



Anglican Consultative Council submission to the OHCHR 'Call for Input for the HR75 Youth Declaration'

This submission comprises information from the Anglican Communion Youth Network, a youth-led and youth-focused network, working with the Anglican family and as many other churches as possible to bless the communities in which people live.

1. **What are the challenges the world is facing now, how will they affect the future of human rights, and what future do you want for human rights?**
 - a.) **Climate change** drives **food insecurity, migration** and increased **conflict**.
 - b.) **Gender inequality, gender-based violence, violence against youth, and youth suicide** are all increasing.
 - c.) **Loss of community** as competition/individualism is prioritised over working together, reducing the value of individual people.
 - d.) **Unemployment** is producing lost generations and frustration. Jobs want experience, yet how can one get experience without a job?
 - e.) Modern life is **unsustainable** – societies must become less “throwaway”¹.
 - f.) Poorer, developing states often speak of a **post-colonial mindset** where lack of confidence in their ability to become successful runs deep, deterring innovation.
 - g.) Developing states often use **economic models that serve the Global North**, leaving them dependent on imports despite having the resources to meet the needs of their own people.
 - h.) **Apathy** is apparent: the next generation faces the same problems of this generation, which faces the same problems as the previous generation.
 - There is a merry-go-round of global conferences, statements, “Millenium Development Goals” and “Sustainable Development Goals”, yet no real change takes place. The goals are the same, only with new names. The system is fundamentally broken, and genuine, painful, global change at all levels is needed.
 - i.) Disasters are used to **deprive people of rights**. If rights don't matter in a crisis, they don't matter outside of a crisis.

¹ Pope Francis [spoke](#) on the theme of caring for resources and placing humans at the centre of economies, rather than pushing a consumerist worldview or 'throwaway culture'

These challenges all affect Youth disproportionately. If unchallenged, they mean a worse future for human rights. More disasters will result in increased societal breakdown, less order, more excuse to deprive people of rights, and thus fewer human rights.

2. What are your recommendations to decision and policymakers, including governments, civil society, international organizations, the United Nations, and others, to advance human rights in the future?

Everyone:

- a.) The Global South must develop skills/confidence to **pioneer new ways of living in harmony with nature**, and resist Western-centricism. Traditional sustainable ways of living are being lost by Global South countries adopting Western models instead of embracing **solutions** in their own heritage.
- b.) **Women, Children** and the **Elderly** are always worst affected by catastrophes¹. Global focus on these groups would deliver huge change for everyone. Delivery of practical solutions, better infrastructure and education would be noticeable changes that would increase trust in systems and governments.
- c.) **Human Rights** need to be **rethought** to start from **need**, working towards *rights*. Humans need food, water, security, community, warmth and shelter, healthcare and education. These should not be commoditised, but fiercely guarded for all people, and any denial of one person's access to clean water, food, etc. must be resisted. It is wrong that access to (e.g.) medicines is dictated by the profit margins desired by shareholders of large pharmaceutical companies.
- d.) **Localise** power as close to people as possible. Local, communal associations owning nearby areas of land will deliver better justice, community, fairness and equality than allowing power to accumulate among elite groups, far away, with little accountability².
- e.) Provide continuous, ongoing investment in **educating people of their human rights**, and counter the global media message of consumerism by focusing on shared human needs.
- f.) Ensure that **authentic, representative grass-roots voices** are heard by engaging with faith groups and others operating in local contexts.
- g.) Do not **impose ideals of human rights** without **discussion** and **tolerance of difference**: such behaviour seems like colonialism and the Global North making the South into its own image.

² [Caritas Confederation key messages for UN Food Systems Summit 2023 refers to the advantages of localising agricultural systems](#); [LocalGov.co.uk - Your authority on UK local government - Justice system 'needs to be localised'](#); [Governance and administration of justice in refugee camp settings | Kirsten McConnachie — Refugee Studies Centre \(ox.ac.uk\)](#); [Corruption and Decentralized Public Governance \(worldbank.org\)](#)

Governments

- h.) Increase **self-sufficiency**, **reduce import dependency** and create **mixed economies** to reduce vulnerability to disasters, breed more creativity and innovation, and connect local producers to local buyers, creating vested interest in local communities.
- i.) Provide young people with **internet access** to allow poorer youth the opportunity to compete with richer states at online business.
- j.) Create **training schemes** and better **access to employment**, alongside action to stop exploitation and avoid wealth inequalities.
- k.) **Reduce** the '**brain-drain**' of talent to global north countries, robbing the global south of skills and future populations.
- l.) Ensure equality in education, so a degree from any institution, not just global 'top-10' institutions, has the same value, allowing those who **cannot afford an elite education the chance to compete on merit** against those with inherited advantages.
- m.) '**Affirmative action**' policies must be protected. They give the disadvantaged a chance to have their voices heard by power.
- n.) Ensure politics **prioritises** and seeks **consensus for those most in need**, avoiding point-scoring on basic needs.
- o.) **More accountability: good governance** must be a priority in both the West and Global South. Politicians are losing touch and credibility with real people and need to spend more time with the poorest communities in their countries.
- p.) **Reduce corruption** in government.
- q.) **Governments must lead by example** in promoting sustainable lifestyle changes.
- r.) Enable **women to have meaningful employment and listen to women's voices**, not just token-placing to meet quotas.
 - a. Women often outnumber men yet **lack access to the economy. This is self-defeating, suppressing half an economy's potential!**

Civil Society and NGOs

- s.) Collaborate to provide **continuous education** on human rights.
- t.) Win **credibility**: resolve more problems and achieve greater accountability to the poor.

United Nations

- u.) Become **accountable to the poorest**, not just to member states.
- v.) **Engage the 'grass roots'** where the UN operates; avoid 'top-down' solutions. Ask those being helped who the real actors are and work with them rather than just going to professional NGOs. Usually, **faith-based organisations** are providing the bulk of the care and support and need resources.

w.) Become more credible by stopping the **endless international conferences**, forums, and plane travel. **Focus on simple delivery, and support** those already doing the hard work.

3. What commitments and actions can young people take towards advancing human rights in the future?

We urge young people to:

- a.) Learn, take responsibility for, and educate others about their human rights.
- b.) Train people on how to advocate and be vigilant about rights.
- c.) Lead by example: live sustainably, use local resources, and share lives built on empathy and the community (“If I am hungry, she must be as well”), rather than individual selfish gain.

ⁱ [Climate change and health \(who.int\)](#); “Women, boys and girls are 14 times more likely than men to die during a disaster” [Microsoft Word - Disaster and Gender Statistics.doc \(unisdr.org\)](#); [Why we must engage women and children in disaster risk management \(worldbank.org\)](#)