands and resources, as well as increased poverty and exclusion for marginalised groups, such as Indigenous peoples

and people with disabilities. Engaging women and Indigenous people in climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts can lead to more sustainable and equitable outcomes. Women and Indigenous peoples have unique knowledge and skills related to land management, agriculture, and natural resource conservation which can contribute to the development of climate-resilient strategies. Thus, we call for the following:

- Support towards the meaningful participation of women in climate policy-making and inclusive mechanisms for implementing and monitoring the Paris Agreement;
- Funding organisations and donors to take into account the gender-specific impacts of climate change, particularly in areas related to water, food security, agriculture, energy, health, disaster management, and conflict when developing and introducing climate change adaptation technologies;
- The acknowledgment of the rights of Indigenous peoples within their respective areas and how un-industrialised, de-carbonised solutions can be brought to them or from them regarding adaptation to the impacts of climate change; and
- Increase accessibility of resources such as food, water, land, and fuel, to reduce the harsh impacts that climate change has on women and girls.

3. Finance

Insufficient funding is a major challenge faced by developing nations. We are concerned that the commitment to source USD 100 billion per year in climate finance by developed countries, as outlined in the Paris Agreement, is not being met. Developing nations continue to face challenges in accessing just and equitable funding. We note with grave concern that the lack of climate financing is exacerbating the debt burdens on developing nations. Another poignant issue is the unpredictability of climate finance flows which in turn makes it difficult for recipient nations to plan and implement long-term climate adaptation and mitigation projects.

- The growing share of finance delivered as debt-burdening loans and not grants raises questions about the extent to which countries are honouring their historical responsibility. The form of finance we envision in 2023 and onward looking to the SDG 2030 and Agenda 2063 preferences public finance in the form of grants and concessional loans concerning not driving member states further into economic disparity:
 - In the case of private finance, risk-averse conditions should be stipulated in any agreements reached to protect the public sector from any financial risks;

- The USD 100 bn goal from the Copenhagen Accords has not been met. This has been completely underwhelming and severely misaligned with the growing climate crisis and urgent needs of developing countries. To address this:
 - We insist on a comprehensive framework for achieving the newly set USD 200 bn through a comprehensive plan for how the burden will be shared among developed countries and set time frames for contributions;
 - We envision a New Collective Quantified Goal target that is, evidence-based, needs-based, predictable, and responsive to the adaptation, mitigation, loss, and damage needs, and priorities of developing countries; and
 - The Global Goal on Adaptation needs to include a significant increase of funding, which is more than double that of the current finance for adaptation; ensuring that flows are consistent with Article 9 of the Paris Agreement as well as the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) submitted by countries;
- The accepted working definitions of ‘new and additional’ climate public finance such as those accepted in the UNFCCC negotiations allow for discrepancies where the G7 and 16 other Global North nations can report additional funding directly from development aid budgets as new and additional, which is empirically and inaccurate.
 - We call for a definitional framework to regulate against reporting existing diverted development public funds as part of ‘new and additional’ commitment;
- We demand the elimination of all carbon markets and insist that they never be developed in the future;
- With regard to the Green Climate Fund, we call for more accessible and transparent financial flows to Global South projects, specifically focused on adaptation catering to the disproportionate needs of the Global South;
- We demand that developed countries cancel the debt (acquired as a means to source climate change action) owed to them by developing countries and;
 - Call for a further increase in carbon emission taxes from developed countries.

4. Global Stocktake (GST)

The Global Stocktake (GST) represents a pivotal juncture in our efforts to address the worsening climate emergency. It is a moment to deeply assess the condition of our planet and plot a more promising path for the future. Thus taking in the significance of the GST, we stress the urgent need for ambitious climate action and an overall course correction. Therefore, in high hopes of the GST presenting as a turnaround moment for ambitious action, we hope outcomes will promote rectification and enhancement of country and collective action guided by the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities in achieving Paris Agreement targets.

- We are of the view that the GST will operationalise the guiding principles of the Convention and Paris Agreement while also providing clear guidance for the collective alignment of Parties' efforts with pathways towards achieving 1.5 degrees C without overshooting in a just and equitable manner. These include:
 - Article 2.2 of the Paris Agreement on its implementation to reflect "...equity and CBDRRC," which must also prioritise balance between mitigation and adaptation outcomes of the GST;
 - Article 3.2 of the Paris Agreement on progression from previous commitments is critical for and relevant to new commitments to action and support;
 - Article 14.3 to update and enhance, in a nationally determined manner, action and support as well as enhancing international cooperation;
- The key priorities of developing countries hinge on sustainable development objectives to address poverty, energy access, and managing the debt crisis and impacts of geopolitical events while also addressing the adverse impacts of climate change.
 - Therefore, we envision a successful GST process that will address the entrenched development challenges faced by developing countries while also delivering cross-cutting positive impacts on economic and social dimensions providing sufficient means of support in the policy space for development-focused investments as well as an opportunity to exploit all available energy sources;
- We see the need to take into account lessons learned from the past as well as avoid shifting the burden to developing countries. Looking forward, the outcomes of the GST must focus on achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement in a manner consistent with efforts to achieve the SDGs while addressing developmental challenges of countries for more just and equitable transitions;
- Outcomes on the GST must be responsive and highlight the intrinsic link between adaptation and sustainable development and highly flexible to the differentiated

context from which Parties are undertaking climate action; therefore we demand developed countries lead the pathway to achieving net zero emissions ahead of 2050, to give space for the global community to achieve net-zero by

- The GST must also highlight the need for reform of the global finance system to finance the transition through:
 - Comprehensive burden-sharing criteria for contributors of climate finance;
 - An agreement on a criterion for Africa to access a share of finance flows and investments, in line with our special needs and circumstances.

5. Just Transition and Energy

We champion the need for an equitable, swift, and just transition. We further insist on an energy transition that shifts away from highly centralised production dependent on fossil fuels and moves towards decarbonised and decentralised renewable energy. Subsequently, a green, and circular economy cultivates the need to create green employment opportunities, while reducing carbon emissions to ensure a resilient and socially equitable economy. Equitable distribution of renewable energy sources is critical for reducing inequality gaps, increasing accessibility of resources, and bolstering community adaptation capacities to further circumvent the catastrophic ramifications of climate change.

Furthermore, we acknowledge the role of the private sector in providing financial support toward the just transition and simultaneously emphasise the need for transparent and accessible public finance initiatives toward a sustainable and prosperous economy for all.

- To begin, we urgently call for the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) to end fossil fuel extraction and combustion subsidies and impose sanctions for high-carbon-emitting projects;
- We are concerned by the potential privatisation of electricity production and supply. We, therefore, call for clear and ethical regulation between the competition commission, government, and Independent Power Providers to prioritise clean, green, stable, and affordable electricity;
- We remain deeply concerned by the lack of carbon-neutral commitments made by private corporations. We, therefore, call for an integration and acknowledgment of environmental, social, and governance performance levels in traditional key performance indicators and the undertaking of future investments and activities to ensure environmental responsibilities are addressed holistically to accomplish long-term sustainability and agility;

- We reaffirm the need for the government to strengthen efforts towards increasing investment for the mobilisation of natural resources such as wind, solar, and hydropower towards a just transitional energy shift;
- Within the Just Energy Transition Plan framework:
 - We recognise the existing trucking industry and call upon both government and trucking industry stakeholders to facilitate the reskilling of truck drivers. This reskilling effort is aimed at equipping them with the necessary competencies for roles in the freight and passenger rail sector; and
 - We advocate for this transition towards rail transport for both freight and passenger services.
- We encourage the progression of the eradication of sacrifice zones, further noting the global responsibility to contribute and maintain social and environmental justice in communities that are key players in the industrial extraction process;
- We encourage the development within the sphere of ecomodernism whilst prioritising human rights and lives.

6. Transport and Sustainable Cities

An integral part of urban infrastructure is a variety of fit-for-purpose modes of transport that are both environmentally sustainable and socially appealing for daily commuting. Additionally, we emphasise the importance of urban development and growth plans that prioritise people's needs, promote ecological sustainability, and take climate risks into account to align with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. By investing in expanded infrastructure, eco-friendly transportation systems, and coherent urban development practices that adhere to the principles of a circular economy, we can enhance economic productivity and extend social safety nets, reinforcing our capacity to address the challenges posed by climate change.

Transport

- We strongly call for public engagement processes to determine the best fit-for-purpose modes of public transport for specific regions;
- We urge the government and SOEs responsible for freight and passenger rail to develop an action plan and an assessment of current rail network infrastructure to ascertain whether current infrastructure can be retrofitted for cleaner, more sustainable infrastructure;
- Further, we see the need for financing the updating and construction of low-carbon and non-motorised public transportation infrastructure within and between cities;

- We support the establishment of green corridors and spaces within and between urban spaces to improve air quality as well as support biodiversity, with a special emphasis on rehabilitating and preserving Indigenous biodiversity;
- We encourage domestic production of eco-friendly transportation means and urge state-owned entities to prioritise the use of locally-sourced materials whenever feasible in the manufacturing process;
- We further encourage intergovernmental cooperation between national, provincial, and local governments, as well as state-owned entities responsible for transport to develop local transport in cities; and
- Call for a review of the National Land Transport Strategic Framework to mainstream sustainability, accessibility, and affordability in transport industries whilst also prioritising cleaner fuel alternatives for passenger and freight transportation.

Sustainable Cities and Urban Development

As current trends place two-thirds of the world's population in urban areas by 2050, there is a clear need for climate-proofing and supporting the sustainability and adaptive resilience of 15 urban and rural spaces. In addition, new urban development and growth plans should be people-centered, eco-centric, and climate risk-conscious. To this end, and noting the vital role played by cities and subnational entities in climate action, we call for the following:

- Refurbish and maintain existing buildings to ensure the efficiency and conservation of resources and minimise their environmental impact;
- Detail the greening and carbon reduction strategies of construction and renovation plans;
- Innovate and fund the redevelopment of informal and rural settlements to ensure equal access to green housing and communal spaces; and
- Identify risks and vulnerabilities facing vulnerable communities and develop strategies, plans, and infrastructure to support resilient settlements as appropriate to their identified risks.

7. Youth, Children, and Capacity Building

Considering the importance of having meaningful youth engagement in discussions and procedures relating to climate change and its policies, we seek a larger engagement that includes children and the community at large. We strongly applaud the efforts of the Youth Climate Action Plan ([SA YCAP](#)) in its attempts to be as inclusive as possible for their recognition of community and for speaking to people in a language that they understand. This was seen through the translation of the SA YCAP into five of the eleven official languages of South Africa.

Furthermore, we applaud the South African government on their recent strides in increasing youth involvement in international Climate Change meetings by adopting youth delegates to attend COP Conferences. We urge the government to continuously provide support for youth delegates, taking lessons from COP27, the Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan, and recent initiatives like the COP28 Presidency's International Youth Climate Delegate Program.

We support the strengthening of the voice of the youth from Global South countries at international decision-making tables and stress the need for the involvement of youth, and those from marginalised communities in the entirety of the decision-making processes of international policies and frameworks. Young people are eager to do good for their community but are to a larger degree not aware of how to start or engage with the environment, thus we call for the following:

- Strengthening existing youth environmental committees, initiatives, and outreach education which can help with educating and informing communities of their role towards climate change actions;
- Increased use of cultural extra-curricular activities (such as public speaking etc.) in schools, thus promoting skills that will assist in advocating for climate change;
- Increased state/government support and funding for youth-led climate organisations and projects, this support could include:
 - Stronger implementation of policies and programs that specifically target youth, such as environmental education programs in schools, and internships and apprenticeships in the environmental sector, and
 - Increased meaningful youth participation and decision-making in policymaking, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. This can be done through the use of youth advisory boards and youth-led climate summits, as suggested in the Johannesburg Youth Climate Action Plan.
- Accessible climate policy documents that youth, children, and community members can understand and easily implement.

8. Loss and Damage

Deeply concerned by the harms that are experienced by vulnerable communities due to loss and damage from extreme weather conditions such as droughts, cyclones, and heatwaves, we call for nations to draw their attention towards the communities and to provide economic support. We acknowledge the introduction of the Loss and Damage Fund post-COP27, yet implore the international community to further implement practical policies that tackle the economic and non-economic losses and damages that affect vulnerable communities. We reaffirm that climate change has already caused and will increasingly cause loss and damage and that, as temperatures rise, impacts from climate change and weather extremes, as well as slow onset events, will pose an ever-greater social, economic, and environmental threat to developing countries bearing the brunt of impacts. Therefore we,

- Urge developed country Parties, who are the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism, United Nations entities and intergovernmental organisations, and other bilateral and multilateral institutions, including non-governmental organisations and private sources, to provide enhanced and additional support for activities addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change,
- Call on the UNFCCC to continue providing support for developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change that may seek or wish to benefit from the technical assistance available from organisations, bodies, networks, and experts under the Santiago Network,
- Demand that the operationalisation of the Santiago Network be:
 - Guided by the best available science and as appropriate, traditional, and Indigenous knowledge, and follow a gender-mainstreaming approach; and
 - Efficient, demand-driven, and responsive to nationally- and locally-led needs, with a focus on the most vulnerable, to complement existing structures and strive to maximise coherence and synergies, while avoiding additional burdens on developing countries in terms of reporting and other obligations.
- Recommend that carbon footprints be calculated and updated promptly to inform decision-making processes to prevent irreparable damage;
- Call for the necessary precautions to be made via policy and local government initiatives to ensure advanced food banks are created, equipped, and made accessible amidst the food security situation concerning the climate crisis and agricultural destabilisation;

- Insist upon the use of urban spatial planning, especially in disaster-stricken areas, to better prepare for unlikely weather-related events. This can be done through the following:
 - Planned relocation supported by the cooperation between governments and private sectors to make land available for human settlement development; and
 - The creation and implementation of climate-specific and locally responsive emergency action and disaster management procedures, particularly in disaster-prone areas;
- Call for recognised humane relief centers to be better equipped with the tools and resources in preparation for unforeseen natural disasters;
- Encourage all relevant parties within the international community to work together to deliver on mobilising the necessary finance to protect vulnerable communities through the following:
 - Further requesting improved and transparent implementation plans with regards to the fiscal requirements in adapting to weather-related disasters by making resources accessible to disaster-stricken areas; and
 - Support vulnerable countries and communities in their efforts to rapidly scale up prevention and preparedness measures to avert, minimise, and address displacement.

9. Food, Agriculture, and Water

Environmental Sustainability

Addressing climate action necessitates the prioritisation of environmental sustainability, specifically under the context of protecting and restoring ecosystems and natural habitats while reducing carbon emissions. We welcome the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) adopted at CBD COP15 and continue to stress the need for enhanced implementation of such biodiversity initiatives. Especially through collaboration with marginalised groups and communities, supported by strengthened and cross-sectoral policies, and sufficiently funded to allow for effective monitoring and data capturing, processing, and reporting systems.

We champion the recognition of nature-based solutions as an essential means of protecting and restoring ecosystem services while providing the opportunity to use local, Indigenous knowledge systems and nature-based tools to combat climate change. As such, we suggest an increased, collaborative, and inclusive commitment to the research, finance, and implementation of nature-based solutions.

Water, Biodiversity, and Wildlife

We express our appreciation for the effective practice of the Blue Economy to monitor the growth of the population of all marine life to stabilise global ocean ecosystems.

- We further urge for stricter laws within the international community on animal poaching, trade, and/or ownership of wild and endangered species to prevent wildlife trafficking and related zoonotic diseases;
- We urge for the protection and stabilisation of worldwide formal and informal conservation areas; and
- Encourage the financial mobilisation and investment into green solutions of water filtration and water reclamation technologies to enhance service delivery within water-scarce communities around the world.

Agriculture

Agriculture is responsible for 80% of deforestation, causing habitat loss and fragmentation, biodiversity loss at unprecedented rates, and converting the earth's carbon sinks into carbon sources. Every day, forests are cleared to make room for ever-growing agricultural land, which, by now, takes up half of the world's habitable land, and 77% of the agricultural land is used to raise and feed farm animals. Furthermore, guided by the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture, we call for increased strides in effective climate action through agriculture which should:

- Promote cost-effective, sustainable farming methods, the use of natural pest management, and further encourage the use of field buffers, large-scale composting, biocontrol, and polyculture;
- Prioritise collaborative stakeholder engagement surrounding agricultural unions, cooperatives, and their regulation of farming issues;
- Foster community-owned regenerative agriculture, permaculture, hydroponics, and aquaponics practices;
- Stimulate the transition of natural fertilisers and growth stimulants to reduce genetically modified organisms (GMO) to promote ecological and sustainable farming and the preservation of seeds through permaculture;
- Promote alternative farming methods such as vertical farming (aeroponics) and multi-crop farming to stimulate crop cultivation and combat mainland farming; and
- Call upon stakeholders to incentivise sustainable soil management through advanced machinery to commercial farmers.

Food

We have found that a transformation in food systems is both necessary and achievable. Further recalling that food systems contribute a third of all GHG emissions, and emissions from the food system alone could jeopardise the achievement of global climate goals, we suggest the following:

- The GST outcome should reflect the need to transform food systems for climate change adaptation and mitigation and the critical need for this transformation to address all aspects of the food system, from inputs and land use through consumption patterns through the Agriculture Work Programme / FAST Initiative launched at COP27;
 - We advocate for consistent transformation with human rights, gender equality, human health, livelihoods, food and nutrition security, ecosystems, and biodiversity considerations, and nature;
 - The GST should recognise that the types of transformation required will vary according to national contexts as well as the need to address unsustainable production practices and consumption patterns at a global level;
 - Food systems transformation should be supported with just transitions for those working in food systems and who are most vulnerable to climate impacts to ensure livelihoods and nutrition, as well as advancing climate mitigation and adaptation; and
 - Intensive livestock production has significant consequences on the climate, which in turn renders food production even more vulnerable. Smallholders, livestock keepers, fishers, and pastoralists are among the most vulnerable to climate change.
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This statement was created by the members of the Youth Policy Committee Global Change Working Group. This process was convened by Youth@SAIIA. The statement was presented at the National Stakeholder Consultation to Minister Barbara Creecy of the Department of Forestry and Fisheries and Environmental Affairs and Dr Crispian Olver, Executive Director, Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) on 26 October 2023 in Johannesburg. For any queries, please send your email to youth@saiia.org.za.

