

Response Call for Input: Views of youth-led and youth-focused organizations and institutions on the future of human rights for the development of the Human Rights 75 Youth Declaration

1. Currently, the world is encountering numerous challenges including ever rising political instability, conflicts and wars, climate change, Data protection issues, food insecurity, cultural extremism, corruption, disease outbreaks, terrorism, religious extremism, human trafficking and many more. Some of these global issues include.

Cross border and Internal (In Country) wars and conflicts

Human rights violation can be both the cause and consequences of war and conflicts. In war and conflict zones, most people are denied access to basic resources such as food, water, and housing.

Africa, as a developing continent is mostly ravaged by wars and conflicts, which is one of the main factors that have contributed to abuse of human rights in the region.

People, and especially youth in war-stricken countries struggle accessing employment, because of the disruptions in systems and infrastructure, adding to the already fuelled challenge of unemployment, affecting the access of resources. With young people being the biggest demography in most regions, the inadequate access or lack of key mentioned resources fuels the conflicts even further.

Conflicts that begin over resources, religion, or ethnic or territorial entitlements, to the extent of causing displacement of people may in future, as they progress, create new grievances through the real and perceived violation of human rights by one or more parties to the conflict. This will also lead to increased rates of mental health struggles.

With such a disastrous situation, it will largely affect the fight for protection of human rights, now and in future. Tangible examples of internal conflicts include the Kenyan skirmishes over livestock, or the grazing lands, which has led to deaths, and the loss of livelihoods.

Climate change

The profound impacts of climate change have plunged a significant portion of the global population into poverty. From prolonged droughts to destructive flooding, communities worldwide struggle to access essentials like food, education, and adequate shelter. Climate change directly jeopardizes various human rights, including water and sanitation, food, health, and overall living standards. With the unpredictable weather patterns, people will struggle to make the right plans on resources, and this is being felt mostly by those reliant on rain-fed agriculture or living in arid or semi-arid regions. Rural communities grapple with feeding their families and securing income, exacerbating challenges like accessing healthcare.

The adverse effects of climate change have led to livelihood loss, economic strain, strained social relationships, and even mental health issues like depression. This dire situation denies people their right to life and education, compelling them into a survival mode that resembles a competitive jungle. In such an environment, human rights often take a backseat.

Climate change, coupled with conflicts, displacement, and corruption in numerous countries, further compounds challenges, especially for youth seeking employment. Many nations struggle to safeguard the jobless, impacting their access to fundamental rights like food, health, and shelter. We look forward to a world where human rights matter most and no challenge should result in compromising any human right.

Artificial intelligence in human rights violation

Implications of technological advancements on privacy and individual rights are due to increased surveillance and the weak enforcement of data protection laws, developments in human imaging, facial recognition, and AI-generated content like deep fakes. With this new normal, there's a high possibility of fabricated evidence being used against individuals, requiring them to prove their innocence. There's also a risk of personal data held by governments and other entities, which can lead to potential misuse. The concept of concept regulation - Looking at the current trends in the economy in the first world countries, and in the emerging markets in general, there's a very strong push by large corporates to be self-regulating.

This approach can lead to violations of rules and a failure to prioritize the social good, as seen with companies like Facebook and Google. This becomes more concerning in emerging economies where accountability, transparency, and the rule of law are not guaranteed. The evolving idea of self-regulation presents challenges to human rights and the preservation of social contracts.

2. Recommendations to decision- and policymakers

- Commit to achieving peaceful resolutions for conflicts, prioritizing objective outcomes that safeguard human rights.
- Enhance support for peacebuilding initiatives and allocate greater resources to advance the implementation of projects aimed at creating peaceful conditions.
- Ensure access to essential necessities like healthcare and safeguard vital resources such as water to mitigate potential conflicts within communities.
- Promote the dissemination of information that serves as a guide for the protection of human rights.
- Invest in comprehensive unemployment protection and diverse forms of social safety nets for individuals actively seeking employment or grappling with livelihood loss due to major disruptions to ensure the continual accessibility of fundamental human rights.
- Invest in unemployment solutions, especially for youth and women, by boosting economies and high-impact sectors such as the Digital and the Green sectors.
- Enhance the reporting on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) concerning human rights and universal periodic reviews to monitor progress and ensure no one is being left behind.
- Preserve individuals' privacy and establish robust data protection frameworks to ensure their well-being.
- Increase investments in climate finance to support actions addressing climate change, catering not only to major corporations but also aiding small-scale entities whose efforts can lead to significant contributions, while creating responsible jobs at the same time.
- In the evolving landscape of AI and rapid technological advancements, it is important to guarantee the protection of individuals' privacy. Strong data protection frameworks must be established to effectively safeguard people's personal information.

3. Recommendations to young people

- Due to the challenges young individuals face in exercising their rights and their prominent role in human rights activism, meaningful youth engagement becomes a vital commitment for them, so that they can actively commit.
- Young people should proactively participate in human rights discussions, ensuring their perspectives shape decision-making processes.

- Beyond mere representation, young people ought to advocate for human rights within their communities through both dialogue and action.
- Young people need to join comprehensive networks and platforms that encourage the exchange of human rights knowledge.
- Young people need to contribute to the management of human rights knowledge to support actions grounded in evidence (evidenced based actions)
- Young people can enhance their knowledge and contribute to public awareness and educational campaigns, to enable safe interactions with AI technologies. To assist people, understand the significance of AI in our lives and navigate their consequences positively.
- In the challenge of climate change, the youth, as the largest demographic and in their significant community influence, have an important role in shaping attitudes for present and future generations. This role involves them adopting low-carbon lifestyles, actively participating in decision-making across, local, national, and global levels and championing initiatives that pave the path toward a world resilient to climate change's negative impacts.

The Challenge Fund for Youth Employment

The Challenge Fund for Youth Employment (CFYE) is a 7-year programme launched in 2019 by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the aim of providing better and more inclusive jobs for 230,000 young women and men (aged 15-35 years) in the Middle East, North Africa, Sahel & West Africa, and Horn of Africa. The CFYE is managed by The Palladium Group, Randstad and VSO.