



World Youth
Parliament
for Water

LAC YOUTH
FOR WATER

DECLARATION

Context

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is a region with a per capita water endowment of approximately 22,000 cubic meters, tripling the global average of 6,000 cubic meters per person. This highlights that the primary challenge for water resources is not scarcity but rather the integrated management of resources that belong to individual nations and cross borders.

As young people committed to sustainable water management in Latin America and the Caribbean, we express deep concern over the systemic deficiencies affecting this vital resource. Below, we outline our perspectives on critical issues to transform the region's water reality.



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WORK PROPOSALS

WATER GOVERNANCE AND INEQUALITIES



We observe that water management in the region is severely hindered by the absence of competent, decentralized entities to implement policies and regulations effectively. A Lack of transparency, weak enforcement of regulations, and insufficient participation of ancestral communities, rural and Indigenous groups, and marginalized populations have led to aquifer overexploitation and water-related conflicts. Investment remains concentrated in urban centers, neglecting remote regions and exacerbating inequalities in water access.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION



Millions in the region still lack reliable access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. Fragmented management and poor coordination among governments, public utilities, and other stakeholders have created significant infrastructure gaps. Limited technical capacity among authorities and a comprehensive approach to territorial planning hinder the coverage and maintenance of systems that ensure equitable and high-quality access, particularly affecting vulnerable communities and rural areas.

UNDERINVESTMENT IN WATER SECURITY



Conservation of watersheds, resilient infrastructure, and water management budgets remain underfunded. This lack of resources fuels disorganized development and territorial disparities, increasing vulnerability to extreme climate events and worsening water insecurity. The absence of innovative financial mechanisms and rigorous diagnostics on underinvestment obstructs the mobilization of resources needed to transform water governance.



UNSUSTAINABLE WATER USE IN GROWING CITIES



The rapid growth of cities in Latin America and the Caribbean has led to uncontrolled and inefficient water use. Unplanned urban expansion has resulted in the overexploitation of water sources, affecting resource availability and increasing the risk of shortages. The lack of efficient technologies, waste in distribution systems, and the absence of reuse strategies exacerbate this issue. Additionally, unregulated urbanization negatively impacts surrounding ecosystems, reducing the capacity of watersheds to provide quality water.

POLLUTION AND DETERIORATION OF WATER QUALITY



Groundwater and surface water pollution—caused by untreated discharges, mining, intensive agriculture, and uncontrolled urban expansion—severely compromises water security and public health. Outdated wastewater treatment systems and a lack of automated monitoring prevent compliance with environmental standards. In coastal and Caribbean island areas, saltwater intrusion and inefficient waste management further degrade freshwater sources.

CLIMATE RISKS AND LACK OF INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT



The region's water systems are increasingly vulnerable to climate change impacts. Failure to integrate climate models and information systems into decision-making, coupled with limited cross-border cooperation, restricts the ability to anticipate and adapt to extreme events like droughts, floods, and tropical storms. Weak implementation of nature-based solutions and lack of resilient infrastructure amplify damage to water sources and systems, endangering access to water.



TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES, THE YOUTH OF LAC FOR WATER COLLABORATIVELY PROPOSES TO STRENGTHEN WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT THROUGH:



- Encourage the establishment and consolidation of basin councils and oversight committees that effectively integrate communities, Indigenous peoples, rural sectors, women, and youth. Additionally, it is essential to train local and regional authorities to implement regulations competently and transparently.
- Develop basin-level policies that incorporate water and sanitation management, promoting investments in resilient infrastructure and innovative financial models while ensuring allocated budgets for operation and maintenance. Data collection must be digitized and standardized to monitor service performance and guarantee equitable access, particularly in vulnerable areas.
- Create sustainable financial mechanisms to mobilize resources for watershed conservation and the development of climate-adapted infrastructure. Conducting a rigorous investment assessment and fostering public-private partnerships and international cooperation are crucial to driving long-term project execution.
- Deploy continuous water quality monitoring systems using low-cost innovative technologies, artificial intelligence, and satellite imagery. Regulations must be updated and standardized by industry, with reinforced audits and sanctions. Additionally, wastewater treatment projects should integrate modern technological solutions and active community participation.
- Boost investment in resilient water infrastructure, incorporate climate projections into project design, and promote transboundary cooperation for information exchange and strategy development. Nature-based solutions, water recycling and reuse, and environmental education campaigns are essential to mitigating the effects of extreme events.
- Promote the implementation of circular economy models, the reuse of treated wastewater, and the reduction of losses in distribution networks. Integrating territorial planning with sustainable water management is essential to preventing the overexploitation of water sources.



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OUR VISION

As the World Youth Parliament for Water, we envision a dynamic, collaborative network where national chapters actively engage in regional discussions on water challenges, exchange knowledge, and co-develop solutions with governments and stakeholders. Our regional efforts aim to generate research-based perspectives, functioning as a Think Tank that translates youth expertise into concrete policy recommendations for water authorities, policymakers, the private sector, and local communities. We strive to be the leading youth-driven water governance platform, offering innovative insights and technical expertise to influence decision-making. Our goal is not merely to advocate for youth inclusion but to ensure stakeholders recognize and seek our contributions based on the quality of our research, innovative solutions, and hands-on project engagement. Moving forward, we aspire to evolve beyond the Think Tank model by launching youth-led initiatives and projects in every region, creating lasting and meaningful impact.

In the following link, you will find the full development of the LAC Youth Declaration on Water, which provides a deeper understanding of the ideas previously presented and proposes concrete solutions to the identified issues.

Download the long version



Working in close collaboration and guidance of
the International Secretariat of Water



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Thirsty for change



Contact Us!

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