




Pre- Human Rights Council (HRC) Youth Forum Declaration

Declaration developed by more than 100 youth in collaboration with different youth organisations during a one day preessional youth forum convened by World YWCA at the 32nd HRC Session in Geneva, Switzerland on the 10th of June 2016.

It was supported by some Member States (UK, US, Swiss, Canada) UN Entries and the following Youth organisations and partners:



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2016 Pre-Human Rights Council (HRC) Youth Forum Declaration

on including Young People and their priorities in the work of the Human Rights Council

Preface

Words and phrases in **Bold** are defined at the end of this document.

Preamble

We, the **Young People** of the world in all of our diversities, build on our visions for the future and want to secure, respect, and enjoy our human rights as expressed in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and multiple human rights instruments. We note that while leaders worldwide speak to the need to secure human rights for all through implementation at all levels, youth voices continue to be marginalized within, and excluded from, official processes of the Human Rights Council (HRC).

We seek to ensure coherence between commitments made to secure our human rights and we bring with us the voices and the recommendations we made to the 60th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). We ground ourselves in the spirit of the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR); the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA); the Secretary General's Global Strategy on Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The HRC and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) provide an effective accountability framework and mechanism for us as rights holders to effectively monitor and report on the implementation of these commitments and to contribute to building the future we envision for ourselves, each other and future generations. We are here to learn, to share experiences and to shape the discourse on equality, rights and empowerment. We therefore

make these observations and recommendations, in this first Pre-HRC Youth Forum Declaration, with full responsibility to our lives, communities, countries and the world at large. The 2016 Pre-HRC Youth Forum calls upon the Human Rights Council 32nd Session to formally adopt the following recommendations:

Young People’s Right to Participation in Decision-Making

1. Institutionalize and adequately resource an annual Youth HRC Forum as an integrated component of the HRC, and ensure that a **Youth Delegate** presents the Youth Declaration to the Council.
2. Ensure that priorities outlined herein are included in the decisions of the Council, and ensure that every high-level panel, side and parallel event at every HRC includes a minimum of one **Young Person**.
3. Create a transparent accountability mechanism and clearly defined metrics specifically mandated to monitor and publish the Member States’ commitments related to youth.
4. Request ongoing support, resources and collaboration for:
 - a. The implementation of the recommendations in this document.
 - b. The development of metrics used for tracking the progress and impact of the recommendations in this document.
 - c. Writing and publishing progress reports and case studies around the implementation of the recommendations in this document.
 - d. Enabling initiatives, including research and development, of open source implementation strategies aimed at effectively and efficiently attaining the SDGs by youth experts.
5. Share power and create space to ensure – beyond tokenism – full and meaningful participation of young people in all their diversities in leadership and decision-making at all levels and across all sectors, including in governments and parliaments. Youth in all their diversities include, but are not limited to: young women and girls, Indigenous youth, Afro-descendant youth, youth of all castes; ethnicities and communities; Lesbian, Gay; Bisexual, Transgender; Queer or Questioning; Intersex; Asexual; and Pansexual (LGBTQIAP) youth, youth of all gender and sexual identities; youth members of language minorities; youth living with disabilities; youth living without economic security; youth who have been displaced from their homes; youth migrants; youth living in the context of war and humanitarian crisis; youth who do sex work; youth living with HIV;

youth who have left school early; youth who use drugs, youth who are survivors of abuse and violence; and youth who have been incarcerated (based on the Bali Declaration and CEDAW General Recommendation 28, para 18).

6. Recognise and respect that Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination and that by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development (UNDRIP Article 3).
7. Ensure and enable political participation of youth, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Accessible information about and easy access to voting.
 - b. Education around the right to run for political office at all levels.
 - c. Effective and **Sustainable Mentorship** during all stages of political participation.
 - d. Support and enable the formation of **Youth Parliaments**.
 - e. Ensuring support and resources for **youth human rights advocates, defenders, feminists** to participate fully and equally in international forums like HRC for advocacy and policy-making, and remove the barriers to meaningful participation including, but not limited to: visa refusals, political detainment, lack of financial support, and lack of access to leadership skill development.

Youth, Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) & HIV

8. Ensure universal access to a range of reproductive health services, including safe and effective voluntary contraceptives, maternal health care, safe and legal abortion and post-abortion care free from coercion, discrimination and violence (based on CSW58 AC, para 42(o)) including upholding all young people's right to be free from interference with their bodily integrity perpetrated by any actor, including, inter alia, medical, cultural and traditional practitioners and ensure all young person's free prior and informed consent.
9. Ensure that all UN Member States commit to removing all legal and regulatory barriers that limit child and youth access to SRH services, education and information, including, but not limited to restrictions based on age, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, Indigenous status, or any other status.
10. Ensure the promotion and protection of the human rights of youth in all their diversities to have control over their lives and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) (based on the Bali Youth Forum Declaration and the Beijing PFA, para 96).

11. Ensure that all SRH services are affordable, confidential, gender and sexuality identity sensitive, child/youth friendly, and are designed and monitored by those whom they are meant to serve. Information should be easily accessible in all relevant languages in each context (e.g. Indigenous languages, Braille, sign languages).
12. Ensure that intimate partner violence, child sexual abuse, human sex trafficking, and marital rape are always treated as punishable offences and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Youth & Migration

13. Recognize and take urgent action to address the root causes of intraregional and inter-regional migration including military occupation; climate injustice; and poverty rooted in systemic colonialism and global capitalism that treats youth as labourers and commodities rather than as rights holder
14. Allocate and raise sufficient long-term development funds for initiatives focused on supporting and fostering the development and well-being of migrant youth and unaccompanied minors.
15. Enact laws and programs protecting the rights and well-being of migrant youth who have not been granted asylum, but cannot return to their countries of origin.
16. Ensure that Indigenous youth, are not forcibly removed from their lands or territories, and that no relocation takes place without the free, prior and informed consent of the Indigenous peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return (based on UNDRIP Article 10).
17. Enhance access to education and employment for migrant youth through reusable open source educational materials, access to free technology resources.

Youth Employment, Entrepreneurship & Economic Empowerment

18. Promote social entrepreneurship, meaningful employment and access to capital for youth by:
 - a. Creating and implementing legislation to incentivise the formation and fostering the development of **Benefit Corporations** by using profit business models to help achieve the global goals while having a fiduciary responsibility for triple bottom line impact.

- b. Ensuring that Social Entrepreneurship Education & Financial Literacy are taught at the earliest levels of schooling and reinforced through educational and governmental institutions.
- c. Ensuring sustainable access to Grants, Equity, and Impact Investment Capital magnified through Cross Sector Partnerships and **U.N. Entrepreneurship** initiatives.

Youth, Gender & Diversity

19. Resource, support and enable the capacity development of young people in all their diversities and ensure gender equality across all decision-making structures.
20. Create a set of inclusive, non-discriminatory, standard and transferable gender and diversity policies for all workplaces and schools, following human rights based approach.
21. Promote bottom-up approaches in policies on respecting and embracing difference and create an environment for enabling behavioural change towards respect for diversity.
22. Intensify the implementation of laws, policies and strategies that eliminate all forms of harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
23. Scale-up community-based gender-transformative programmes that ensure the full engagement of men and boys in achieving gender equality.

Youth, Innovation & Education

24. Enable **Learning to Care** of youth by providing opportunities for empathy-building activities and volunteering, including, but not limited to, participation in community-based activities within the framework of formal school curriculum (in particular at primary and secondary level).
25. Institutionalise humanitarian and Human Rights Education.
26. Support the creation of collaborative learning environments with teachers, parents, and students, by encouraging the use of innovative approaches.
27. Actively support youth-led and youth-targeted education programmes, including non-formal, peer-to-peer and experience-based (hands-on) education, as well as vocational trainings making sure that no youth is left behind, including the marginalised.
28. Partner with relevant actors (such as ICT companies, NGOs, international organisations) to increase investments in innovative education tools, technology and infrastructure to bridge the digital divide to ensure that all young people have access as users and innovators of education technologies.

Youth as Agents of Change

29. Support initiatives that enable and foster the research and development on and implementation of **Sustainable Mentorship** of youth and their meaningful participation in political and decision-making processes.
30. Enhance accessibility of official UN documents by presenting them in a more engaging and transparent manner through infographics, social media, and publishing the source documents and text on open-source collaboration platforms.
31. Create a **Youth Council** of the Human Rights Council as an expert advisory body on youth and human rights that also support the active participation of youth at the HRC.

Youth & Countering Violent Extremism

32. Make official UN information and decisions on the topic of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) more available and transparent through adapted language use and accessibility by the youth;
33. Recognize and fully implement UNSCR 1325 and all UNSCR resolutions on women, peace and security; UNSCR 2250 and the Amman Youth Declaration on Youth, Peace and Security developed by young peacebuilders.
34. Support and resource youth in all their diversities to strengthen their leadership skills and meaningfully engage in prevention and response efforts related to violent extremism through ensuring that a portion of all funds dedicated to addressing violent extremism are committed to youth-led, youth-centric projects. Encourage international financial institutions, foundations and other donors to provide small grant funding mechanisms to young social entrepreneurs to enable them to develop their own ideas on strengthening community resilience against violent extremism (based on A/70/674 para 52 (f)).
35. Ensure that youth have enhanced access to informal and formal open source educational materials as well as intercultural exchanges which lead to enhanced understanding, and increased cyber security on social media.
36. Ensure universally agreed terminology is used in media, which leads to understanding and do not lead to xenophobia.

Definitions

Benefit Corporation: A type of for-profit corporate entity similar in operation and taxation to normal corporations, but differ in their legally defined goals of positive impact on society, workers, the community and the environment in addition to profit.

Learning to Care: Prioritization of teaching empathy and activism through volunteerism and community engagement. Engaging youth to take responsibility and act as teachers or assistants to others to aid in developing active, aware adults and instil a desire to contribute to their communities.

Sustainable Mentorship: Mentorship that requires an open and data-driven process for effectively improving the mentorship program through feedback, and cultivating a diverse portfolio of mentors with experience and perspective from the youth, commercial, NGO, and government sectors. Mentors only provide guidance and do not participate directly in council or parliament activities.

U.N.entrepreneurship: Collaborative social innovation through entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship for the Sustainable Development Goals.

Young People: Persons from 0 – 30.

Youth Council: A group representative of youth voices which is engaged in an official form of community decision-making.

Youth Delegate: A Young Person selected to represent a **Youth Council**.

Youth Parliament: A platform, outside and beyond young parliamentarians themselves – to engage young people and expose them to democratic process and practices

ⁱ *This declaration was developed by more than a 100 youth in collaboration with different youth organizations during a one day pre sessional youth forum convened by World YWCA at the 32nd HRC Session in Geneva, Switzerland on the 10th of June 2016.*