



#Youth4Climate Live Series

Session Title: Driving Empowerment: Protecting the Most Vulnerable

Date: October 23, 2020

Time: 14:30-15:30 CEST (8:30-9:30 am EST)

Background

Global youth climate movements have been a wake-up call for leaders, proving that young people can no longer be dismissed when it comes to paving the way forward. The way we engage young people today will determine the prospects for sustainable development and peace. Young people, who represent a majority of the population in most developing countries, are today visibly contributing as political actors, innovators, entrepreneurs and peace-builders. At the same time, youth face disproportionate social, economic and political barriers, which prevent them from unleashing their full potential. Utilizing young people's potential as agents of change requires involving and empowering them in the development of policy and supporting their participation at all levels.

Climate change will not affect all people equally, and certain age groups and genders will be particularly vulnerable to its effects. Women, for example, account for about two-thirds of the poor people in the world and about seventy percent of the world's farmers, meaning they will face the lion's share of the challenges (IPCC 2015, "*Special Report on Climate Change and Land*"). Despite being early adopters of many new agricultural techniques, first responders in crises, entrepreneurs of green energy and decision-makers at home, women and young girls already often bear the brunt of environmental, economic and social shocks. Meanwhile, their contribution is often overlooked and their practical needs forgotten. Building a sustainable future will entail empowering women and young girls, as enshrined in SDG 5, by harnessing the knowledge, skills, and leadership of women, including on climate action.

Agricultural workers, including those who are young people and women, are also extremely vulnerable to climate change. Changes in environmental conditions due to raising temperatures are already resulting in severe droughts and heat waves, water scarcity and major soil damage, with increased desertification risks in many areas of the world. The COVID-19 pandemic, along with climate change and business-as-usual development patterns, has exacerbated the pressure faced by the most vulnerable, with particular regard



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to food access and food security. According to Food and Agriculture Organization's evaluations, in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia nearly 12 million people were already in dire circumstances as a result of extended severe droughts and back-to-back failed harvests when hordes of desert locusts descended on their crops and pastures in late December 2019 and early January 2020. No continent is immune.

Ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment, empowering the most vulnerable, while also securing food access and food security could have wide-reaching positive and meaningful transformational impacts. However, the underlying conditions to reach these objectives will depend on governments' ability to provide inclusive, equitable and high-quality education programs that promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, as established by SDG 4.

The Event

The session is part of the *Youth4Climate Virtual Event Series*, an exclusive programme of dynamic and inspiring webinars with empowering content, dedicated to young people and hosted by the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, in collaboration with Connect4Climate - World Bank Group and the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, as part of the initiatives organized in the run-up to the 2021 pre-COP26 in Milan, Italy and COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland.

The webinar *Driving Empowerment: Protecting the Most Vulnerable* will focus on the role of the most vulnerable in the fight against climate change, with a particular focus on young people, women and young girls, young people living in fragile settings, as well as people working in the agriculture sector, and how governments could further enhance their participation in decision-making processes domestically and at the international level, including measures to ease access to education while improving its quality.

Session Organization

The webinar will feature the participation of Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Amina J. Mohammed, and a video message the Italian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Emanuela Del Re.

The session will cover ways governments, the UN and the international community could:

- Enhance the inclusion of the most vulnerable in policy and decision-making processes in their own countries, with focus on young people living in fragile settings, women and young girls, as well as agriculture workers.



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- Improve vulnerable communities' involvement and opportunities to promote concrete proposals to be considered in the UNFCCC climate negotiations and the international political agenda.
- Foster climate education, training and awareness to build a more sustainable and resilient communities.

Youth speakers will be asked to provide their inputs on the above topics, including by:

- Sharing their own experience in driving youth action and awareness on food security and climate change and how to make food system and food security more climate resilient.
- Providing their views on how to achieve gender equality through climate action and quality education while sharing their own experience on gender issues with regard to food security and system.
- Providing real-life testimonies of how climate change further exacerbates the situation of the most vulnerable living in fragile settings.
- Addressing how to advance climate change education and youth empowerment.

Speakers

Moderators

- Salina Abraham
- Ahmed Badr

High-Level Speaker

- Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, Amina J. Mohammed

Video message

- Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Emanuela Del Re, Italy

Youth Speakers

- **Fatou Jeng** (The Gambia) is the Founder of Clean Earth Gambia, an NGO that seeks to create awareness about the environment. Due to her passion for gender justice and climate action, she has worked with women farmers at grassroot level in promoting climate smart agriculture and creating awareness about the need for more gender responsive actions towards climate change. Fatou has trained over 500 school children on Climate Change; because environmental education is not incorporated in the Gambian education curriculum. She has organized/conducted a series of beach and community clean-up exercises in her community.



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- **Sophia Kianni** (United States) is an 18-year-old, member of the UN Secretary General's Youth Advisory Council on climate change. Her passion for environmental advocacy began after she witnessed the devastating effect pollution was having on her parents' home country, Iran. She is the founder and executive director of Climate Cardinals, an international non profit with over 5,000 volunteers translating climate information into more than 100 languages. She is also the host of the New Fashion Initiative Podcast, interviewing climate leaders ranging from sustainability professionals at Lush Cosmetics and Mara Hoffman to politicians like Tom Steyer.
- **Louise Mabulo** (Philippines) is an award-winning chef, farmer, and entrepreneur. She is the Founder of The Cacao Project, a social venture aimed at equipping farmers for sustainable success. The Cacao Project provides farmers in the Philippines with seedlings and teaches them how to responsibly and sustainably produce cacao. To date, the project has helped more than 200 farmers plant 80,000 trees. The project aids reforestation efforts and has helped with the revival of two water sources from increased water retention in soil. In addition to cacao, the project provides farmers with other crops, such as bok choy, okra and pumpkins to intercrop with the cacao and maintain soil fertility.

Proposed Run of Show

Moderators Salina Abraham and Ahmed Badr will open the event and guide the conversation between the live guests while encouraging interaction with the young audience. Introductory remarks from the high-level speaker will spark a dynamic discussion between three representatives of the global youth-led and youth-focused movements about their perspectives on how to foster youth action and engagement.

10:00 am	Salina & Ahmed	Welcome and introductions by the moderators
10:05 am	Italian Vice Minister	Introductory video message
10:10 am	Her Excellency	Opening remarks
10:20 am	Youth Speakers	Youth speakers each have a few minutes to introduce themselves, their work, and deliver remarks
10:30 am	All Speakers	Interactive Q&A, including dialogue between the speakers and questions from the audience, submitted via chat
10:50 am	Salina & Ahmed	Closing remarks, including interactive feature (i.e. poll, game, etc.), and announcement of next event



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