

LCOY

SYRIA

Syrian Youth Statement



2023



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Conference of Youth in Syria has taken place in three Syrian cities (Latakia, Tartus and Damascus) 2023. LCOYs are national youth-led conferences on climate, officially endorsed by the Youth and Children's Constituency to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (YOUNGO), and have been hosted in more than 120 countries over the last nine years. However, this was the first ever LCOY held in Syria.

The event welcomed a wide variety of speakers giving space for the participants (as students, young professionals and experts, and multisectoral actors to discuss the issues related to climate change in a local context that they face daily.)

The youth of Syria suggested many solutions for the major problems that the country faces, such as pollution, political instability, economic sanctions, etc.

The Conference welcomed over 500 people, in-person, with an average age of 18 to 35 years old, and many experts, both online and in-person. The group was composed of young people from all three regions of Syria.

Four main themes, those of innovation, policy negotiations, awareness, youth commitments, and contributions to the process of implementation of the NDC Syria. Participants also conducted supplementary events and dialogues to discuss critical issues faced by their communities and presented their work, which allowed for the facilitation of knowledge sharing.



Youth statement introduction

We, the youth of Syria, assert our entitlement to a sustainable Earth and a future characterized by just transitions away from fossil fuels. We advocate for climate reparations for those most affected by the climate crisis, both within Syria and globally. Furthermore, we demand the active involvement of youth worldwide in decision-making processes related to climate change, including planning, implementation, and evaluation at various levels—multilateral, national, and local.

In light of these principles, we call for increased youth inclusivity in Syria's climate policy-making processes and emphasize the importance of a substantial youth presence within our national delegation. We implore the Syrian government to invest in programs and initiatives that empower and educate young individuals on climate change issues, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to policy discussions.

Additionally, we urge the Syrian government to endorse and support youth-led climate initiatives and projects aimed at addressing local and national environmental challenges. Recognizing the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable communities, particularly in developing nations such as African countries, we appeal to developed nations to take decisive action and bear the responsibility for climate change through emissions reductions.

We insist that developed countries commit to scaling up finance for climate-resilient infrastructures and technologies in Arab countries to mitigate potential challenges arising from resource shortages. Emphasizing the urgent need for action, we call on hesitant developed countries to promptly and decisively commit to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions.





Highlighting the significance of long-term capacity-building initiatives in African countries, we encourage increased investment in sustainability. Moreover, we stress the interconnectedness of climate change with peace and security in Arab regions, especially Syria, and recommend the establishment of bilateral and multilateral agreements between countries to manage support flow and share responsibilities.

Furthermore, we advocate for the integration of climate change considerations at all stages of peace-related policies and strategies. Urging a Water-Energy-Food approach, we emphasize its importance in ensuring food security and sustainable development, especially considering the intrinsic connection between water, energy, and food.

Encouraging the integration of this perspective into policy formulation in Syria, we call upon Arab countries to prioritize and take concrete actions to address climate-sensitive risks. Finally, we appeal to the Ministry of Health and Environment to allocate a dedicated fund for enhancing health and environmental information systems and call upon relevant representatives to create Syria's Climate Change Adaptation strategy.





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Capacity building

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We, as a youth from Syria, believe that with certain support and training, we can do incredible things, We:

- Demand the establishment of capacity-building programs run by governmental entities, international organizations, and civil society non-profits all working together through knowledge sharing and transfers of skills and expertise.
- Urge developed countries to share data openly ensuring informed decision-making and advanced research that inspire countries like ours, and to allocate a specific fund dedicated to the establishment of robust climate impact models to enable proactive planning by affected nations and to provide low approach technologies so youth got the fundamental ground to start from and aim to bridge the technological gap.
- Mandate climate change and environmental education that is interdisciplinary and based on the best available science and data across curriculums, that is accessible to all school aged children regardless of how they are schooled, and that is also inclusive of unique local, traditional and geographical contexts. We also recommend for school, college and university staff to be equipped enough so they can lead by example focusing on building a culture and behavioral norms rather than another subject in school.
- Emphasize the importance of transparent research partnerships that gather region-specific data and empower local communities through regional capacity-building programs.
- We eagerly demand founding a national database, collecting, analyzing, and monitoring systems.
- We insist on funding awareness wise local initiatives through government and international organizations.





Inclusivity in creating change

Inclusivity plays a pivotal role in driving positive change in the field of climate action in Syria. By embracing diverse voices and perspectives, inclusive policies contribute to comprehensive and effective decision-making processes. This inclusive approach ensures that marginalized communities, including women and youth, are actively involved in shaping sustainable practices and adapting to the impacts of climate change. Furthermore, inclusivity promotes equal access to information, resources, and capacity-building initiatives, empowering individuals and communities to become agents of change. Collaboration and partnerships among various stakeholders further enhance the collective efforts towards climate resilience and sustainability. we call for the following:





Youth engagement:

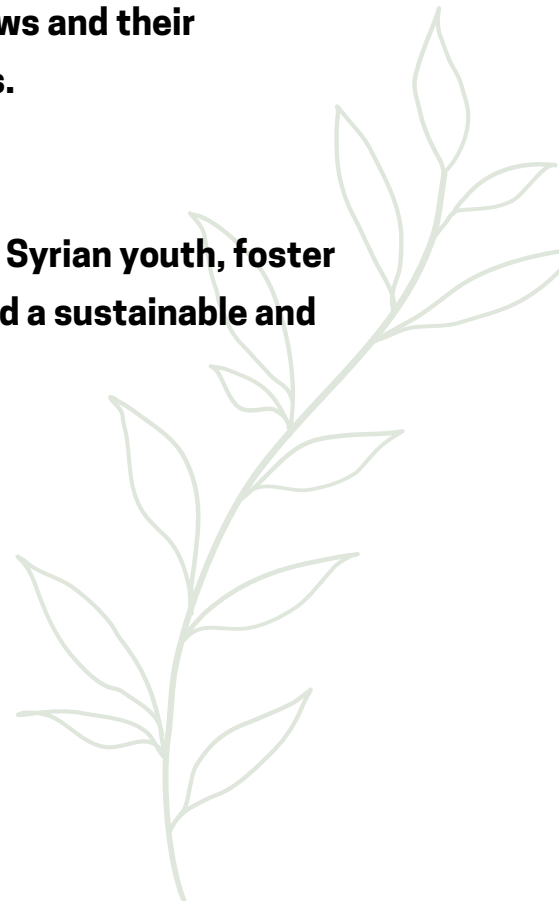
- Establish a Syrian Youth Council to ensure ongoing and inclusive youth representation in governmental decision-making processes at local and national levels.
- Elect a Youth Ministry with representatives from each governorate to amplify youth voices in higher-level discussions and policy-making.
- Provide fair and livable compensation to youth advocates for their valuable work, time, and expertise.
- Public Access to Information: Guarantee equal access to essential information about the causes and solutions to the climate crisis for all Syrians, regardless of their background.
- Create credible online information hubs that offer effective climate solutions from nonprofit organizations, academia, and the private sector.
- Ensure delivery of climate-related information in plain language in Arabic and languages accessible to Deaf and mute individuals.
- Support students' participation in climate activism without facing penalties, as guided by the Department of Education.
- Climate Diplomacy and Collaboration: Simplify the visa process for Syrian youth to attend international climate events, fostering their inclusion and representation on global discussion platforms.
- Develop a specialized visa application process for youth environmental activists and advocates, improving accessibility similar to other specialized professions.
- Research and Development: ease the process, funding, and allocate immediate resources to expand research and development aimed at adapting to the emerging and neglected effects of the climate crisis.
- Incorporate mentorship for young scientists and technical research experts in the development, implementation, and regulation of climate policies.



Social Awareness:

- **Inclusion of Disabilities and Public Awareness:**
- **Facilitate the participation of people with disabilities in environmental activities.**
- **Raise public awareness about the dangers of climate change through street signs, TV advertisements, and other media platforms.**
- **Encourage professionals to engage with local communities to raise awareness about climate-related risks and provide guidance on preventive measures.**
- **Improve the business environment for the recycling industry. Besides, the government should cultivate a supportive and stable business environment for the local recycling industry.**
- **We demand to strategically include waste pickers (which is a whole working field in Syria) in serious employment plans.**
- **Organize an annual national environmental camp to encourage youth to engage actively in climate change initiatives and deepen their understanding.**
- **Promote public knowledge of environmental laws and their relevance to addressing climate-related issues.**

By enacting these demands, we strive to empower Syrian youth, foster public awareness, and drive positive change toward a sustainable and resilient future for all.



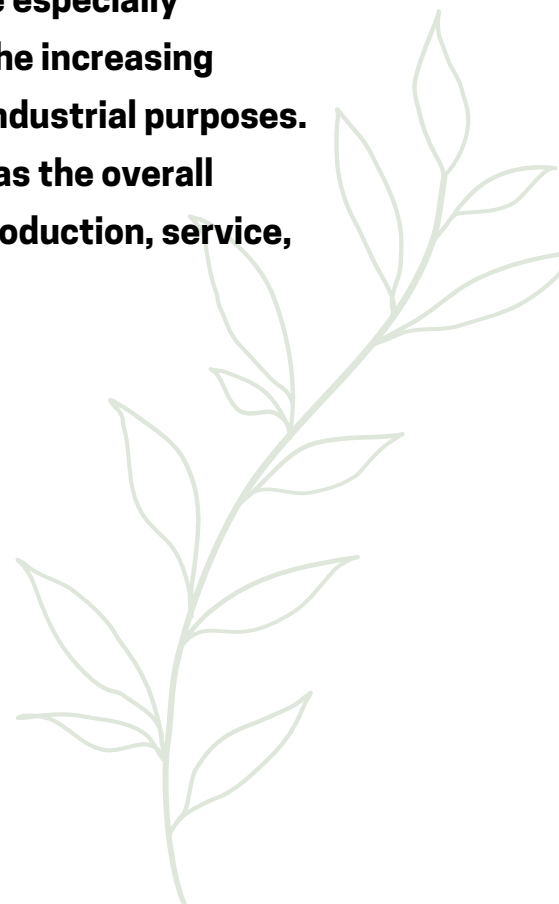


Mitigation & Adaptation and NDC implementation plann



Although the Syrian Arab Republic is not one of the major contributor countries to climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, it is one of the countries highly affected by global warming and climate change, especially the unprecedented climatic phenomena, such as precipitation change and rainstorms, drying up of some rivers or dropping water levels of natural and artificial lakes, frequent drought and its increasing risks, unprecedented levels of temperatures, heatwaves, forest fires, sand and dust storms, increasing duration and frequency of sand and dust storms, and desertification. The impact of global climate changes with their local impacts on land-use patterns and the accelerating pace of their degradation has put pressure on:

- **Natural resources for agriculture and livestock exploitation, and the implications on sustainable production and strengthening communities' resilience.**
- **Renewable energy resources such as hydropower, due to drop in water levels, and wind power, as a result of climate variability.**
- **Water resources, which are already limited, are especially suffering from a growing water deficit due to the increasing demand for water for irrigation, drinking, and industrial purposes.**
- **Natural ecosystems and their balance, as well as the overall impact on public health and other economic, production, service, and social sectors.**





The Syrian Arab Republic faces obstacles to obtaining advanced technologies that meet all environmental standards which play a key role in sustaining and strengthening mitigation and adaptation measures and building resilience. It also faces a lack of specialized skills in such areas, particularly the expertise in environmental economics and environmental degradation costs. In addition, it faces obstacles in the context of the implementation of vital projects, including the localization of many technologies and software to monitor the current situation and to simulate and extrapolate the future, while these tools are important for developing all economic, social and environmental indicators and measuring the level of meeting the needs of management and planning of sustainable development. Not to mention, these obstacles are mainly due to the unilateral coercive economic measures imposed on the Syrian Arab Republic decades ago, which increased since 2011, and their serious implications on building an economy, which will be able to adapt to climate change.

We think as Syrian Youth that we can start from:





Disaster Preparedness and Resilient Infrastructure:

- **Fund disaster preparedness plans and community-led mechanisms to build resilience against the many long-term health effects of climate change under the National Climate Emergency**
- **Invest in climate-resilient infrastructure, focusing on disproportionately burdened communities, encompassing housing, roads, schools, public spaces, broadband internet, electronic infrastructure, and other resources essential for sustainable living.**
- **Development of early warning systems It's fundamental that developing countries develop early warning systems for monitoring droughts and extreme weather conditions such as rainstorms, floods, and dust storms to increase the capacity of the infrastructure and improve readiness for resilience. However, this target requires technical and financial support from developed countries to access computer systems, monitoring technologies, remote sensing techniques, analysis methodologies, and globally applied programs for drought forecasting, climate variability, and storms.**





Climate adaptation:

While we work towards alleviating human-induced climate change, abnormal and extreme weather conditions already impact all walks of life. People and other habitats are forced to adjust their lifestyles in response to climate change - mainly by adapting or strengthening resilience. Climate adaptation concerns the readiness and ability to respond to existing or future consequences of climate change, as climate resilience looks at the ability to forecast and react to abnormal weather events.

- We demand having laws that support the production of environmentally friendly materials, establishing regulations that require establishments to be environmentally friendly, supporting green business projects, and establishing organizations dedicated to sustainable climate action.**
- We demand that governmental entities publicly share resource maps where people can apply for subsidies (adaptation funds), where people can know more about climate change and join to take action and voice out.**
- We demand that basic infrastructure and buildings get inspected and maintained regularly to ensure they can offset the effects caused by extreme weather conditions.**
- Build a more temporary shelter in preparation for extreme weather conditions so those who live in undesirable environments can still have a decent living during hard times.**



Loss and Damage :

We call for action to address climate-induced Loss and Damage by generating evidence-based, all-hazard inclusive climate-induced loss and damage data and collaboration across humanitarian and development networks. Furthermore, Parties must agree to establish a new finance facility for loss and damage, beyond pledges for mitigation and adaptation. Parties should also make loss and damage a permanent agenda item in the negotiations. They must ensure that action is taken, and finance provided, to meet the scale of the needs of the most affected countries and communities.

IN SYRIA:

We as Syria Youth demand the stakeholders to consider the indirect and direct effects of climate change, like economic difficulties to Migration. We are already living them without knowing, even if we don't play a grand role in contributing to climate change. Thus, we need to pay attention before it is too late.

We have been facing so many catastrophic severe weather events, led to loss of many agricultural lands due to wildfires, droughts in the Northeastern regions of Syria led to economic loss in citrus fruits and olive sessions.

WE as the youth of Syria demand:

- We want dedicated resources to facilitate political and technical consultations.**
- We demand to strengthen and finance a governance system that scales up, and articulates existing technology regarding data and information systems to monitor the use, exploitation, abuse, restoration and natural regeneration of nature.**
- Increasing the number of natural reserves and committing to implementing their protection laws.**



Technologies



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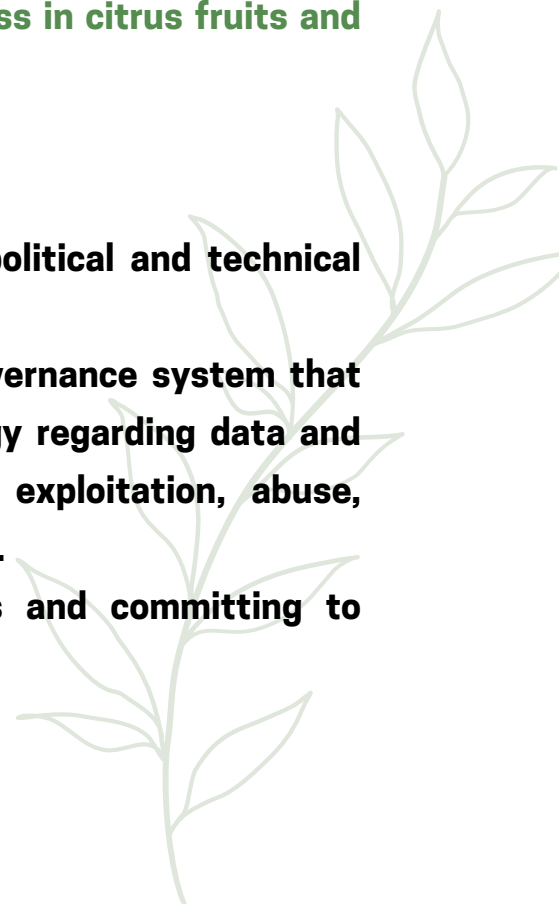
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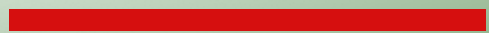
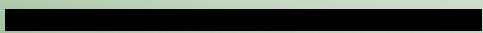
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Carbon Tracking



Carbon Tracking:

Calling for the development of applications that allow users to track their daily activities and calculate their carbon emissions. These applications should offer practical tips and guidance on how individuals can reduce their carbon footprint and encourage environmentally friendly behaviors.

Data Collection Methods:

The most critical role in the process of climate action nationally and internationally is having accurate and updated databases. We believe in collection methods in shaping informed decisions, we, as advocates for progress, call upon our leaders to embrace innovative approaches for data gathering. Effective data collection is vital for addressing complex challenges. Therefore, we call for:

Health sector:

Recognizing the urgent need for comprehensive action to safeguard public health and the environment, we, as Syrian youth, call upon our leaders to prioritize the health sector and address the challenges posed by climate change. Together, we can build a resilient future that ensures the well-being of our people and secures a healthy and sustainable Syria for generations to come.





We demand the following:

- **Implementation of an interdisciplinary training program for policymakers focusing on climate health, including customized content, interactive workshops, effective communication strategies, scenario planning, policy integration, and ongoing collaboration platforms to enable informed policies at the intersection of climate and health**
- **Formalize accessible, representative, and democratic offices for youth engagement and inclusion, with an emphasis on people from Frontline Communities.**
- **To secure the lives of those who live near the factories that affect their health, specifically leading to a high number of cancer cases.**
- **Create a new system to control the air pollution that is produced by the Oil refining stations, especially in the city of Baniyas city, partnering with the Ministry of Health or other local environmental authorities.**
- **To spread awareness of the danger of swimming in oil-polluted waters and sewage-polluted waters and to make strict laws to prevent people from swimming there, especially in slums e.g. Al Ramal Al Janobi.**



Energy:

We urge that decision-makers incorporate the most recent findings of the IPCC and take into account the natural and social impacts of fossil fuel exploitation in order to create public policies that promote the energy transition to clean and renewable energy sources and optimize energy consumption. We also call for more international cooperation to meet these objectives worldwide, especially calling for support from developed to developing countries. We suggest:

- **To invest in Geothermal energy to generate electricity. It is important to note that it can be invested on the local/household level, thus it can be used as a heating method in apartments & houses.**
- **It'd be effective to use composting energy by Biodigestion (Anaerobic digestion) which is a process that consumes organic waste and produces methane, the latter can be used in cooking and heating. In addition to producing organic compost.**
- **To invest in wind & waves energy instead of solar energy due to the high consumption of batteries by the latter which cause environmental pollution.**
- **To provide facilities and loans specific to renewable energy equipment to the public community, thus they will be able to increase the use of them.**
- **We emphasize that there is a huge responsibility on developed countries and international organizations to provide energy funds to developing countries without considering it as country debt.**



Pollution:

Understanding the grave implications of pollution issues on our environment and well-being, we, as concerned citizens, implore our leaders to take immediate action. It is essential to recognize the importance of addressing pollution and embracing sustainable practices for a cleaner, healthier future. Therefore, we call for:

- **Develop specific monitoring guidelines using the inputs and knowledge of communities that are directly impacted, along with the best available science.**
- **Develop and fund comprehensive training programs for existing community health workers to understand and treat the health effects of climate change. Empower communities, especially Frontline Communities, with the capacity to consistently train their climate change health workers.**
- **Solid waste management was significantly affected during the war and faced many obstacles and pressures, which led to a decline in the performance of this sector.**
- **The inability of local administrative units in some areas to reach their workplaces, for the removal of solid waste, due to the spread out of terrorists, has led to the accumulation of large amounts of solid waste and prevented from moving and safe disposal of such wastes.**
- **The inhabitants of these areas were forced to burn the waste, which caused the emission of harmful pollutants. Therefore, the Syrian government is looking forward to improving this sector, especially after overcoming the obstacles mentioned above, through several procedures:**
- **Assessing the current situation of solid waste management and developing the national strategy in this regard.**



- **Finding suitable solutions for random dumps, preventing random burning, and updating the fleet of waste management mechanisms.**
- **Encouraging the implementation of pilot projects related to the sorting of solid waste from the source and treatment plants, particularly in the large cities with intensive economic activities.**
- **Regulate and encourage the recycling industry, and develop standards for necessary facilities and equipment.**
- **Conversion of sanitary landfill gasses into energy (and utilization of biogas)**

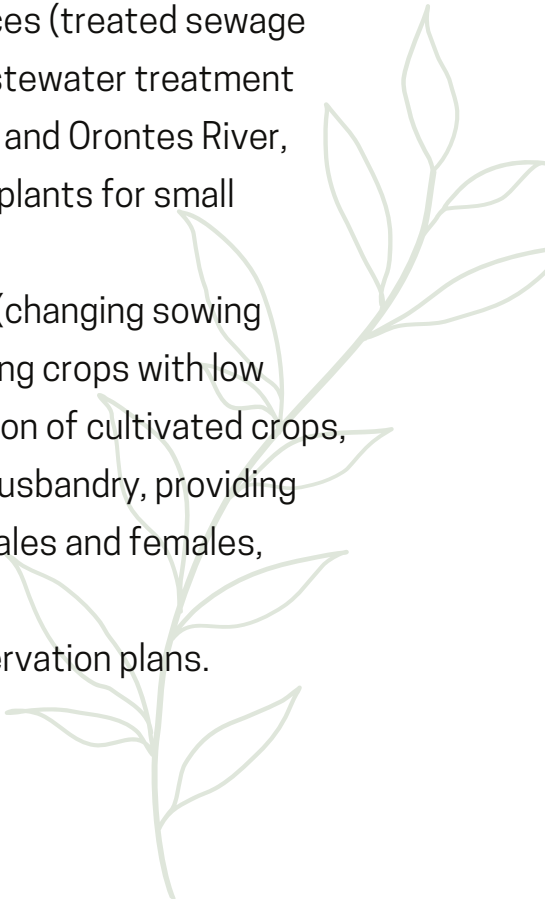




Water:

We, the youth of Syria, understand the importance of addressing the water crisis in Latakia, recognizing some practical decisions on the ground for the preservation of the water effectively, and concentrating on promoting responsible water management and conservation efforts locally.

We demand for the following:

- Strengthen frameworks and introduce stronger Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure the implementation and enhancement of wastewater treatment and management policies, as well as the reduction of water losses and consumption;
 - Reducing water losses, reducing water leakage from canals, and maintaining soil moisture by improving their organic matter content.
 - Raising the efficiency of irrigation water use, supporting water harvesting projects, using highly efficient irrigation methods, and providing actual quantities of water needed by plants, as well as using supplementary irrigation to irrigate rain crops during droughts.
 - Enhancing the use of non-traditional water resources (treated sewage and agricultural drainage, supporting industrial wastewater treatment plants for large rivers, such as the Euphrates River and Orontes River, typical village treatment plants, spatial treatment plants for small communities, and producing irrigation water).
 - Improvement of the current agricultural practices (changing sowing dates and deepening, improving plant nutrition, using crops with low water needs, drought-resistant crops, diversification of cultivated crops, combination of crop cultivation, domestic animal husbandry, providing agricultural and rural extension services to both males and females, strengthening market linkages).
 - Inclusion of Rural areas in the national water conservation plans.
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- **Calling for implementation of Global Water Protection Laws:** calling for the strict enforcement of global laws designed to protect water sources. These regulations should be activated to safeguard our water resources.
- **Reduced Chemical Composting:** insisting on reducing the use of chemical composting, which has been causing significant harm to the soil and polluting groundwater. Safer and eco-friendly alternatives should be explored.
- **Industrial Water Treatment Facilities:** emphasizing the need to install treatment and purification units in industrial facilities to prevent the contamination of water sources.
- **Protection of Seawater from Oil Derivatives:** calling for measures to prevent oil derivatives from accessing seawater, thereby preserving the marine environment and safeguarding the integrity of coastal areas in Syria.
- **Create a purifying Household Sewage Separation, demanding the creation of household sewage treatment systems, converting black water into gray water. (This approach is a practical solution to mitigate water overuse).**



Agriculture:

We, as Syrian youth, see that the agricultural sector is suffering greatly, and this has a negative impact on food security in the country. Therefore, we demand the following:

The Syrian Arab Republic was covered with forests and trees for decades, extending from the Mediterranean to the Syrian Badia. While forests covered 32% of Syrian territories last century, they gradually deteriorated to less than 1% due to the effect of frequent drought spells, wildfires, and transgression of land and forest sites.

The impacts of climate change and the war on the agricultural sector have manifested in the deterioration of large areas of agricultural lands (rain-fed and irrigated lands), as well as the damage to agricultural machines and equipment and the shortage of spare parts. In addition, the destruction of irrigation networks and water channels has led to the lack of crops and poor quality, which has been accompanied by an unprecedented decline in the numbers of sheep, cows, and camels.

We, as Syrian youth urge:

- **To educate farmers about the importance of the different kinds of fertilizers. To provide farmers with advanced farming techniques and methods and provide loans for eco-friendly methods to increase the encouragement to use them.**
- **To provide the fire fighting department with advanced equipment and technologies to prevent fires from reaching large agricultural areas. The fires also play a negative role, as the ash remaining on the soil turns into harmful oxides.**
- **To mandate a condition on restaurants and public shops to include agriculture terraces and plant-based decors and To adopt new policies that aim to protect the green spaces in public spaces.**
- **To cultivate plant species that contain natural insect-repellent substances to reduce the use of pesticides.**
- **To empower researchers and college students in their research on sustainable agriculture.**



The Syrian Arab Republic strongly reaffirms that the implementation of these contributions requires full and serious commitment from developed countries to provide adequate and predictable financial support to developing countries under the international environmental conventions, including UNFCCC, to fulfill their national plans in the context of Paris Agreement, as well as guarantees that funds and funding mechanisms are accessible for developing countries to analyze needs and opportunities for developing their national programs and encouraging investment in projects contributing to mitigation and adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

Social Media:

📘 [Facebook](#) : LCOY SYRIA

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