



WORLD YMCA - POSITION PAPER: ENVIRONMENT

The YMCA believes that:

- *every young person should live in a sustainable environment;*
- *we should be an example of sustainable practices and respect for the environment;*
- *young people should be given opportunities to learn and advocate on environmental issues;*
- *every young person has the ability to contribute to reducing environmental degradation and its consequences.*

Background

Environmental degradation, sustainable development and the regulation of human impact on our planet will likely be the greatest challenges we face in the 21st century. The earth is the greatest resource that young people have yet we are destroying it.

Climate change, frequent storms, floods, droughts and unsustainable ways of production and consumption; none of these are problems of the future. They are already affecting young people, especially in vulnerable countries, in all dimensions of their lives, and will continue to do so.

Without sustainable environmental practices the situation will not change. The world will continue to get worse for present and future generations of all ages. We cannot afford to be moving backwards or even stay where we are.

The YMCA is, at heart, a youth organisation. We have the knowledge, reach and experience to help young people transform their reality—and our world—through empowerment.

Our position

We, the YMCA, are committed to protecting the creation and empowering young people. This is about who we are and is a call inspired by our Christian and ecumenical identity.

Therefore, we commit ourselves and urge the international community, governments, businesses and the civil society at all levels to:



- Set, commit and be accountable to ambitious goals in reducing environmental degradation and putting people's right to live in a sustainable environment at the forefront of any decision. ***It is possible and necessary to do more than we do today.***
- Allocate the necessary resources for projects and initiatives that will reduce our human impact on the planet. ***It is possible and necessary to do more than we do today.***
- Strengthen solidarity amongst nations in order to reduce the impact of unsustainable practices with special emphasis in vulnerable areas of the world. ***It is possible and necessary to do more than we do today.***
- Be examples of sustainable practices. ***It is possible and necessary to do more than we do today.***
- Involve young people in meaningful ways in finding solutions and in decision-making processes that have an impact on our shared future. ***It is possible and necessary to do more than we do today.***

Our call is a call to all those concerned about our collective future on this planet, but especially to all young people, because the YMCA believe you have the potential and the ability to change the course of history.