



# POLICY BRIEF

Expectations of African Youth for the Summit of  
the Future: Views from RCOY Africa



# CONTRIBUTORS



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy brief outlines the critical expectations and recommendations of African youth for the upcoming Summit of the Future (SoF). Highlighting the perspectives from the Regional Conference of Youth (RCOY) Africa, the brief addresses key areas of concern including sustainable development, financing, peace and security, digital cooperation, youth and future generations and global governance. The brief advocates for enhanced youth participation, equitable benefits from climate financing, and robust regional and international collaboration to address climate change and foster sustainable development.

## INTRODUCTION

The Summit of the Future (SoF) presents a pivotal opportunity for African youth to shape the global agenda on climate action and sustainable development. This policy brief synthesizes the views and expectations of African youth as articulated during the Regional Conference of Youth (RCOY) Africa. It aims to inform policymakers and stakeholders about the priorities and actionable recommendations proposed by young leaders from across the continent.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

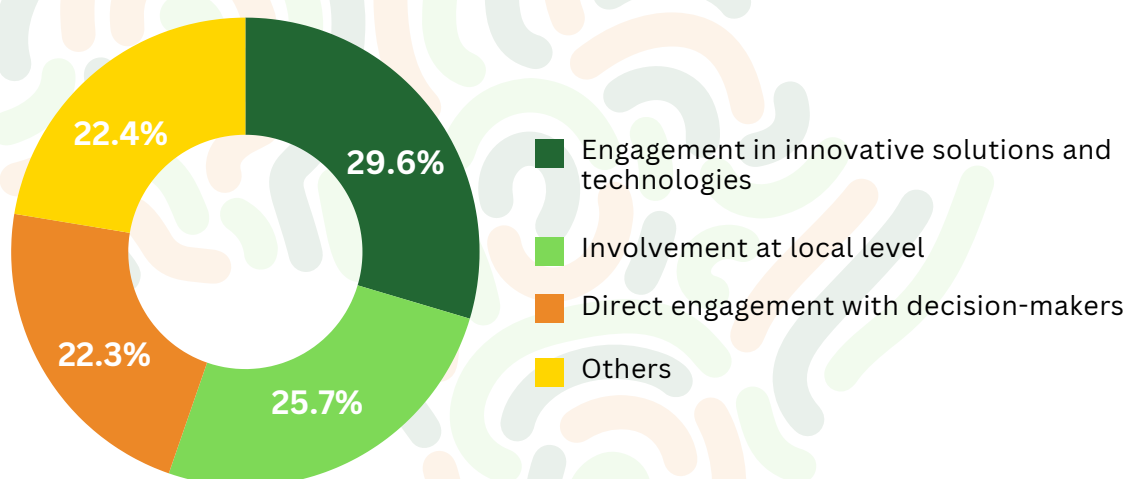
African youth are at the forefront of addressing climate change and advocating for sustainable development. However, they face significant barriers in influencing policy and securing adequate support. Key challenges include limited access to financing, insufficient representation in global governance structures, and a digital divide that hampers innovation. This brief outlines these challenges and presents youth-driven recommendations to ensure their voices and contributions are fully integrated into the SoF agenda.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

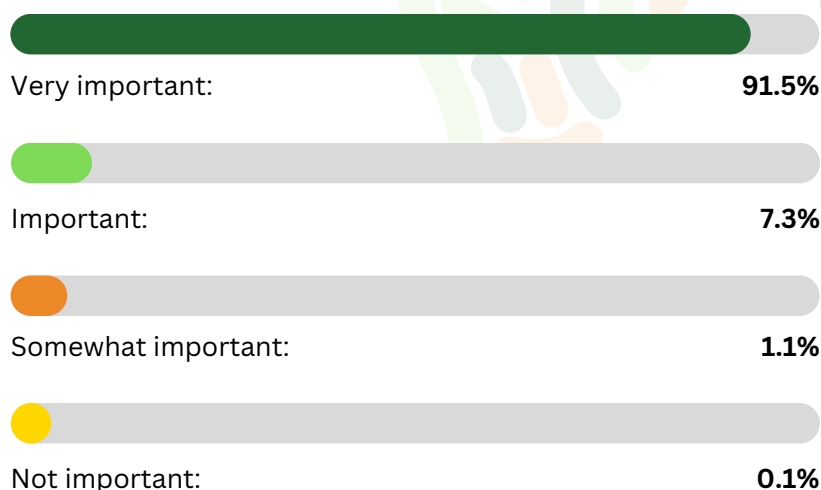
This brief draws on recent survey data collected in the margins of the Regional Conference of Youth Africa RCOY AFRICA 2024 Morocco, as well as an in person consultation hosted during RCOY AFRICA that knew the participation of

250+ young person from more than 40 African country, and a series of virtual consultations to extend the participation to more young people (**around 2900 engaged person**), highlighting African youth's perspectives on climate action on the road to the aspirations for the Summit of the Future and COP29. The survey explored various aspects of youth engagement, including their participation in advocacy campaigns, local initiatives, and collaboration with policymakers. Key findings include:

- Engagement areas:** 29.6% of respondents believe that engaging youth in contributing to innovative solutions and technologies is the most effective way for African youth to play a more active role in climate action, 25.7% of African youth prioritize involvement at the local level to address climate challenges and 22.3% emphasize the need for direct engagement with decision-makers.



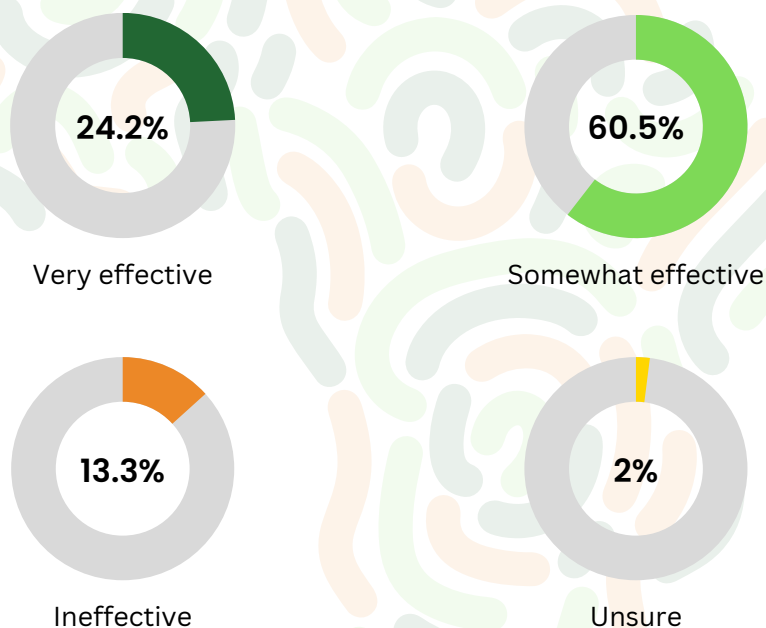
- Importance of youth involvement:** An overwhelming 91.5% of respondents consider it very important for governments and organizations to involve youth representatives in climate summits and policy discussions.



**3 Barriers to participation:** Major obstacles include limited engagement opportunities for youth engagement in policy-making processes by 41.9% (n=1206) followed by insufficient support for youth-led initiatives by 22.7% (n=653).

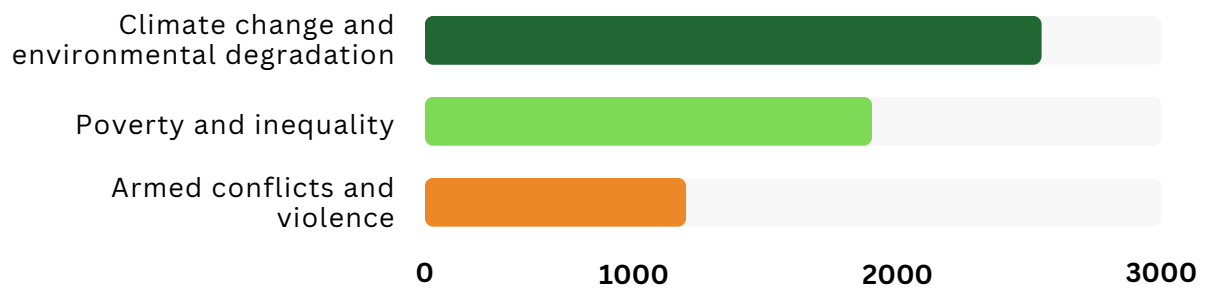
**4 Opportunities and optimism:** While 38% of respondents believe there are **some opportunities, but more support is needed** for effective youth engagement in climate action and sustainable development in Africa, 32% see **limited opportunities for certain groups**, highlighting disparities in access (1096 responses).

**5 Multilateralism:** Only 24.2% of respondents find current multilateral institutions effective in addressing global challenges, whereas 60.5% of African youth find them somewhat effective.



**6 Pressing global challenges facing humanity:** top global challenges identified by African youth are:

- **Climate change and environmental degradation** is viewed as the most pressing challenge, identified by 88.6% of respondents.
- **Poverty and inequality:** 75.5% also see these as critical issues.
- **Armed conflicts and violence:** 46.5% view this as a significant global challenge.



### Enhancing youth participation:

- **Increase representation:** Ensure that 25-30% of negotiation teams at global and national levels include independent young people, particularly from underrepresented regions, to enhance diversity and innovation in decision-making processes.
- **Capacity building:** Implement comprehensive training programs to equip youth with the necessary skills and knowledge for effective participation in global forums, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to climate negotiations and policy development.
- **Formalize youth forums:** Establish dedicated youth advisory councils ensuring that their perspectives are consistently integrated into high-level decision-making processes.
- **Access and inclusivity:** Address visa challenges and reduce costs associated with attending international events and prioritize holding key events in the Global South to improve accessibility for youth from developing countries.

### Improving climate financing:

- **Diversify funding sources:** Expand climate financing by involving non-governmental organizations, community-based institutions, and private sector stakeholders. This approach will democratize access to funds and empower local communities to engage in climate action.
- **Simplify processes:** Streamline application procedures for accessing international climate funds and provide technical assistance to help youth and community organizations navigate these processes effectively.

### Strengthening regional cooperation:

- **Promote integration:** Support frameworks that enhance regional collaboration on climate action as a means of promoting peace and security. Encourage the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to facilitate regional cooperation and integration.
- **Encourage free movement:** Advance initiatives within AfCFTA to facilitate the free movement of people and goods, thereby strengthening regional partnerships and enabling collaborative climate solutions.

### Bridging the digital divide:

- **Invest in infrastructure:** Prioritize the development of digital infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, to ensure broad access to technology and to enable youth to participate fully in the digital economy.
- **Support STEM education:** Foster science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education to drive innovation, particularly in the development of clean energy solutions, and prepare youth for leadership roles in the green economy.

### Ensuring gender equality:

- **Integrate gender perspectives:** Ensure that climate policies explicitly address the needs of women and promote their leadership in climate action by integrating gender-sensitive approaches into all stages of policy development and implementation.
- **Empower women:** Implement mentorship programs and support networks for young women to enhance their participation in climate action, ensuring that they have the skills and opportunities to lead in this critical area.

## CONCLUSION

African youth are crucial to shaping the future of climate action and sustainable development. By addressing the challenges and implementing the recommendations outlined in this brief, stakeholders can ensure that the voices of African youth are effectively represented and supported at the Summit of the Future. This approach will not only empower young leaders but also foster a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable global climate agenda.

# REFERENCES

- Regional Conference of Youth (RCOY) Africa Reports
- African Union (AU) Climate Action Framework
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Documents

