

CONCEPT NOTE
for the Plenary Session
at the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention
on Climate Change (COP28)
«Empowering Futures: Youth Engagement and Sustainability»

Date: 08/12/2023 (4:45pm – 6:00 pm)

Location: CAREC-Central Asia Pavilion (MA19G3), Blue Zone COP28
UNFCCC, Dubai Expo

1 INTRODUCTION

This open session will be a fishbowl discussion, concentrating on the barriers and opportunities for environmental education and youth engagement in Central Asia. The discussion will include ecological educators and youth from Central Asia and beyond, evolving into small group breakouts for collaborative dialogue and networking. The primary objective of this session is to share experiences on successful national youth programs and to promote international support for Green University. These discussion points will be taken on to the Climate Forum in March.

As of 2020, the combined population of the four Central Asian countries stood at 68.46 million, with 16.55 million being youths, comprising 24.1% of the total population. This demographic presents a valuable opportunity for Central Asia and the global community, provided there is enough support for educational and youth-focused programs.

In Uzbekistan, the lack of emphasis on ecological education in primary school limits the groundwork for higher education in this area. Additionally, for young people choosing career paths there are concerns about job prospects after earning ecological degrees. Despite growth in these green sectors, the shortage of regional experts to educate and mentor young people in this field perpetuates a cycle of insufficient environmental expertise.

In response to these issues Uzbekistan has established the Green University which will be a regional hub for environmental research and education. However, other initiatives are needed, including green education at earlier stages of schooling, improved quality of university ecological education, greater youth engagement in environmental studies, and promoting environmental career pathways.

2 OBJECTIVES

1. Establish partnerships with international educational institutions, bringing their programs to Green University or offering advice and teaching support.
2. Promote knowledge exchange regarding successful youth engagement initiatives and environmental education at the primary school level.
3. Facilitate private partnerships for apprenticeship or training schemes for students pursuing environmental careers and schemes for young entrepreneurship.
4. Assess support for "Green Citizen of Asia" ahead of its launch at the Climate Forum.

3 DRAFT OF PLENARY SESSION

At the event, the following main topics are proposed for discussion, reflecting the key aspects youth education and inclusion:

- Successful examples of integrating climate education at a primary school level.
- Obstacles to environmental engagement for youth in Central Asia, including language barriers that limit access to environmental news and research.
- Best methods for streamlining entry to the green job industry.
- Best practices for implementing a Youth Council in Uzbekistan and the "Green Citizen of Asia" project to promote regional educational exchange.