

Statement by delegates of the G7 Youth Summit (Y7) in response to the United States' decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement

From May 7-9, 2017, G7 Youth Summit (Y7) delegates met in Rome to negotiate a communique on the theme «Rethinking innovation as catalyst for an inclusive, open, and sustainable growth», which was delivered to the G7 leaders who met in Taormina, Italy on May 26-27.

We, delegates of the 2017 G7 Youth Summit (Y7), the official Youth Engagement Group of the G7 Summit, issue the following statement in response to the United States' decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement.

Climate change is a systemic challenge that requires international commitment in order to be addressed effectively, but effective diplomacy is based on trust. This underpins why states should honour international commitments that concern the entire international community. Reasoned debates are based on facts, and science provides evidence that climate change is occurring and that it is human-induced.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), global average temperatures increased by 0.85°C between 1880-2012. Arctic sea-ice extent decreased between 3.5% and 4.1% per decade between 1979-2012, and global mean sea level rose by 0.19 m between 1901-2010. The dominant cause of global warming is the increased amount of human-induced greenhouse gas emissions, which has led to atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide that are unprecedented in the last 800,000 years.

As delegates representing the interests of our youth, we exchanged views on addressing common issues that affect us all and learned first hand the importance of constructive dialogue to tackle global challenges such as climate change.

We are deeply concerned by climate change since it poses a threat not only to our respective jurisdictions, but the entire world. Climate change is an issue that transcends borders, identities, and political systems. It poses a serious threat to our own survival and the ecosystem by reducing water resources, affecting food security, accelerating the mass extinction, and increasing the risk of extreme weather events.

However, climate change not only urges us to act, it also presents an incredible opportunity to innovate. To rethink how cities are designed, infrastructure, transportation, how energy is generated, and meet emerging market demands that are more sustainable for our planet. The opportunities are endless. We presented several propositions to the G7 Presidency which outlined bold yet realistic steps to start addressing complex societal, economic, and environmental challenges. We believe that the transition to the Fourth Industrial Revolution - the digital revolution that has been occurring since the mid 20th century and is characterized by a fusion of technologies as anticipated by the WEF - can help to protect the environment and to enhance the well-being of workers and people.

Acknowledging climate change as a serious threat is the first step to finding actionable solutions, this includes recognizing indigenous knowledge, science and evidence-based research to enhance environmental stewardship.

The American delegation of the Y7 would like to highlight that fifty-nine percent of Americans and sixty-seven percent of Americans under the age of 40 oppose the decision to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement. We call on the United States federal government to reaffirm their commitment to the Paris Accord, and that all states reaffirm their commitment to implement the Paris Agreement swiftly.

As youth representatives at the G7, we welcome opportunities to work with government and non-governmental groups - within and outside the G7 - to address climate change, promote green growth, and innovation. We look forward to collaborating and discussing in our respective jurisdictions the communique we delivered, and will continue to find opportunities for collaboration to discuss this issue which is of critical importance to the entire world.