

S'pore youth make 18 suggestions to boost climate efforts

Group's statement covers areas such as emissions, energy, corporate responsibility

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In Glasgow

As young people took to the streets in Glasgow to mark Youth Day at the COP26 climate summit, a group in Singapore also released yesterday a statement with 18 recommendations on how the Republic can be made more liveable for future generations.

An Urgent Call From Singaporean Youth On The Environ-

mental Crisis was co-authored by six youth-led organisations, including the Singapore Climate Rally and FiTree, as well as 10 individuals from different sectors of society.

They include marine biologists Pavarne Shantti and Sam Shu Qin; co-founder of environmental group LepakInSG Ho Xiang Tian; indigenous culture and environmental advocate Firdaus Sani; as well as environmental communicator Woo Qiyun, who runs the Instagram account @theweirdandwild.

It was the first collaboration by environmental and climate youth organisations of varied interests.

Their recommendations spanned six areas: emissions, nature, energy, corporate responsibility, community empowerment, and the economy and people.

One key recommendation was for Singapore to set itself a bolder emissions target to reach peak emissions before 2025 instead of the current target of 2030.

The earlier the timeline, the earlier the country must take steps to bring down the amount of greenhouse gases it produces, even as the economy continues to grow.

The youth say the amount of planet-warming emissions Singapore produces should reach net

zero by 2050, in line with recommendations by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Singapore now plans to reach this milestone "as soon as viable in the second half of the century".

The IPCC has said global emissions should reach net zero by mid-century for the world to stand a better chance of avoiding harsher climate impacts such as more extreme weather.

On nature, the young people urged the Government to protect remaining natural habitats such as the Clementi Forest, and to ensure that nature conservation efforts are grounded in science.

Natural habitats can serve as nature-based climate solutions, able to take in carbon and protect the country's coastlines. "Mature habitats are much better at providing these solutions, and destroying them would be counterproductive to our climate mitigation and adaptation efforts," they said.

The signatories of the statement also called for more governmental engagement with youth communities in an "expansive and strategic manner".

"The Government can reach out to energy-focused youth groups in Singapore or create initiatives to get youth involved in our energy transition conversations and long-term plans," they said.

The statement has since Thursday been endorsed by 93 individuals and 75 organisations and entities. They include Associate Professor Jason Lee from the National University of Singapore's Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and the Nature Society (Singapore).

"While we acknowledge that the Government has released various initiatives and made progress on various environmental issues over the years, we know our actions are still not yet where they need to be," said the co-authors.

Minister for Sustainability and the Environment Grace Fu said she was heartened that youth in Singapore are advocating sustainable action. "Their activism and willingness to drive the change they want is important in advancing our sustainability and climate agenda," she said in a Facebook post yesterday.

Ms Fu said the Government has set the broader policy direction and goals, and will lead sustainability efforts across the public sector.

"However, sustainability cannot be achieved by the Government alone," she added. "I encourage our youths to continue their advocacy for greater responsibilities all around, including from businesses, communities and individuals themselves."

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Activists at the Fridays for Future student march against climate change yesterday, on the sidelines of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, Scotland. Meanwhile, a group in Singapore also made their voices heard by releasing a statement on how the Republic can be made more liveable for future generations. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

