

Our Voice on Climate Change Youth Forum Session



Climate change. We have heard about it many times - in the media, the news, even in our national policies.

My name is Azmeel, and I am standing here today to represent the youths, the new generation of Sabah.

Who are we, you may ask - we are your children, your grandchildren, your colleagues, your acquaintances.

In western countries, youths have been very vocal with regards to climate change and have proved to be prominent figures and inspiration to many of us.

These youths have mobilised thousands of young people around the world for climate strikes and actions. But don't forget that we also have youths in Sabah that have been making great impacts at grassroot level through climate change advocacy and initiatives. Knowing the fact that youths are taking climate change seriously, I am here today to represent them, to share OUR voice on climate change in Sabah.

We, the youths of Sabah, are no exception. We have been watching our Earth suffer. Witnessing the promise of a bright and safe future for our generation and the next, diminishes before our very own eyes. Watching people's selfish acts ruining our natural treasures. Flash floods may come anytime, washing away our kampungs, destroying our homes and childhood memories. Rising temperatures, affecting the health of the most vulnerable groups, the children and the elderly, as well as compromising our education.

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We ARE aware about these issues. And we HAVE been taking actions, even if it is at a smaller and more humble scale. But, we can only do so much by ourselves. There is one thing, one thing that we believe can change everything! It is - TOGETHERNESS. We need as much support and involvement from the government, private sector, NGOs, teachers, students, public and everyone across borders to take actions. We need to work together, stronger and smarter! Only by working in unity can we mitigate the climate crisis.

Please listen, we also want to be given the opportunity. A chance to voice our opinions and suggestions in mitigating this crisis, to take action against climate change. And most importantly, we want to play a bigger role, to be involved in programmes and decision making processes related to climate actions. We no longer have the luxury of time to sit and merely discuss plans. This is a problem that we are facing now and it will indeed be a much greater challenge for generations to come.

To the people who have the power to make decisions - we urge you to take tangible action now. Climate change knows no border, its impacts are evident, and Sabah is no exception from experiencing it. We - the Children and Young People of Sabah will inherit this land from you. It is our given responsibility to continue to care, protect and conserve our natural resources and ecosystems, our rich biodiversity, our culture and heritage. We don't want the future generations to look at our beautiful and blessed State only through Google images or history books. This is why we believe we need to take actions against climate change now!

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Leading towards this conference today, I and many other Sabahan youths shared our opinions and voices to the organisers on the actions that need to be taken, now! Therefore, I would like you to please consider:

- 1. Investing and upscaling climate change action programmes at schools, within communities, and among private and government sectors. Grants and funds should be available specifically to support the creation and implementation of climate change action related programmes.**
- 2. Strengthening the knowledge and skills of children and youth by increasing environmental education, outreach and awareness efforts on climate change mitigation, adaptation and sustainable lifestyle.**
- 3. Providing a platform for children and youth to voice their ideas. This could be in the form of forming Sabah Youth Climate Action Group by engaging the youth across Sabah with expertise, scientists and policy makers and taking into account their ideas and vision on possible climate change action.**
- 4. Policy makers need to take urgent actions as climate change is no longer a prediction but it is happening now and in the state of emergency. Please take the climate change crisis seriously and do not neglect our voices.**

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5. Incorporate sustainable development in State planning and shifting towards green facilities and eco-friendly materials in schools, public and even in the office of private and government.

6. Encourage knowledge sharing between the scientific and research community, relevant government agencies with the public.

Finally, to everyone here today, climate change is real. Impacts are being felt here and across the world. We may lose more land, more resources, more biodiversity and maybe more lives.

And to my fellow youths. Let's continue to work together, work harder and become stronger. This is our land, this is our lives. We are the ones who will live in this world and bear the consequences if no actions are to be taken immediately. We will wait no longer and will fight together towards combating climate change.

In HOPE for a better FUTURE.

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