

Extraordinary session of the Children and Teenagers Parliament

The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Climate Action

November 17-20, 2023

MANIFESTO

Children and teenagers of Cabo Verde for our planet!

Considering that climate change is not a distant threat, but a reality that we face on a daily basis and that children are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Alerting that our communities and our ecosystems, both terrestrial and marine, are already facing worrying transformations and harmful consequences due to climate change.

Considering that:

The heat waves have become more frequent, longer-lasting and affect every aspect of our lives.

Changes in rainfall patterns and saline intrusion, threaten access to drinking water and jeopardise water security.

Prolonged and more frequent droughts make growing crops and producing food a greater challenge, limiting agriculture and livestock farming, which are fundamental activities for the subsistence and food security of our populations, particularly affecting children's nutrition.

The rising tides invade our homes and jeopardise the integrity and safety of the vast coastal areas of our archipelago.

The ocean acidification and the loss of marine resources limit fishing, which is a very important economic and subsistence activity for our islands.

Emphasising the significant impacts of climate change on people's health, especially that of the most vulnerable groups such as children, for example, the increase in vector-borne diseases related to climate change and the negative impacts on human health of more frequent, intense and prolonged heat waves.

Pointing out the consequences of climate change on education, namely the more frequent interruptions in school activities due to extreme weather events; the growing absenteeism from school due to health problems associated with climate issues and the economic impacts on families livelihoods; and school failure aggravated by recurrent heat waves.

Underlining the increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, which entail costly losses and damage that can cause mass migration, and which damage basic infrastructure, communication, health, education and housing, especially harming the most vulnerable communities and their children.

Emphasising that climate change has had a significant impact on our biodiversity and that rising temperatures and scarce rainfall adversely affects biodiversity, leading to the extinction of some endemic species of birds and plants, jeopardising the sustainability of our ecosystems.

Pointing out that the loss of natural resources has severe socio-economic impacts and jeopardises the inalienable right to life and well-being and the right of children to live in a healthy environment.

Considering the lack of awareness, information and education on climate issues, which leaves children particularly unprotected and prevents them from being prepared to face the challenges ahead.

Emphasising the right of access to information and the right of children to freely express their opinions, including on issues that affect them or are of interest to them, particularly with regard to climate change.

Considering that all actions, good or bad, have consequences, and that planet Earth is our home, and that it is up to us to preserve it as best we can.

Underlining that in the current era climate action is imperative, we need to transcend borders and join forces to preserve our planet.

We are claiming:

We are the voice of future generations who will depend on the decisions we make now.

It's time to act individually and collectively to mitigate the greenhouse gas emissions responsible for future climate change and to adapt to the negative impacts we are already seeing.

We are part of the solution and contribute to the paradigm shift, having a significant impact on the present and the future.

Our commitment to contribute to combating climate change in Cabo Verde, in a responsible and supportive manner, includes:

Learning about climate change in order to better understand the causes, current and future impacts and potential solutions.

Participating in advocacy and activism campaigns to raise awareness among our colleagues, families and communities about the urgency of climate action and promoting the adoption of more sustainable and climate-sensitive lifestyles and increasing individual and community adaptive capacity and resilience.

We declare that we intend, in the future, in the event of political inaction and if necessary, and inspired by climate leaders like Greta Thunberg, to initiate school climate strikes to put pressure on our leaders to adopt and implement more rigorous measures against climate change.

Despite all these actions that we are already taking and will continue to take in the future, we need to be supported by Cabo Verde's government and political decision-makers in this commitment at national and international level.

We therefore call on our leaders and government officials to work together to guarantee the fulfilment of children's rights, ensuring a healthy and safe environment for their development, by:

- Investing in renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, and increase the use of public transport and soft mobility to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and cut greenhouse gas emissions.
- Implementing reforestation programmes to preserve local ecosystems, absorb carbon dioxide and protect against the harmful effects of climate change, such as soil erosion and nutrient loss.
- Promoting sustainable agricultural practices by supporting our farmers in adopting planting and agricultural techniques that include water conservation and drought resistance.
- Creating the conditions for families who depend on agriculture, livestock and fishing to have guarantees of subsistence and economic prosperity by creating more jobs and providing more support for the most vulnerable families and communities.

- Investing in water production and conservation infrastructure (such as reservoirs and water retention systems) and investing on the desalination of seawater using renewable energies to combat water scarcity and increase food security through agriculture production.
- Investing in the reuse, recycling and treatment of solid waste and wastewater, with a view to reducing the associated GHG emissions and to contributing to the conservation and efficient use of materials and water resources and promoting the circular economy.
- Strengthening health systems by investing in infrastructure and training health professionals to deal with the challenges posed by climate change. Also, implement prevention and adaptation measures such as improving epidemiological surveillance to monitor and respond to climate-induced diseases.
- Encouraging the construction of sustainable housing that is energy efficient and uses materials with a low climate impact.
- Preventing and supervising construction on hillsides, in coastal zones and areas most at risk of disasters due to the current and future impacts of coastal erosion and rising sea levels.
- Establishing climate monitoring systems to collect relevant data and predict extreme weather events by operationalizing early warning systems.
- Integrate climate change into all school curricula from basic education to higher education and develop training programmes for teachers to address climate change issues in their subjects.
- Encouraging activities that promote information, education and awareness of climate issues.
- Funding and supporting NGOs that develop actions and projects on climate change.
- Supporting the municipalities by providing resources and training so that they can implement adaptation and mitigation strategies, ensuring that local communities are well prepared to face climate challenges; and
- Creating ambitious political agreements with other countries to combat climate change.

We demand our active inclusion in the policy-making and decisions-making that will shape our future and call for government action to be proportionate to the climate emergency, the impacts of climate change and the unbearable costs of inaction.

We know that another world is possible. A world where everyone can live in harmony with nature and with each other. We are the change we want to see. We are the climate manifesto of the children and teenagers of Cabo Verde!

Made in Praia, on the 20th of November 2023

(Signatures of all PIJ members attached)