



Filipino Youth Agenda for a #BetterNormal

We, the #BetterNormal Youth Champions, representing youth from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, are asserting our commitment to ensure a better future for our nation. We represent the future of the country. We have an important role in the present, and we are duty-bound to participate in actively shaping a just, green and equitable world we envision.

At present, we are in the middle of a global health pandemic that has magnified many broken systems in our society: our generation is experiencing the tremendous pressure of living in a world of overconsumption and wastage; where healthy food and efficient energy sources are inaccessible; where fake news, hatred and division abound; and where there is fear for health and safety.

We are also the generation that will experience the worst consequences of the climate crisis. The impacts which we are seeing now--stronger typhoons, more intense rains and droughts that are affecting our parents' livelihood opportunities and our access to basic needs, are merely a prelude to a warmer world where super typhoons and other extreme weather events are projected to be the norm rather than the exception. The climate crisis is affecting and will continue to affect rich and poor alike, but it is the most vulnerable--youth, women, indigenous peoples, marginalized groups and communities, and those living in poverty--who will suffer the most.

The crises that we are experiencing now are the result of inaction as well as policy-making that does not put people and the environment front and center. We believe that the current pandemic has opened doors that can enable systemic changes so that the youth of today and future generations will have a chance to thrive in a better world.

We stand together today as the generation who will inherit the country, to call on President Duterte and all our leaders to take concrete actions to safeguard our future. We demand a green and just recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. We demand a #BetterNormal for the youth, for the most vulnerable sectors, for Filipinos.

We call on President Duterte and our leaders to:

1. Uphold youth participation within a society that upholds democratic principles

We, the youth, represent more than half of the country's population. The decisions that government and businesses make today will impact the world we will inherit. It is crucial that our voices be heard. In this regard, we call on the government to uphold youth participation in every level of policy decision making, provide platforms for youth participation, and guarantee a society that upholds democratic principles so that we may be free to raise our voice and propose solutions without threats of harassment and from the fear of being labeled as troublemakers.

2. Prioritize solutions to the health and climate crises

Shift to Renewable Energy

A [2018 UN report](#) states that we only have a short window of time to prevent the worst impacts of the

climate crisis. Without ambitious action on climate change, the youth stand to inherit an unlivable world. We are calling on President Duterte and his administration to put climate action at the center of recovery programs to the COVID crisis. In particular, the government should ensure the country works towards 100% renewable energy generation, and phase out coal-fired power plants that cause climate crisis and air pollution. In the face of the climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, what we need are energy sources that are accessible, affordable, available to all Filipinos, and which do not harm human health.

Transition to Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems

A [report](#) released last June by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition recognized that the COVID pandemic has exposed the weakness in our food systems, and that its impacts will strongly affect the poorest and most vulnerable, both in terms of access to food as well as to proper nutrition. In the Philippines, we saw how many people had limited access to healthy and sustainable food in some areas, while farmers in other regions suffer from significant loss due to limited market access, leaving their produce to rot. With the threats of climate crisis growing each day, this is not the last food crisis that Filipinos will face. We demand that the government empower local small holder food producers by investing and directly procuring from them and shortening value chains by advancing zero kilometer food systems. We must also protect local and indigenous knowledge, and allow communities to be active partners in building a better and sustainable food system that we all need. This needs to include the promotion of healthy, plant-based diets that are essential for a healthy lifestyle and which are not reliant on industrial farming systems that harm the planet.

Ensure Green and Livable Cities that Support Sustainable Mobility

We demand national policies that will support green, livable, inclusive and safe cities and municipalities, and which will mandate local governments to ensure community-based city design that incorporates green spaces and eco-friendly infrastructure to support the physiological, mental, and societal well-being of people.

A key component of livable cities is sustainable and inclusive mobility that will displace the predominance of fossil fuel-based transport. The burning of [fossil fuels by motor vehicles](#) is one of the major contributors to the climate crisis. At the same time, it is also a major cause of air pollution in urban areas. Greenpeace [research](#) shows that air pollution from fossil fuels in the Philippines can cause as much as 27,000 premature deaths per year, and can cost the country up to approximately 1.9% of GDP in economic losses annually. Bad air quality [can make people more vulnerable to diseases](#) such as COVID-19, and children are among those who are most affected. We therefore also demand policies on sustainable mobility, green and efficient mass public transport and the promotion of active and micro-mobility that is not reliant on fossil fuels (such as biking and walking) to ensure everyone's well-being while keeping our climate and environment protected.

Promote Zero-Waste

Communities suffer as our planet slowly turns into a plastic planet, driven by “throwaway culture” and enabled by lack of real solutions. Recycling, upcycling, downcycling, and drastic approaches, such as waste incineration, do not address the root of the problem, and will only encourage the continued manufacture of single-use plastic, which ends up as pollution and puts people's health and well-being at risk. We know that the only way to address the waste problems is to stop it from the source. We demand that the government pass a national law to ban the manufacture and use of single-use plastic products and packaging, as an important step to realize waste minimization and reduction at source.

3. Put people at the center of local and national policy-making

We firmly call on our government to put communities at the core of national and local decision-making. Laws and policies must be community-responsive and in order to reflect what Filipinos need. COVID19 has shown us an opportunity to fix the problems and to do it right, but the government must ensure that all recovery efforts must lead to a better normal that will help us build resilience against future pandemics and emergencies, as well as ensure a society that puts the well-being of the people and the environment, first.

We commit, collectively and individually, to do our part by being active citizens not only for the benefit of fellow youth, but also for the Filipino people as a whole. However, we believe that action from all levels of government, as well as democratic processes that enable people participation in nation building, are key to realizing the better normal—not only to recover from the pandemic, but also to address the much bigger climate crisis and its related emergencies.

We call on our fellow Filipino youth to raise their voice and support this declaration. And we call on the Philippine government, led by President Duterte, to heed the voice of the youth and adopt the youth agenda to ensure a better normal for present and future generations of Filipinos.

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Contact Person:

Kisha Muana

Oceans Campaigner, Greenpeace Philippines

kmuana@greenpeace.org

Note: The *#BetterNormal Youth Movement* is composed of young leaders from all over the Philippines committed to ensure livable and lovable cities for the #BetterNormal. They are part of Greenpeace Philippines *#BetterNormalYouthAgenda* campaign aiming to mobilize young people, ages 18-30 years old, to care about the future of Philippine cities and communities and support the local government units. The campaign seeks to redefine how we, as a society, reimagine our better cities.