



Youth Policy Proposal

Designing a New Norm for Sustainable Society through Synergistic Strategy

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Third Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement on
Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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I. Acknowledgement

First of all, we would like to thank the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for organizing the Third Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and Ministry of the Environment Japan for hosting this conference. Also, we would like to thank the United Nations University, and Institute for Global Environmental Strategies.

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II. Proposals

Preambulatory Clauses

○Background

This is a proposal initiated by youth who participated in the "Third Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" to promote the formation of a "sustainable society where no one is left behind" through synergy between the Paris Agreement and the SDGs agreed to at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties.

○Ideal Society

The kind of society we seek is composed by these two elements: 1) "a sustainable society in which no one is left behind," 2) "a society where dialogue with youth is mainstreamed in the collaboration among different stakeholders through the participation of young people".

The issues of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, known as the Triple Crisis, are directly related to the youth generation, and it is important for youth to participate in the discussion in order to realize the ideal society we seek.

○Assessment of Current Status

At the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), where the SDGs are followed up and reviewed at the global level every year, diverse members of society, including youth, are "Major Groups and Related Stakeholders (MGoS)" who are permanently involved in discussions to achieve a sustainable society. They have been participating in the discussions to realize a sustainable society. Although youth participation has been gradually established in recent years, there are limited decision-making forums in which the voices of all members of society, including youth on a permanent basis, are reflected, therefore further promotion of the MGoS framework is required.

○Problem Definition

The following issues still need to be addressed in order to realize a sustainable society.

1. Perspectives that do not guarantee opportunities for participation of various segments of society, including youth

The youth generation has not been able to participate in either the Organizers' Committee or the Technical Advisory Group at the Synergy Conference. Despite the fact that this Synergy Conference is an important meeting to discuss the realization of a sustainable society through a cross-cutting approach to global issues, youth should be given more support so that their voices influence important decision-making process.

2. Stalled progress in setting long-term goals and achieving them through a cross-disciplinary approach

According to the Sustainable Development Report 2022 (SDSN), global progress on the SDGs has stalled over the past two years, and it is pointed out that this is due to multiple crises occurring simultaneously in recent years, including disasters and armed conflicts, which have diverted policy attention and priorities away from medium- and long-term goals such as the SDGs and Paris Agreement. This has diverted policy attention and priorities away from medium- and long-term goals such as the SDGs and the Paris Agreement. The shift in attention to short-term issues threatens to delay or stall the adoption of ambitious and credible national and international plans, and also puts pressure on available international funds for sustainable development. However, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other scientific organizations have already shown that these multiple crises are all caused by a lack of approaches to climate change and the SDGs, including biodiversity. Now, with less than eight years to go until the SDGs target year, there is a need to foster new social norms through a comprehensive approach to global issues to realize a sustainable society. There are limits to science-based predictions, and it is currently challenging to simulate human behavior. Hence, discussions in those synergy conferences on how to respond to all kinds of uncertain risks should be promoted from both the perspective of science and technology and the humanities and sociology, such as ethics and philosophy. In addition, consensus building should be achieved not only based on cost-benefit evaluation but also various evaluation criteria such as ethical values without bias toward one method.

This Synergy Conference is an international conference to strengthen the synergy of actions toward the Paris Agreement and the SDGs, and could truly serve as a guide to solving the above issues. However, there still remains a room for coordination with the other major international conferences.

3. Need to address funding opportunities for youth organizations to work sustainably

Compared to other stakeholders, youth have limited power, financial resources and access to the United Nations and governments. It is not enough to simply create a space for youth to participate in order to promote their constant and meaningful engagement.

Based on the above, we would like to make the following proposals;

Operative Clauses

【Proposal】

1. Creating new Norms and disseminating standards necessary to shift the world in the direction of the SDGs and accelerate progress in the eight years leading up to the achievement of the SDGs from 2023

- a. Major international meetings such as HLPF, COP of the Convention on Biological Diversity and UNFCCC, G7 and G20 are key decision-making fora. In order to make this Synergy Conference a more impactful process across global issues by contributing to these processes, it is essential for this meeting to become a place where norms, concepts, and mechanisms that accelerate the progress of each process can be generated. The effective utilization of synergy is precisely the direction in which such a role can be played. We call for holding and promoting activities based on the norms of synergy to be mainstreamed in the future. In order to clearly position this Synergy Conference as a Norm-setter and Shifter, and to enhance the initiatives necessary to achieve this role, the following specific initiatives are requested;
 - i. This Synergy Conference is important in the context of creating values and a forum for discussion that integrates multiple sectors of society, such as climate change and the SDGs, which have been discussed at each conference in the past to be discussed within a centralized platform or working groups that would be established for this issue.
 - ii. We call for the Synergy Conference to define essential synergies, not just a list of specific and individualized examples, but to make and disseminate recommendations in the form of commitments by each government, relevant UN agencies, and stakeholders.
 - iii. We propose that major international conferences such as HLPF, UNFCCC COP, CBD COP, G7, G20, take up the issues discussed at this Synergy Conference.
- b. Mandate this Synergy Conference to produce a new norm and standard that accelerate the implementation of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement
 - i. The organizers, including UNDESA, UNFCCC, Government of Japan, and others should ensure that the result of this conference is fed into discussions of the relevant fora, including the HLPF, UNFCCC COP, CBD COP, and others in order to mainstream the outcome of this Synergy Conference.
 - ii. In the future, we will promote collaborations among major international conferences, and the creation and establishment of a framework in which discussions are not limited to specific fields, but are cross-disciplinary, and in which different stakeholders can participate.
 - iii. We call for the expansion of learning opportunities for global citizens including youth so that cross-sectoral discussions on climate change countermeasures, biodiversity conservation, and other issues can be disseminated to global citizens. This is necessary for global citizens to foster new social norms.
- c. In order to enhance the preparatory process for this Synergy Conference, we endorse the following recommendations ;

- i. To ensure the participation of Major Groups and Other Stakeholders, especially youth, in the preparatory process including Technological Advisory Group of this Synergy Conference, and that the preparatory process be conducted through a more inclusive mechanism. And that their participation be guaranteed in an equitable manner, taking into account gender and regional balance.
- ii. To ensure that stakeholders are not only included within the preparatory and outcome but also in their capacity to monitor compliance and ensure access to transparency of any changes decided with the ever to be established Synergy Conference committee or working groups. This also to minimize potential negative impacts and promote cooperation between synergy groups and stakeholders.
- iii. To prepare an outcome document based on scientific findings which proposes new norms and concepts that accelerates the implementation of various sustainability targets. In preparation of that outcome document, a preparatory group should consider current challenges, best practices, and ways forward with the involvement of Major Groups and Other Stakeholders. The UNFCCC and UNDESA should ensure that the outcome document is fed into the respective official processes.
- iv. To incorporate intergenerational equity perspectives into policy formulation, additionally, to target all policies, institutions, and actions in order to address the "common but different responsibilities" of all generations and to avoid and minimize potential negative impact to youth.

2. Policies and Norm making that go beyond the SDGs and climate change and incorporate synergies in terms of biodiversity and resilience

While this Synergy Conference is significant in that it seeks to bridge the interrelated international frameworks of the Paris Agreement and the SDGs, discussions should be held and policies should be formed based on the perspectives of both measures on climate change and biodiversity. Thereby, issues that were previously limited to discussions in each field will be discussed in the same context.

In order to realize the above-mentioned society, we call for the following specific initiatives;

- a. Cross-disciplinary discussion and practice at this Synergy Conference
 - i. Mainstream solutions such as Nature based Solutions (NbS) can address multiple issues at the same time, including climate change mitigation, adaptation, and ecosystem conservation.
 - ii. While maximizing the effectiveness of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, it is necessary to be very careful about the trade-offs that can be made by these measures that have negative impacts on biodiversity.
 - iii. Deeply aware that the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity may be considered fundamental to the 2030 Agenda.
- b. Adoption and mainstreaming of new norms and concepts into the international community
 - i. Transform the current economic system to be consistent with 1.5 degree limit and biodiversity conservation
 1. It is said that a 100% renewable energy ratio can be achieved not only by developing new technologies but also by utilizing existing technologies. Instead of focusing only on the development of new technologies, discussions should be promoted on how the public and private sectors can work together to make the pre-existing technologies commercially viable in different markets around the world.
 2. Climate change adaptation measures and biodiversity initiatives are interrelated, and we urge that this be put into practice at the national and community levels, including all other stakeholders as soon as possible.
 3. In order to clearly address a path to an equitable and just transition, countries need to articulate to the international community concrete policies for their own

decarbonization, especially the feasibility of their energy mix, which also takes biodiversity into account.

- c. Advocating and mainstreaming of alternative social norms to degrowth and economic evaluation standards.
 - i. Realizing a decarbonized, circular society based on the concept of "green recovery" and consistent with climate change countermeasures and biodiversity conservation.
 - ii. To prepare the opportunity to rethink the current economic evaluation standard and discuss a new evaluation criteria for sustainable development.
 - iii. Discuss specific measures that take into account participation and concerns of communities affected and related to the transition to a more sustainable economic, cultural and political activities of locals. In restructuring a plan to adjust the relationship between people and nature and its ecological wellbeing, that is workable, inclusive and mutually beneficial to communities affected.

3. Meaningful youth participation

The fact that a youth-led side event, "Youth Day," was held during this Synergy Conference indicates the significance of youth being explicitly identified as one of the key stakeholders in climate change and the SDGs, and participating in discussions that create synergy among multiple sectors. Youth is one of the stakeholders in society and will be responsible for the future of society. As members of society, it is important for youth to be included in policy making discussions to ensure the mission of democratic institutions is delivered equally and impactfully. From "Our Common Future." Sustainable Development is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Youth participation is needed to integrate with present needs to make a sustainable society.

Youth is also important in the regeneration process of decision making. Sustainable policy for the future depends on a smooth transition from one generation to the next and continues. We, as the current youth, will increase the momentum to further mainstream the framework to realize the interlinkage and the synergies between issues. The current generation can pass the baton to the next generation so that this establishes a system where sustainable policies are reflected in the future.

We recommend the following so that there will be a permanent place for such youth-led discussions at future Synergy Conferences and other major international conferences.

- a. Support youth for challenges we face
 - i. Youth do not have a sufficient number of regular seats in international conferences. It is important to establish a system to give voice to people in various positions in society, including youth, in global SDGs and other policy decision-making conferences.
 - ii. The majority of youth organizations do not have enough financial resources. In order for them to participate in international conferences in a meaningful way, we call for the promotion of financial support for youth organizations and their activities.
 - iii. Society needs to actively embrace and promote the activities of youth, and it is important to achieve a state of guaranteed social credibility by creating a social climate that embraces the opinions and aspirations of youth. This requires collaboration with the UN and national government, public relations, and opportunity for us to deliver our opinions at events and decision-making discussions.

Appendix

About us

This paper was co-authored by Japan Youth Platform for Sustainability, Climate Youth Japan, and Change Our Next Decade. We also plan to gather more members in order to expand our global activities.

Japan Youth Platform for Sustainability

Japan Youth Platform for Sustainability (JYPS) is a platform for youth and organizations based in Japan to engage in the UN and other intergovernmental systems.

Climate Youth Japan

Climate Youth Japan (CYJ) is an environmental youth NGO that works on various policy advocacy activities and participates in international conferences to bring solutions to climate change.

Change Our Next Decade

Change Our Next Decade (COND) is a Japanese youth organization addressing biodiversity issues and focusing on CBD. The vision is to create a better society in living in harmony with nature.