

NATIONAL YOUTH CLIMATE STATEMENT

September 13, 2024



Local Conference of Youth Qazaqstan
Nazarbayev University, Astana

PREAMBLE

The Republic of Qazaqstan is a landlocked country of forest-steppe, steppe, semi-arid and desert climate zones. It has one of the lowest population densities in the world, and its economy is dominated by a large minerals sector. Geographical and economic features make the country vulnerable to climate change. Temperatures in Qazaqstan are projected to rise at a faster rate than globally with the average annual air warming of 0.33 °C [for](#) every ten years. The alarming figures underscore the urgent need for climate action, and the youth is ready to contribute with determination.

The Local Conference of Youth Qazaqstan 2024 took place in Astana on September 13 and brought together over 100 young voices from all the regions across the country, united by a shared commitment to combating climate change and ensuring a sustainable future for our nation and the world. The key collaboration areas included 1) water resources and climate change, 2) just transition and energy exchange, 3) active climate action and careers in sustainability, 4) climate negotiations and diplomacy. Following active discussions, we crafted a vision that encompasses our commitments to innovation, sustainability, and equality. We believe in our capacity as a country to consider the proposed measures.

We call for youth empowerment and the urge to take meaningful actions.



ENSURING WATER RESOURCES SECURITY

Qazaqstan faces the challenges of shallowing lakes and rivers, dependency on transboundary water resources and neighboring countries, loss of biodiversity, and the respective problems in the socio-economic sector. Scarcity and low quality of water resources can slow down the economic development of a country and diminish the well-being of its population. 55% of children in Kazakhstan are already exposed to water scarcity. The deficit of water resources can lead to economic losses of 1.3 percent of GDP per year.

1. We urge the water management reform to increase transparency and engagement of the local population with possible establishment of the river basin organizations and shift to a basin model of approaching water resources. For example, we believe in the importance of engaging population and youth in the finalization of the new Water Code.
2. We urge the private sector and public organizations (including pre-schools, schools, universities and hospitals) to invest in and support the infrastructure development focused on disaster prevention for minimization of flooding consequences, water loss, and to be oriented on water saving technologies.
3. We recommend centralization, enhanced support and digitalization of data of research institutes for modernization of aquatic ecosystems. These centers are the pillar of efficient and sustainable management and consumption of water resources in agriculture, industry and households.
4. We call for enhanced cooperation in water diplomacy and increased engagement of young professionals in regional negotiations, and establish a hub for all youth initiatives oriented on water and climate oriented issues.
5. We call for establishment of local initiatives to monitor the quality of water in the basins and mobilize the consumers.



TRANSITIONING TO RENEWABLE ENERGY

Qazaqstan adopted the [Strategy](#) on achieving carbon neutrality by 2060 and recognizes the need for phased withdrawal of the economy from coal dependence. As of today, there are 148 [operating](#) renewable energy facilities with a total installed capacity of 2903,7 MW in the country. Political and socio-economic conditions are required to further diversify the energy mix and ensure fair implementation of the energy transition.

1. We recommend development of energy communities that unite local businesses and owners of residential apartment buildings to jointly generate, share and consume clean energy. We urge the government to overview the project of energy communities and support it legally, administratively and technically. Engagement of schools and universities is crucial to contribute towards learning and practicing energy-efficient behavior and stimulating the relevant infrastructural changes.
2. We recommend launching retrofit grant programs for multifamily house residential buildings oriented to rooftop solar installation. The government shall consider renewal of energy passports of the buildings and introducing the Virtual net metering mechanism.
3. We call for decentralized and micro energy production models to popularize the solar and wind energy sources, considering the difficulties with expanding and integrating renewable energy into the energy system.
4. We urge the government to take a holistic approach in the planned construction of the Atomic Energy Station. Evaluating the needs of the population and monitoring the quality of the project is key to sustainable development of nuclear energy in the country.
5. We recognize the necessity of creating a favorable legal investment environment for realization of a more ambitious transition from the current energy system.

ADDRESSING FOOD SECURITY AND SUPPORTING AGRICULTURE

Changes in average annual temperatures in Central Asia by 2050 will exceed 15-20%, leading to more severe seasonal droughts. In the absence of adequate adaptation, spring wheat yields in Qazaqstan are projected to decline by 50% by 2050s due to higher temperatures and reduced soil moisture. There is a threat of irreparable damage to agriculture, the economy and hunger in the countries of the region overall, with the poorest and most marginalized communities falling most vulnerable.

1. We call for support of the regions that experience and are projected to harshly face the consequences of droughts, land degradation, decline of fish populations, and scarcity of water.
2. We call for investment in climate adaptation projects focused on agricultural regions of the country. There is a need for educational programs directed at farmers and village communities to avoid the food production crisis. We recognize the imperative need of research and innovation in driving the agricultural sector towards more sustainable practices.
3. We recommend analysis of supply and demand for animal- and plant-based agriculture to evaluate the sustainability of production rates and develop a system to satisfy the needs and cut on considerable emissions from the food chain.



ENCOURAGING CLIMATE ACTION AND MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION



The youth stand at the forefront of the climate crisis, recognizing that the decisions made today will shape the world we inherit tomorrow. We commit to fostering a sustainable future, contributing with action.

1. We demand increased engagement of youth in discussion and realization stages of climate policies. Young leaders should have decision-making roles on local and national levels, meaningfully integrating innovation and ambition in environmental strategies and legal projects.
2. We call for support of climate startups, business projects and green technologies for national and regional influence. Funding these entrepreneurial initiatives creates necessary competition and opens prospects for innovative solutions. We also highlight the

need for ITs development, climate monitoring, modeling the possible scenarios, and developing decisions for minimization of consequences and adaptation practices.

3. We believe in supremacy of quality climate education for all youth. Development of school and university standards and curriculum, as well as pre- and in-service training for teachers, production of multimedia communication about consequences of natural disasters, sustainable development in intersection with political and economic institutions are a must for general awareness about the climate crisis and interest towards its resolution by future leaders. We believe in life-long learning on climate and sustainability issues, accessible by all generations.
4. We propose development of a “Youth Climate Ambassadors” program in local communities to encourage learning, networking and empowerment among youth from rural and distant regions. We believe that creation of the Local and National level Youth Councils on climate action is urgently needed, so that young people are able to take part in the relevant climate and environmental dialogue contributing to the decisions.
5. We recognize the importance of youth in greenification of cities and fight against air pollution, including participation in activities from tree planting, environmental quality monitoring to modernization of urban infrastructure.
6. We believe in the exchange of ideas and encourage youth participation in climate initiatives of local, national, regional, and global levels. In addition to experience exchange, it is vital to strengthen the state's contribution to the international climate agenda.
7. We ask the Government to sign the [Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate](#) and start its implementation.

CONCLUSION

We envision a future where economies are powered by renewable energy, biodiversity thrives, and all communities are protected from the devastating impacts of climate change. Sustainable water management, just energy transition, food security and climate action co-led by youth must be at the core of this transformation.

We want our statement suggestions to be considered by the year 2030 and believe in intergenerational cooperation, where the experience of today's leaders meets the vision and innovation of the youth, working together to tackle the climate crisis in an inclusive and comprehensive way.



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