THE GLOBAL CALL ON YOUTH

“Prioritizing Youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda”

The signatories of this call in the framework of the Global Partnership for Youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, urge Member States to incorporate the following youth-focused target areas in the post-2015 development agenda:

- Ensure all young people of school-going age are able to complete a full course of secondary education at a minimum.
- Reduce the number of youth not in employment, education or training and increase access to decent work amongst young people by providing access to learning opportunities, putting in place school-to-work transition policies, strengthening public private partnerships for better skills-matching, and opportunities for financing and entrepreneurship, and promote inclusive economic growth.
- Ensure all young people achieve recognized and measurable learning outcomes, through adequately trained teachers and with quality education curriculum that equips them with the relevant knowledge and skills to lead healthy lives, meet the demands of the job market and to foster global citizenship, through access to quality technical and vocational education and training, comprehensive sexuality education, peacebuilding and sustainability education and lifelong learning opportunities.
- Ensure young people’s meaningful participation in decision making processes, governance and peacebuilding.
- Improve the physical and mental health status of adolescents and youth, promote healthy behaviours for reducing the risk of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and substance abuse, and increase access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health, and HIV prevention, treatment and care.
- End child, early and forced marriage and harmful traditional practices.
- Eliminate all forms of violence against adolescent girls and young women.

Building on the five thematic priorities of over 1.2 million young people who voted in the MyWorld2015 survey – Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship, Health, Good Governance, and Peace and Stability – the crowdsourcing platform, which is run by the Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth in partnership with ITU, UNFPA, the UN Millennium Campaign, The Major Group on Children and Youth, ICMYO (International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations), and the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD), engaged over 1700 youth organizations, members of the Global Partnership on Youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, who submitted proposals in moderated online discussions on how they would like to see their priorities reflected in the post-2015 agenda. Drawing on the priorities identified in the online crowdsourcing exercise along with the results of number of recent global, regional and national youth consultations and meetings that have taken place in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda process, the team of moderators from youth-led organizations and UN entities have synthesized their outcomes in the detailed summary annexed to the Global Call on Youth. The target areas proposed emerge from this exercise.
**Young people today...**

- With 1.8 billion strong, the world is home to the largest generation of young people in its history
- Close to 90 percent of the world’s youth live in developing countries, where they tend to make up the largest proportion of the population
- More than 500 million youth aged 15 to 24 live on less than $2 a day
- Some 75 million youth are unemployed, and more than 600 million jobs need to be generated globally in the life span of the new development agenda
- Young women and men are three times more likely than older segments of the population to be unemployed, and in some countries the youth unemployment rate exceeds 50 per cent
- Some 69 million adolescents of lower secondary school age remain out of school
- In developing countries, 1 in 3 girls is married before her 18th birthday and across the world, more than half of all sexual assaults take place against girls younger than 16
- 1.5 billion persons, the majority of them young people, are living in states that are in conflict or in fragile situations
- Despite significant progress made since the Millennium Development Goals were adopted, this generation of young people has been left behind. They are still denied the opportunities that they need to realize their full potential

**Let’s remember**, the world’s demographic and development realities mean that the success of the post-2015 development agenda hinges on fulfilling the human rights and meeting the development needs of all young people. Connected to each other like never before, they are driving social progress, inspiring political change and building resilience. Countries with populations composed of large proportions of adolescents and youth can reap a demographic dividend for national development, resilience and sustainability, by investing fully in young people. Countries will need to address gender inequality and pay particular attention to the unique needs and rights of adolescent girls and young women so they can reach their full potential and in turn shape the development of their families, communities, and countries. Young people – their experience of engagement or of alienation, their inclusion or their marginalization – will determine whether their societies prosper or fail.

**Let’s ensure**, as the global community gathers to review progress made after the Millennium Development Goals and put forth an ambitious and achievable vision for the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, that youth priorities and targets are duly included, because investing in young people could ensure the success of the agenda more than anything else. A failure to do so could jeopardize it altogether. The Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, in partnership with the United Nations system and all the signatories of the Global Call on Youth, urge the international community to put young people at the centre of this agenda. The time for action is now.
SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES:
FROM CONSULTATION TO CONSOLIDATION

Education:

Ensuring basic reading skills for students in low-income countries could lift 171 million people out of poverty, equalling a 12 per cent cut in global poverty. Despite large gains made in primary education in the past decade, 69 million adolescents of lower secondary school age remain out of school. These efforts are also undermined by the low quality of education systems: over 250 million children of primary school age are unable to read or write by the time they reach grade 4. In the least developed countries, one quarter of young men aged 15 to 24 and one third of young women aged 15 to 24 are illiterate. Ensuring adolescent girls complete the next level of education could add 1.5% per year to the GDP of countries, ensuring their participation in the job market could add up to 4.4% per year. The following have been identified as key target areas for education:

- Ensure equitable access for all children and young people to primary, lower secondary, secondary and tertiary education, with a focus on the most marginalized;
- Ensure all children, particularly the most marginalized, are achieving recognised and measurable learning outcomes at all levels, made possible through the provision of quality education by a sufficient number of adequately trained teachers;
- Ensure that children and young people, particularly the most marginalized, are equipped with the relevant transferrable skills to lead healthy lives, meet the demands of the job market and to foster global citizenship, through access to technical and vocational education and training (TVET), comprehensive sexuality education and lifelong learning opportunities.
- Increase the accountability and responsiveness of national governments to increase their national budget allocation to education, with equitable distribution to the most marginalized communities.

Employment and Entrepreneurship:

In 2013, almost 202 million people were unemployed, of which some 74.5 million were between the ages of 15 and 24. Young women and men are three times more likely than older sections of the population to be unemployed, and in some countries the youth unemployment rate exceeds 50 per cent. The number of young people neither in employment, nor investing in skills development (NEETs) continues to grow and informal employment remains the norm for young people in many developing economies. Globally, 9 out of 10 jobs are created by the private sector, however, young women and men face numerous obstacles to engage in productive activities, and set-up and develop their own businesses. It is estimated that from 2015 to 2030, the global economy will need to create more than 670 million jobs to contain the current spread of unemployment and cope with the growth in the working age population. The quest for decent work is a universal concern that affects young people in all countries and communities. The post-2015 development agenda should make employment and decent and productive work for young people a reality. The following have been
identified as key target areas to promote productive and decent work for young women and men and reduce the number of youth not in employment, education or training:

1. Put in place school-to-work transition policies to increase employment rates of young women and men, with targeted measures for disadvantaged youth;
2. Strengthen public private partnerships to ensure a better match between the skills of young graduates and the needs of the private sector;
3. Provide access to learning opportunities to develop knowledge and skills, including professional, technical and vocational, for work and life;
4. Ensure young entrepreneurs’ access to tailor-made financial and non-financial services;
5. Ensure gender equality at work, including eliminating the gender pay gap
6. Ensure universal global access to adequate social protection, including social protection floors, and decent work and livelihoods for young people in the formal and informal sector in accordance with ILO labour standards.

Health:

Adolescence is a critical life stage characterized by rapid biological, emotional and social development, during which every person develops the capabilities required for a productive, healthy and satisfying life. Nearly two thirds of premature deaths and one third of the total disease burden in adults are associated with conditions or behaviours that began in youth, including tobacco use, a lack of physical activity, unprotected sex or exposure to violence. To promote healthy lives, it cannot be ignored that young girls continue to carry the heaviest burden of death and disability due to complications relating to pregnancy and childbirth, including unsafe abortions. 39% of new HIV infections occur amongst young people, which can be prevented with comprehensive and correct knowledge of how to prevent HIV and access condoms. The following have been identified as key target areas for health:

- Improve health status of adolescents and youth; Ensure all young people enter adulthood with the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; reduce mortality and morbidity related to violence and accidents, including due to road injuries, and due to complications related to pregnancy and childbirth, including unsafe abortions. 39% of new HIV infections occur amongst young people, which can be prevented with comprehensive and correct knowledge of how to prevent HIV and access condoms. The following have been identified as key target areas for health:
- Promote healthy behaviours, including reducing risks for NCDs and substance abuse;
- Increase access to health services, information and modern methods of contraceptives.

Peace and Security:

Building peaceful, inclusive societies requires the participation and engagement of young people. Globally, the risk of becoming a victim of homicide is highest for young men in the 15-29 age group. The homicide rate of 21.2 per 100,000 for young men aged 15-29 is much higher than other age groups. In situations of armed conflict, adolescents are disproportionately targeted for violence, abuse and exploitation, recruitment by armed forces or groups for use as (child) soldiers, and/or trafficked for exploitative labour or commercial sex. At the same time, it is also young people who hold the keys to sustainable and inclusive peacebuilding. The following have been identified as key target areas for Peace and Security:

- Ensure equitable distribution of development gains to promote peaceful and secure societies;
- Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, in particular through female empowerment, strengthening young women’s leadership and involving young men in the process of eliminating violence against young women;
• Ensure that all young people participate in peace and human rights education, either through formal or non-formal education, and have access to opportunities for cross-cultural exchange and volunteerism;
• Ensure that young people can meaningfully participate in decision making processes on local, national and international governance, including issues related to peace and security. Ensure accountability and transparency in governance of peace and security issues.

Governance:

“Governance” has been identified as a high priority issue by young people, who want to see governments effectively held to account, and governance structures where young people have access to decision making processes. Concerns around corruption feature strongly in global consultations, together with transparency and accountability. Youth is not represented adequately in formal and political institutions and processes, such as parliaments, political parties, electoral processes and public administrations. Good governance and the rule of law requires the participation of young people, women and men, in decision-making at all levels, in the planning, implementation and monitoring of policies, with young people as beneficiaries, partners, and leaders in development. Despite the fact that young people disproportionately face poverty and constitute a significant proportion of the population in low-income countries, 2 out of 3 countries do not consult young people as a part of the process of preparing poverty reduction strategies or national development plans. Improving information and communication technology is making it easier for people, including young people as primary users of technology, to collect and access data and hold decision-makers to account.

• Strengthen participation of young women and men in governance and decision-making processes at local, national and global levels by supporting enabling environments and implementing youth-centred policies;
• Ensure freedom of media, association, and speech, for all, including the most marginalised youth;
• Support the capacity development of youth, youth movements, networks and organizations;
• Encourage and support youth civic engagement and volunteerism for development, including by ensuring education on and awareness of human rights;
• Strengthen effective, transparent and accountable institutions at all levels;
• Support and promote increased and equitable access to open, timely, reliable and quality information, including through ICTs, to enable stronger accountability mechanisms and greater youth participation in decision making.
ANNEX II: List of previous consultations, findings, recommendations and policies related to youth

- World Program of Action for Youth for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (A/RES/50/81);
- Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding (A/RES/65/312), July 2011;
- Colombo Declaration on Youth “Mainstreaming Youth in the Post 2015 Development Agenda”, 2014;
- Quito Youth Declaration of the Regional Meeting for the Latin American and Caribbean Youth, 2014;
- Outcome Document of Dubai Regional Arab Youth Meeting, 2014;

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1 The online thematic discussions were moderated by the following organizations: Education: UNICEF, the Global education First Initiative (GEFI); Employment and Entrepreneurship: ILO, UNIDO and the Major Group on Children and Youth (MGCY); Health: UNFPA, UNAIDS and the International Federation of Medical Students’ Associations (IFMSA); Governance: UNDP, the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (ICMYO), Restless Development and Plan International; Peace and Stability: UN-HABITAT, the UN PeaceBuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY)

2 Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010, Education Counts

3 United Nations Technical Support Team Issues Brief: Education and Culture

4 The ‘most marginalized’ children, includes but is not limited to, girls; children with disabilities; indigenous children and minority ethnic groups; poor children; working children; those living in disadvantaged areas, in informal settlements or on the street; refugees and migrants; and those affected by emergencies and conflict.


6 UNAIDS Global Report 2013

7 UNODC Global Study on Homicide 2011

8 UNICEF Adolescent programming experiences during conflict and post conflict, case studies 2004