The Future Youth Want
Elements of a Youth Manifesto

At the initiative of the Italian Presidency of the 2022 OECD Ministerial Council Meeting (MCM), a workshop was organised on 8 June in Paris, bringing together members of Youthwise – the OECD’s youth advisory board – as well as representatives from youth organisations and OECD experts. A number of proposals emerged from the workshop and were relayed to Ministers on 10 June – the first time youth voices have been included in the MCM. These are outlined below:

1. Youth participation

Young people are a third of the population but 100% of the future. We believe that for youth participation in government and other public institutions to be meaningful, it must be diverse, regular, and embedded in formal decision-making processes with adequate feedback mechanisms.

Therefore, we propose:

- Introducing initiatives to promote diversity in government and other public institutions, with a view to bolstering youth representation. At the national level, we support the use of youth quotas in parliaments and legislatures. We also ask that the OECD lead by example in promoting a culture of meaningful youth participation within the organisation by institutionalising Youthwise, and through the development of youth participation guidelines for member countries.

- That governments and other public institutions improve access to information critical to young people’s lives. Organisations must ensure that they are communicating with young people on the platforms where we are, and in clear and accessible language.

- Rethinking the workforce of tomorrow, including through civic education and by allowing young people to create jobs that reflect our values and in which we feel empowered to enact change. Paid leave for mental health and civic participation, as well as a ban on unpaid internships would be key features of this new workplace environment.

2. Policy action for future generations:

We see an urgent need to ensure that decision makers apply a long-term intergenerational lens when enacting policy; that power is shared across generations; and efforts to promote inter-generational collaboration are made by those in leadership. This is vital at a time when young people are facing generational shockwaves at the crossroads of the climate crisis and global economic instability.
Therefore, we propose:

- A holistic **rethinking of financial systems** to take into account the critical challenges young people face in their lifetime, including **lack of access to retirement funds and other forms of social security, affordable housing, education, and healthcare**; and **forced migration** as a consequence of inequality and the climate crisis.

- Measures to ensure **greater government transparency and accountability, particularly with regard to budgeting decisions**, and with a “youth and future generations” test applied to all new policies.

- Schools to **prioritise essential skills**, including creativity and problem solving – preparing young people to be not only good workers but also fulfilled citizens. This is particularly important for a generation navigating both the green transition and an increasingly digital world.

### 3. Environment and the planet

We call for urgent, co-ordinated global action that puts **planetary and human well-being at the heart of policy** for current and future generations, underpinned by principles of equity and fairness. **Young people must be empowered** to be part of the solution.

Therefore, we propose:

- A stronger emphasis on **systemic solutions and shifts as key drivers of the green transition. Changing our habits alone will not be sufficient.** The burden of environmental challenges must be shared by governments, businesses and generations. **We call for governments to introduce stronger incentives for consumers and businesses to reduce their** climate impact.

- A greater focus on formal and informal education on environmental topics to enhance understanding of the issues, but also to build skills for a more sustainable lifestyle and economy while participating in the green transition.

- The meaningful involvement of youth representatives in policy debates and decision-making processes on environmental and climate issues, at international, national and local level.

- Stronger accountability measures for polluters and emitters – and the recognition that the high price of the climate crisis should not disproportionately be paid by those most affected, in particular lower-income populations and marginalised communities.

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**Participants in the Youth workshop included:**