

Climate Action Simulation: Climate Justice Hawks



To: Chief Negotiators for Climate Justice Hawks
Subject: Preparation for the Climate Action Summit

Welcome to the Climate Action Summit. You and leaders from all relevant stakeholders have been invited by the UN Secretary-General to work together to successfully address climate change. In the invitation, the Secretary-General [noted](#) that: “The climate emergency is a race we are losing, but it is a race we can win...The best science...tells us that any temperature rise above 1.5°C will lead to major and irreversible damage to the ecosystems that support us...But science also tells us it is not too late. We can do it...But it will require fundamental transformations in all aspects of society—how we grow food, use land, fuel our transport and power our economies...By acting together, we will leave no one behind.”

The goal of the summit is to create a plan to limit global warming to less than 2°C [3.6°F] above pre-industrial levels and to strive for 1.5°C [2.7°F], the international targets formally recognized in the Paris Climate Agreement. The [scientific evidence](#) is clear: warming above this limit will yield catastrophic and irreversible impacts threatening the health, prosperity, and lives of people in all nations.

Your group includes large established environmental organizations and newer youth-led movements, both of which have engaged millions of people worldwide. Your group also includes representatives from the most vulnerable communities, such as small island nations and indigenous peoples who are on the front lines of climate change and whose ability to thrive or even survive depends on limiting global warming to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels. You speak for the future, the poor, and the most vulnerable people in the world.

Your policy priorities are listed below. You can, however, propose, or block, any available policy.

- 1. Limit warming to well below 2°C and as close to 1.5°C as possible.** A 2°C world will still deliver severe impacts for today’s young people and vulnerable populations, who have contributed the least to climate change but will suffer more from extreme weather disasters, increasing floods, droughts, heat waves and public health crises. Achieving the strongest possible agreement to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as soon as possible will mitigate the impacts on those in developing nations, indigenous populations, the poor and young people.
- 2. Get to 100% renewable energy as soon as possible through a high carbon price, subsidies for renewables, and taxes on fossil fuels.** Emissions from fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas) are the biggest contributor to climate change. The world needs to cut fossil fuel extraction immediately, and keep the carbon in the ground. Economists agree that pricing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions to reflect their environmental and social costs (well over \$50 per ton of CO₂) is the best way to reduce global emissions. You may also consider subsidizing renewables and/or taxing and regulating coal, oil, and gas.
- 3. Reduce deforestation.** The world’s forests are in severe decline. Act to protect the remaining forests and the people who live in or rely on them, including indigenous populations. Protecting forests also protects freshwater supplies, natural resources, and biodiversity.

4. **Beware of efforts that threaten global food production and land rights.** Large scale implementation of policies such as afforestation, biofuels, and carbon removal methods like bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS) will require large areas of land that could threaten food production and push indigenous and poor people from their homes. Consider the land required for any given policy.
5. **Lobby the other groups for strong action.** As independent activists, you are not beholden to vested interests. But, you don't have much power compared to governments and the fossil fuel industry. The fossil fuel industry will try to marginalize you and the people you represent as naive and ill-informed. They will try to cast doubt on climate science by emphasizing uncertainty, following the same playbook the tobacco industry used successfully for many years to [confuse the public and delay action](#). Use whatever nonviolent tactics you feel are appropriate to get the attention of those in power. Consider peaceful demonstrations and passionate speeches. Take the moral high ground and remind people what you are fighting for—a world in which every child and every person can thrive.

Additional Considerations

The climate movement is growing. The scientific consensus is clear: climate change is happening now, it is caused primarily by human activities, and if unchecked it will have devastating effects on our prosperity, health and lives. Young people today have the most to lose. They were born into a fossil fuel economy they didn't build but that threatens to leave them an impoverished and dangerous world, a world without the rich diversity of plant and animal life past generations enjoyed. Climate change is fundamentally an issue of justice. The sooner all businesses, consumers and nations cut emissions, the more likely we all are to succeed, and the easier the transition will be.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions will bring public health and social benefits, including improved air and water quality, greener cities, energy and food security, better health, new jobs, and greater resilience. Limiting warming to 1.5 °C, rather than 2 °C, would save more than 100 million people from water shortages, up to 2 billion people from dangerous heat waves, and many plant and animal species from climate change extinction risk. Actions to achieve these climate outcomes would likely generate accumulated global benefits of more than \$20 trillion while alleviating global economic inequality. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) makes it clear that such a transformation is “[possible within the laws of physics and chemistry](#),” and describes scenarios that can accomplish this goal with today's technologies (<https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>).

The effects of climate change will not be uniform. The great injustice is that the people who have contributed the least to global warming will suffer the most and have the fewest resources and infrastructure to adapt. The most vulnerable regions of the world include Sub-Saharan Africa, South and Southeast Asia, Latin America, and island nations in the Pacific and around the world. Many developing countries rely heavily on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and tourism. Even within developed nations, their poor, farmers, and other vulnerable populations bear the brunt of climate impacts.

The world faces a challenge of unparalleled magnitude. Good luck. The future depends on your success.