

ARI at COP29 Azerbaijan

As ARI participates in COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, we stand firm in our commitment to addressing critical funding gaps for youth-led and community-driven initiatives across the West Asia North Africa region (WANA). Despite the urgent need for climate action, funding remains insufficient and largely inaccessible for the very groups who are leading transformative changes on the ground. We strongly advocate for grant-based financing over loans for fragile states, ensuring that these regions can build resilience without incurring unsustainable debt.

Our vision for an inclusive and just climate finance future

At COP29, ARI is dedicated to amplifying the voices of youth addressing the barriers they face in accessing climate finance. *There is no climate justice without human rights justice in the WANA region.* We call on global leaders and financial institutions to recognize the needs of the WANA region who will be affected the most by climate change and collaborate with researchers, think tanks and advocates in building a fair, accessible, and sustainable climate finance system.

By working together to fulfil these demands and initiatives, we can forge a climate finance framework that not only mitigates climate impacts but also strengthens communities to adapt to climate change. We are committed to this mission at COP29 and beyond, creating pathways to a sustainable, just, and resilient future for all.

Call for improved funding access for youth and community-led initiative

Existing funding channels currently do not fully meet the needs, and access to finance remains highly restricted for youth-led and community-led initiatives across WANA. Access

barriers, political interests and processes, significantly hinder local leaders who are best positioned to implement effective, locally adapted climate solutions.

At COP29, ARI will strongly advocate for financial structures that directly address these disparities, enabling youth and communities to meaningfully contribute to climate action.

Grant-based financing for fragile states

To protect economically vulnerable states, especially those impacted by conflict and instability, ARI calls for a decisive shift from loan-based to grant-based climate finance. Loans exacerbate financial strain on fragile states, impeding their ability to invest in sustainable adaptation. By prioritizing grants, we can ensure that these communities have the resources to build long-term resilience without increasing their debt burden.

Equity in climate finance: centering youth and marginalized voices

We urge global leaders to integrate equity as a foundational principle of climate finance. Youth, women, and marginalized communities must be given a central role in decision-making processes and resource distribution, ensuring that climate solutions are as inclusive as they are impactful. Local communities often bear the brunt of climate impacts, yet they receive the least support.

Capacity building and sustainable partnerships for youth-led and women-led organizations in promoting climate finance and a just environmental transition

Climate resilience requires more than just funding, it demands sustained investment in the capacity and expertise of youth-led organizations. ARI advocates for ongoing capacity-building initiatives and strategic partnerships to ensure local communities have the skills and support needed to drive lasting change. Technical training, access to resources, and operational capacity are essential for youth-led organizations to grow and sustain their

impact. We are committed to gender-driven Just transition through a “gender-responsive just transition and climate action” partnership as global leaders mentioned at the COP 28.

Transparent and accessible climate finance mechanisms to Promote Just Environment Transition

Transparency in fund allocation and eligibility criteria is essential for equitable access. ARI demands streamlined, accessible funding pathways for WANA organizations, with clear guidelines and simplified application processes. By removing excessive bureaucratic barriers, we can create a climate finance system that truly empowers community-centered initiatives.

Our key messages

1. Supporting youth-driven climate action through simplified funding models

ARI is pushing for accessible, streamlined funding models under the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG), specifically designed to empower youth-led climate solutions. These models must reduce administrative burdens and offer technical support to local organizations implementing community-centred climate action.

2. Advocating for a shift to grant-based financing

We are calling for a critical shift from loan-based to grant-based financing, particularly for adaptation efforts in fragile WANA states. Influencing donor policies to prioritize grants over loans is crucial for building resilience without adding debt burdens to economically vulnerable regions.

3. Promoting equity and inclusion in climate finance

ARI champions inclusive finance structures that prioritize youth, women, marginalized groups, and local communities in climate finance decisions. Embedding these perspectives in both policy formulation and funding allocation fosters a climate strategy that is equitable, responsive, and empowering for communities on the frontlines of climate change.

4. Building capacity for sustainable impact

Resources dedicated to capacity-building and partnerships are critical for supporting long-term climate resilience. ARI calls for sustained investments in technical training, resource access, and operational support for youth-led organizations, as well as the development of regional partnerships to amplify local climate actions.

5. Ensuring transparency and accessibility in climate finance

Transparent fund allocation is vital for building trust and expanding access. ARI demands clearer eligibility criteria, simplified application processes, and improved transparency in funding distribution, ensuring that local and emerging organizations can confidently engage in climate finance initiatives.

At COP29 and beyond, ARI remains committed to creating pathways to a sustainable, just, and resilient future for all. By advocating for equitable climate finance, direct support for youth-led initiatives, and a shift towards grant-based funding, we aim to forge a climate finance framework that not only mitigates climate impacts but also empowers communities to adapt and thrive.

If you would like to connect with ARI and engage with us during COP29, please reach out to us at reachout2EPP@arab-reform.net .