



EARTHDAY.ORG

<https://www.earthday.org/>

Bryce Coon – Director of Education – [Coon@earthday.org](mailto:Coon@earthday.org)

**Subject: Inclusion of Climate Education in the Summit for the Future and the Zero Draft of the Pact for the Future**

As we prepare for the upcoming Summit for the Future and its consequential outcome, the Pact for the Future, we see a unique opportunity to advance and enrich global cooperation and sustainable development: the inclusion of formal, integrated, and assessed K-12 Climate Education as a pivotal component of both the conference agenda and the zero draft of the Pact for the Future. Formal Climate Education refers to formally integrated k-12 education that provides future generations with a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to fostering understanding, awareness, and action related to climate change and its multifaceted impacts on the environment, society, and the economy. This educational framework aims to equip individuals with the knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary to comprehend the complexities of climate systems as well as prepare them for the Green Economy.

We ask that the UN integrate formal Climate Education in the agenda and provide a platform for heads of states and ministers to commit to establishing policies for formal Climate Education in their respective countries. This action will build upon the progress made during the latest United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change<sup>1</sup> (UNFCCC), Conference of the Parties<sup>2</sup> (COP28) held in Dubai last month and accelerate Climate Education commitments under the Paris Agreement, the UNFCCC, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>3</sup>. This would also build upon the outcomes and goals established in the UN Transforming Education Summit<sup>4</sup> held in September of 2022.

The right of current and future generations to a sustainable and habitable planet is a fundamental principle that echoes through various international agreements and frameworks. The Summit for the Future, with its overarching aim to unite Member States behind a common agenda, provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to place Climate Education at the forefront of global cooperation efforts.

Youth engagement is pivotal and future generations are not merely recipients of our choices; they serve as essential stakeholders today and catalysts for transformative change. Their innovative perspectives, enthusiasm, and dedication constitute invaluable resources in confronting the intricate challenges posed

by climate change. Integrating Climate Education into the agenda not only empowers the current generation but also acknowledges the profound impact young minds can have in steering the global response to environmental issues, ensuring a sustainable legacy for future generations

Climate change is an existential threat that transcends borders, impacting ecosystems, communities, and economies worldwide. Integrating Climate Education into the Summit for the Future aligns with the imperative to address the root causes of climate change, adapt to its impacts, and foster a global community committed to sustainable practices.

Competencies that should be included in Climate Education practices to make the Dubai Agreement<sup>5</sup> possible: new skills for green jobs and a new educational approach for the legal framework and new management and economic systems. These need to be explicitly stated in any future agreements to guarantee that all Parties are taking the necessary actions to integrate and assess Climate Education in the Nationally Determined Contributions<sup>6</sup> (NDCs). Earth Day Network has created an NDC Guide<sup>7</sup> to help all Parties ensure a successful implementation of formal Climate Education into their respective NDCs.

Education is a powerful catalyst for change. Climate Education empowers individuals with the knowledge necessary to understand, mitigate, and adapt to climate change as well as the skills to participate in and strengthen the Green Economy. It cultivates a sense of responsibility, fostering a generation of leaders capable of making informed decisions that prioritize environmental sustainability.

The proposed agenda should build upon established international agreements, including article 128 of the Paris Agreement, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>9</sup> (SDGs). By integrating Climate Education, we reinforce the commitment to these frameworks, acknowledging their critical role in shaping a sustainable future.

Climate change affects every aspect of our lives. Climate Education is intertwined with multiple SDGs, such as Goal 4 (Quality Education<sup>10</sup>) and Goal 13 (Climate Action<sup>11</sup>). Including it in the Summit for the Future agenda ensures a holistic approach to sustainable development.

A report<sup>12</sup> from the EPA shows that climate change exacerbates inequalities, with vulnerable populations bearing the brunt of its consequences. By fostering Climate Education, we equip communities to adapt and build resilience, thereby promoting social justice. Additionally, it addresses the environmental impact of climate change, such as deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and disruptions in ecosystems. There is a growing body of evidence<sup>13</sup> that showcases the link between economic inequality and climate change especially in coastal communities<sup>14</sup> around the world susceptible to rising sea water.

Climate change poses significant economic risks, from the increasing frequency of extreme weather events to shifts in agricultural productivity. Integrating Climate Education into the Summit for the Future agenda recognizes the economic imperative of preparing the workforce for the challenges and opportunities associated with the rising Green Economy. These new industries created out of necessity will be worth upwards of \$10 trillion by 2050<sup>15</sup>.

Numerous jurisdictions and educational institutions around the world have already recognized the importance of Climate Education. For example Argentina<sup>16</sup>, Italy<sup>17</sup>, and the United Kingdom<sup>18</sup> have formally incorporated Climate Education into their national curricula. By highlighting these global trends and best practices, we can inspire collective action and the adoption of effective educational strategies.

Climate Education will help to inform the citizenry and combat the climate crisis. We therefore call on Member States and other stakeholders to ensure that the huge potential of Climate Education in the Pact for the Future. Specifically, we recommend including the following:

### **Under the Chapeau**

Ensure that Climate Education is mentioned wherever UN treaties are discussed, emphasizing its integral role in achieving the overarching goals of the conference and supporting multiple SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement.

### **Under Chapter 1: Sustainable Development and Financing for Development:**

Reference SDG Goal 4, emphasizing the importance of Quality Education in achieving sustainable development.

Encourage multi-sector partnerships and coordination with global educational initiatives.

Encourage support for creating new and leveraging existing multilateral funding mechanisms to support implementation of climate education at the national level.

### **Under Chapter 3: Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation**

Urge member states to recognize formal Climate Education as a foundational tool to foster science, technology, and innovation in the pursuit of sustainable growth.

### **Under Chapter 4: Youth and Future Generations:**

Urge Member States to prioritize formal Climate Education, recognizing its role in empowering future generations to address climate challenges.

Urge member states to recognize formal Climate Education as a tool to address climate justice to develop a more equitable future.

Please consider the vital role that Climate Education can play in shaping a sustainable future. By incorporating this critical component into the Summit for the Future agenda and the zero draft, we can foster a global commitment to education as a key driver of positive environmental change.

Thank you for your time and consideration. The Summit for the Future will become a beacon of inspiration for a world united in the pursuit of a sustainable and resilient future.

## References:

1. <https://unfccc.int/>
  2. <https://www.cop28.com/en/>
  3. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals#icons>
  4. <https://www.un.org/en/transforming-education-summit>
  5. <https://www.cop28.com/en/>
  6. <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs>
  7. <https://www.earthday.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/NDC-GUIDE-Final.pdf>
  8. [https://unfccc.int/files/essential\\_background/convention/application/pdf/english\\_paris\\_agreement.pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/application/pdf/english_paris_agreement.pdf)
  9. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals#icons>
  10. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>
  11. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal13>
  12. <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-report-shows-disproportionate-impacts-climate-change-socially-vulnerable>
  13. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0301421523000605>
  14. [https://www.cell.com/one-earth/pdf/S2590-3322\(23\)00038-6.pdf](https://www.cell.com/one-earth/pdf/S2590-3322(23)00038-6.pdf)
  15. <https://www.oxfordeconomics.com/resource/the-global-green-economy-understanding-and-capturing-the-opportunity/>
  16. <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/ambiente/educacion-ambiental/ley-de-educacion-ambiental>
  17. <https://www.earthday.org/italy-first-country-climate-change-studies-in-schools/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-to-lead-the-way-in-climate-and-sustainability-education>