About FIMCAP

The International Federation of Catholic Parochial Youth Movements (FIMCAP) brings together millions of young people through 34 member organisations in 29 countries across four continents. FIMCAP has been actively involved in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process, including the Conference of the Parties (COP) and its subsidiary bodies, to ensure that the voices, knowledge and priorities of young people shape global climate discussions. Young people, particularly those from the Global South, must be recognised not simply as a group affected by climate change, but as leaders, experts and equal partners in designing and implementing climate solutions.

Our climate advocacy is informed by the experiences of young people and the communities they belong to, as well as the principles of the Paris Agreement and Catholic Social Teaching. We believe that climate action must protect human dignity, promote solidarity, care for creation and recognise our responsibility to future generations. Inspired by Laudato Si' and Laudate Deum, FIMCAP calls for practical, science-based and equitable responses to the climate crisis. This commitment is closely linked to FIMCAP's priority of youth well-being: children and young people need safe, healthy and supportive environments in which they can learn, participate, build relationships and flourish.

Climate change is not only an environmental or political issue; it is already affecting the social fabric of local communities and the everyday spaces in which children and young people come together. Extreme weather, displacement, livelihood insecurity and damage to local infrastructure can disrupt education, community activities and the safe spaces provided by parish halls, youth groups and other community organisations. These impacts can weaken social connections, increase pressure on families and undermine young people's physical, emotional and social well-being. As the climate crisis deepens, COP31 must be a turning point from promises to implementation. Governments must deliver stronger adaptation measures, accessible and predictable climate finance, and timely support for loss and damage. They must also ensure that the transition to a low-carbon economy does not leave workers, young people, low-income households and vulnerable communities behind.

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FIMCAP calls on governments and other decision-makers at COP31 to place people and their dignity at the centre of climate decisions, turn existing commitments into measurable action, and give young people meaningful opportunities to influence negotiations and implementation. Young people must be recognised as rights-holders, knowledge-holders and partners in decision-making, with young people from the Global South participating on an equal footing in shaping the policies that affect their communities and futures. This requires more than inviting youth to speak: it means providing meaningful access to negotiations, resources, information and decision-making processes.

Our position focuses on five thematic areas: Loss and Damage, Just Transition, Climate Finance, Adaptation, and Human Rights. Across these areas, FIMCAP urges Parties to adopt outcomes that are fair, ambitious and responsive to the needs and priorities of those most affected. These priorities are connected to youth well-being: climate action should protect the health, safety, livelihoods, relationships and opportunities of children and young people, while strengthening the communities and institutions that support them. We call on world leaders to leave COP31 with clear commitments, adequate resources and practical measures that communities can feel in their daily lives. For FIMCAP, climate action is not only a political responsibility; it is a moral duty to protect our common home and safeguard the future of generations to come.

Our guiding principles

- Human dignity and the common good: climate policy should improve people's lives and protect the conditions needed for communities to flourish.
- Solidarity and climate justice: countries and communities with greater capacity and historical responsibility should provide support in line with agreed UNFCCC principles.
- Care for creation and integral ecology: social, economic and environmental impacts must be considered together.
- Intergenerational justice: decisions made today must not undermine the rights and opportunities of future generations.
- Participation and accountability: affected communities, young people and civil society must be able to influence decisions and monitor implementation

Loss and Damage

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Climate impacts are already causing losses that cannot be fully prevented through emissions reduction or adaptation alone. These include damage to homes, infrastructure and livelihoods, as well as losses involving culture, community ties, biodiversity, ancestral lands and other values that cannot be measured only in money. Such impacts can also disrupt the community networks and safe spaces that support children and young people, including parish halls, youth groups and local organisations. The resulting loss of social connection, security and opportunities has direct consequences for youth well-being. Article 8 of the Paris Agreement recognises the importance of averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage, including from extreme events and slow-onset events. Our position is that Loss and Damage must receive attention and support appropriate to the scale of harm. It should not be treated simply as another name for adaptation: adaptation reduces risk, while Loss and Damage also responds to impacts that remain or have already occurred.

Our asks for COP31

- Support the development and resourcing of the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage, including accessible procedures for vulnerable developing countries and communities.
- Establish clear, simplified and accessible access arrangements for the Fund, including practical support for countries, local institutions and community organisations with limited technical capacity. Funding procedures should not exclude volunteer-driven youth organisations and grassroots groups because they lack the staff, time or resources to navigate complex applications and reporting requirements. Support should reach locally relevant initiatives that help communities prepare for, respond to and recover from climate impacts.
- Ensure that funding approaches recognise slow-onset impacts such as sea-level rise, salinisation, drought and ecosystem loss, alongside sudden disasters.
- Develop approaches to recognise non-economic losses, including cultural heritage, Indigenous knowledge, community cohesion, health and ecosystem integrity.
- Strengthen coordination between the Fund, the Warsaw International Mechanism and the Santiago Network, while avoiding duplication and keeping affected communities involved.
- Improve climate-risk information, early-warning systems and preparedness, without making access to post-impact support conditional on perfect data or complex applications. Ensure that affected communities, including youth-led and volunteer-driven organisations, can access support through proportionate and practical procedures.

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Climate Finance

Climate finance is useful only when it reaches the countries, institutions and communities that need it and can be used effectively. The issue is not just the total amount pledged: access conditions, predictability, the balance between mitigation and adaptation, the terms of finance and the ability to prepare projects all affect what finance achieves. Our position is that climate finance should enable action, not create additional burdens for people already facing climate impacts. Developing countries and local organisations need support to turn priorities into workable projects, access funds and report on results without being overwhelmed by complex procedures. These barriers can be especially difficult for volunteer-driven youth organisations, which often lack dedicated staff and the institutional capacity required by existing funding systems. FIMCAP therefore calls for accessible, proportionate funding that enables youth groups and grassroots organisations to implement practical initiatives that strengthen local resilience and youth well-being.

Our asks for COP31

- Improve transparency about climate-finance commitments, disbursements, recipients, terms and outcomes.
- Simplify application, accreditation and reporting processes while maintaining strong safeguards and accountability. Introduce proportionate, low-barrier funding windows for grassroots and volunteer-driven organisations, including youth organisations, so that limited administrative capacity does not prevent them from accessing climate finance.
- Provide project-preparation grants, technical assistance and institutional capacity-building so local priorities can become fundable programmes.
- Increase the accessibility and predictability of adaptation finance and support for Loss and Damage.
- Prioritise grant-based and other non-debt-creating finance for highly vulnerable countries and communities where debt would undermine development.
- Strengthen direct access and locally led approaches, including meaningful participation by women, young people, Indigenous Peoples and community organisations. Recognise youth-led organisations as partners in designing, delivering and monitoring climate action, and provide accessible resources that enable their participation.

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- Assess finance by results for people and ecosystems, not only by the sums announced or approved.

Just Transition

A just transition is broader than changing the energy system. It concerns how societies change their economies and public services while protecting rights, livelihoods and access to essential services. For many communities in the Global South, poverty reduction, energy access, food security, decent work and resilience are inseparable from climate action. FIMCAP supports a whole-of-society and whole-of-economy approach that includes formal and informal workers, smallholder farmers, care workers, young people, local businesses and communities affected by economic restructuring. Young people, including those in the Global South, should be recognised as equal contributors with relevant knowledge and experience, not merely as vulnerable groups requiring protection. A just transition must also safeguard the community spaces, relationships and opportunities that contribute to youth well-being. Climate policy should create decent work and reduce inequality, not transfer transition costs to low-income households.

Our asks for COP31

- Operationalise the Belém Action Mechanism for Just Transition with a clear mandate, practical work programme, transparent governance and meaningful participation by affected groups and observer constituencies.
- Ensure the mechanism supports international cooperation, technical assistance, capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and access to grant-based, non-debt-creating finance and technology transfer. Such support should also be accessible to local and youth-led organisations, including volunteer-driven groups, through simplified procedures and proportionate administrative requirements.
- Promote national just-transition plans that cover energy, transport, agriculture, industry, waste, care work and the informal economy.
- Protect workers' rights, decent work, social dialogue, freedom of association, collective bargaining and social protection for people affected by economic change.
- Make energy access and affordability central to transition plans, with particular attention to rural and underserved communities.

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- Support training and education that help young people enter secure, decent jobs in climate-resilient and low-emission sectors. Ensure young people, including those from the Global South, participate as equal partners in identifying skills needs, shaping training programmes, and deciding the future of work.
- Ensure the costs and benefits of transition measures are fairly distributed and that essential services remain affordable.

Human Rights and climate action

Climate change threatens rights connected to life, health, food, water, housing, culture and a healthy environment. Climate solutions can also cause harm when projects exclude communities, restrict access to land or water, or fail to provide remedy for damage. Human rights protections should therefore apply across climate policies, finance and technology deployment. FIMCAP's position is that Climate action must not reproduce patterns of exploitation or inequality. The need for renewable energy and transition minerals does not justify land dispossession, unsafe working conditions, pollution or violations of Indigenous Peoples' rights. Strong safeguards and access to information, participation and justice are essential.

Our asks for COP31

- Integrate human rights, labour rights, gender equality and Indigenous Peoples' rights into the design and implementation of climate policies.
- Require meaningful consultation and, where applicable under international standards, free, prior and informed consent for projects affecting Indigenous Peoples.
- Strengthen safeguards and accessible grievance and remedy processes for climate-finance projects and cooperative approaches under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.
- Promote transparency and independent monitoring of social and environmental impacts in transition-mineral supply chains and low-carbon infrastructure.
- Protect environmental and human-rights defenders, including young people, from threats, violence and criminalisation.
- Ensure climate-related relocation and disaster response respect dignity, cultural ties, access to services and the rights of affected communities

Adaptation

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As the UNFCCC moves towards COP31, adaptation negotiations are focused on operationalising the 59 Belém Adaptation Indicators under the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), resolving outstanding questions around their technical implementation, and ensuring that adaptation finance is adequate, accessible and accountable. As young people and faith-based organisations such as FIMCAP, we should advocate for a people-centred and justice-based approach to adaptation that prioritises the rights, knowledge and leadership of vulnerable communities, children, young people, women, Indigenous Peoples and informal sector workers. Young people should not be viewed only as recipients of support: they are already organising, developing solutions and contributing expertise in their communities. Adaptation should protect the social infrastructure and safe spaces that sustain community life and youth well-being. Our asks include accessible and predictable adaptation finance, meaningful youth participation in decision-making, locally led adaptation, protection of ecosystems and livelihoods, and indicators that measure real improvements in people's lives rather than progress on paper alone.

Our asks for COP31

- Strengthen adaptation implementation and accountability by operationalising the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) and its 59 Belém Adaptation Indicators to reflect the realities and priorities of vulnerable communities.
- Scale up accessible and predictable adaptation finance, particularly for locally led initiatives in developing countries, ensuring resources reach the communities most affected by climate change.
- Ensure meaningful and resourced youth participation in adaptation planning, implementation and monitoring. Recognise children and young people, particularly those from the Global South, as leaders and equal partners, with particular attention to the inclusion of young women, Indigenous Peoples and informal sector workers.
- Invest in community-led adaptation and ecosystem protection through climate education, early-warning systems, ecosystem restoration and resilient livelihoods. Strengthen partnerships among governments, faith-based organisations, youth groups and local communities, and support the community spaces and networks that contribute to the safety, belonging and well-being of children and young people.

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See Antonio Yayrator Korkuvi: aykorkuvi@gmail.com for further discussions on the position papers

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