

# A Call to Action for COP30: Engage, inform, prepare and protect children and young people

.....







This document was prepared by the ChildFund Alliance Child Rights in a Changing Climate Committee and presents a collective message to the Thirtieth Conference of the Parties (COP 30) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)



ChildFund Alliance is a global network of 11 child-focused development and humanitarian organizations operating in 66 countries around the world. The Alliance helps nearly 36 million children and their families to overcome poverty and build resilience.

Members work to end violence and exploitation against children; provide expertise in emergencies and disasters to ease the harmful impact on children and their communities; and engage children, families and communities to create lasting change.

Guided by [ChildFund Alliance Strategy 2030: Championing Child Rights in a Changing World](#), the Alliance also places child rights in the context of a changing climate at the center of its interventions; advocating for climate justice, strengthening community adaptation, and ensuring that young people’s voices and rights are integral to climate action and policy processes.

Members of ChildFund Alliance

- |                         |                                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ChildFund Australia     | Barnfonden (Sweden)            |
| ChildFund Deutschland   | Children Believe (Canada)      |
| ChildFund International | Educo (Spain)                  |
| ChildFund Japan         | Un Enfant par la Main (France) |
| ChildFund Korea         | WeWorld (Italy)                |
| ChildFund New Zealand   |                                |



© ChildFund Alliance 2025	Front cover: Yasmin, age 4, Guatemala.
ChildFund Alliance 545 Fifth Avenue Suite 1109 New York, NY 10017	Back cover: Vanessa, age 11, and her mother Neide in Brazil.
+1.212.697.0859 info@childfundalliance.org childfundalliance.org	

“When I see the climate changing, I feel both happiness and fear. I’m happy because a new season is coming, but I’m also afraid because I don’t know what kind of weather will arrive — will it be hot, cold, refreshing, rainy, or sunny?” – *Mirley, age 15, Paraguay*

Children and Young People’s Lives on the Climate Timeline

A child born in 2015 began life under the promises of the Paris Agreement.	pressures will strain communities. Without urgent action, an entire generation’s potential to realize their rights and build secure, fulfilling lives could be lost.
On the frontlines of the climate crisis, the child had a future exposed to multiple climate related events. By 2025, at age ten, their community – supported by local organizations, government, and traditional leaders – had adopted climate-smart farming and disaster-risk plans. They learned to adapt and thrive in a changing environment.	This timeline makes one thing clear: plans must be made, and investments must be targeted now.
Across many regions, similar progress is underway. Yet the pace and scale of the climate crisis are accelerating. Without child- and youth-centric investment, more families face displacement, lost livelihoods, the risk of violence, and disrupted education. With the right support, these challenges can be overcome.	Engaging, informing, preparing and protecting children and young people on issues related to the climate crisis is not optional – it is essential. Action today through education, child- and youth- responsive planning, resilient infrastructure, and meaningful participation will determine whether the next generation inherits hope or hardship.
Looking twenty to thirty years ahead, rising heat, water scarcity, food insecurity and migration	Children and young people are not passive beneficiaries. They are rights-holders, innovators, and leaders whose well-being and agency must be central to a just and sustainable future.



# ChildFund Alliance’s Key Asks for COP30

## 1. Children and Young People as Rights Holders and Climate Actors

Children and young people are disproportionately affected by the climate and environmental crisis yet are underrepresented in decision-making. COP30 must embed and enshrine children and young people’s rights across all climate commitments.

We call on Parties to:

- Reaffirm and operationalize the Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action (COP25) and report progress at COP30.
- Strengthen intergenerational and gender equity, recognizing the care economy and women’s leadership as essential pillars of climate resilience.
- Ensure children and young people are recognized as agents of change, with age seen as an opportunity and added value – not a barrier – to inclusive governance and meaningful participation.

### Example from ChildFund Alliance

Hundreds of youth participants in the project “Building well-being in harmony with Mother Earth” in Bolivia worked with the Autonomous Municipal Government of La Paz to develop a Municipal Climate Agenda and have led its subsequent implementation.

## 2. Child and Youth Responsive Climate Finance

As governments negotiate the New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance, they must ensure children are not left behind. Today, only 2.4% of multilateral climate finance supports child-focused projects. The new goal must prioritize finance that protects and empowers children.

We call on Parties to:

- Embed child-sensitive indicators in the Baku–Belém Roadmap for climate finance (targeting \$1.3 trillion) and integrate them into the allocation criteria of the Loss and Damage Fund, ensuring that funding decisions consider impacts on children and young people.
- Commit to measurable increases in child- and youth-responsive finance by COP31.
- Ensure that any additional climate finance does not add to existing debt burdens, especially for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and prioritizes grants over loans.

- Allocate dedicated resources for child- and youth-led adaptation initiatives, green skills, and climate-resilient education systems.
- Integrate age-, gender-, disability-, and social-inclusion disaggregated indicators for transparency and accountability.
- Prioritize accessible Loss and Damage funding (especially for LDCs and SIDs) that safeguards children and young people’s access to essential services in a timely and effective manner.

### Example from ChildFund Alliance

In Nicaragua, Haiti, India, Cambodia, Ethiopia and Kenya, Environmental Brigades or interest clubs established in schools – lead the development and implementation of environmental action plans, as well as raising awareness among their peers and families.

“The participation of young people is important, but they do not listen to us. We must bring all the groups together: when we are more, we can move more. As they say, there is strength in numbers. Promote the goal of saving the environment so that everyone hears it, and to make everyone know about it.”  
– Member of a Youth Focus Group in Brazil

## 3. Meaningful Participation of Children and Young People

Children and young people must be included as decision-makers, changemakers and leaders to ensure climate policies are relevant and accountable.

- Invest in training, mentorship, and digital access to strengthen youth leadership.
- Remove language, ability, and technology barriers to participation.

We call on Parties to:

- Formal representation of children and young people in national and international climate councils, planning, and budgeting.
- Institutionalize MiniCOPs and national child/ youth climate councils in partnership with UN agencies, civil society partners and local and community networks.
- Establish accessible, child-friendly feedback mechanisms to prevent tokenism and ensure voices are heard.

### Example from ChildFund Alliance

In its global programming, the ChildFund Alliance is ensuring that children and young people have genuine representation in climate and environmental decision-making. Through inclusive, age-appropriate platforms, ranging from spoken word and art to drama and public dialogue, children are shaping local and national conversations on climate resilience and driving awareness and action within their communities.

## 4. Mental Health and Well-being

Climate change intensifies anxiety, trauma, and long-term stress, particularly among children and youth. It is a mental health crisis for children and young people.

We call on Parties to:

- Recognize the impact of the climate crisis on children and young people’s mental health and well-being as a key risk and include it as a key adaptation priority.
- Integrate psychosocial support and trauma recovery as well as urgent preventive mitigation measures into adaptation and resilience programmes.
- Finance mental-health and well-being interventions as part of climate adaptation.
- Provide safe, inclusive forums for children and young people to share experiences and foster hope through positive climate messaging and build purpose, connection, and well-being through meaningful participation in climate action.

### Example from ChildFund Alliance

Children and young people affected by conflict and climate change in Mali, Burkina Faso and Mozambique are supported in schools with psychosocial and environmental programs that integrate peacebuilding and climate action.

5. Rights-Based Climate Policies

All climate policies, including NDC 3.0 and NAPs, must be grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as General Comment No. 26.

We call on Parties to:

- Embedding the best interests of the child and the young person as a primary consideration in all COP30 and CMA decisions.
- Establishing a follow-up mandate to the 2024 Expert Dialogue on Children and Climate Change to advance research and implementation by 2026.
- Integrating Child Rights Impact Assessments (CRIAs) into NDCs, NAPs, and climate-finance mechanisms.
- Linking child-and youth-responsive social protection systems with community-led adaptation measures to prevent climate-induced displacement and migration, school disruption, and violence.
- Embed child protection and social safeguards in climate and migration

policies to ensure continuity of education, healthcare, and identity documentation for displaced children and young people, while strengthening community resilience and livelihoods to prevent forced migration.

Example from ChildFund Alliance

In Kenya, climate education in schools included integrating children’s voices into county-level environmental planning. Advocacy efforts contributed to policy changes, including influencing one county’s Water Bill and shaping their agroecology policy. In India, a Water Bodies & DRR Study focused on restoring ponds and DRR interventions to improve water, food, livelihoods, and child protection across Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. An external study documented replicable lessons for integrating resilience with child protection. Also in India, use of the GSI Toolkit & Vulnerability Tools enabled the collection of disaggregated data by gender, caste, and ethnicity guided targeted interventions for Dalit, Adivasi, and tribal youth, shaping district disaster planning.

6. Education, Skills, and Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer

Children and young people must be engaged, informed and prepared to navigate and lead in a changing climate.

We call on Parties to:

- Recognize children and young people as cross-cutting priority groups across all six ACE (Action for Climate Empowerment) elements.
- Allocate finance for child-and youth-responsive ACE implementation.
- Integrate climate and environmental education into curricula at all levels.
- Support intergenerational knowledge transfer, combining Indigenous, traditional and scientific expertise.
- Invest in youth-led initiatives for ecosystem restoration, green economy, climate change adaptation, disaster preparedness, and sustainable agriculture.
- Integrate environmental governance into regular education, incorporating modules on children’s climate diplomacy, negotiation, and civic and policy engagement.

- Build in an Education in Emergencies perspective — ensuring continuity of learning, minimizing educational loss in climate-related crises and reinforcing the link between the climate crisis and the right to education.
- Ensure equitable digital access and literacy for children and young people – investing in connectivity, safe online spaces, and technology-based early warning systems that enable their meaningful participation in climate education, advocacy, and innovation.

Example from ChildFund Alliance

In Kenya, young people are empowered with skills for the green and digital economies. Youth-led organizations are being supported through training, incubation, and funding, strengthening participation, leadership, and policy influence while fostering social entrepreneurship and collaboration across green and digital networks.

7. Local Leadership and Community-Based Solutions

Policies must empower local communities – including Indigenous Peoples, women, children and young people with disabilities, migrants, and those living in extreme poverty – to lead adaptation and mitigation efforts.

We call on Parties to:

- Direct access windows within the Loss and Damage and Adaptation Funds for community- and youth-led projects.
- Support for local adaptation planning and education that reduces children and young people’s vulnerability and allows them to engage in community-based solutions.
- Integrate child-responsive early warning and preparedness measures into national adaptation and disaster risk reduction frameworks—ensuring accessible communication, education on local risks, meaningful child participation, and investment in safe, resilient schools and community protection hubs.
- Invest in community education, social protection, and climate-adaptive livelihoods to reduce children and young people’s vulnerability to shocks.

- Promote child and youth engagement in nature-based solutions that protect ecosystems and Indigenous knowledge through community-led, intergenerational climate action.
- Promote the use of low-cost technologies in schools and communities for environmental monitoring, early warning, and interactive environmental education shaped by children and young people.
- Integrate gender-transformative approaches that address power imbalances and promote girls’ and young women’s leadership in climate decision-making.

Example from ChildFund Alliance

In Ethiopia, schools and community groups petitioned the government to promote the establishment of ‘Green clubs’. Lesson plans included community elders and farmers sharing indigenous knowledge with children, working side-by-side to plant trees and gardens and take care of waterways.

8. Urgency and Accountability

COP30 is a defining moment for measurable, child-responsive outcomes.

We call on Parties to:

- Commit to time-bound, measurable indicators for child-and youth-responsive climate action, aligned with the UNCCD’s Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) frameworks, which aim to balance land degradation with restoration – and review progress by COP31.
- Publish age-, gender-, and disability-disaggregated data on finance and adaptation outcomes.
- Support a Children and Climate Accountability Mechanism to monitor progress.
- Translate global commitments into actionable, child-and youth-responsive strategies at all levels.

Example from ChildFund Alliance

In Sri Lanka, a study *Youth-Centric Analysis of Sri Lanka’s NDC 2.0* revealed that young people saw themselves as active participants in climate goals, particularly in the energy sector, agriculture, and in stimulating climate action through technology, creativity and community mobilization.

In Bangladesh, youth eco-groups received training, conducted research, and implemented micro-grants on eco-friendly innovations such as rainwater harvesting, eco-stoves, biogas, vermicomposting, homestead gardening, cloth bags, and solar lighting, contributing to waste and emission reductions.



## 9. Commitment to Global Pacts for a Liveable Planet

COP30 must reinforce alignment with the world's major environmental commitments to secure a safe planet for every child and young person.

ChildFund Alliance calls for:

- Commit to a rapid, just, and equitable phase-out of fossil fuels, protecting children, young people and their communities from transition risks.
- Uphold and implement the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, embedding ecosystem protection and restoration within adaptation and resilience planning.
- Ensure that policies under the UNFCCC, UNCBD, and UNCCD work together to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation in ways that protect and empower children and young people.
- Integrate child-rights safeguards into all environmental and climate policies – ensuring every child has access to clean air, safe water, and healthy ecosystems – guided by UNCRC General Comment 26, which provides authoritative guidance on children's rights in the context of climate change and environmental protection.

### Example from ChildFund Alliance

Through a YOU-CAN group in India, 6,350 rural young people—including Dalit and tribal adolescents—became climate champions. They created Oxy Parks, led campaigns reaching 95,000 people, and embedded 240 climate leaders including 110 girl leaders in governance. This scalable model shows how youth leadership drives gender-responsive climate resilience.

In Brazil, REJUDES, a youth-led network connects environmental literacy and green entrepreneurship with national decision-making processes.

Young people in The Gambia take part in environmental action on Youth Day



## Call to Action

At COP30 – and beyond – world leaders must act decisively to engage, inform, prepare and protect every child and young person for a changing climate. Children and young people are not passive beneficiaries of climate action; they are rights-holders, innovators, leaders, and agents of change whose voices, ideas, and well-being must shape the policies that define their future.

The ChildFund Alliance calls on Parties to embed child rights across all COP30 outcomes, NDCs, and NAPs; finance child-and youth-

responsive adaptation and resilience initiatives; institutionalize child and youth participation in climate governance; invest in education and mental well-being as essential components of adaptation; and ensure accountability through child-and youth-focused indicators and transparent reporting.

The choices made in Belém will determine whether the next generation inherits hope or hardship. Action must be taken now to secure every child and young person's right to a just, safe and sustainable future.

**“Children and youth participation is important because we are also human beings, and we live on this planet. We breathe this air, and we are here, so we have the right to make decisions and to learn how to make them at the right time.”**

**– Rosa, age 13, Paraguay**

To learn more about the importance of children's Right to the Future and the call for the participation of children and young people, please read the [ChildFund Alliance World Index on the Rights of Women and Children 2024](#) which presents results from a survey involving over 10,000 children and young people across 41 countries where ChildFund Alliance members operate.

For more information, contact Joohi Haleem, member of the ChildFund Alliance Child Rights in a Changing Climate Committee, on [jhaleem@childfundalliance.org](mailto:jhaleem@childfundalliance.org)



## ChildFund Alliance: a global network championing child rights in a changing world

**ChildFund Australia** manages and implements programs in the Mekong and the Pacific while supporting projects delivered by partner organizations throughout Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Our work is funded through public donations and government grants. Flagship programs include Swipe Safe, which teaches children to safely navigate the online world. Sport for Development, through the power of sport, creates more inclusive communities for children and young people and supports them with essential social and emotional skills and knowledge to realize their potential.

[childfund.org.au](http://childfund.org.au)

**ChildFund Deutschland** is a child protection organization working to improve the future opportunities of children in need, their families, and their entire environment on an international scale since 1978. Aid and development projects are financed by private and institutional donations and focus on child protection, education, food security and income-generating activities. We also provide emergency aid in crises. Projects are carried out in cooperation with ChildFund Alliance members and with local partner organizations.

[childfund.de](http://childfund.de)

**ChildFund International** is the Alliance's member based in the United States. We work throughout Africa, Asia and the Americas to connect children with the people, resources and institutions they need to grow up healthy, educated, skilled and, above all, safe—at home, at school, online. Delivered through over 150 local implementing partner organizations, our programs address the underlying conditions that prevent any child or youth from achieving their full potential.

[childfund.org](http://childfund.org)

**ChildFund Japan** was established in 1952 as a recipient for ChildFund International sponsorship funds in support of Japanese orphans following World War II. Since 1975, we have been working in the Philippines and Nepal to help deprived, excluded and vulnerable children, families and communities through meaningful, sustainable solutions. The essence of the sponsorship approach, which connects people one-to-one, is embedded in ChildFund Japan's organizational culture.

[childfund.or.jp](http://childfund.or.jp)

**ChildFund Korea** has played a pivotal role in enhancing South Korea's child welfare laws, policies, and system development since initiating relief efforts for war orphans in 1948. As a leading child-centered non-governmental organization in the country, we are expanding efforts to close the gap in the growth environment among children in over 30 countries, including Korea. Leveraging collaborative partnerships with ChildFund Alliance members and local partners, we are committed to fostering a world where children can thrive and be happy by supporting child rights-based programs emphasizing direct support, capacity building, and advocacy activities.

[childfund.or.kr](http://childfund.or.kr)

**ChildFund New Zealand** works to create conditions where children and youth are educated, healthy, protected, engaged and resilient. We believe the strongest development outcomes are achieved through work designed, implemented, and evaluated by local partners in their specific areas of need. We work in Kenya, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Zambia using long-term strategic plans unique to each community, and also work with children and youth in Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Kiribati, focusing on child protection, youth social and emotional wellbeing, and disaster risk reduction.

[childfund.org.nz](http://childfund.org.nz)

**Barnfonden** is a child rights organization based in Malmö, Sweden, focused on children's rights and safety in vulnerable areas that are heavily affected or at risk of being affected by climate change. We work with children to create sustainable solutions that protect and strengthen their rights and well-being through partnerships, local ownership, and a holistic perspective. Through long-term work and innovative solutions, we are committed to creating resilience and ensuring children's right to safety, education, good health, and a life free from violence.

[barnfonden.se](http://barnfonden.se)

**Children Believe** is a Canadian independent registered charity that manages and directly funds program activities in its countries of operation. For over 60 years, we have brought together "brave young dreamers, caring supporters and partners, and unabashed idealists." We are driven by the belief that access to education—inside and outside of classrooms—is the most powerful tool children can use to change their world. Through our work, Children Believe is helping 900,000 children, youth, women and men change their lives.

[childrenbelieve.ca](http://childrenbelieve.ca)

**Educo** is a non-governmental organization that works in more than 14 countries for the wellbeing and rights of children, especially the right to receive a quality education. We stand with children all over the world, especially those who live in situations of vulnerability, poverty, or lack of opportunities. Whatever happens, nothing can stop us: in any crisis, armed conflict or emergency, education cannot stop. Because education is urgent: it heals, empowers, and protects.

[educo.org](http://educo.org)

**Un Enfant par la Main** is a French not-for-profit organization helping vulnerable children in rural isolated areas gain full access to their rights, through a systemic, pragmatic, collaborative and sustainable approach to development. We work directly in Haiti and Madagascar and with local partners in the areas of child protection, education, health, access to water & sanitation, nutrition and income-generation activities. Communities, families and local authorities are involved in the identification of local priorities and action plans. Our funding sources include the sponsorship of more than 12,000 supporters, private individual and corporate donations, and institutional funds.

[unenfantparlamain.org](http://unenfantparlamain.org)

**WeWorld** is an Italian organization operating in 27 countries with development cooperation and humanitarian aid projects to guarantee the rights of the most vulnerable communities, especially women and children. We have been working for more than 50 years to create a better world where everyone has equal opportunities and rights, access to resources, health, education, and dignified work. A world in which the environment is a common resource to be respected and preserved; in which war, violence, and exploitation are banned. A world that belongs to everybody and where no one is left behind.

[weworld.it](http://weworld.it)





**ChildFund**®  
Alliance

**Every child deserves to live a life free from violence.**

**[childfundalliance.org](https://childfundalliance.org)**

©2025 ChildFund Alliance