

YOUTH DECLARATION: GLOBAL LAND FORUM YOUTH

Defining a Future with Secure Land Rights for Youth

We, the young land rights activists gathered with the support and facilitation of the International Land Coalitionⁱ in Jordan from 21st to 23rd of May 2022, join our voices and efforts together to commit ourselves to seek joint solutions to the problems faced by the youth in all their diversityⁱⁱ, in the world in owning, accessing, governing and stewardship of land.

With our strong commitment and vibrant energy, we are dedicated to creating a just future for all, in which land rights of youth, women, Indigenous Peoples, afro-descendants, pastoralists, fisher folks, family farmers, peasants, landless people and other local communities are recognised, secured and respected.

As the youth, we recognise the need for working together across national, regional, generational, social, economic and any other boundaries and barriers and reclaim our space. We recognise the immense collective power of the youth to shape and create a sustainable future, finding solutions to the global problems confronted by all.

It is in this spirit that we set forth this Declarationⁱⁱⁱ, with our shared understanding of the problems faced by the youth in owning, accessing, controlling and having stewardship of land.

We live in an era where:

Climate Crisis

- The rampant effects of the climate crisis deprive opportunities for the youth in engaging with the land and hinder our ability and ambitions to own, access, control and stewardship of land, with a long lasting impact on livelihoods and food systems.
- Collective and individual land tenure insecurity among the youth in the climate crisis make them further vulnerable contributing to youth marginalisation, migration and disenchantment, thus requiring an intersectional approach to climate action.

Poor Land Governance

- Poor governance, lack of legal and policy frameworks, and corruption lead to youth often being excluded in decision-making processes in national and traditional spheres, marginalising leadership, management and access to resources.
- Due to lack of political will, laws are not properly implemented to assure young peoples' meaningful participation, especially women, in land governance to ensure their ownership, self-determination, access, control and stewardship of land.
- Lack of freedom of association and assembly, hinders the active engagement of youth in the people centred land governance.

Violent conflict

- Youth across the world, particularly in rural areas are confronted with poverty, structural discrimination, socio-cultural violence, and lack of protection of community land.
- Youth from Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendants, peasants and local communities are subject to forced displacement and abuse by large-scale extractive industries and exploitation of natural resources, with disproportionate adverse impact on young women.
- Young land rights activists defending their land and territories are subject to persecution, imprisonment, discrimination, racism and harassment resulting in torture, forced disappearance, death and displacement depriving their land rights.

Inequality and Injustice

- Growing inequality and injustice in the world limits youth from accessing land and natural resources, as well as productive assets and financial resources, which inhibits their ability to engage in agriculture, innovation, conservation and restoration.
- Colonial, post and neo-colonial, and neo-liberal based systems lead to profit driven land governance, rather than community or people led governance.
- Unequal access to education, information, and training, prevent young people from engaging with land.

We meet in a region where

Young people are affected by the occupation such as Palestine, climate crisis, conflicts, and lack of opportunities based on traditional social norms.

In order to achieve a paradigm shift to secure land rights of the youth:

We look forward to upcoming Conference of State Parties 27 (COP 27) with high expectations. The COP27 should recognise role of land rights which support traditional knowledge and practices in tackling the climate crisis, enable young land rights activists; devise a transparent and accountable mechanism to disburse the funding agreed at COP26 targeting the most vulnerable youth and create a pathway for a just transition to net-zero which delivers youth access and ownership for sustainable livelihood.

We demand: active and meaningful youth participation and inclusive decision making, effective implementation of the existing laws and public policy which benefit youth and abolishing discriminatory practices.

We reject land corruption including nepotism and favouritism and demand for transparency and accountability, using tools such as social audits, moving beyond promises.

We demand a just share in land and natural resources, particularly for youth, women, Indigenous Peoples, afro-descendants, pastoralists, fisher folks, family farmers, peasants, landless people and other local communities.

We urge access to information, training and education, integration of technology and digitalisation and promotion of agro-ecological practices in land governance and agriculture as a means to promote meaningful youth participation. Resource allocation is key in this regard.

We demand urgent actions for the safety of Indigenous Peoples, land and environmental defenders and their right to freedom of speech, association and assembly and the liberation of political prisoners related to land and territories.

As the present and future youth leaders of the world:

We commit to leadership in regional and global processes tackling climate crisis. We claim our space and will take active responsibility to bring land as a key consideration in climate mitigation and adaptation.

Building on the power created at the GLF Youth, we expect the organisers of the GLF Youth to broaden and strengthen our existing youth networks, mobilise resources and draw commonalities across the region to set strategies and see their implementation until we meet again in the next GLF Youth. To assure this we ask for mandatory youth representation on the ILC council.

We work together to facilitate peacebuilding and reconciliation, presenting land rights of youth as a key pathway out of violence and conflict. We commit to make every possible effort to bring global solidarity for the struggles of our peers in the MENA region, against social injustice, occupation and climate crisis and create opportunities for them.

We are stronger together!

ⁱ The ILC consists of 301 civil society and multilateral organisations from 81 countries in Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, Middle East and North America.

ⁱⁱ Throughout the declaration we refer to youth in all their diversity

ⁱⁱⁱ The drafting committee of this declaration is composed of following members: Kantuta Conde from Red de Jóvenes Indígenas de América Latina y el Caribe, Juan David Caro from Ypard, Samke Mkhize from Association for Rural Advancement, Judeon Young from Centre pour l'Environnement et le Développement, George Gambadatoun from Youth Initiative for Land in Africa, Moshin Khan from Ekta Foundation Trust, Krishna Khisa from Kapaeeng Foundation, Magnus Davidson from Community Land Scotland, Monica Usai - LIBERA CONTRO LE MAFIE, Rahaf Rifai from Agricultural Development Association and Areej Khalid from DANA, Jordan.