

Report of the first Children and Young People's Consultation

September 2022



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Thank you!

Hello! We are the United Nations General Comment No. 26 Children's Advisory Team. We would just like to send a very big thank you to **all the children** who participated in the online questionnaire for the General Comment No. 26 consultations that closed at the end of June 2022. It really means a lot to us.

It means so much not just for us children but to everyone who has been a part of this. As we all know, we are in a crisis and therefore it is so important that we get your voices heard.

We will be in touch again to let you know how you can get involved in the second round of consultations later this year.

So again, thank you so much for being part of the change. We are powerful citizens of now. Ahead we go!



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Introduction

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee) is listening to the calls of children and taking a significant step to hold State parties accountable for ensuring children can grow up and live in a clean, green, healthy, and sustainable world by creating a General Comment on Children’s Rights and the Environment with a Special Focus on Climate Change (General Comment No. 26).

The right to a healthy environment¹ is a prerequisite for the effective implementation of all other rights outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

To ensure General Comment No. 26 is representative of the diverse experiences and best interests of children globally, a collaborative and intergenerational approach must be taken to its development. An essential part of the development of General Comment No. 26 is the involvement of children themselves. Children have the right to freely express their views on all matters and decisions that affect them and to have those views taken into account at all levels of society. This right is described in detail in General Comment No. 12 on the right of the child to be heard, available at [CRC/C/GC/12](#).

The Committee recognises the importance of working with children on matters of such importance and relevance to their lives. Therefore the Committee, with support from terre des hommes, established its first global Children’s Advisory Team to support the development of General Comment No. 26. The Children’s Advisory Team is a group of 13 child experts, between 10 and 17 years of age, from different regions, backgrounds and with diverse lived experiences. You can find out more about the Children’s Advisory Team [here](#).

The Children’s Advisory Team is central to informing the children’s consultation process, and ensuring children have meaningful opportunities to contribute their views, experiences and ideas to the development of General Comment No. 26.

¹ In July 2022, with 161 votes in favour, and eight abstentions*, the UN General Assembly adopted a historic resolution on Thursday, declaring access to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, a universal human right. [UN General Assembly declares access to clean and healthy environment a universal human right | UN News](#)

This report is a summary of findings of a global children’s questionnaire, which was co-designed with the Children’s Advisory Team, and circulated with children globally between the 31 March and 20 June 2022. This report summarises children’s views on, and their experiences of, the following issues:

- 1) Impact of climate change and environmental damage
- 2) Thoughts and feelings about climate change and environmental damage
- 3) Access to education and support
- 4) Having a say and being taken seriously
- 5) Access to information

Finally, the report provides key messages shared by children in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire findings will inform the Committee in their work to develop the first draft of General Comment No. 26, which will be made publicly available for review in November 2022. A second phase of consultation with children will take place between November 2022 and February 2023.

Methodology

Data Collection

In February and March 2022, the online questionnaire was co-designed with the Children's Advisory Team to support children in sharing their views and experiences on their rights, the environment and climate change. The questionnaire was aimed at children aged 12-17, but younger children could participate with support from an adult.

The questionnaire included a consent form, so children could have sufficient information to agree to participate with the understanding that their information would be stored safely. The questionnaire was available in English, French and Spanish, with the text provided for other translations. Children were able to submit their answers in any language.

On 31 March 2022, the online questionnaire was published and shared using social media, newsletter communications and partner organisations and networks. The Children's Advisory Team played a key role in raising awareness of the questionnaire, reaching out to children and young people in their communities, and at national and international level.

The questionnaire remained open until 30 June 2022.

Analytical Approach

The data analysis of the close-ended questions was carried out using the statistical software STATA. After cleaning the datasets, descriptive statistics were produced and are presented as tables and figures in this report. Where relevant, results are presented with disaggregation by region, gender, age, disability and medical condition².

The data analysis of the open-ended questions was carried out using the software NVivo. The data was coded and trends were observed to describe the key issues and themes for children who participated in the questionnaire. The analytical process followed a deductive approach to look more

² Additional submissions from children and organizations were received in formats that were incompatible with the analysis software, nor aligned with the questions asked in the questionnaire. Whilst the views and ideas shared could not be included in this analysis to ensure the validity and integrity of the results, such submissions will be accounted for in the second phase of consultations for General Comment No. 26, which will have an open submissions component.

in-depth into the children's experiences and views. This report includes illustrative word clouds featuring the 1000 most frequent words used by children in relation to climate change and environmental damage in the open-ended questions. Moreover, illustrative quotes from participating children are included, as well as their key messages to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and duty-bearers.

On the 20 July 2022, partial results of the analysis were presented and discussed in a participatory workshop with members of the General Comment No. 26 Children Advisory Team and Advisory Board. The reflections gathered from the experts, children and adults, contributed to the interpretation of the data and development of this report. A few of the reflections shared by Child Advisors in the workshop are also included in this report.

Limitations

The data is not representative of the world's population of children. There are several factors to consider that may influence the interpretation of the results. Children participating in the questionnaires had internet access, digital competencies and literacy. Therefore, the data is likely not to include children with limited or no access to digital connectivity, many of whom may be highly affected by climate change and environmental damage. This would mean that the findings of how climate change and environmental damage affect children are likely to be an underestimation of the effects at the population level. Moreover, our sample does not reflect the true distribution of the population worldwide; however, some developing regions of interest (i.e Sub-Saharan Africa) are over-represented in this sample.

Finally, the sample is likely to include 'self-selection bias'. Children who participated in the questionnaire may be particularly interested in and informed about climate change, environmental damage, and their rights related to them. This may have influenced for example the results of the questions about access to information, support and children's knowledge of their rights.

Sample

7,416 children from **103 countries** participated in the online questionnaire³. However, due to missing observations and non-response, most questions were answered by 7,181 children (or less,

³ The sample is not representative of the population of children and young people in these countries. Children participated in the online questionnaire on a voluntary basis, and provided they had access to the Internet, devices (personal or borrowed) and digital competencies and literacy.

in the case of specific questions). To be able to qualitatively analyse the 'open-ended' questions, we randomly selected a sub-sample of 500 children. The randomisation was done to reflect the actual distribution of the population at the regional level, using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) classification.

Table 1: Age of children

Age	per cent	N
Younger than 8	1.53	103
8	3.45	232
9	4.5	303
10	8.26	556
11	9.48	638
12	9.72	654
13	9.69	652
14	10.14	682
15	11.86	798
16	17.03	1,146
17	14.34	965

Note: N refers to the total number of children who answered to the specific question and per cent shows percentage of children from total who chose that answer.

Females represent the majority of the sample (57.8 per cent), 29.2 per cent of children were males, and the rest chose not to disclose their gender (10.2 per cent) or responded 'other gender' (2.7 per cent). Most children were 14 to 17 years old, but about 10 per cent of children were 9 years old or younger (Table 1). Almost 12 per cent of children who responded to the survey shared that they have a disability, illness or medical condition. Regarding residence and living environment, 61.5 per cent lived in a city or town, and 36.8 per cent in a rural area (Table 2). Most children responding to the questionnaire lived at home (93.29 per cent), while almost 4 per cent lived in a detention centre, followed by a residential home (1.02 per cent), a centre for homeless people (0.85 per cent), somewhere else (0.64 per cent) and in a refugee camp (0.33 per cent).

Table 2: Living environment and place of residence

Environment	per cent	N
City or town	61.49	4,348
Rural	36.83	2,604
Other	1.68	119
Total	100	7,071

Residence	per cent	N
I live at home	93.29	6,561
Refugee or migrant camp	0.33	23
Centre for homeless people	0.85	60
Residential home	1.02	72
Detention centre	3.87	272
I live somewhere else	0.64	45
Total	100	7,033

Note: N refers to the total number of children who answered to the specific question and per cent shows percentage of children from total who chose that answer.

Table 3 shows the sample's geographical distribution according to the SDGs classification. Compared to the actual population distribution, our sample has over-representation from Sub Saharan Africa (27.6per cent) and Europe and North America (28.05per cent), and under-representation from Central and South Asia (only 2.97 per cent of children were from this region) and North Africa and West Asia (1.19 per cent). The proportion of children from East and South East Asia, Oceania and Latin America, with regard to the rest of the sample, is similar to the population distribution in the real world (29.38, 1.28 and 9.51 per cent, respectively).

Table 3: Geographical distribution

Region	per cent	N
Sub Saharan Africa	27.62	1,905
North Africa and West Asia	1.19	82
Central & South Asia	2.97	205
East & South East Asia	29.38	2,026
Latin America	9.51	656
North America and Europe	28.05	1,934
Oceania	1.28	88
Total	100	6,896

Note: N refers to the total number of children who answered to the specific question and per cent shows the percentage of children from total who chose that answer.

Findings

This section presents the key findings from the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, as well as word clouds and illustrative quotes from children, are included.

1) Impact of climate change and environmental damage on children's lives and communities

Thirty-five per cent of children (2,508 in total) responded 'yes' to the first question 'Has your life or community changed because of the consequences of climate change?'⁴. Forty-two per cent (42) said that their life had changed because of the consequences of environmental damage. However, when asked to explain in their own words how their lives or communities have changed, children showed an understanding that climate change and environmental damage are interrelated.

By region (Figure 2), a majority of children from Sub-Saharan Africa (64 per cent) reported having experienced change in their lives due to the consequences of climate change, followed by half of the children in Latin America and 47 per cent of children in Central and South Asia. The least affected children were in North America and Europe (22 per cent), North Africa and West Asia (32 per cent), Oceania (36 per cent) and East and South East Asia (15 per cent).

This final figure is surprising, considering that some countries in this region are highly vulnerable to climate change⁵. However, the question was framed in terms of children's lives changing due to the consequences of climate change. Therefore, the low number of children who answered 'yes' to this question could be the result of these children experiencing the consequences of climate change

⁴ 'Has your life or your community changed because of the consequences of climate change? For example, have you changed the way you live because of flooding, drought, or wildfires?'

⁵ Japan and the Philippines were among the 10 most affected countries by climate change, according to the 2020 Climate Risk Index presented by the Germanwatch institute (https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/20-2-01e%20Global%20Climate%20Risk%20Index%202020_14.pdf) and Japan continues to be in 2021 (https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/Global%20Climate%20Risk%20Index%202021_2.pdf). Moreover, Vietnam, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Thailand have been classified among the 10 countries in the world most affected by climate change from 1997 to 2016 (<https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/publication/20432.pdf>) and Myanmar, the Philippines and Thailand also in the classification from 2000 to 2019 (https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/Global%20Climate%20Risk%20Index%202021_2.pdf)

since birth. This nuance was explained exemplarily by a member of the Children’s Advisory Team when reviewing the data:

“Only 15 per cent of [children from] East and South East Asia agree that climate change affects them. This might be because the region is on the seaside area and the impact has already been there for so long, that there is no change (flooding is a norm, for instance). That is why they see no impact: because climate change is life as they know it.” (Bach, age 16, Vietnam)

For the second question⁶, a greater number of children answered ‘yes’. The order of regions in terms of those most affected is similar, with Sub Saharan Africa (65 per cent), followed by Central and South Asia (64 per cent) and Latin America (62 per cent). Interestingly, children reporting a disability or medical condition were more likely to report that their lives changed due to climate change or environmental damage (see table A1 in Appendix) – however, looking at the open-ended questions for a selected random subset of children, none of the children reporting a long-term disability, illness or medical condition referred directly to it when asked about how environmental damage or climate change affected them or their communities. Finally, no statistically significant differences were observed in terms of gender.

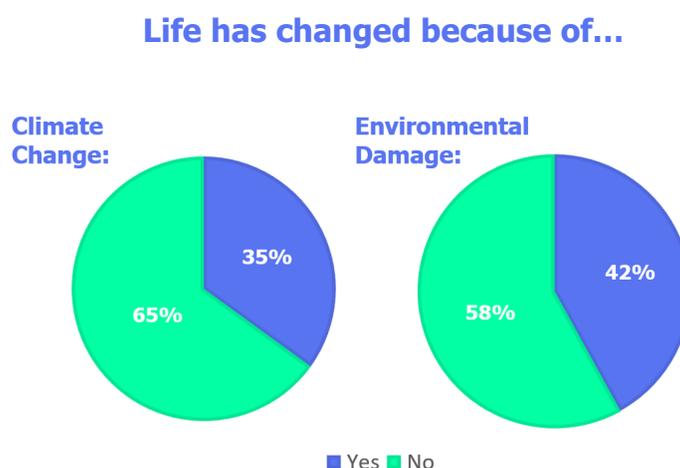
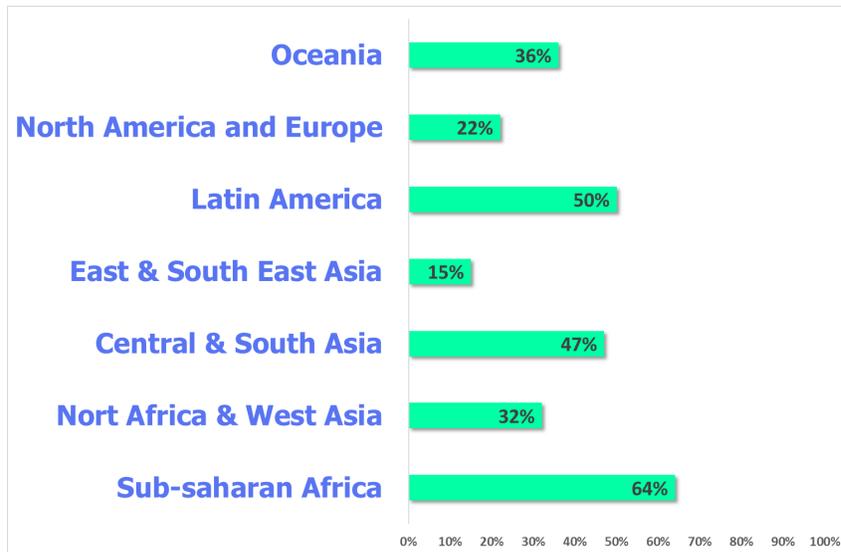


Figure 1: Has your life or community changed because of the consequences of climate change and environmental damage?

⁶ ‘Has your life or your community changed because of environmental damage? For example, due to issues like waste, pollution or deforestation?’

Life has changed because of climate change
(% of respondents to agree by region)



Life has changed because of environmental damage
(% of respondents to agree by region)

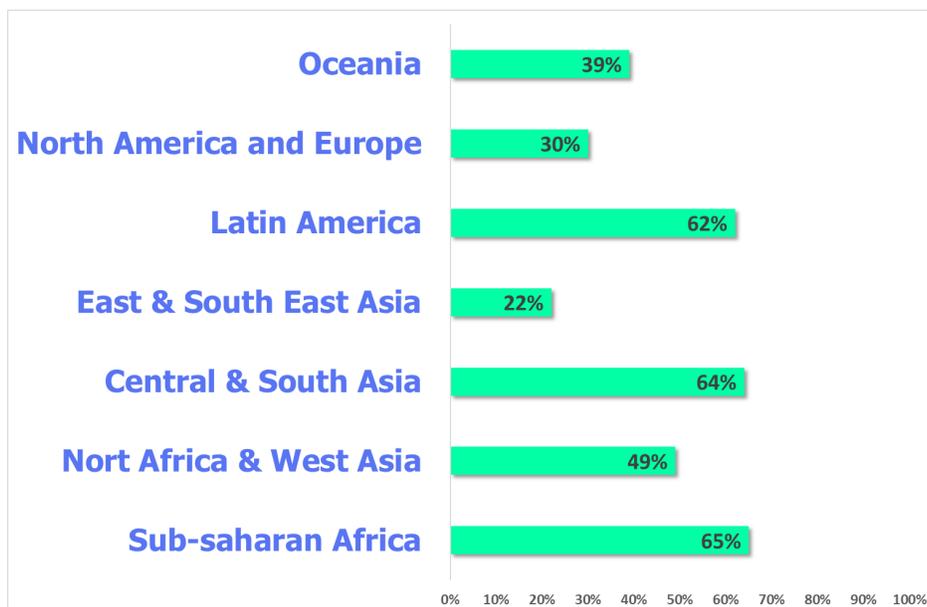


Figure 2: Life or community changed because of the consequences of climate change or environmental damage, by region.

Table 4 shows that the most reported effects of climate change mentioned by children were extreme temperatures (15.3 per cent), heavy rain and storms (11.9 per cent), droughts (10.5 per cent) and floods (10.3 per cent). The most reported situations of environmental damage causing changes in children’s lives were waste and pollution (23.6 per cent), deforestation (17.3 per cent), toxic air (15.4 per cent) and loss of biodiversity (11.8 per cent). Statistics by region are shown in the Appendix.

Table 4: Events and situations causing the change

What effects of climate change have caused changes?	%
Extreme temperatures	15.3
Heavy rain and storms	11.9
Drought	10.5
Flooding	10.3
Animals leave natural habitat	6.6
Forest and wildfires	5.3
Did not report	40.1

Total sample size: 7,590

Which situations of environmental damage have caused changes?	%
Waste and pollution	23.6
Deforestation	17.3
Toxic air	15.4
Loss of biodiversity	11.8
Plastics	9.3
Animals leave natural habitat	6.6
Did not report	16.0

Total sample size: 7,590

A thematic analysis of three open-ended questions⁷ revealed that children often understand key issues associated with environmental damage and climate change to be interchangeable.

Like the results shown in Table 4, the most cited things were pollution, weather changes, deforestation, waste, lack or limited access to nature due to damages to the natural environment or pollution, and changes in their surroundings (due to excessive waste and pollution, floods, droughts, etc.). A child stated:

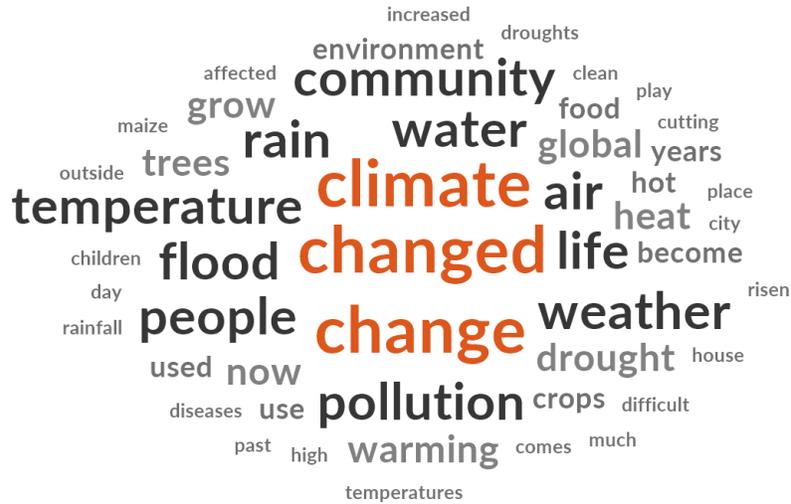
"My house is near a transport where there is a lot of environmental damage by both air pollution and noise pollution, it feels as if we are on a place full of smoke and dust" (Boy, 12, India), another mentions that *"The region I live in is facing great environmental challenge on waste disposal and toxic air emission from cars and vehicles, causing greenhouse effects. In the last decade, a large number of people have moved into Shenzhen and the city has become a huge city of more than 20 million people, producing more than 30 thousand tons of domestic waste each day, a large proportion of which is not properly classified. The huge number of cars and vehicles on the streets not only created congestion, but immense toxic emission into the air. I think this has contributed to the increase in temperature and extreme weather."* (Do not want to say, 16, China).

Some children also described how environmental damage and climate change impact their right to education and right to play, such as school disruptions *"Climate change has played a consequential role in my life. Previously due to heat stroke, there was an orange alert in Delhi, and some of the schools were closed. The impact that climate change has on our life cannot be foreseen."* (Girl, 13, India); school dropouts *"Some children dropped out of school."* (Boy, 11, Zimbabwe); lack of safe places to play *"First we used to play in the park near my house [but] now a factory has been built near my house and dirty smell comes from there. Now we are not able to play there."* (Boy, 13, India). One participant clearly summarises all these concepts around rights and life bringing them down to a matter of happiness: *"We can't live happily because of dirty environments & pollution."* (Boy, 16, Bangladesh).

⁷ i) 'How has your life or community changed because of climate change?'

ii) 'How has your life or community changed because of environmental damage?'

iii) 'Would you like to describe your experience of environmental damage and climate change? Describe it here.'



Word Cloud 1: 50 most frequent words used by children in response to the question 'How has your life or community changed because of climate change?'

The following word clouds show the 50 most frequent words children used when answering the questions: 'How has your life or community changed because of climate change?' and 'How has your life or community changed because of environmental damage?'



Word Cloud 2: 50 most frequent words used by children in response to the question 'How has your life or community changed because of environmental damage?'

2) Thoughts and feelings about climate change and environmental damage

"Adults! The real victims of environmental destruction are us, children." (Other, 11, Korea)

Figure 3 shows that a majority (nearly 63 per cent) of children think that the effects of climate change and environmental damage affect children more than adults – as exemplified by a participant *"Yes, I would like to tell them [adults] that we are the future generations and if you destroy the planet, where will we live?!!!!"* (Boy, 13, India), while almost 67 per cent think that it affects some children more than others, as for example those living in certain parts of the world, those living on small islands, those depending on nature. Nearly all (88 per cent) children think that climate change and environmental damage are threatening future generations of children:

"I hope adults and teenagers like me really understand that climate change will affect future generations. I hope everyone takes action to change our environment to be a better one - the biggest actions or just small actions. Cause we need to save this earth, and let this earth last a little bit longer." (Girl, 17, Indonesia).

Some children perceive a difference in their ability to enjoy their natural environment and general surroundings, vis-à-vis the older generations (for example, parents and grandparents' generations). This concept is exemplified by a child's message to the Committee:

"Please demand our freedom, freedom of life and health. We can't enjoy [life] like you used to do when you were little." (Boy, 14, India).

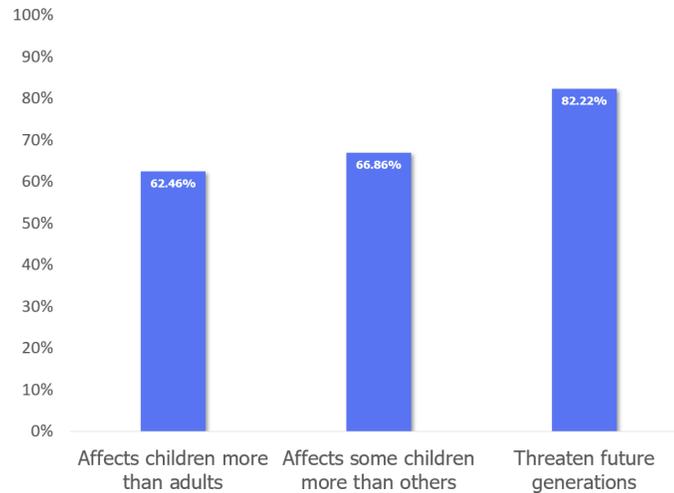


Figure 3: Thoughts about climate change (total N, from left to right: 4438, 4720, 5804).

In terms of feelings towards climate change, more than half (57 per cent) of children reported feeling worried about the health of the environment, and more than 11 per cent reported that their daily lives are affected because of how they feel about environmental damage. Meanwhile, 12.47 per cent feel optimistic that challenges will be solved, and 18 per cent do not think about environmental damage very often. Statistics by gender are reported in the appendix. Boys were slightly more likely to feel optimistic that challenges would be solved, while those who preferred not to report their gender were felt less worried and thought less about climate change and environmental damage, with differences being statistically significant.

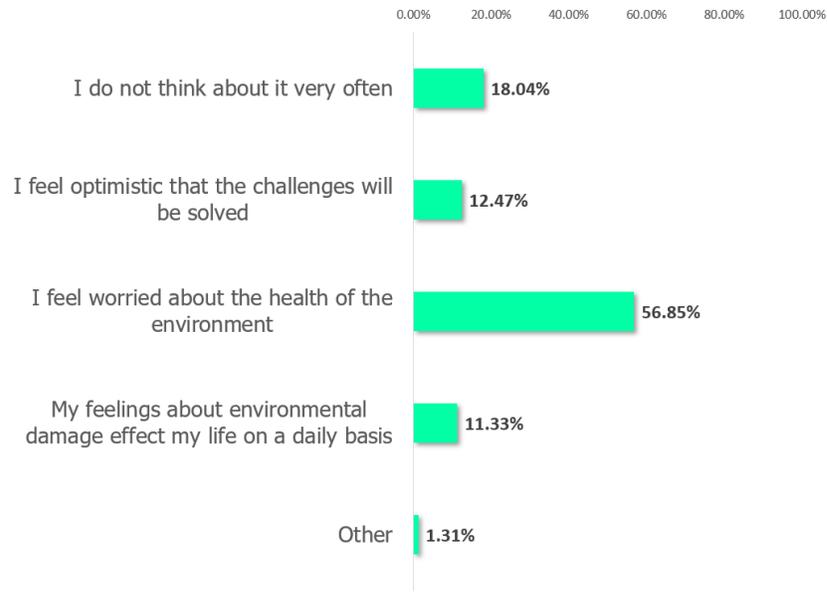


Figure 4: Feelings towards climate change (per cent) (N=6960)

In the open-ended questions, children also shared their feelings related to anxiety, fear, sadness and deception vis-à-vis environmental damage and climate change and the lack of actions taken by responsible actors:

“When it floods here in our place, we can't sleep properly because we have anxiety about what's going to happen next or if we are safe like that.” (Girl, 16, Philippines)

“What will happen to the earth if we keep going like this?” (Girl, 11, China)

“We are failing to live freely.” (Girl, 17, Zambia)

“Environmental change has indeed affected a lot of people around the world. As it personally goes for me, earlier I used to live in a very beautiful environment, but now, due to the rise in global warming, my surroundings and nature are not as beautiful now. Therefore, whenever I see rivers or forests nowadays, I, from deep inside, grieve because it's really depressing to see such beautiful things undergoing destruction. I believe that due to global warming, my incentives and notions have taken a great turn, and I am somewhat mentally affected. Therefore, this is how I am affected due to these environmental changes.” (Boy, 14, India).

3) Access to education and support

In terms of whether children learn about the environment and climate change at school or in their communities, around half of the children reported that they learned only at school, while almost 27 per cent learned both at school and in the community. Only 6.8 per cent learned in the community, and 14 per cent reported not learning about climate change and environmental damage in any context. East and South East Asia have the highest proportion of children not learning about the environment (27 per cent), while in the other regions the proportion is around 10 per cent or less. Many children called for greater awareness-raising efforts and the inclusion of environmental education in school curriculum as some of the key actions to be taken to tackle environmental damage and climate change.

Table 5: Learning about climate change and environmental damage

Do you learn about climate change and environmental damage?	per cent	N
No	14.05	1,001
Yes, at school	52.5	3,743
Yes, at school and the community	26.63	1,898
Yes, in the community	6.81	485
Total	100	7,127

Note: N refers to the total number of children who answered to the specific question and per cent indicates percentage of children from total who chose that answer.

Ninety per cent of children who participated in completing the questionnaire reported that they had heard about the rights of the child. Findings reveal that children's reported knowledge of children's rights was lower in Oceania (77 per cent) and East and South East Asia (84 per cent) and no statistically significant differences were observed between males and females, although those children who did not wish to report their gender were less likely to know about their rights. From the open-ended questions, a number of children demonstrated a familiarity with rights-based language related to accessing to water, healthy environment, and empowerment:

"Our right to have water matters." (Boy, 11, Zimbabwe)

"All children have a right to the environment." (Girl, 17, Mozambique)

"Respect for our rights, having advice to guide us in life, empowerment." (Girl, 16, Algeria)

Even though most children reported having knowledge about their rights, only 41 per cent reported that they feel they can access help if their rights are affected by environmental damage or climate change (again, Oceania and East and South East Asia are the regions where children reported feeling they have less access to support). The latter figures are particularly striking, as members of the Children's Advisory Team reflected:

"41 per cent is a very low number. This is not ok. As a child, I have the right to not be treated like this. I have the right to have help." (Maya-Natuk, age 17, Greenland, CAT)

"I am not surprised [by these findings], as in my country, most young people do not speak up for their rights. This is a very sad figure and a reality." (Olt, age 14, Kosovo, CAT)

4) Having a say and being taken seriously

When asked about children's rights to have a say and be taken seriously by adults and governments, forty-two percent of children agreed with the statement 'When I try to talk about environment protection and climate change other people have ignored or dismissed me', with little differences by gender or age. Differences by region can be observed, with more than 60 per cent of children feeling ignored in Sub-Saharan Africa and Central and South Asia, 58 per cent in Oceania, around 37 per cent both in North Africa and West Asia and in East and South East Asia, and less than 30 per cent in Latin America, as well as in Europe and North America.

In response to the question 'If you have shared your views and opinions about the environment or climate change with decision makers, do you think it made a difference?', only 28.7 per cent of children answered affirmatively. In the open-ended questions, children ask to be heard and listened to, as exemplified by two children from Japan and Brazil:

"Please take more measures to save children who are at risk. I wish you would listen to our opinions more." (Boy, 11, Japan)

“First we would like to be heard, because people think our words are worthless, they think we are new to everything, but we know more than many adults who are arrogant and don't care about the future.” (Other, 11, Brazil).

Table 6: Rights to have a say and be taken seriously

People have ignored me when I talked about climate change	Per cent	N
Agree	41.05	2,891
Disagree	33.44	2,355
Don't talk to other people	25.5	1,796
Total	100	7,042

Sharing views made a difference	Per cent	N
Don't know	23.05	1,613
No	25	1,749
Sometimes	23.3	1,628
Yes	28.7	2,007
Total	100	6,997

5) Access to information

Finally, children were asked about their rights to access information. Figure 5 shows that nearly 36 per cent of children said that they had enough and easy-to-understand information about what governments and industries are doing to protect the environment and prevent worsening impacts of climate change, while slightly more than half of children reported that they think they have enough and easy-to-understand information about the environment and climate change. Figure 6 shows these answers by region: the regions with the highest percentage of children perceiving they have access to easy-to-understand information were Central and South Asia, North Africa and West Asia,

North America and Europe and Oceania. In terms of children’s perception of having access to information on what governments are doing to protect the environment, the only region where at least half of children had an affirmative answer was Central and South Asia.

These results align with the qualitative answers: children wrote messages directly to governments to ask for more actions and information on what they are doing to protect the environment.

In some cases, they point out that they do not trust adults: “*I honestly don't know where to start even if I want to change things. And I don't think the adults are being honest about how things are now.*” (Girl, 15, Japan). They ask governments to “*stop procrastinating*” and “*save our generation*” (Boy, 15, India).

“The time for meaningful climate action is now. We have talked and discussed, we know what needs to be done and the solutions are there. It is now time to act, we need your help and likewise, you need our help. We must do this together.” (Girl, 15, Trinidad and Tobago).

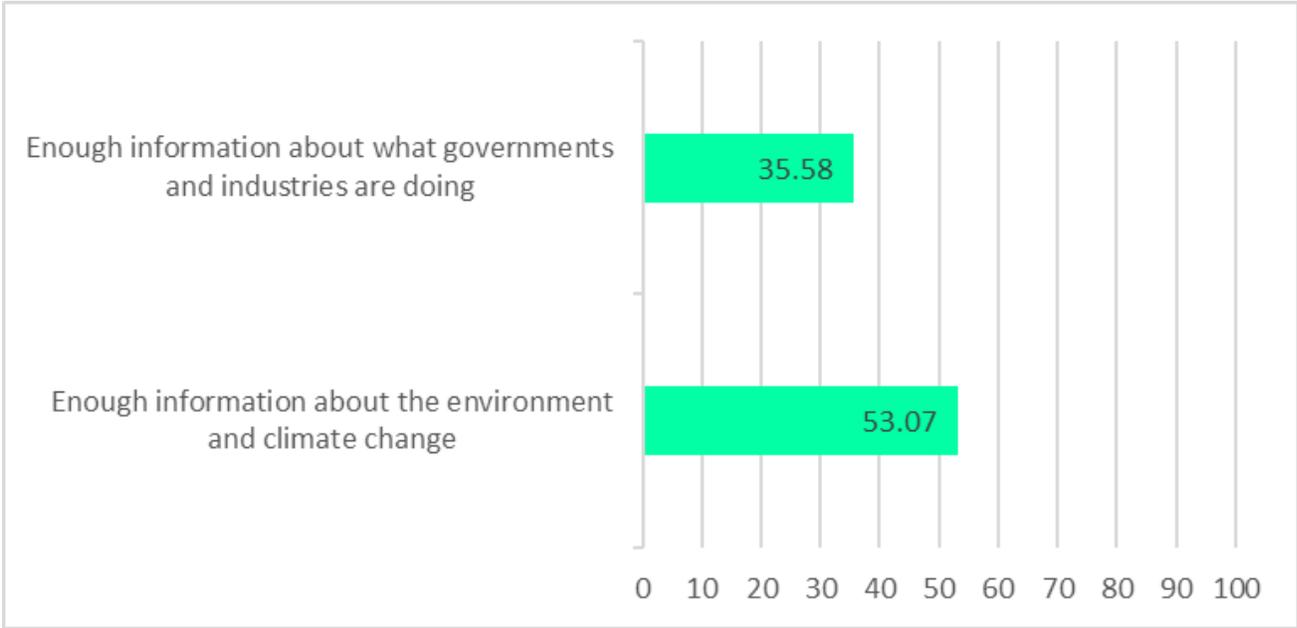


Figure 5: Perceptions on access to information (starting from above: N=7113, N=7059)

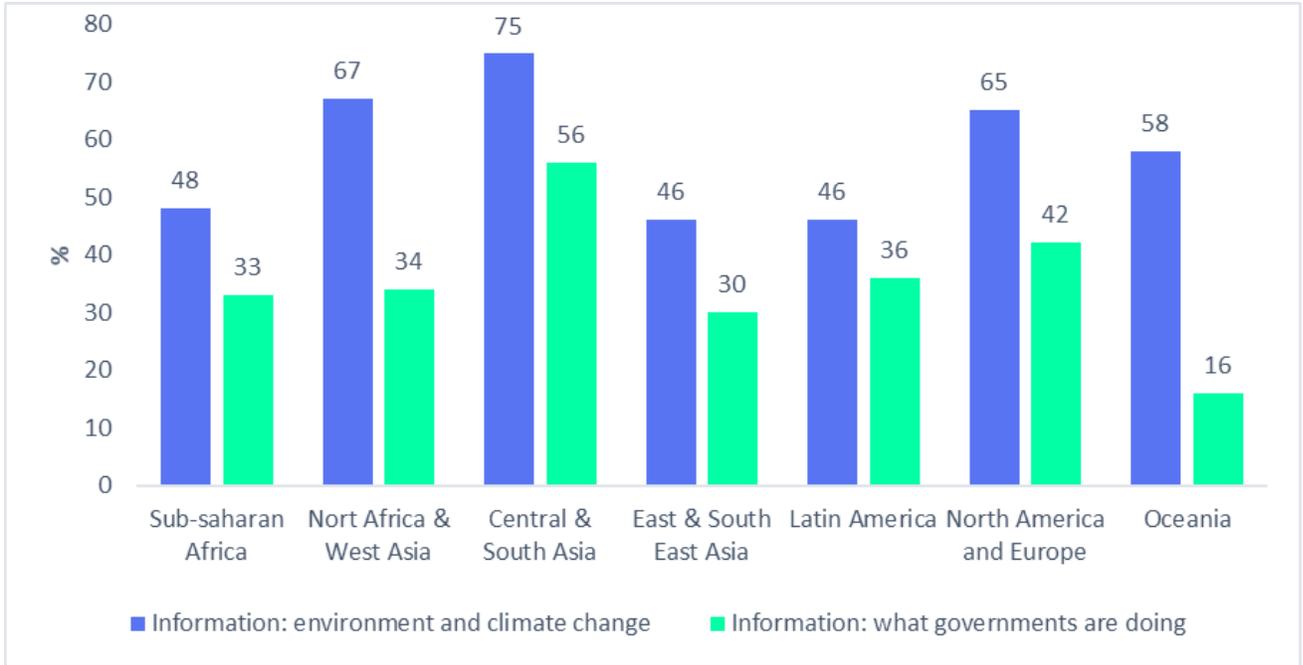


Figure 6: Perceptions on access to information, by region (N, blue bar=6759; N, red bar: 6703)

Word cloud 3: 50 most frequent words when children answer the question 'Would you like to describe your experience of environmental damage and climate change? Describe it here.'

1. Children want to enjoy a clean, healthy environment:

"Every time I go with my father and mother through the river, I see many rivers are blocked and dirty with garbage as well as on the streets. I want to see rivers and roads clean of garbage." (Girl, 13, Indonesia)

"People should avoid damaging the environment." (Girl, 17, Zambia)

"Stop burning chemical materials in mines which are closer to homes and community setups for child protection and reduce pollution. They should also stop throwing waste anyhow." (Boy, 17, Zambia)

"I ask that we be given a space to live where there would be no floods." (I don't want to say, 13, Algeria)

"That they take action now for the protection of the species and the protection of the oceans and not oil in the sea." (I don't want to say, 17, Armenia)

"I want to tell them not to cut trees and pollute the environment." (Boy, 12, India)

2. Children want to be listened to, taken seriously and to work together with adults to bring about change:

"First of all, children want to be heard by adults, taken seriously because we are the future of Brazil and we don't want arrogant adults preparing our future without listening to us." (Girl, 11, Belize)

"We children must be listened to and we must be taught to care for and protect the environment and for that to happen, we must see adults doing what they want us to learn because for us we learn by seeing. If we only see the bad, that is what we are going to do to learn and we are the

future and the future will only exist with a past and a present but just as we are destroying our environment I think we will not have a future..." (Girl, 12, Burundi)

"A chance for people that are not necessarily in organisations or bigger and wider groups to have more say about how climate change affects us and those around us and how it can be changed." (Girl, 17, New Zealand)

"My thinking is that if not only adults but we children work together in Unity, we can make a change in environmental action." (Boy, 14, India)

"Our climate and environment play a very important role in our lives. I want people to understand that the change of climate does not only affect our lives, but our future generations' too. If you stand up together, and put in the effort to make a change, then the environment will thank you. It promises you the freshest air and the purest water, the tallest mountains and the freshest trees, then we must also show our responsibility and promise the restoration of the environment. If we put the effort into it, we can do it. Anything is possible." (Girl, 13, India)

3. Children call for bold, urgent action from governments, corporations and all adults:

"Well firstly I would like to ask adults and the Government to go to the rural areas and see what's happening. People get sick and some die because of climate change that is mostly caused by pollution, for example water pollution and air pollution." (Boy, 16, South Africa)

"In New Zealand, or at least my community, everybody knows about how climate change is bad, but no one really talks about how to fix it. We do plenty of school projects about climate change, but we don't want another lecture about how it's bad. What we want is for companies, corporations, and most importantly, the government to take action. No more talk/marketing schemes, at this point in time we just want the government to accept there is a problem and do something about it. Children and young people want action because we all know there is no way to avoid climate change at our current rate. We know there is a problem so we need solutions." (Girl, 12, New Zealand)

"Please stop polluting. I know that not only adults pollute but if they stop doing it, it could set an example for young people so that they also stop polluting because if we continue polluting we will

not have a planet left to live on neither for us nor for the next generations.” (I don’t want to say, 12, Armenia)

“Adults, stop procrastinating and get moving with us to make a change. we don't want: 'you are the new generation, you have to change the world'. The world, you will rock it with us. I think we need to raise a lot more awareness, not only among adults, but among children, it's really urgent. You have to inform them, motivate them too. I believe that the governments must hurry to make decisions vis-à-vis the behavior of the populations (especially the rich and consumerist countries). Laws should be implemented for the reduction of plastic / GHG emissions at the level of households but also and, very importantly, of large industries. People must be made aware (and therefore informed) of their consumption (which must absolutely be reduced). We need to change mentalities. And for that, we need children and adults, of course.” (Girl, 15, Bangladesh)

4. Children call for international cooperation:

“I think that global warming and other problems cannot be solved unless there is a global cooperation.” (Girl, 11, China)

“You have to look at the global south of the planet, the children and adolescents, because unlike the children of the global north, we were colonised and suffered more for it. Our governments are not acting as they should to protect the environment.” (Boy, 14, Brazil)

“Stop looking at money and seeing which country is more powerful than another. That they look at all people equally and start doing things to raise awareness and care for the environment.” (Boy, 17, Brazil)

“I would like to ask everyone to help and contribute their bit to save the environment and preserve it for future generations.” (Girl, 13, India)

5. Children call for more awareness raising and education on environment and climate change:

"Add information about climate change to the current school curriculum so that all children and youths can attain first hand information on climate climate change." (Boy, 16, Zambia)

"I have experienced how it's like to not feel safe during the stubble burning months in India. I would like to request the UNCRC to keep spreading awareness regarding air pollution." (Girl, 13, India)

"Spreading awareness among people is the first and foremost thing we can do to make them understand about the environment and climate and prevention." (Girl, 15, India)

"I am still in elementary school and don't know much about environmental issues, so I would like you to hold environmental summits for children in elementary, middle and high schools all over Japan to think about and discuss environmental issues and to hold events that will make people more interested in environmental issues. I would like to see the creation of a website like Google dedicated to environmental issues to make it easier for us to obtain information on environmental issues. We will eventually become adults. I believe that it will be useful for us to know more about environmental issues now so that we can deal with them when we grow up. For our future, if UNICEF, UN, etc. could publish the results on their websites, we would be able to understand what they are thinking and cooperate with them. Thank you very much." (Boy, 12, Japan)

"Dear adults, instill in future generations a culture of environmental behavior; inform young people about actions in case of environmental disasters." (Boy, 14, Belarus)

6. Children share their ideas for solutions:

"There are many ways to save our environment. By planting more trees, joining campaigns who spread awareness about the serious damage caused by pollution, decrease the use of a/c, cars, bikes etc." (Girl, 13, India)

"1. Provide more trash cans on the streets so that people can easily throw garbage in its place. 2. Reduce the use of motorized vehicles for short distances, better to walk or use a bicycle." (Girl, 14, Indonesia)

"I know that some adults have their house far away from work but the others who do have it close, please [protect] the climate and environment by starting walking or using your bike. I know you might think it won't make a big change but it will: the change starts from you! There's a lot of things you can start with, for example stop using plastic bags, don't throw your trash out except in trash cans, buy only the things that you need! Recycling also plays a big part in this, recycle/reduce more! 'Look deep into the nature, and then you'll understand everything better.'" (Girl, 13, Kosovo)

"I strongly believe that public transport is the way forward. In the UK, there are so many cars now and most of the time, these massive SUV's that use loads of energy due to their size only have 1 or 2 people in them. Public transport is so much more efficient just the UK government isn't doing enough to improve things like our ancient railway system with massive ticket prices. Also, hybrid cars should stop being sold as they are actually, as I understand it, worst for the environment due to the extra weight. As well as this, people should be informed about the problems with electric cars such as the lithium batteries which require mining which releases lots of CO2 and where that electricity is coming from. If the power is coming from a coal power station, it isn't exactly 'zero emissions' is it!" (Boy, 15, United Kingdom)

"Yes, I would like to tell adults and the entire population in general, that no matter our traits, or where we come from, or how we are, no matter our religion, culture or ideology, each and every one of us must be aware of the problem and we must turn the fight for the care of the environment into a common fight, a daily fight, so that the fight for the care of the Earth does not become a fight for reason. I would like us to be able to think about the future and not see destruction, crisis, but rather see, based on our actions, a prosperous future where life is something fundamental and that leads the care of this house, the earth, above all things. I would like us to see a future where citizens value a plant as much as they do with money, I am faithful to believe in a utopia where no one throws a piece of paper, where no one wastes water and takes care of the planet, a utopia where environmental leaders are considered heroes and non-incendiary and where above all things lead the love, respect and sustainability of society in favour of a future in peace with the planet. I would like to do this through campaigns where we can go out to the streets to raise awareness, implementing awareness projects in schools, where students can have outings to get to know the paramos, and on the other hand they can feel the destruction of the land and know that the

animals, the forests, the ecosystems are in danger and they can act to change it. I would like to participate in initiatives related to sustainability, children's rights and the preservation of life." (Do not want to say, 16, Armenia)

Appendix

Table A1: Effects of climate change and environmental damage, by medical condition

<i>Disability or medical condition</i>	<i>Life changed because of climate change</i>	<i>Life changed because of environmental damage</i>
Yes	47.48	50.84
No	31.85	30.01
Do not know	39.55	48.44
Total	34.87	41.86

Table A2: Most prevalent effects of climate change and situations of environmental damage, by region (%)

What effects of climate change have caused the change?	Sub Saharan Africa	North Africa & West Asia	Central and South Asia	East and SE Asia	Latin America	North America & Europe	Oceania
Extreme temperatures	25	18	32	7	30	10	18
Heavy rain and storms	21	11	11	7	23	8	23
Flooding	25	9	5	4	18	3	17
Drought	26	9	4	3	15	4	15
Forest and wildfires	6	9	4	2	14	6	9
Animals leave natural habitat	9	6	6	3	15	6	11

Which situations of environmental damage have caused the change?

Waste and pollution	36	33	39	14	42	17	32
Deforestation	30	17	20	8	27	14	23
Toxic air	18	37	27	9	29	16	18
Loss of biodiversity	14	9	16	7	26	11	22
Plastics	6	13	12	8	20	10	33

Table A3: Feelings about the environment, by gender

		Boy	Girl	Do not want to say	Other	Total
I do not think about it	N	292	680	233	29	1,234
	per cent	14.64	16.99	33.82	16.02	17.97
I feel optimistic	N	283	476	83	20	862
	per cent	14.19	11.89	12.05	11.05	12.55
I feel worried	N	1,123	2,363	313	104	3,903
	per cent	56.29	59.03	45.43	57.46	56.83
My feelings about environment affect my daily life	N	277	428	49	27	781
	per cent	13.88	10.69	7.11	14.92	11.37
Other	N	20	56	11	1	88
	per cent	1	1.4	1.6	0.55	1.28
Total		1,995	4,003	689	181	6,868

Table A4: Thoughts about the environment, by gender

	Boy	Girl	Do not want to say	Other	Total
Affects children more than adults	61.56	61.22	58.31	62.24	61.05
Affects some children more than others	64.8	64.45	67.17	72.96	65.01
Threatens future generations	80.85	80.33	74.39	84.69	79.99

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