



WORLD CONFERENCE
ON YOUTH 2014

WCY2014/ZD/AP/VI

Summary of discussion in the round table in the World Conference on Youth 2014

This document is meant to capture the breadth of the discussions that took place at the World Conference on Youth 2014. Although it in no way represents the consensus of all the participants of the conference, it provides a glimpse into the various discussions and deliberations during the event

10th May, 2014



Globalization & Inclusive Youth Led-Development

Globalization has opened up new opportunities for global economic development. It has also permitted countries to learn from one another's achievements and has promoted a cross-fertilization of ideas, cultural values and aspirations - thus helping to connect youth not only to the rest of the world, but also with each other (WPAY). Yet, in the past the emphasis was on the economic dimension rather than environmental and social aspects of globalization at the expense of marginalized youth (especially rural youth and youth with limited technological skills) and future generations.

The framers of the youth aid architecture have begun to recognize that youth and youth-led organizations have unique grassroots abilities to take action through a bottom up approach. Youth led development, youth-participation, the access to quality education and ICT play a central role in empowering young people to reap the benefits of globalization.

The UN Secretary General made public the United Nation's commitment to the Child and Youth Finance Movement. UNCDF and UNICEF have fully endorsed the Movement, which is a collaborative effort of individuals and organizations, including national authorities, financial institutions and networks, NGOs, educators and academia that seeks to strengthen financial literacy among youth and increase their ability to become financially independent. The implications of underinvestment for growth and well-being provide a strong incentive to allocate sufficient public resources for youth development, with particular attention to marginalized groups. A specific aid architecture, and especially a dedicated fund endorsed by Member States, foundations, youth and development partners could enable youth-led development in regions in need and a significantly better use of overseas development assistance (ODA).

The round table recommended that governments should formally establish permanent mechanisms in which youth can exert influence over the decision making, implementation and monitoring of local, regional, national and international policies and programmes related to globalization and youth-led development. These mechanisms e.g. UN-affiliated bodies, politically independent youth parliaments or quota youth representation should be based on a democratic, representative and transparent recruitment processes. In order to engage in an effective dialogue on the existing policies and programmes, governments should set up ICT/ social media-based platforms in cooperation with young people and their organizations.

Moreover, youth-led development is to be endorsed in standard curricula and promoted through public-private partnerships. The round table recommended governments to establish ICT centers for youth connecting private, public and educational stakeholders to young people to better inform them on how to benefit from and influence the process of globalization.

Especially in areas of conflict, youth-led development should be recognized as a key element to build and consolidate peace. The round table recommended the provision of training for youth capacity building, leadership development, conflict resolution and mediation to empower young people to become agents of peace and reconciliation.



Poverty Eradication, Food and Nutrition Security

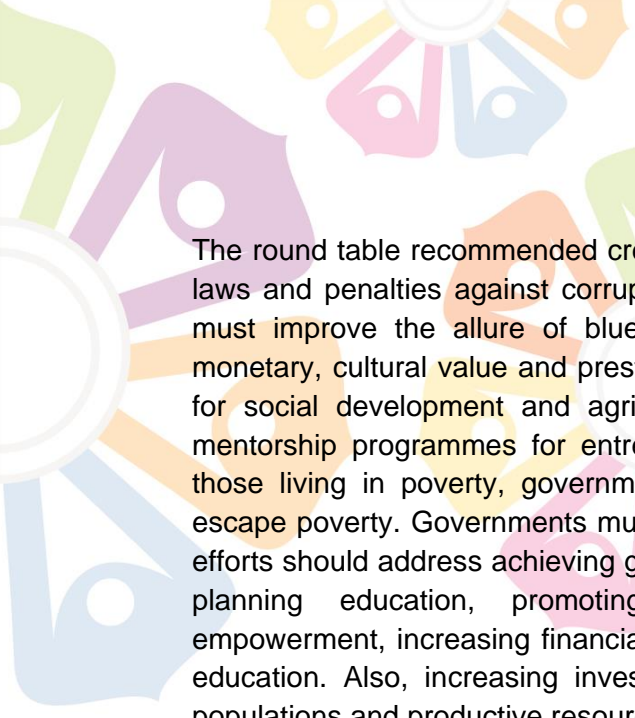
Youth recognize structural causes of poverty including power asymmetries in governance structures domestically and globally. Unequal resource distribution, corruption in governance and problematic economic systems are the primary perpetrators of poverty. Ingrained attitudes of dependence create a culture of cyclical poverty. Inadequate and geographically inequitable distribution of infrastructural and technological development results in crop and food wastage, contributing to food insecurity, malnutrition and general poverty.

Poverty eradication plays a significant role in mainstreaming youth participation in the post-2015 development agenda. Without adequate living standards and food security, young people lack incentive to take active and full participation in the decision making process and in the implementation of policies. Youth development remains hindered by challenges brought about by the food crisis and continued food insecurity, the energy crisis and climate change. (HLM on Youth A/RES/65/312 – Line 15)

Over one billion people in the world today live in unacceptable conditions of poverty. Young people are particularly affected by this situation. Poverty, has various manifestations including hunger and malnutrition, loss of education, unemployment, social discrimination, degraded health, lack of access to resources and a lack of youth participation in political processes and society in general. (WPAY, 21) Inclusive governance processes must reach out to relevant stakeholders, including those living in poverty, and engage them in a meaningful way.

A majority of the world's youth live in rural settings in developing countries and lack access to productive resources They must rely on their own labor to earn a living. In recognizing this, it is vital to ensure that government policies promote decent rural job creation, sustainable agriculture livelihoods and food production, and youth participation. Specifically, marginalized youth (including indigenous populations, women and girls, and LGBTQI individuals) must be integrated into rural youth development policies, strategies, programmes and partnerships. Without increased involvement of youth in agriculture, long term shortages in skilled agricultural labor and underdeveloped infrastructure will negatively affect food supply in ageing farm populations. Linking this need to formal education, training and good governance, a long term solution must be produced, as well as through policy initiatives, awareness and capacity development related to human rights, healthy and sustainable food and cultural practices that impact health. By Incorporating agro-business, as well as marketing and managerial skills, in the early and secondary school curricula, a new generation of farmers with the necessary skills to produce, package and market their agricultural products, can be created.. Such education and skills would be sustained and improved through exchange programs and other information dissemination platforms that promote innovation among young farmers.

To promote bottom up and inclusive community development programmes, the round table proposed to have a decentralized and structural framework which ensures the access of marginalized youth at the grassroots level, while ensuring the provision of the technical and financial support needed to implement their initiatives through public-private partnerships and embracing cultural diversity.



The round table recommended creating an independent anti-corruption agency and tougher laws and penalties against corruption to address related causes of poverty. Governments must improve the allure of blue collar jobs by increasing wages and increasing non-monetary, cultural value and prestige for non-white collar jobs, particularly those necessary for social development and agriculture. Governments should also provide training and mentorship programmes for entrepreneurship. Because women comprise the majority of those living in poverty, governments must educate and empower women to help them escape poverty. Governments must also educate populations about gender equality. These efforts should address achieving gender parity in employment opportunities, providing family planning education, promoting access to contraceptives, promoting economic empowerment, increasing financial literacy training and promoting comprehensive sexuality education. Also, increasing investment in maternal and child health will ensure healthy populations and productive resources.

Making sure no one is left behind is key in the post-2015 framework and young people will need particular attention with disaggregated data and specific indicators that look at poverty for those who are not always included in work statistics, such as those in training and education. Going beyond \$1.25/day Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) will also be vital in ensuring that the aspirations of young people are met.



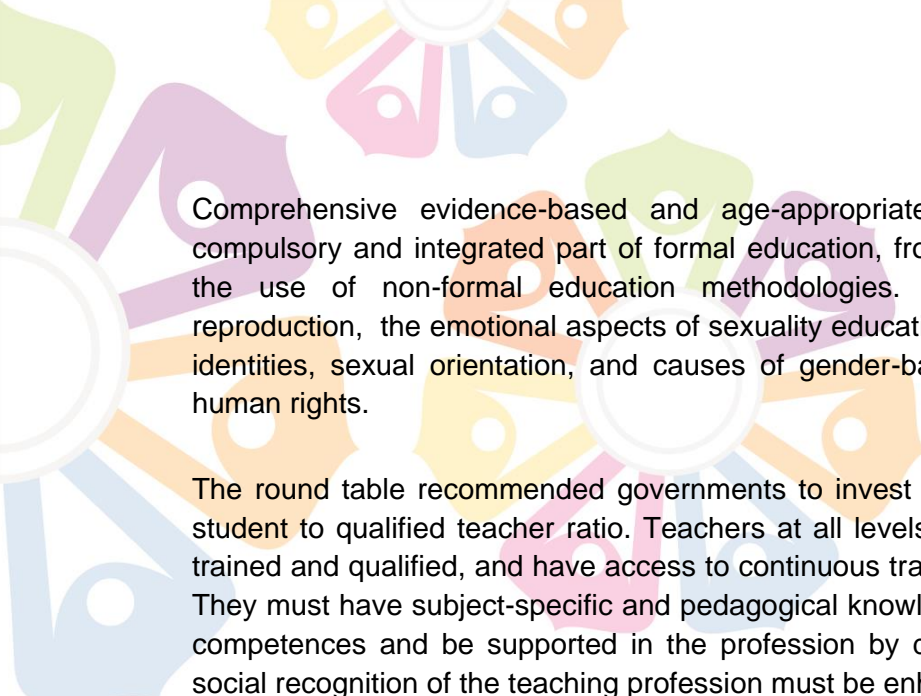
Realizing Equal Access to Quality Education

Education is the very foundation for the development of human potential and knowledge. It is the vehicle through which the improvement of the lives of young people can be attained globally. But at this point in time it is under-prioritized and under-financed. Especially in relation to the Post-2015 Development Agenda, access to quality education is crucial to eradicate poverty and hunger and to promote sustainable development. Quality and inclusive education systems will also foster effective participation of young people in decision-making processes as well as in the promotion and protection of human rights. In this technologically advanced age, there should be an effective system through which modern technology, science and information technology could be accessible to all young people, especially those in rural and underdeveloped areas, as well as students with disabilities.

Worldwide 10.6% of young people are illiterate, lacking basic numerical and literacy skills. This means that they are gravely impeded when it comes to being able to sustain a living through full and decent employment. Many educational and training systems do not provide young people with the basic skills needed to escape poverty and unemployment, even when they continue to receive formal education. (UNDESA: Youth and education) The persistent gender gap in education further intensifies the situation and halts progress towards gender parity in basic education (UNESCO: Sixth meeting of the High Level Group on Education for all, pg. 2). The importance of non-formal education has been highlighted by encouraging Member States to promote programmes for non-formal education in accordance with the goals of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (A/RES/66/288 par231). Education systems are currently focused on measurable outcomes; quality education should develop skills that are transferable to the job market, foster personal development, promote well-being and build capacity for civic and active citizenship. There is a clear lack of education for disadvantaged, marginalized groups and decision making processes must be opened up to allow young people to participate meaningfully.

Education is indeed the top priority of global youth, according to votes expressed within the MY World Survey, which comes from 70% of youth under 30 years of age, regardless of their education level and gender. Education should be fully funded and resourced so that high quality education can be ensured for all. Education policies and decision making should meaningfully engage students, parents and other relevant stakeholders, in order to make those policies more sensitive to students needs. This starts at the school level and therefore students must have a governance body, such as a student council, that allows the students to participate meaningfully in decision-making. Education must be student-centered and include a variety of participatory and democratic approaches and methods, through which students learn to learn and acquire global citizenship and life skills, including critical thinking and the ability to make informed decisions. Evaluation and assessment methods in education must be diverse; tests are diagnostic tools and should not be used for the ranking of students, schools or education systems.

There is a need to ensure that curricula are flexible and updated; and lifelong learning is emphasized in formal education systems. Further to this, ICT education and facilities must be fully integrated into formal education and governments must ensure required resources.



Comprehensive evidence-based and age-appropriate sexuality education must be a compulsory and integrated part of formal education, from primary education onwards, with the use of non-formal education methodologies. In addition to knowledge about reproduction, the emotional aspects of sexuality education must be taught, including gender identities, sexual orientation, and causes of gender-based violence, gender equality and human rights.

The round table recommended governments to invest in teacher trainings and reduce the student to qualified teacher ratio. Teachers at all levels of the education systems must be trained and qualified, and have access to continuous training and professional development. They must have subject-specific and pedagogical knowledge as well as social and cognitive competences and be supported in the profession by decent conditions and benefits. The social recognition of the teaching profession must be enhanced.

All young people must have access to quality education on an equal footing. Specific measures have to be taken to ensure that vulnerable and marginalized groups of children and young people can access and complete education of the highest quality, in particular girls and young women, all groups of marginalized youth including most at risk young people, taking into account the particular socio-economic and cultural realities in which young people find themselves. The round table called on governments to ensure full inclusion of students with special educational needs and disabilities through specific measures such as inclusive facilities and learning environments, and appropriate training for teachers.

Education outside formal settings (non-formal education and peer learning) is key to ensuring that a rounded and holistic education is provided to young people through participatory and experiential learning methods in youth-led organizations. Opportunities can play an important role in stimulating and reinforcing civic engagement as well as lifelong learning. Civic participation can help to improve coherence between education, training and labor opportunities. Non-formal education must be recognized in legislation and lead to certification when appropriate. Special attention should also be given to vocational and professional training, thereby allocating more funds by governments to improve these trainings as an effective alternative to the traditional university system.



Promoting Healthy Lives and Access to Health

Young people are affected by various factors (cultural, religious, ethnic, and geographic Disparities, statelessness and other social determinants) that make them vulnerable not only to health risks but also affect their happiness and well-being as a whole. Today, more than 1.8 million young people aged 15-24 die each year, mostly due to preventable causes, and nearly two-thirds of premature deaths and one-third of the total disease burden in adults are associated with conditions or behaviors that began in their youth. About 16 million girls aged 15 to 19 years give birth every year (WHO) with subsequent impact on Maternal and new born morbidity and mortality, adding to existing social morbidities such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM). About 20% of adolescents will experience a mental health problem, with suicide being one of the leading causes of death in young people (WHO). Young people have the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and quality of life by providing them access to sustainable health systems and social services that are tailored to their needs, free from all forms of stigma and discrimination and administered through sensitized providers, and also by paying special attention to nutrition, the effects of non-communicable and communicable diseases and the sexual and reproductive health rights of young people.

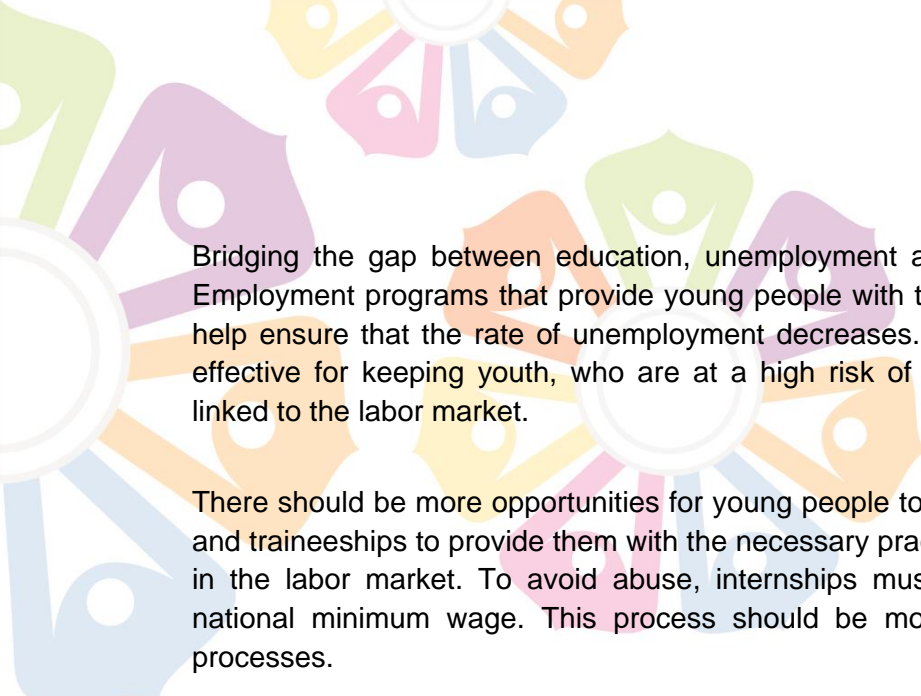
A holistic view of young people's health is essential to formulating public policies and programs as to ensure that young people are provided with universal health coverage that is including youth-friendly, stigma free and that includes confidential sexual and reproductive health services. Youth must have access to evidence based information including comprehensive sexuality education and opportunities to benefit from a healthy lifestyle. Emphasis should be placed on the provision of health programs and evidence-based prevention services.

A “Health-in-All” approach should be mainstreamed and integrated into public policies to ensure sustainable health impacts as in tobacco and alcohol taxation and public smoking control.

Full Employment and Entrepreneurship

As costs for employing young people are often high, youth, particularly marginalized individuals, often witness significant barriers in terms of entry into the labor market. Furthermore, these populations often witness challenges in accessing credible information regarding opportunities for employment, vocational training and higher education.

Education should better prepare young people for entry into the labor market. Stakeholder partnerships between the private sector, governments and NGOs should provide vocational, technical and non-formal educational opportunities, beginning at an early age. These opportunities will strengthen young people's entrepreneurial skills, enhance their employability and improve the transition from school to entry into the workforce. A ‘dual’ vocational education system should be promoted to improve employability and entrepreneurship skills. Furthermore, to allow for the continuity of education while working, higher education should be flexible and affordable.



Bridging the gap between education, unemployment and the labor market is paramount. Employment programs that provide young people with training and continued education will help ensure that the rate of unemployment decreases. Such strategies can be particularly effective for keeping youth, who are at a high risk of being marginalized, connected and linked to the labor market.

There should be more opportunities for young people to secure apprenticeships, internships and traineeships to provide them with the necessary practical experience needed to succeed in the labor market. To avoid abuse, internships must be remunerated at or above the national minimum wage. This process should be monitored through national legislative processes.

Youth, particularly marginalized individuals, encounter disproportionate difficulties in securing decent job opportunities and establishing their own businesses. These challenges could be addressed through government policies that specifically concentrate on marginalized groups on a national scale. Such policies would support: funding for youth entrepreneurship (e.g. crowd funding, seed funding, soft loans, micro-financing, cooperative markets, etc.), mentorship, implementation, and small-business incubators, with periodic social audits involving youth in the review process. Emphasis should be placed on innovation and fostering job creation in high-level fields, including agriculture, information technology, sustainable development and tourism as a medium-term strategy, in order to incorporate marginalized youth and enhancing economic development. Moreover offering tax breaks to youth, will increase the attractiveness of jobs.

Marginalized groups are encountering obstacles while attempting to access the labor market or establishing businesses. As a result, employment programmes should be inclusive of, and accessible to people living with disabilities. The right to education and employment without discrimination should be equally ensured for marginalized groups, including refugees, young people affected by war and for youth who are living in a post-conflict situation. Young people living with disabilities should be encouraged and supported in their pursuit of entrepreneurship as marginalized groups often do not have access to information. The development of IT infrastructure and access to Internet should be promoted as to allow young people to obtain the information needed to access the labor market.



Gender Equality

Gender equality is first and foremost a human right and as such must remain a high priority and cornerstone of the post-2015 development agenda. Young people must call for a stand-alone goal on gender equality with special focus on young girls, further to mainstream gender perspectives across other development goals and targets. All people must recognize the rights and aspirations of girls and young women who make up half of the global youth population and are critical to shared goals of prosperity and peace as a prerequisite for sustainable development.

One of the “most important tasks of youth policy” acknowledged by the WPAY is “to improve the situation of girls and young women.” Gender inequality including discriminatory cultural and social norms, practices and gender stereotypes continue to prevent girls and young women from enjoying the full spectrum of their human rights and equal opportunities in political, social and economic life. It must be acknowledged that cultural norms can lead to the violation of girls’ and women’s basic human rights. Tackling these must be done with cultural sensitivity and safe and competent programming, especially when working with marginalized groups such as indigenous peoples. States have agreed to promote gender equality and girls’ and young women’s right to non-discrimination in line with the existing international framework, in particular CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action (L Section), and WPAY (I Section).

Girls and young women should have equal access to quality education at all levels and be able to exercise their rights to make informed and un-coerced choices in private and public life, including on their sexual and reproductive health. Girls and women have the right to make all decisions regarding their own bodies. Gender based violence must also be defined as violence based on gender identity, therefore all genders can be victims or perpetrators of violence. Education programmes on gender equality must not only define men and boys as perpetrators. To support this, comprehensive sexual education should also be provided for parents, guardians and other caregivers. Acknowledgement of the role of young women as active citizens, equal partners and contributors to development is essential for building stronger and fairer societies, as is the acknowledgement of the role men and boys must play as active agents in this process.

Further, the post-2015 development agenda should promote alternative role models for men and boys and encourage shared responsibilities as care providers to challenge structural inequalities and deeply rooted notions of patriarchy and masculinity. In this regard it should also embody a broader understanding of the category ‘gender’ which has mostly been associated only with women, and recognize and reflect the needs and rights of people of all gender identities and sexual orientations including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual and Pansexual (LGBTQQIAP). The round table would like to emphasize its support for the definition of marginalized groups as outlined in the Bali Declaration. All of these groups must have the right to define themselves as agents of their own lives, especially those that are discriminated against because of their gender identity. The post-2015 development agenda should incorporate gender responsive budgeting to ensure a fairer and more equitable distribution of resources and effective implementation of sustainable development and gender equality commitments.



All people should be able to live in an environment free from discrimination and gender-based violence, where gender equality is a norm rather than a development objective.

Ending Systemic Inequalities

Inequalities and established patterns of discrimination are deeply ingrained in our social structures. Persistent inequalities and exclusion have significant impacts, both for the individuals facing discrimination and for their communities and countries. The symptoms of systemic inequalities are regularly addressed but we must prioritize strategies to combat the root causes.

Different systems that affect young people's lives whether social, economic or political are strongly interrelated. Therefore inequalities embedded in one system strengthen, reinforce and perpetuate inequalities across other systems. Religion and culture should never be used to justify systemic inequalities, discrimination or human rights violations.

Youth are often marginalized and excluded from access to resources, opportunities and decision-making processes. Marginalized youth are at an even higher risk of experiencing discrimination, with disproportionately higher chances of being poor. Participation in decision-making processes must allow for a wider, more inclusive representation of all youth.

Tackling systemic inequality requires the power that is held by a few redistributed as to minimize the hierarchies in society. In order to achieve this, young people's active meaningful participation in society for inclusive decision making must be ensured. There is a need to promote impartial media that guarantees accountability, transparency and freedom of information to expose and challenge power imbalances that reinforce systemic inequalities.

The roundtable identified education as one of the most effective tools in tackling systemic inequalities, notably provision of equal access to comprehensive relevant and quality education. Within this, mechanisms must guarantee empowerment of young people and shift attitudes towards promoting social justice. Additionally, in order to challenge systemic inequalities, young people must be aware of their human rights' therefore provision of human rights education is necessary. The round table calls for enforcement of laws that will reduce income inequality as one of the root causes of other forms of inequality. Data collection and monitoring regarding the inclusion of the most excluded and marginalized young people must be implemented in order to effectively eradicate systemic inequality.



Empowering Marginalized Youth Emphasizing Most at Risk Young People

The various groups of most marginalized youth experience severe social, economic, educational and civic disparities due to a range of factors from stigma to inaccessible environments. They are almost always deprived of their rights. Key populations are those most likely to be exposed to HIV or to transmit it and whose engagement is critical to a successful response to HIV and AIDS.

Despite existing conventions and resolutions on the rights of marginalized populations, many Member States have not effectively implemented them. At the country level, laws and policies that are supposed to protect and empower marginalized youth are not being respected in an effective way or there is no political will to implement them.


International and national laws, regulations and policies should not contain obstacles and barriers for the development of marginalized young people and those most at risk. Marginalization is a shifting issue and changes according to country and context based on culture, geographical location, literacy level, religion, ethnicity, race, caste, class, socio-economic status, spoken language, indigenous status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. This includes, but is not limited to, young people with disabilities, LGBT youth, documented and undocumented migrants, dropouts, young unemployed, homeless, refugees, asylum seekers, young prisoners, drug users, sex workers, young pregnant women, orphans, young parents, people affected and infected by HIV, displaced people, young people in conflict and emergency situations, child soldiers, child laborers and victims of abuse and violence.

Marginalized youth experience multiple levels of stigma and discrimination. This is particularly evident for women, girls and adolescents. Marginalization comes from policies and laws but also from families, communities, religious groups, the private sector, social institutions and media.

There is a lack of spaces, competencies, financial support, and opportunities for marginalized young people to meaningfully participate in the political spaces and decision making process at all levels. There is also a lack of social integration and lack of opportunities for development and the full realization of their human rights. To address the lack of data on marginalized youth, countries must guarantee that there is an independent body with adequate resources to collect reliable data about marginalized youth in order to adequately inform policies and programs.

Governments must ensure that organizations, networks and informal groups of marginalized young people have the resources they need to empower their representatives and communities in order to strengthen their meaningful political and social participation at all levels. Member States must design appropriate laws and policies as to introduce mechanisms of meaningful and effective representation of diverse marginalized youth by means of quotas and reservations to meet their needs. Solidarity and spaces to share best practices across marginalized youth groups should be encouraged.

Governments must ensure that educational and health systems guarantee mechanisms to provide educators and service providers with the competencies to address the needs of



marginalized youth and value diversity and inclusion in different contexts. The roundtable called on Member States to allocate specific budgets dedicated to marginalized youth, to implement outreach programs and accessible, affordable and quality social infrastructure, including health services, education, and employment opportunities, especially in relevant settlements with a high concentration of marginalized youth. Governments must also develop awareness raising programs to reduce stigmatization at all levels.

Ensuring Inclusive Recreation, Sport and Culture

Culture, sports and recreation are an integral aspect of sustainable youth development. A lack of proper recognition and resources for education, art and sports programs for youth means that young people are being excluded from meaningful activities that are effective vehicles for intercultural dialogue. Young people are being deprived of curricular and extracurricular activities that could be used constructively for skills building and healthy activity to combat non-communicable diseases such as obesity, heart disease and diabetes. Moreover, in terms of culture, the lack of research and academic work in indigenous cultures and traditions, will lead to their knowledge on unique ways of sustenance, identity and sustainability being lost.

According to the World Programme of Action for Youth, appropriate sports, recreation and cultural programs can be effective at minimizing issues such as drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, acts of violence and social exclusion. Sports, culture and inclusive recreation can help facilitate this empowerment. Governments, nongovernmental organizations, inter-governmental organizations, youth and the UN system should agree to promote intercultural understanding among different cultures through workshops, seminars, exchange programmes, sports events and youth camps with an adequate evaluation process. Everyone must be free of hate speech and discrimination regardless of religion, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic level, ability or any other status, with equal access to visibility (i.e. media coverage and universal technological information sharing platforms), financial support and special trainers.

The round table recommended Governments to ensure equal access to sports, recreation and culture through free public cultural offerings and by establishing accessible centers or spaces in every community with the equal distribution of investment and funding. The empowerment of volunteers and mentors and increased exposure to sports, culture and recreation for all in school curricula are critical. The 2010 World Youth Conference in Mexico incorporated the involvement of young people in programs that encourage a healthy lifestyle, the practice of sports, physical activity and other healthy habits. It is critical that this line of thought is furthered even more as to ensure the participation and representation of youth at the policy making level for sports and recreational activities and in the decision making of such bodies.



Environmental Sustainability, Disaster Risk Reductions and Youth Centered Urbanization

The round table acknowledged the 5th Assessment Report of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) and is deeply concerned. The round table called upon the Government leaders to immediately put in place strategies and policies that will give effect to concrete action aimed at preventing and mitigating the adverse effects of climate change, specifically steps towards reducing the carbon footprint of economies based on the principles of “common but differentiated responsibility” so that the projected 2 degree Celsius rise of the global temperature is limited and prevented if possible. Young people are committed to mobilizing public opinion and persuading the Governments and other entities to act immediately as it is clear that the world has to act now to prevent irreparable harm from climate change. Further delay in taking action will only result in jeopardizing the well-being and indeed the right to life of successive generations.

Youth specifically challenge rampant “carbon consumerism” which if left as is, will see global temperatures rise far beyond 2 degree Celsius.

Youth must be fully engaged in climate change negotiations. Youth friendly cities, which engage youth in decision making and planning, as well as provide shared spaces for entrepreneurship and access to relevant services, must be encouraged. Governments must help connect youth friendly cities with resilient and sustainable cities. Governments must provide resources for emergency preparedness, disaster and risk management, which allows for the incorporation of local knowledge and circumstances. In addition, climate change adaptation measures must be implemented in tandem with disaster risk reduction to achieve disaster resilience in both developed and developing countries. The round table called for the promotion of resource sustainability, education and training for disaster risk reduction.

The round table called for the promotion of the self-sufficiency of vulnerable groups through environmentally sustainable and economically viable livelihood programmes. Governments and relevant youth constituencies must explore the potential for developing a global framework for environmental crimes which will impact current and future generations. Policies should be created to promote the use of public transport and promote other forms of non-carbon emitting transport. Areas of cities should be free from motorized transport to increase the livability of urban areas.

Sustainable practices, which promote economic advantages, should be addressed first as there are less barriers to action (e.g. resource efficiency). There are significant opportunities which exist from the domestic to industrial level. Undertaking these practices will make it easier to infuse environmental protection values into entire communities. Essentially this is about promoting economic advantages through sustainable environmental practices.



Realizing Peace, Reconciliation and Ending Violence

Young people are vital stakeholders in realizing peace and ending violence. In the post-2015 framework, the participation of young people in all spheres of decision making and policy implementation is of extreme importance – particularly in peacebuilding processes. Empowering young people to emerge as peace builders and active partners of a reconciliation process is one way of ensuring that peace and reconciliation is more sustainable and inclusive.

Children and youth represent the majority of the population in most countries affected by armed conflicts and are thus disproportionately affected by armed conflict. They are uniquely vulnerable to recruitment as combatants. Youth are affected by direct violence such as armed conflict, as well as other forms of conflict in particular structural violence and cultural violence. They also suffer from other consequences of conflict such as poverty, unemployment, discrimination, poor governance and the disintegration of families and communities.

Young people should be seen as catalysts for building peace and harmony, not as passive participants in rehabilitation processes. A number of agreements are relevant here the first being WPAY (A/RES/50/81), which provides a policy framework and outlines the impact of conflict on youth and highlights the role youth play in peace building, conflict prevention and conflict resolution. In the current development paradigm there remains a focus on youth as victims or people at risk during conflict, so more agreement is needed on young people's roles in peace building.

The round table called on Governments and the international community to:

1. Create and further strengthen existing formal and non-formal educational programs for youth that promote intercultural and interfaith dialogue on peace building, conflict transformation, reconciliation, tolerance, and non-discrimination, and ensure that marginalized and minority youth are also reached by these programs.
2. Ensure that the rights of the victims of violent conflicts and youth actors in the peace building process are protected, particularly those from vulnerable groups, from potentially difficult or dangerous situations during and after their participation through integrated security and restorative justice.
3. Ensure impartial, responsible and accessible media that promotes freedom of expression to a wider society.
4. Recognize and understand the root causes of conflicts in order to create a framework for structured dialogue in compliance with international law.
5. Strengthen accountability and transparency from decision makers at local, national, regional and global levels to youth.
6. Strengthen and promote the role of youth through recreational activities to enhance peace building in their communities, countries and regions



Achieving Good Governance and Accountability

Good governance is one of the main drivers of social well being and is vital to the achievement of long lasting development. The post-2015 process has allowed young people to demonstrate their willingness to participate in shaping the future through presenting their views and Calls for Action.

Young people, especially young women and girls, usually lack access to governance structures at the community, local, national, regional and international levels due to negative cultural, economic and political practices and are thus unable to deal with problems that plague their societies. Corruption, nepotism and abuse of power and privilege prevent the development of meaningful intergenerational dialogue and engagement. As a result, young people are often disillusioned with political leadership and political institutions and are excluded from policy development. Restrictions on freedom of expression and the right to information, open data and resources limit transparency, and disable accountability for all stakeholders.

Governments must abide by the principles contained in the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the only legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument. At Open Working Group 7, Member States referred to the declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the national and international levels. The document states that the rule of law and development are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, and that advancement of the rule of law must occur at the national and international levels. In order to achieve this, strong government commitments are needed, together with closer relationships with the private sector, independent judiciaries and freedom of the media.

Young people need governments to be transparent, accountable and responsive to their rights and needs. Youth must have the ability to organize themselves in a legal environment that enables them to form and join youth-led and other civil society organizations, as well as the right to protest and express their opinions peacefully. These have to be supported by the unrestricted access to internet and social media, disaggregated data on marginalized groups, independence of media, freedom of information acts and strong human rights and values. Marginalized and minority groups should as well be proportionally represented in decision making processes with quotas and equal allocation of jobs and power. The incorporation of political/civil rights and values should be included into the education curricula from an early age. Youth must leverage institutional capacities of all stakeholders engaged at regional, national and local levels, including governments, the private sector, CSOs, youth and marginalized groups. Accelerating the implementation of all policies and legal instruments that engage young people as key actors and beneficiaries of the post-2015 agenda is essential. Strengthening existing partnerships for awareness, advocacy, coordination and networks related to the post-2015 agenda is also needed.



Youth Rights

Over half of the world's population is made up of young people. The needs of young people are distinct from other social groups, in that they face different social, economic, and political challenges. Until now, the particular needs and issues of young people have not been heard and therefore their rights are not being addressed. It is hence undeniable that the rights of young people must be considered and ensured. Due to different realities in culture, politics, law and religion, these rights are not particularly understood or recognized equally around the world. Therefore there is a need for common understanding on youth rights.

Even though the human rights framework is already established, recognition and access especially for young people have not been fulfilled or considered. Youth rights are a crosscutting issue, which is inclusive of a large variety of policy areas such as employment, education, participation in decision-making processes, amongst others. This must be guaranteed to ALL young people, especially those belonging to marginalized groups, with specific pertinence to their realities and challenges.

In order to ensure that the specific needs of young people are addressed, the round table called upon the Secretary General of the United Nations to launch a participatory, inclusive and transparent process among Member States, youth and youth organizations, which would lead to the Universal Declaration of Youth Rights. Member States should ratify and uphold this declaration and its monitoring should be guaranteed through a recognized body, which includes young people, youth led organizations, governmental representatives and other stakeholders, which reviews and monitors the access to and recognition of youth rights.

Some regional bodies have already passed youth charters that outline the rights of young people such as the Ibero-American Youth Convention and the African Youth Charter, which could be used as a reference while the Declaration is being negotiated. Member states should subsequently recognize youth-led platforms at all levels in their efforts to promote and advocate for rights based youth policies. Those policies could be based on the already existing youth charters from which the Declaration would theoretically be derived. Problems are addressed, but the validity of these policies and forums will only be confirmed in case that member states and assemblies make a concerted effort to implement the concepts outlined in this document.



Inclusive Youth Participation

The round table called upon young people to raise their voices jointly with Governments, and other actors to revise, promote and create opportunities through various political and innovative mechanisms, with a focus on ICT and social media, to strengthen the youth profile at all levels of society. The round table pointed out that a lack of education, limited self-governance of youth and little acknowledgement of youth leads to exclusion in participation and erodes responsibility of both young people and the state.

Information, especially relating to participation needs to be accessible in inclusive formats and in a transparent manner so to increase trust between decision makers and youth. It has already been agreed that with youth led-organizations and Member States, further exploration should take place to promote effective, structured and sustainable youth participation in designing, planning, implementing, monitoring and assessing United Nations youth policies, programmes and initiatives (A/RES/68/130). By ensuring inclusive and appropriately proportionate youth representation at all levels, young people would be to have an effective say.

The round table recognized the importance of a capacity building to allow them to participate as appropriate, (JPOI, 127{c}) in councils, programmes and activities in a consistent way. This can be achieved, for example, by supporting local youth councils or their equivalent and encouraging their establishment where they do not exist. (JPOI, 170).Ensuring that these policies, programmes and initiatives occur in a co-management style with fair sharing of power in decision making and mutual responsibility can guarantee their success. Youth organizations and governments share responsibility to outreach and gather opinions directly from diverse youth, ensuring openness, transparency, coherence and effectiveness at all levels.

The roundtable recommended that the UN Youth Delegate Program should be made available in all countries with a common guideline for implementation and a commitment by governments that UN youth delegates play a stronger role. There should be an increased number of youth participants in the UN through a larger role for UN Youth Delegates and other global fora. Further studies, youth policy evaluations and permanent open consultations on youth opinions in national and international processes are encouraged.