MIND OUR FUTURE!
CRITICAL YOUTH ON
SOLAR GEOENGINEERING

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Youth Statement on SRM

Mind Our Future!

Do not hand us false solutions that postpone climate action.

Summary

By nature, solar radiation management (SRM) *shifts the burden of solving the root causes of the climate crisis to youth and future generations. In neglect of intergenerational justice, this burden-shifting places extra costs onto youth and future generations instead of taking immediate and meaningful action in the present.*

There is an insoluble knowledge gap on the risks and uncertainties of SRM. If research is undertaken on this technology and its impacts, contingent upon global public consensus regarding the necessity of such research, it should appropriately prioritise addressing its environmental, ethical, and political risks. Instead, non-steered research by private actors without civil society input has demonstrated a trend in investigations that more heavily emphasise the benefits over the uncertainties, risking the unjust legitimisation of SRM. Based on current knowledge, the risks and uncertainties would be unprecedented and ultimately unknowable until implemented on a global scale over an extended period. Therefore, we support an international non-use agreement[1]*.*

False Solution

Speculative SRM approaches do not offer a "solution" to the climate crises. By artificially blocking a portion of incoming solar radiation, SRM approaches would merely mask the global effects of greenhouse gases without addressing their underlying cause. Not only is SRM illegitimate as a climate solution, it is also a risky measure. According to the IPCC, SRM would "*...introduce a widespread range of new risks to people and ecosystems, which are not well understood.*".[2] The intervention would greatly affect ecosystems and could, for instance, significantly influence regional rain patterns impacting food systems and risking floods and droughts—only one of many possible ecological ramifications. Such potential regional impacts would especially impact communities in the Global South, further threatening social and planetary justice at local, national and global scales.

Ultimately, the potential regional and global climate impacts of SRM are unknowable via small-scale experimentation or models. *Regarding the proposal from*

[1] https://www.solargeoeng.org/
[2] IPCC (2023), AR6, Section 3

a.o. Switzerland to establish an expert group, therefore, we are in direct contestation. Scientific research into SRM has already identified the knowledge barrier regarding potential impacts, thus an expert group only risks unjust legitimisation of SRM and continues to divert climate governance resources away from the real climate solutions. We support the call for an ***International Non-Use Agreement on Solar Geoengineering.***

Representation and discretion

We cannot allow unsteered research. *If an expert group were established, clear guidelines on both the composition of such a group and its directionality would be needed, as previous research has been dominated by proponents of SRM and researchers from the global north. Given the diverse impacts at stake, it is essential that any acceptable expert group and associated assessment be inclusive of: i) various types of disciplinary knowledge, ii) local and indigenous knowledges; iii) meaningful input from civil society; iv) leadership and oversight from member states, and v) a sole focus on evaluating risks and uncertainties.*

We are in favour of strong restrictive language in any resolution text, a clear reference to the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as the precautionary principle.

Pushing the burden

From a youth perspective, SRM is translating the challenges of and priorities for climate action into another global governance challenge for future generations. By nature, SRM would need to be governed at a global scale to mask the effects of accelerated atmospheric warming. A governing body capable of facilitating such '*management*' is currently non-existent and implausible to develop in the near future. Stratospheric aerosol injection (SAI), a widely discussed SRM technique, risks lock-in to avoid '*termination shock*' – the risk that after termination of SRM use, temperatures would rise suddenly, shocking climate systems – and thus would need to be deployed for at least a century. This would therefore necessitate the need for stable and consistent governance throughout multiple generations. SRM entails handing future generations an inconceivable governance problem in addition to the already severe risks to the climate and to societies. This certainly does not promote intergenerational justice. This can be avoided if real climate solutions are undertaken now.

Please, do not risk global and regional climate systems to burden future generations with an inconceivable global governance challenge.
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Recommendations:

1. **Do not support the call for an expert group**
2. **Work towards a *Non-use Agreement on Solar Geoengineering***
3. **Listen to the voices of Youth actors and from the Global South**

Resources:

Sixth Assessment Report, IPCC

Solar geoengineering non-use agreement

Decision 19/5 African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Resolution 2023/2636 European Parliament

Decision X/33 COP10 Convention on Biological Diversity

Solar Geoengineering Research Toolkit