Thank-you Chairperson,

While the initiatives to improve Human Rights for youth in the international stage have been foundational, I think that education is still the main stumbling block.

The first reason I say this is that many youth do not know the importance of this issue, or how it impacts their daily lives. For example, it is still a wide spread practice to pay youth a significantly lower amount of money for the same work as an older person, but many youth just accept it as a normality of society. Even if they are aware that this is an issue, they do not know who to contact to address this problem, what protections they have, or what financial assistance is available to them.

Secondly, how to be involved is not well advertised. This can be due to countries reluctant to release information that could destabilize their power system, or from poor understanding on how to communicate and connect with youth.

Finally, it is very difficult for the non-privileged to be able to participate. They usually do not have access to the organizations (or other means) to present issues to national bodies. Often, they also do not have the technology to submit their statements. Not to mention, they may not be able to afford to spend time away from their present engagements.

An example of this situation is the youth in Sri Lanka. From years of civil war, government corruption, propaganda campaigns, the Boxing Day Tsunami, and cultural traditions, many youth do not know what their rights are. They have no ability to get information or help. They are not even aware of the abuse of their rights that is occurring, and just accept it as a fact of life.

This is a difficult topic as there is not even an agreed upon age range, or if one is accepted, it is so broad that no one solution will meet the needs of everyone in that category. For example, issues relevant to a 16 year old would be meaningless to a 29 year old.

I ask that there should be a universal definition for the age of youth that all member states can agree upon; even separate categories such as youth being 10 – 18 years old, and young adult, 18 - 30 years old. This would allow adult responsibilities and consequences to be incorporated into youth issues appropriately.

Secondly, that there be a strong awareness campaign covering the importance of youth Human Rights, what they are, how they are implemented, how to get support, etc.

Finally, that there would be financing and resources made available for youth to participate in Human Rights issues, including those who seek to rectify an issue impacting themselves as well as obtaining participation from non-privileged individuals.

Thank-you