

BRIEF FOR MOS HOW TO ENGAGE WITH COP21



WHAT IS COP?

COP stands for Conference of Parties – with ‘parties’ meaning the countries that ratified the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The stated and agreed objective of the UNFCCC is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to prevent dangerous levels of human interference with the climate system. Each year, signatories to the Convention meet to advance that objective and to discuss and adopt measures to address climate change and its impacts on our society. This COP will be the twenty-first to take place since the signing of the UNFCCC, hence COP21.

WHY DOES WAGGGS ATTEND?

Climate change may be the most important issue of our time, one that particularly matters to, and for, young people.

The decisions that are made this year at COP21 will dramatically impact what kind of world today’s young people inherit. As the largest voluntary organisation for girls and young women in the world, WAGGGS has a responsibility to advocate for the rights of girls and young women and ensure that their voices and interests are represented and acknowledged in global decision-making.

For Girl Guides & Girl Scouts in particular, the environment and sustainability have been important thematic issues in our work for many years. Girls have learned about these issues and taken action in their community – they are engaged and invested in protecting our planet and ensuring a sustainable future.

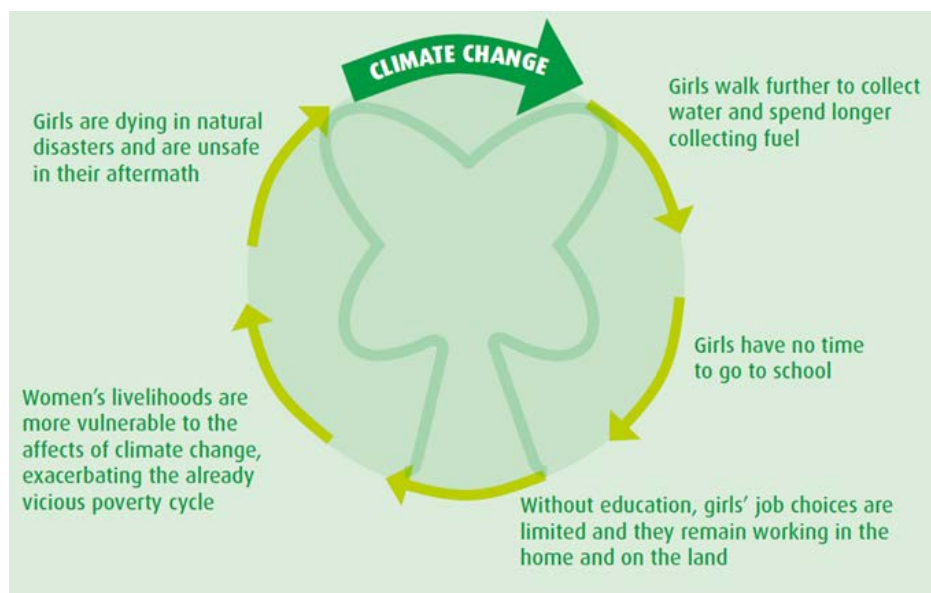
WHY IS COP21 SO IMPORTANT?

At COP17, held in Durban in 2011, nations agreed to establish a new, legally binding agreement to limit global warming by 2015. This year is the final deadline for creating that new agreement, meaning that this COP may be the most important conference on climate change ever held.

If we do not reach a bold agreement this year, we will lose any hope of limiting global warming to 2°C above pre-industrial levels, which scientists have told us is the maximum safe limit we can allow. Beyond this limit, climate change may begin to accelerate very rapidly and the impacts of climate change – including rising sea levels, extreme storms, droughts, etc. – will become catastrophic.

HOW DOES CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECT GIRLS & YOUNG WOMEN?

Girls & young women are already disproportionately impacted by disasters & extreme weather and will continue bear the brunt as climate change intensifies.



As weather patterns become more extreme, it is girls & young women – who so often bear primary responsibility for food, water, and fuel collection – who must cope with the challenges of securing these increasingly scarce resources. As girls’ domestic chores become more time-consuming and as income pressures intensify, they are more likely to be pulled out of school and forced into income-generating activities.

When disaster strikes, it is girls & women who lose their lives in greater numbers. In some recent natural disasters – including the 2004 Asian tsunami – upwards of 80% of lives lost were those of women & girls.

And following disasters, it is girls & young women who are exposed to a severe risk of sexual assault and violence in shelters and refugee camps. In addition, devastated and desperate families often marry off their young daughters, increasing girls’ risk of early and forced marriage.

Currently girls’ unique needs and vulnerabilities go overlooked and unrecognized in disaster resilience and response programming. Governments must recognize that vulnerability to climate change is exacerbated and compounded by gender inequality and that building support for girls’ rights must be a part of climate change initiatives.

WHAT IS WAGGGS ASKING FOR?

WAGGGS calls on world leaders to reach an agreement in Paris that will limit global warming to safe levels. Recent research indicates that this may still just barely be possible, but will require immediate and aggressive action. At COP21, we need an agreement that is:

- **Ambitious:** We need to take urgent and concerted action to drastically reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases.
- **Equitable:** Any agreement must be fair and fully in line with the principle of common-but-differentiated responsibility (CBDR), recognizing countries’ distinct historical responsibilities for current emissions levels. The agreement must also embody the principle of intergenerational equity and ensure that today’s young people inherit a liveable world.
- **Binding:** The agreed framework must be legally binding with an effective compliance mechanism established to ensure nations are held accountable for and fulfill their agreed obligations.

WAGGGS also calls for:

- Girls’ unique vulnerabilities to climate change to be recognized and accounted for in planning.
- Girls to be educated and equipped to participate in decision-making on climate change issues.
- Girls to be substantively involved and consulted in the design of action plans and programs to ensure that their needs and rights are addressed.

For full details on WAGGGS’ messages, we encourage you to download our Position Statement on COP21 from our website.

THE WAGGGS DELEGATION TO COP21

This year's delegation is composed of four youth delegates and six remote delegates. The remote delegates are full-fledged members of the delegation – attending regular trainings, participating in the delegation's working groups, and helping to engage members on a national level – but they will not be attending COP21 in Paris.

Our delegates who will be representing WAGGGS in Paris come from:

- **Sweden**
- **France**
- **Costa Rica**
- **Maldives**

And our remote delegates come from:

- **USA**
- **Ireland**
- **Lebanon**
- **Tanzania**
- **Kiribati**

IF YOUR MO HAS A DELEGATE PARTICIPATING IN COP21, YOU CAN SUPPORT HER BY:

Before COP21:

- **Providing training.** WAGGGS provides the delegation with training, but you can make sure she's briefed on national projects and initiatives so that she is prepared to promote what work your MO is doing. Provide her
- **Contacting your country's national delegation.** You can also support her to contact her national delegation that will be travelling to Paris. Is your country sending a youth delegate? If not, would they consider doing so, or even including our WAGGGS delegate in the official delegation? Would it be possible to arrange a meeting? You may be able to help your delegate get more traction with officials than she would have on her own.

During COP21:

- **Publicizing the delegation's work.** Follow the delegation on social media, and work with local & international press to raise awareness about the team's efforts in Paris.

After COP21:

- **Organizing opportunities for her to share her experience.** This sharing could be with other Girl Guides/ Scouts - through internal events - or with the wider community thou
- **Assisting her with her action project.** We ask all delegates to complete a follow-up action project. The format of this project is very flexible – we leave it up to the delegate and to you as her MO to choose what type of project would most benefit your membership. We do ask that you give your delegate your full support and work with her to make her action project a reality.

WHAT IS COY?

Our delegates will also be attending the Conference of Youth (COY) immediately prior to COP21. This year, 5000 young people from all over the world are expected to gather in Paris for three days of workshops and activities designed to help young activists share skills and ideas for how to tackle climate change.

Simultaneously with the COY in Paris, there will be 'local COYs' organized in cities around the world, including:

Montreal, Canada
Florianopolis, Brazil
Nouméa, New Caledonia
Porto Novo, Benin

Rabat, Morocco
Antananarivo, Madagascar
Tokyo, Japan
Ahmedabad, India

If there's a COY happening near you, join in!

HOW CAN YOU ENGAGE YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

There are many ways you and your members can be involved:

- **Learn about climate change** using our [Climate Change: Take Action Now Toolkit](#). Choose some of the activities from Part 1 of the curriculum to help your members understand climate change and how it is impacting their communities.
- **Encourage girls to send in their messages on why climate change is important to them.** In the weeks leading up to COP21, we will be collecting girls' perspectives on climate change and how it's affecting them. We're asking girls around the world to submit a photo or short video in the format: 'I'm asking world leaders to take action on climate change because _____. ' For more information on how to submit, please visit [GirlsForAGreenerFuture.Tumblr.com](#). We will take these messages with us to be displayed and shared at COP21 in Paris so girls' voices can be heard.
- **Join a local COY on November 26-28 if there's one near you.** Simultaneously with the Conference of Youth in Paris, there will be COYs in cities on every continent around the world. If there isn't a COY happening near you, consider organizing one! For more information on the COYs, email international@coy11.org
- **Join one of the worldwide mobilization events on November 29.** To create pressure and momentum ahead of COP21, climate activists will be organizing major demonstrations around the world. From London to Johannesburg, from Tokyo to Sao Paulo, people in cities around the world will be organizing. [Find an event near you](#) and help make it clear to world leaders that young people around the world want to see real action in Paris!
- **Start or join a campaign to pressure your city, your state, or your nation to move toward renewable energy.** We need to switch to 100% renewable energy by 2050, and if we are to reach this goal, we need to start now! [Our Climate Change: Take Action Now Toolkit](#) and our [Advocacy Toolkit](#) contain tips and suggestions for how to mount an effective campaign.

If you have any questions on how you and your membership can take action on climate change, please contact Gabriella Pinto: gabriella.pinto@wagggg.org.

This is a critical moment to ensure today's girls inherit a liveable world.

Please join us and help make COP21 count!