



Human Rights Council Youth Forum Declaration 2 June 2017

Recalling that the Human Rights Council (HRC) has been created to ensure the protection of all human rights around the world, we, as youth in all of our diversities, urge decision-makers to recognise that youth are rights holders and that including youth voices in decision-making processes is necessary for any human right to be fulfilled,

Recalling that human rights are universal and that we as youth are equally entitled to human rights without discrimination,

Welcoming the efforts of the Human Rights Council to identify and analyse best practices, challenges and opportunities for States during the first convening of the Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law under the topic of “*Widening the Democratic Space: the role of youth in public decision-making*” (A/HRC/34/46),

We present the following recommendations to the Human Rights Council to institutionalise youth voices after the convening of the second annual youth-led pre-HRC Youth Forum:

Meaningful youth participation within the UN Human Rights System

1. Guarantee that preconditions for meaningful youth participation are met, including notably by protecting the right to freedom of opinion and expression, right to freedom of assembly and association, freedom of movement and non-discrimination,
2. Adequately resource youth voices at the HRC through an annual Youth Forum as an integrated component of the HRC, and ensure that priorities outlined in the Youth Forum are included in the decisions of the HRC,
3. Systematically include youth representatives from a wide constituency in delegations of member states and create enabling conditions for them to meaningfully participate,
4. Engage and consult with the widest representative scope of youth and youth organisations in all HRC processes, including but not limited to, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) reporting and implementation of recommendations, at the international and national level,
5. Encourage UN Special Rapporteurs to meet with youth in all of their diversities during their country visits and begin the process to create a Global Youth Charter,
6. Appoint a Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Youth to analyse and provide guidance to remedy human rights issues specifically impacting youth,
7. Guarantee funding for youth from all regions to have access to the HRC.

Priority Issues for Youth

8. Urge the HRC and its Member States to incorporate in its work, the recommendations annexed to this Youth Forum Declaration on the following priority issues for youth: Strengthening Youth Engagement Across Regional Human Rights Processes, Monitoring Youth Policies, Human Rights Education and Information, Economic Empowerment for Young People, Bodily Integrity and Freedoms (SRHR, HIV, VAWG and SOGI), Climate and Ecological Justice and Emerging Technology for Human Rights.



ANNEX TO THE HRC YOUTH FORUM DECLARATION:

Recommendations to the Human Rights Council on Priorities for Youth

Strengthening Youth Engagement Across Regional Human Rights Processes

- I. Begin the process of creating a Global Youth Charter by strengthening collaboration between international and regional human rights processes to ensure that regional human rights bodies enhance awareness of the HRC in their region and allow for HRC resolutions and UPR commitments to be brought back to national levels.

Monitoring youth policies

- II. Ensure that member states consult the widest representative scope of youth and youth organizations (on and offline) when developing youth policy,
- III. Ensure that member states provide accessible information and education about policy development processes, including but not limited to the HRC, through the use of user-friendly language, as one example, and
- IV. Ensure that member states must recognize youth as rights holders and improve and develop adequately-resourced mechanisms in order to hold each other accountable for guaranteeing youth access to their fundamental human rights.

Human Rights Education and Information

- V. Ensure that materials about human rights and the HRC are user-friendly, easily understandable and disseminated through various channels including social media, and non formal education tools,
- VI. Guarantee universal access for all youth to human rights education, for instance through inclusion in national school curricula,
- VII. Task the OHCHR with the creation of trainings and resources for young people, in collaboration with youth and youth organizations, to enable youth to meaningfully participate in the UN human rights mechanisms,
- VIII. Ensure that all member states have national action plans on human rights education, include it from primary school level curricula and in all public institutions, implement trainings for young people and create toolkits for young people to understand the importance of Human Rights Education and Human Rights mechanisms including the HRC, and
- IX. Ensure evidence-based reporting on human rights violations experienced by youth by upholding independent media channels, guaranteeing the right to freedom of expression and opinion.

Economic Empowerment for Young People

- X. Raise awareness on best practices of supporting youth entrepreneurship,
- XI. Establish partnerships with the private sector and other actors to enable funding for youth working on improving human rights, and
- XII. Ensure job trainings for young people at the local levels and within the UN system.



Bodily Integrity and Freedoms (SRHR, HIV, VAWG and SOGI)

- XIII. Implement and fully fund, quality, evidence-based comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) programs that provide accurate information on human sexuality, gender equality, human rights, relationships, and sexual and reproductive health and rights for both in and out-of-school youth,
- XIV. Repeal existing discriminatory laws and instruments that hinder fulfilment of human rights based on age, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other characteristic and eliminate harmful cultural practices that affect welfare and dignity of youth such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Child and Forced Marriages, and
- XV. Increase budgetary allocation to sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for youth and invest in comprehensive youth friendly services in line with WHO standards, capacity building, research and monitoring & evaluation for evidence based SRHR programming

Climate and Ecological Justice

- XVI. Make access to scientifically accurate environmental information and data a right for all youth,
- XVII. Ensure that affected communities play a key role in environmental policy decisions and implementation of such decisions, and
- XVIII. Enhance legal liability for contributors to climate harming activities,
- XIX. Amplify the concept of ecological debt, and
- XX. Ensure international support for displaced communities.

Emerging technology for Human Rights

- XXI. Research new independent tools to evaluate and model oversight methods to make certain that youth rights are protected, respected, and fulfilled,
- XXII. Invest in social innovation to create meaningful jobs and preventative measures for rights violations, and
- XXIII. Educate and empower members of all generations on new technologies for sustainable development and human rights.

We, the young people of the world, resolve that in order to make the UN Human Rights System deliver for all people, we must work together across generations and differences to find our common values shared in these new methods of including young people at every level of engagement and decision making. We look forward to creating a planet that leaves no one behind in these processes in order to welcome future generations into a society that protects human rights for all.