

# Climate Activist Felicia Davis, Unveils Global Youth Initiatives at COP28



*HBCU Green Fund delegation stops for a photo after a press conference at UN COP28 in Dubai announcing global youth initiatives and opening of Africa office in Dakar, Senegal. Atlanta, GA and Washington, DC – Distinguished climate activist and founder of the HBCU Green Fund, Felicia Davis, took center stage at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, making groundbreaking announcements that underscore the organization's commitment to global climate action and youth empowerment. In a momentous press conference, Davis announced the official opening of the HBCU Green Fund's new Africa office in Senegal and revealed plans for the third annual Pre-COP Africa, African American*

Youth Climate Summit, set to take place in Dakar in June 2024.

✘ “Establishing a significant presence in Africa positions HBCU Green Fund to give voice to people most impacted by climate change and help to cultivate innovative youth leadership,” Davis commented.

Cheikhou Thiome, HBCU Green Fund’s Africa director, adds, “Our Pre-COP29 summit will bring young leaders, activists, and innovators from the United States and across Africa together in Dakar, Senegal to engage in constructive dialogues, share insights, and ignite climate action.”

HBCU Green Fund’s Managing Director, Illai Kenney, shared insights into the organization’s extensive involvement at COP28, with eight delegates from the United States credentialed through partner Omega Institute, and network representatives from 12 African countries. Kenney emphasized the HBCU Green Fund’s dedication to empowering future leaders through supporting youth led projects in Africa and the US.

“We have a unique Eco Spring Break program that is a service-learning experience connecting HBCU students with peers in West Africa that involves hands-on environmental restoration projects. The program offers students, faculty, and alumni the chance to plant trees, dig wells, plant gardens and gain firsthand experience in addressing environmental challenges,” said Kenney.

Dr. Mustafa Santiago Ali, executive vice president, National Wildlife Federation; Hussein Kassim, Ghana project director; Sharon Gakii Mureithi, Kenya project director, and Denise Ayebare, Uganda local youth coordinator, joined Davis, Kenney, and Thiome for the press conference.

In addition to the press conference, HBCU Green Fund delegates actively contributed to multiple COP28 side events. Davis

delivered a powerful keynote speech at the Uganda Pavilion emphasizing the role of youth in addressing the climate crisis. She also participated in a panel discussion with Dr. Ali at the Kenya Pavilion and Lucky Abeng, a coordinator from Nigeria, organized a conversation that included contributions from Davis and Mithika Mwenda, executive director of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance. Davis also contributed to side events organized by young climate leaders from Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, and Tanzania.

Another member of the delegation, Pamela Fann of Impact Energy, moderated a discussion about the energy transition with Davis as a panelist. Fann also coordinated sessions for partner organization, Harambee House/Center for Environmental Justice, featuring renowned environmental justice leader and executive director Dr. Mildred McClain.

Young leaders in the HBCU Green Fund delegation played a pivotal role in several youth events. Kenney, a former youth activist and the youngest speaker at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in South Africa in 2002, spoke about cultivating young leaders at the launch of the Stone Soup for a Sustainable World Curriculum. She also organized and facilitated the HBCU Green Fund's day-long workshop and 2024 strategy session for youth delegates. The workshop included a briefing by the founder of the Chisholm Legacy Project, Jacqui Patterson, along with her team, on the Global Afro-Descendant Climate Justice Collaborative.

In response to the overall outcome of COP28, Davis says, "A stronger commitment to phasing out fossil fuels remains a reach; however, acknowledging the need to transition away from fossil fuels is still a small step forward. Ultimately, it is action rather than rhetoric that will make the difference for vulnerable communities already impacted by climate change." She continued, "The HBCU Green Fund's impactful presence at COP28 reflects its commitment to global climate action, sustainability, and empowering the next generation of leaders

in the fight against climate change.”

For more information on the HBCU Green Fund, Sustainable Africa Network, or the 2024 Pre-COP Africa, African American Youth Climate Summit, visit [hbcugreenfund.org](https://hbcugreenfund.org) or check for @hbcugreenfund on social media.