

Policy Planning for the Youngest Children in a Warming World

An analysis of 10 highly populated countries' climate action plans

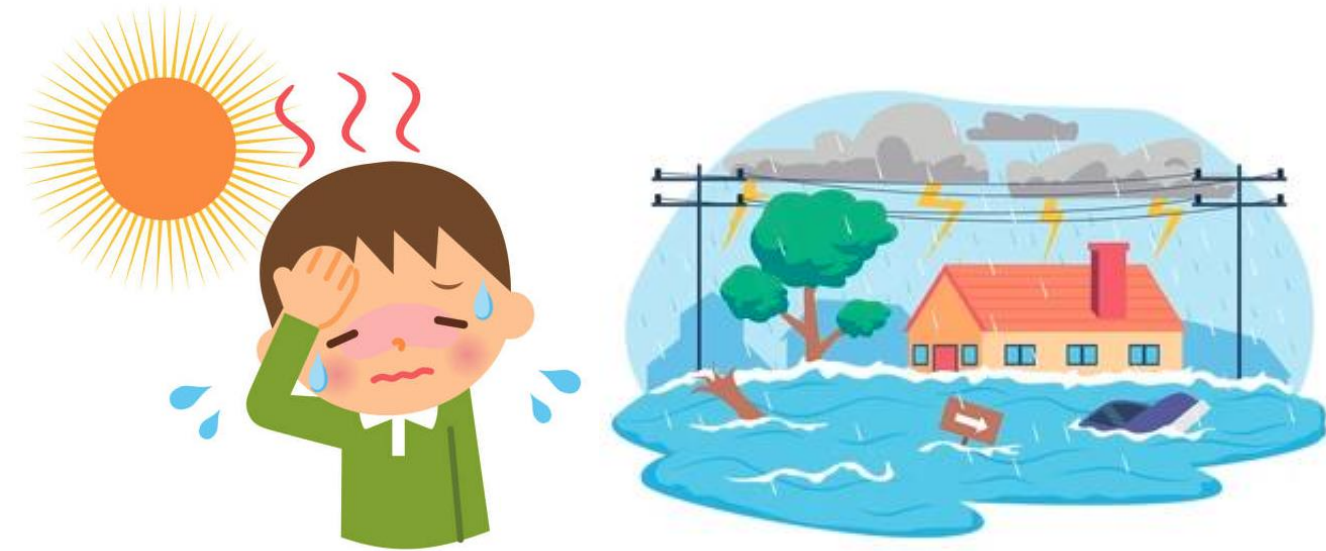
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Children & climate policies



China's Achievements, New Goals and New Measures for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)-2021

- New low-carbon development models
- Carbon peak and carbon neutrality
- Technological support
- What about **CHILDREN**?

Question: whether, to what extent, and how children, especially the youngest ones, are included in national climate action policies?

Research Scope

Top 10 countries by population by 2100¹

- Asia (5): India, China, Pakistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh
- Africa (4): Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Tanzania
- America (1): United States

Analytical method: content analysis using a keyword list

National Climate Policies	Key Objectives
Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)	A country's formal climate action commitment under the Paris Agreement .
National Adaptation Plan (NAP)	National plan to identify medium- and long-term adaptation needs and implementation strategies.
Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategy	A policy framework guided by the Sendai Framework to systematically reduce disaster risks.

¹ Source: [United Nations World Population Prospect 2024](#)

Key Findings - Are children included?

1. Limited and Superficial Inclusion of Children

- Only 6 out of 10 countries even mention children in their NDCs
- **Broad** and **vague** references

Nigeria's updated NDC (2022)

“A **Youth Action Manual** on climate change was developed...as an accessible tool for **youth** taking climate action”

2. Systemic Neglect of ECD

- Children are grouped into one single group (children/youth)
- Only Pakistan and DR Congo included ECD, yet with **a narrow focus** on mortality rates

Pakistan's updated NDC (2021)

“Ensure and adopt measures to **improve child mortality rates** and associated women's health issues.”

Key Findings - How are children included?

1. Predominance of Passive Vulnerability Framing **Without Action**

- Lack of language of turning vulnerability into concrete actions

2. **Fragmented child-critical services** in climate policies

- Nutrition, healthcare, education, protection...

3. Inconsistent **multi-sectoral** approaches

- Children are mostly missed out in NDCs, but generally included in NAPs and DRR strategies.

DR Congo's updated NDC (2021)

“The operationalization of the NDC will only be possible through...guaranteeing...rights for...**boys and girls**, and integrating **children**, young people, indigenous peoples and **other vulnerable groups**.”

Tanzania's National Disaster Management Strategy (2022)

“**Nutrition** interventions are to be strongly integrated into disaster risk reduction ... to reducing the high risk of **children dying**...”

Recommendations for policymakers



1. Make children **visible** in national climate policies

- Explicitly mention and develop child-specific targets and indicators
- Translate recognition of children's vulnerability into actionable programs

2. Prioritize **early childhood development**

- Incorporate ECD considerations into climate mitigation and adaptation strategies
- Connect climate policies with existing ECD programs

3. Integrate child-critical services with **multi-sectoral** collaboration

- Develop and coordinate cross-sectoral policies that address children's interconnected needs



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