



Youth 21

NAIROBI, KENYA

15 - 18 March, 2012

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



Building for Change



THE NAIROBI DECLARATION

Recommendations from the
Youth 21 Building for Change Stakeholder Meeting
and Global Youth Leadership Forum on
Inclusive Governance

MARCH 15-18, NAIROBI (KENYA)

THE NAIROBI DECLARATION: PREAMBLE

The Youth 21 global initiative was co-organized by UN HABITAT and UNDP. It gathered over two-hundred and twenty (220) youth representing youth-led organizations and movements from across the globe, as well as UN Member States, members of parliament, private sector, civil society organizations, researchers and UN Agencies. The aim of Youth 21 is for youth to engage with the United Nations and support them in working towards democratic governance and sustainable development. Youth 21 has prepared the Nairobi Declaration and its recommendations in the hope that UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, supportive governments, civil society will work in partnership with youth and engage them in governance at all levels, with an emphasis on creating mechanisms, such as the recently announced UN Secretary General's Special Advisor on Youth, to engage youth within the UN system and beyond.

The current global development context characterized by uncertainty, unpredictability and volatility arising out of inter-related food, fuel, energy, financial, environmental and climatic crises has adversely affected youth in the rural areas, urban informal settlements, nomadic pastoralists, displaced and refugee youth, forest and fisher folk, youth living with disabilities, youth infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, minority and other vulnerable categories of youth. These factors if not properly handled fuel social tension and may blossom into resource-based conflicts. Participants of Youth 21 note the substantial increase in youth unemployment and under-employment across all regions of the world fuelled in part by the global economic,

food, fuel and climate crises. It noted further that global youth unemployment rate increased to a greater degree than adult unemployment, suggesting that youth are more vulnerable to economic shocks.

Participants noted that many programmes within the UN system are in place to address these challenges within thematic silos and thus called for increased coordination and greater integration of efforts for the UN to deliver as ONE. Youth 21 calls for the up-scaling of existing good practices at policy and programming level aimed at strengthening the capacities of young women and men to participate and exercise leadership in democratic governance and sustainable development at all levels in and beyond the UN system.

Youth 21 identified a wide range of opportunities and reflected on the challenges arising out of the current global development context. It reiterated the need to see youth as a solution and not a problem. It noted the willingness of young women and men across the globe to play a more determinative role in democratic governance and sustainable development processes. It called for the removal of social, economic, and political barriers to youth participation, youth leadership and inclusion of youth within and outside the UN system.

It is within this context and understanding that the participants of Youth 21 make the following specific recommendations to the UN system, UN Member States and other key Stakeholders as follows:



A. THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL'S SPECIAL ADVISOR ON YOUTH (SASG)

Youth 21 welcomed the announcement by the UN Secretary General of the impending appointment of a Special Advisor on Youth. It noted that in order for this functionary to be effective s/he requires full support by means of financial, human resource and technical backstopping from all UN Agencies and member states. In order to ensure that the SASG has a positive impact on the lives of Youth, the following recommendations were put forward. The SASG

- Should be a young person (preferably younger than 35 years) so that youth can identify with the appointee and need to have experiences in youth-lead organizations, a long standing commitment to youth policies and experiences with UN youth policies and programs will be an advantage not a necessity. The appointment of a young person itself will be a proof of youth empowerment.
- Should mainstream and promote participation of youth in decision making at all levels through community organizing, volunteering, through consultations and hence advocate for ensuring political inclusion, paying special attention to marginalized and vulnerable, Youth with disability, indigenous people, at all levels. This should incorporate sustainable development and a youth perspective in the post 2015 development agenda.
- Needs to build on existing UN policies and programs, including the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), and cooperate closely with relevant structures and stakeholders such as the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development and advising them regarding effective and

coherent activities for Youth. Furthermore the SASG should advocate for a youth perspective in relevant thematic areas, such as Human Rights and promote a rights-based approach towards youth policy.

- Should promote quantitative and qualitative data and research done at all levels on the life and situations of youth and promotes evidence based policies with clear indicators related to youth engagement, inclusion and development. Research should be done using participatory methodologies engaging all youth. Furthermore the SASAG shall promote the development of practical tools and manuals to strengthen youth' social and political engagement in cooperation with the Advisory Board.
- Should be supported to be independent from state pressure and shall be held accountable by external checks and balances inter alia by Youth.
- Should have close cooperation with youth organizations, further relevant key stakeholders and use (social) media in order to have a wider outreach to Youth at all levels, bearing in mind the special needs of marginalized and informal youth groups.
- Should encourage and assist in the immediate establishment of independent National Youth Platforms or similar structures, such as "Ministers of Youth," "Junior Ministers" and youth representatives in national parliaments and the development of a "youth friendly" policies where these do not already exist and also strengthen them where they exist.



B. UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON YOUTH

Youth 21 proposes the establishment of a Permanent Forum on Youth. An accelerated process should be put in place to establish a Permanent Forum on Youth (UNPFY).

This process should have clear milestones and seek to attain the support of the General Assembly. Participants of Youth 21 recommend that:

- The UNPFY should exist to discuss youth issues within the mandate of ECOSOC relating to democratic governance, political participation, economic and social development, culture, environment, education, employment, health and human rights.
- The UNPFY provide expert advice and recommendations on youth issues to the UN system through ECOSOC; raise awareness and promote the integration and coordination of relevant activities within the UN system and prepare and disseminate information on youth issues.
- The wellbeing and voices of marginalized and vulnerable youth be a key focus of the UNPFY.
- The UNPFY shall consist of an agreed number of members elected - or otherwise nominated - from ECOSOC member states, youth organizations (formal and informal) and regional organizations. In electing or nominating members of the PFY the following considerations shall apply:

1. Diversity and
2. Geographical balance of young peoples' organizations and movements
3. Transparency
4. Representivity
5. Gender equality
6. Socio-economic status

Equal opportunity for all young people, including disability, minority status and historical factor.

All nominations shall take into account the above principles as well as inclusive and broad consultation of the broadest spectrum of youth political, economic and social interests.

- Members serve in their personal capacity for a term of 3 years as members and may be re-elected or re-appointed for one additional term
- The Special Advisor function as Chair of the UNPFY
- The UNPFY, once established, should adopt a Code of Conduct which outlines its accountability to youth and is available in various media in youth-friendly versions



Youth representatives at Youth 21 recommend:

- THAT the UNPFY be supported by a Youth Platform Assembly, which is composed of youth-led and youth-focused organizations, and has a mandate to discuss and debate youth issues biennially and participate in the election of the UNPFY's independent experts.
- THAT the UNPFY, in cooperation with the Special Advisor, develop criteria and guidelines for the participation of marginalized and vulnerable groups of Youth as physical and online participants.
- THAT the UNPFY, once established, develop in cooperation with the Special Advisor, a youth consultation and accountability framework that builds on existing networks, including youth-led organizations, sets indicators, and identifies formal and informal structures and partnerships to engage the voices of the most marginalized and vulnerable youth, with an emphasis on report back mechanisms, including ECOSOC, the Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly.
- THAT the UNPFY develop a communication strategy to implement the framework, engage youth through innovative communication channels and social media, promote youth policies including the WPAY to the media, and report back on UNPFY discussions to the world's youth.

- THAT the UNPFY oversee the coordinated development of national and regional platforms that engage and build the capacity of youth, particularly the most marginalized and vulnerable, through participatory formal and non-formal mechanisms, and establish national youth focal points.
- THAT the UNPFY be able to commission research studies on youth issues that support WPAY priorities and collect data on emerging issues, including Youth's civic engagement.

In order to follow up the outlined recommendations, participants call upon Member States, UN agencies, CSO and other stakeholders to politically and financially support the set-up and sustainability of the Permanent Forum on Youth and the SASG, including suitable staff support and representation costs.

In addition participants request the immediate appointment of the SASG and - considering the UN Secretary General's proposal to establish an Advisory Board to the SASG - participants underscore the need for a more formal Advisory Board with a balanced multi-stakeholder representation (Youth-Led Organizations, Member States, individual Youth, civil society and the UN System) and quarterly meetings with a jointly agreed agenda. The participation will need to be funded in order to ensure inclusiveness. Re-election should not be possible in order to ensure diversity. The main task of the Advisory Board would be to prepare the framework for the Permanent Forum on Youth, presented at the 67th UN General Assembly.



C. YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROCESSES

- UN Member States should adopt creative systematic approaches to leadership development and greater inclusion of young people in the democratic processes at the local and national levels. States should also encourage active youth civic participation as a means of holding government and national institutions accountable as well as minimizing corruption.
- UN member states should empower young women and men to make greater use of ICTs and social media to assess the performance of national and local government processes, as well as promoting efficient administration, responsive public service delivery and eradication of corruption.
- UN system should support UN member states to mainstream youth participation in all policy and decision-making processes, including key state organs such as the executive, judiciary, legislature, public administration, security establishment and state-owned enterprises. This could be done through-amongst other things-the promotion of civic education to promote widespread youth empowerment and political tolerance
- Youth and youth-led organization must ensure the equal participation of young women in all decision-making processes and put in place programs to mitigate the marginalization of young women on the basis of gender
- At a policy level UN Member States must promote the mainstreaming of youth issues to ensure that these are cross-cutting across all ministries and government programmes.
- The UN system and UN member states must inculcate a culture of global citizenship democracy and peace through civic, human rights and peace education targeting the youth with a view to promote political tolerance and the principle of unity in diversity. In this regard, UN Member States should seek to ensure that political party laws and electoral laws are reformed to deepen youth participation and leadership especially in relation to electoral processes and diversity management.
- The UN, UN member states and development partners should promote youth exchanges and networking programs, internships, fellowships and Volunteerism aimed at strengthening youth participation, leadership and know-how in political and democratic governance processes
- States should put in place monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and processes as well as develop indicators to measure the quality of youth empowerment and mainstreaming throughout the political process and within the policy cycle. This should be premised on the right of young women and to social, economic, political and cultural development.
- Access to information, education and training for young people to learn their rights and responsibilities, to be schooled in democratic processes, citizenship, decision-making, governance and leadership is a pre-requisite to enable young people to develop technical skills and confidence to participate effectively and exercise leadership in democratic governance and political processes. The UN and Member States should put in place resources and



mechanisms to enable such capacity development to take place in an enabling environment.

- UN and UN member states should facilitate the creation and /or strengthening of platforms, programmes and policies that ensure equal access of young women and men to participate in decision-making at local, national, regional and global levels and in fulfilling their respective civic duties.
- The UN system, UN Member States and other stakeholders should ensure that all policies, programs, and development interventions reflect the diversity of youth, including youth with disabilities, rural youth, urban youth, youth in poverty, internally displaced youth and refugee youth, indigenous youth, young people living with HIV, Lesbian, Gay, Transgendered and Bi-sexual (LGBT) youth, to mention but a few., etc.
- The UN must mainstream youth participation and leadership at all levels, including through-amongst other things- establishing focal points on youth or youth advisors.
- Ensure that cross-cutting youth issues in all UN programmes, policies and processes are adequately resourced.
- Promote intergenerational dialogue and partnership for knowledge sharing, cooperation and creation of spaces for young people to engage across generations at all levels within and outside the UN system.
- UN Agencies, member states and research institutions should conduct research in partnership with youth in order to produce the evidence base for decision-making on youth,

allocation of resources, results-based management and measuring impact of youth policies and programmes. This requires that the UN system and UN member states up-scale investment in building the capacity for data collection, collation and analysis by and amongst youth organizations.

- The UN and UN member states should establish platforms for knowledge sharing, impact assessment and shared learning through- amongst other things- the development of manuals, documentation and sharing of best practices packaged in a youth-friendly way. Youth and youth-led organizations should –like-wise establish similar online platforms as a means of building a sustainable knowledge economy on youth, democratic governance and sustainable development.
- This new approach to youth leadership and participation in inclusive democratic governance and sustainable development processes requires a drastic change of behavior, mindsets and paradigms in order to remove barriers that hinder youth from reaching their full potential, including transforming unjust patriarchal structures, retrogressive myths about masculinity and femininity, and social taboos surrounding the role of youth in governance. The UN and UN member states must work with all stakeholders to ensure this is achieved in a sustainable and inclusive manner.



D. YOUTH, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

- The Forum noted that what is needed are long-term policies, programs and strategies that will promote economic and social development, at the heart of which rests the imperative for youth employment as one of the strategies for poverty eradication, sustainable livelihoods and inclusive economic growth.
- UN Member States should prioritize education as the primary gateway to gainful youth employment and empowerment.
- Equality must be ensured in both education and employment between young women and men as well as between rural and urban youth. This requires an integrated approach to solving youth development issues and addressing education and employment- education systems, school-to-work transitions, hard and soft skills development and youth employment.
- UN Member States should adopt proactive economic policies that harness the potential and competitiveness of their young people in the global labour market taking into account the demographic dividend. This should be coupled with the promotion of youth (decent) employment programs through entrepreneurship and skills development training.
- There is a further need for member states to harness the potential of young people by enhancing infrastructure, training and retraining to address skills shortages, reforming migration policies, inclusion and right to education and work and strengthening social protection systems.
- Education systems should also adopt an innovative entrepreneurial culture through creative education approaches, entrepreneurship education and access to enterprise start-up. Encourage constant educational reviews/ reforms and labor market analysis, to ensure curriculum is

relevant and incorporates practical skills to facilitate youth into the labour market and ensure sustainable development.

- In designing national training curricula, member states should seek to meet the needs of: global competitiveness, the local economy and promotion of value chain development.
- UN member states should also promote an enabling environment for youth in green entrepreneurship through capacity building, access to 'green' finance, coaching, and mentoring.
- UN Member States and the Private sector should promote inclusive market development to ensure an enabling environment for youth entrepreneurs in sustainable agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, natural resource extraction and management by making resources and capacity development opportunities available for those that are interested in the same.
- Provide Investment (financial and technical) for green enterprises led by young people to foster employment and innovation.
- Invest in promoting better protection and sustainable use of natural resources as youth-led initiatives.
- The UN should- through UNV and other UN agencies- promote the creation of volunteer programs that support social inclusion and accessibility as a way to gain experience for employability, mobilize communities for the diverse youth.
- Furthermore the participants appreciated the establishment of a Global Volunteer Program, developed in cooperation with UNV and recommend that this should be formulated in partnership with youth-led organizations and a close cooperation with the SASG on Youth.



E. YOUTH AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA (RIO+20 AND POST-2015)

The meeting noted that with less than four months before the Rio+20 conference, the engagement of young women and men across the globe remains weak, if not tenuous. Whatever the reason behind this poor inclusion of youth, it is clear that the future will be determined at Rio+20 without adequate participation and meaningful input of those that must live in such a future.

- Young people remain committed to sustainable development and the values that underpin it.
- The Rio+20 Conference should recognize that the fullest integration of environmental, economic and social dimensions is essential at the local, national, regional and global levels if sustainable development is to be achieved.
- Young people welcome the attention being given to strengthening of the environmental dimension of sustainable development. Much still needs to be achieved in order to ensure coherence and collaboration within and outside the UN system. In this regard, Rio+20 needs to provide a strong push for the UN system as a whole to deliver integrated sustainable development support across the three strands (economic, social and political), leveraging the critical role of youth in democratic governance and sustainable development.

- Young people support a single set of global goals in the post 2015 period which are universally applicable and speak to all facets of the development spectrum and are inclusive of all elements currently covered by the MDGs and, where any of these are not adequately incorporated in a new SDG, will promote the development of additional goals to ensure the purpose and spirit of the MDGs remain.
- The SDGs must communicate objectives not only for the bottom billion or for developing countries but for the planet, with developed countries having as important a role to play as developing nations.
- SDGs (or global goals) must be transformational and must involve the fullest integration of all three strands of Sustainable Development in each goal.
- Much work needs to be done to agree on the parameters for goals. Getting acceptance of the principles and crosscutting issues that will inform SDGs will, in itself be a huge task before Rio. Getting agreement on a SDG process at Rio need not cut across the post-2015 process nor sully the MDGs.



ANNEX A

PROCEEDINGS FROM THE YOUTH 21 BUILDING FOR CHANGE STAKEHOLDER MEETING

The recommendations provided in the annex are the result of several breakout sessions during the Youth 21 stakeholder meeting and do not necessarily reflect entirely the opinion of all participants. The document represents input from participants in two areas; (a) Ensuring that the SASG has a positive impact on the lives of youth at local levels, and (b) In reviewing and recommending steps to strengthen youth engagement in the identified thematic areas for the SASG .

The Drafting Committee highlighted the need to strengthen the inclusive, transparent process for the dissemination and discussion of this statement, which is to be presented to the SG immediately upon conclusion of this meeting but is hoped to become a topic brought forward by the SG at the General Assembly in September of this year. The Committee on behalf of the participants present at Youth 21 calls for the lead agencies coordinating Youth 21 to support and manage a transparent online engagement and discussion process for youth and youth organizations to (a) review the draft statement, and (b) proceed to strategically prioritize the many recommendations into regionally relevant "most important, most impactful, most immediate" components, and a "wish list" that comprises those items that need to be held for future consideration.

(1) On the issue of SASG :impacting the lives of youth at local levels, the Drafting Committee consolidated the inputs of the Youth 21 attendees as follows:

- The SA should be a young person, someone that youth can identify with and who represents proof of the forward movement of youth inclusion and empowerment; the SA should have experience with youth-led organizations, a longstanding commitment to youth policy development,

and demonstrated experience with and influence in UN youth policies and programmes, as well as the capacity to influence, lead and command attention towards the issues of youth engagement and inclusion.

- In general, the SA should mainstream youth engagement, and this should be informed both by lessons learned in the gender mainstreaming efforts of the past decades, and by the principles and recommendations already in place in existing structures such as WPAY (World Programme of Action on Youth); additionally, for the purposes of clarity relating to all the recommendations that follow, the SA should help harmonize the definition of and overall approach to working with youth (NOT necessarily in terms of age categories but at least in terms of definite characteristics of the phase of transition between childhood and adulthood); to carefully consider and articulate the category of "marginalized and vulnerable" groups within the category of youth; to ensure that the cross cutting issue of gender is considered not only in terms of promotion of women and girls but also in terms of men and gender issues between men and women.
- In order to ensure coherence of the work done by the UN system regarding youth, the SASG needs to work in close cooperation and coordination with the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development and other relevant stakeholders.
- The SASG cannot be "all things to all people" nor in all places at one time, so should balance his/her means of staying connected to youth through a combination of working with and through Youth Councils, networks of



youth organizations, and also direct contact with youth at the truly grassroots community level.

- The SASG's work should be guided by the WPAY and by evidence based policies with clear indicators related to youth engagement, inclusion and development; within this recommendation, youth would like the SASG to advocate for making inclusive governance – especially in terms of youth inclusion – a key feature of the post-2015 global development agenda; additionally, the SASG should be the leader in consolidating available knowledge on youth, both in and outside the UN system, and feed that knowledge into recommendations for the allocation of funding to programmes for youth.
- The SASG should be supported to be independent and impartial, and should be held accountable by external checks and balances; [an example needing more clarification was the suggestion that funding resources should be made available so that outside youth organizations can be supported to conduct independent research and produce reports on youth engagement, to act as a check on the reporting that is produced by the SASG's office]; a particularly important mechanism must be an advisory board that is inclusive and representative should have direct input into the SASG's work on an ongoing basis, and which has input into the formulation of its own mandate in relation to the SASG.
- The SA will need to have and work through strong and effective partnerships – with media, youth organizations and networks of youth organizations, youth councils, development agencies, universities (and more); that being said, the SA should also explore and promote ways to

encourage UN engagement with informal youth groups, as current registration requirements are a barrier for many regions

- The SA should oversee and guide an in-depth and brutally honest process of reviewing the current UN structures for engaging youth and working with youth, making strong and clear recommendations for what to discontinue immediately, how to redirect resources towards areas of opportunity based on strengths and successes, and to implement mechanisms to strengthen coordination across agencies.
- The SA should direct the creation of a set of global standards for what makes organizations and entities (in any sector) "youth friendly" or "youth inclusive" (similar to "green" ratings systems), and then implement a target % for UN procurement to be set aside for organizations, companies and entities meeting those standards [*care to be given to potential child-labour issues].
- The SA should commission research on the state of youth in specific areas, including but not limited to: representation and inclusion in the UN, impact of UN work on youth currently, linkages of high youth employment and effective youth entrepreneurship with other positive socio-economic indicators (and others to be elaborated; he/she should then use the findings to promote effective policy at the national and international levels, including recommendations for funding allocation.
- The SA should immediately develop a strategy for mobilization, communication, interaction, and consultation with youth – this strategy should be continuously evolving,



and include tools to effectively launch campaigns, as well as to gather input from youth on shifting and newly arising priorities; as a subset of this strategy, the SA should be particularly active in promoting policies and programmes that quickly move to bridge the digital divide, so as to bring more and more Youth into the arena of social media and online, instant, global communications networks.

(2) In reviewing the SASG's suggested thematic priorities (employment, entrepreneurship, political inclusion, citizenship and protection of rights, and education, including on sexual and reproductive health), and considering how to strengthen youth engagement in each area, the Drafting Committee consolidated the inputs from the Youth 21 participants as follows:

2 (a) – General comments on the provided thematic areas

- The thematic areas as they stand can and should be considered further, with possible collapsing of related areas into broader categories; regardless of the final selection of themes, it is understood that at all times these areas are not silos, but rather inform each other and overlap; as noted in (1), existing policies described in the WPAY and developed further by GA resolutions, UN entities and youth-led organizations should be the guidelines for establishing the thematic areas.
- That said, it is generally agreed that Political Inclusion is the single most crucial thematic area, and that areas such as Education in particular need to be leveraged specifically as channels to promote Political Inclusion and empowerment of youth in political systems and in civil society.

- It is noted that environment, health (generally), food security, and a number of other broader social and economic rights are not expressly included, and these should be clearly addressed within whatever broad thematic areas are ultimately chosen; many of these are included in WPAY.
- Careful consideration should be given to how the SA interacts with, informs, and is part of existing structures and mechanisms on the relevant thematic areas (for example, Human Rights), such that he/she is most effective, does not duplicate efforts, and is sufficiently influential to be able to insert the youth perspective within those other mechanisms.

2 (b) Recommendations in each of the suggested thematic areas:

POLITICAL INCLUSION

(which is recommended to become the top priority area, and to be broadened to include Protection of Rights and Citizenship)

- Ensure that the Advisory Group (noted above) is an inclusive, democratic and representative body, modeling the key features of Political Inclusion that the SA intends to promote.
- Mobilize youth at national and international levels to become advocates and activists for their inclusion and participation.
- Streamline and improve the quality of the work of the UN in relation to youth, particularly in terms of how it influences youth engagement (for example, there might be fewer, more meaningful and effective mechanisms, and better coordinated); additionally, strengthen the use of Youth



Focal Points within various agencies and programmes of the UN system and ensure that they are two-way channels of communication between the SA and the UN programmes etc.

- Identify and disseminate good practices for the inclusion of youth in political decision making processes and institutions at local and national levels.
- The SA should encourage and exhort the immediate establishment of Ministries of Youth, AND the addition of Youth/Junior Ministers, AND the adoption of proportional quotas for youth in government, by all member states; furthermore, he/she should put significant pressure on governments to ensure that youth are actively consulted on, and have input into, legislation especially that which speaks to or affects them directly but also in general.
- The SA should encourage the development of independent Youth Council structures in countries and regions where they do not exist, and promote the replication of good practices in this area (Youth Councils that are fair, transparent, representative, empowered and included – should be able to report on how well Youth Council systems actually meet those standards and recommend changes); in parallel with this the SA should promote the inclusion of Youth Councils in decision-making processes at all levels.

PROTECTION OF RIGHTS

Compendium of youth rights; gathering all available rights across all ratified conventions that relate to youth; this could evolve over time into a Declaration, and/or ultimately a Convention on Rights of Youth.

CITIZENSHIP

- Promotion of rights-based approach and rights awareness through educational systems, particularly use of innovative teaching methods to inculcate civic awareness and a sense of both rights and responsibilities/duties
- Promote the concept of “global citizenship”
- Promote civic engagement tools
- A Fund for (or thematic “windows” in existing Youth Funds for) youth led projects related to citizen engagement
- Promotion of volunteerism as a means for Youth to engage in civic action and development at all levels; including working with the existing UNV program to enhance inclusion of young international volunteers in particular



EMPLOYMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

(which are preferred to be subsumed under "Economic Issues")

- The SA should advocate for governments to adopt and implement policies and national as well as regional strategies that create an enabling environment for business and small-medium enterprises (including social enterprise), as well as encouraging youth to view business as a viable and attractive form of employment; this must be accompanied by action to address mismatches between education/training and market needs and demands; this should include promotion of a global standard curriculum for the promotion of entrepreneurship within educational systems to promote a culture of creativity and innovation
- The SA should work with IFIs that currently work on issues of access to credit and financing for youth, both learning from them and pushing the youth agenda further in their work
- The SA should look into the current situation for intellectual property rights, and promote the adoption of global standards that are simplified and easy to use, thus making them youth-friendly (currently, youth are often unable to navigate the IP regulations, leaving them unprotected as innovators) [This is not universally agreed upon as being centrally relevant to youth and may need to be subsumed under another item or removed]

EDUCATION

(also including education on sexual and reproductive health)

- Direct the UN agencies that are involved in education in how to connect more directly and effectively with youth
- Research on youth to establish their real current status at all levels; refine and build on existing research and reporting on youth
- Advocate for youth participation in decision making processes within educational institutions
- Raise and address issues of quality and relevance of education, as well as access to/barriers to education especially for girls and marginalized/vulnerable groups; focus on increasing access to higher education
- Mobilize resources for inter-cultural youth exchange programmes
- Raise profile of youth-led sexual and reproductive health initiatives, and ensure that they are context-specific and locally driven

Item (3) "Steps to strengthen youth engagement in the office of the SASG" was considered to have been fully addressed in (1).



ANNEX B

GLOBAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM ON INCLUSIVE AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

1.0 Background

In 2012, there are more young people today under the age of 25 years old than ever, totaling nearly 3 billion or almost half of the World's population. Of these, 1.3 billion are between the ages of 12 and 24 years old. This "youth bulge" requires urgent and adequate attention of policy makers. For young people it provides a unique window of opportunity in which they can engage in creating a more sustainable, just and equitable World. Former South African President Thabo Mbeki reinforces this urgent need and further questions "...whether the incontrovertible fact of the African "youth bulge" would serve as a positive factor in terms of ...development and a better life for all ... people, or a negative phenomenon, according to which the fact of the larger African population would result in further impoverishment of ... people as a whole." Although these comments refer to Africa, it can be said to be true of the situation of young people across the World.

In order to determine the possibility of "better life for all" it requires that young people have access and skills for decision making. This is based on developing and analyzing information as well as developing a clear agenda on what a more sustainable, just and equitable World need and looks like. The " challenge (for) young men and women (is) to be clear in the definition of the youth agenda. This clarity should be akin to that of the women's movement. Youth should not seek out leadership simply because they are young (but) political space should not be closed to young people simply because they are young. Leadership of and by young people should be based on a clear agenda – the youth agenda and it is time to define one," said the CEO of Youth Agenda, Ms Susan Kariuki.

2.0 Recommendations on Youth Leadership, Inclusive and Democratic Governance

During the Forum, there were both plenary and smaller parallel sessions where youth engaged as panelists, discussants and participants with experts, senior political figures and UN officials. The deliberations resulted in a number of recommendations for the UN, national Governments and youth-led organizations on key issues and requirements for increased youth leadership, effective inclusion and participation in global dialogues, agenda-setting and to influence global, national and local policy and decision-making.

The key emerging issues included effective youth leadership, inclusion and participation in: education and employment; youth leadership and political processes. Specifically, the participants identified the following:

- A Youth Agenda: The lack of a shared overarching mission and a shared short or medium term agenda by the current youth generation results in a lack of leadership among the ranks of young people at national, continental and global level. There have been increasing numbers of youth led and youth serving organizations, however, there is no coalition of youth as individuals or institutions on specific issues that result in successful results, specific to their generation. Leadership especially at institutional level would provide young people a platform from which to engage with global policy makers and engage effectively in decision making processes and in political spaces. The consideration of the position for the Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General would then serve to ensure consistent voice and visibility of the Mission and Agenda of young people with the UN framework and global dialogues.



- Intergenerational dialogue is a critical strategy for youth participation and inclusion, and as a process to access power. Intergenerational dialogue forms an important model for mentorship and succession planning for successful leadership by the next/younger generation. Global dialogue spaces such as Rio+20, UN Assemblies and others with the UN system and national levels should ensure young people are in the mainstream rather than peripheral discussions on important global and national projects.
- Use of social media and technology for democracy and sustainable development: Technology and social media are tools to open up dialogue and in doing so, offer sustainable efficient solutions to problems. However, the limitations of access in many parts of the World and for marginalized groups means that traditional strategies of outreach should not be ignored in favour of this newest global trend. National and local level roundtable or town hall consultations among youth, between youth and government, as well as between youth and UN and other development agencies are still relevant and effective ways for youth engagement.
- Employment and entrepreneurship: Youth leadership in employment and entrepreneurship begins at the design stage of these initiatives. These initiatives should be designed in consultation with young people, as part of the process of developing programmes for their benefit. Governments and development agencies should facilitate at macro and micro levels but not directly implement programmes and projects in which they give young people jobs. Young people view Government sponsored jobs as unresponsive to their needs with regard to skills and creativity as well as quality and work they consider dignified. This is also on the basic

principle that young people should have space to create jobs for themselves.

- Inclusion and participation of vulnerable and marginalized youth: Young female youth, youth with disability, youth from minority and indigenous ethnic groups continue to be left out of mainstream discourse of youth engagement. In addressing leadership, youth leaders must be aware and make specific efforts in their projects and organizations as part of the process of integration.
- Volunteerism and philanthropy among youth can be a form through which youth leadership is practiced as well as an avenue from which young people can learn appropriate skills for leadership. Volunteerism is also a mechanism that enables young people transition from school into the workplace, as it builds skills such as communication, networking, among others. Volunteerism is not an end to itself but a means of advancing skills of young people.

3.0 Unlocking Youth Potential

DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP

To unlock the potential of young people for leadership, and for inclusion and participation in democratic governance, it is important to appreciate leadership as a process. Effective leadership requires individual commitment to learn and ability to inspire. Transformative leadership requires the individual to note that change happens beyond the individual. To be successful, the leader must be creative and innovative.



ADDRESSING MARGINALIZATION

Marginalization of youth from economic social and political processes means a lack of access to what the majority receive and is a denial of fundamental human rights. In the political arena, some regions, communities and ethnic groups are not given access to their due rights and limits full participation in decision-making processes.

Youth are not homogenous. There are also young men and women, for example with disabilities, who are marginalized within youth-led and youth-involving processes. Statistically speaking there are 220 million youth with disabilities globally. A consequence of disability is to be hidden and grow up illiterate; 90% of youth with disabilities of school age are not in school, 82% of youth with disabilities live below the poverty line. To redress this, inclusive education should be promoted through affirmative action programmes, employment quotas and mobilize social movements to demand government accountability in equitable service delivery for and to youth with disability.

The interests of youth within marginalized ethnic groups should be considered in the context of the ethnic group's marginalization but also on the basis of the distinct issues, needs, and aspirations. Beyond political governance, engagement in sustainable development initiatives is critical for youth within these communities. They require skills building for advocacy and lobbying to have their voices heard on the particular issues and interests they want addressed.

Development programmes by international agencies ought to disaggregate groups within communities, in addition to sex

there ought to be disaggregation by age and where applicable by degree of vulnerability and marginalization. Effective responsiveness means that each group within a community is catered for rather than a generic one size fits all approach to community projects.

MASCULINIZATION OF LEADERSHIP

The participation of young men and women in governance and decision-making processes remains peripheral, and the masculinization of leadership particularly limits access to leadership for women. A leader is often "male" and "above 50 years of age". Where "youth" challenge and succeed in leadership, they are mostly male.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP BEYOND AGE

Young women and men people have sought leadership on the basis of age; "it is our time to lead" and based on the demographics; "we are the majority age group in the World". However, the reliance on demographics as a strategy to advocate for youth participation, inclusion and access to leadership is limiting and likely to further stereotype young people, and especially young women and youth from vulnerable and marginalized groups as it creates new stereotypes that leadership is for young people, on the singular basis of age.

The discourse on inclusive and participatory leadership must move young men and women towards appreciation of leadership based on other measures and values. To gain value as leaders, young people should not simply glorify "youth" but rather assess the individual's capacity for leadership and the mission for which leadership is sought.



BROADEN SPACE FOR YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Discussions on youth participation in democratic governance generally tend to focus on political spaces linked to electoral processes. For young people, there should be more options about where and how they engage and take leadership. Creativity is an important element for and of leadership; need different ways of thinking.

Success in leadership is based on experience. Young men and women limited spaces for being creative, and testing their ideas; there is fear of failure and yet this is one of the key requirements for leaders in formation. Youth should have safe spaces to experiment and learn from successes and failures. There is need to create space and opportunities for young people to try, make mistakes and learn from their mistakes.

VALUE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Technology and social media are tools to open up dialogue and in doing so, offer sustainable efficient solutions to problems. The proven ability of social media to serve as a catalyst for political change is reflected in the events in the Arab States where on-line personal engagement transformed to heightened civic engagement. Statistics attest to the ability of social media to mobilize at a political level (Tunisia, Egypt) where social engagement turned into political engagement through street activism and social media served to enhance communication, bringing out levels of held dissatisfaction.

Social media also has the ability to build relationships and partnerships, strengthen cross-generational relations, mobilize, amplify messages for change and connect to one's humanity. ICT and social media are forms of expression and must not only be abused, but content-wise, must also be validated.

4.0 Socio-Economic and Political Participation of Youth

Concerns were raised that it is often elite youth who are affiliated with the Ministry of Youth and other national agencies. In order to avoid marginalization of other groups of young people, young people can campaign for the establishment of special agency on youth such as national youth council, youth federation or similar.

Youth participation at the African Union level is institutionalized. This is in line with the Africa Youth Charter. The Youth Division mobilizes youth in and through civil society organizations to participate in pan-African meetings. The Youth Division is challenged to be the central body to monitor implementation of the Africa Youth Charter and accompanying Action Plan. Within countries it is difficult to monitor the Youth Charter because it is cross-sectoral and implemented within various governmental departments.

The SASG is a welcome institutional addition for engagement on and with youth within the UN system. However, the SASG will only be effective if young people come together in an organized way to drive and support the office.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION

In order to compete in the labour market, young people need to have access to quality education. However, there is a mismatch between the training and education young people receive and the market opportunities for enterprise and employment opportunities. Young people from indigenous, minorities and vulnerable groups have limited access to quality education in regions across the World.



Post-training opportunities such as those provided by the African Union Youth Volunteer Group that aims at recruiting graduates and deploying to countries outside their own should be encouraged so that training received is applied in relevant spaces.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP IN POLITICAL TRANSITIONS AND PEACE BUILDING

In times of political transition and in peace building efforts young people are mobilized as community agents for change, but rarely participate in peace committees or other decision making organs. Young people are perpetrators and victims in times of instability and political transition. The subsequent physical and psychological long-term effects on these future adults can only be imagined, and intensive rehabilitation efforts are required to reintegrate these young men and women to lead productive lives in society.

Initiatives that help to mobilize youth to appreciate the importance of participation in peace building and political transitions include sports and arts events. Other medium include youth-led interactive platforms, cross cultural dialogues and radio programmes that allow young people to freely and responsibly air their view. Reaching young people in “a language they understand” is critical for youth participation.

YOUTH-LED ADVOCACY TOWARDS GREATER PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Youth are important agents for holding governments accountable to their commitments. As educated citizen, youth can play critical roles in monitoring service delivery, sensitizing

communities on their rights and ensuring that what has been promised is delivered. Young men and women’s creativity in developing easy-to-use tools for monitoring ranges from SMS services to report service needs, human rights abuses and violence, web-based platforms for direct communication with service providers, community-based manuals, scorecards, etc. These tools are complementary and enable constructive engagement between citizens and Government at various levels.

Examples from G-Watch in the Philippines, the Social Contract Centre in Egypt and Huduma (Kiswahili for Service) in Kenya show that young people can access tools that enable them to hold public service actors accountable for service delivery to their communities as well as for youth-specific initiatives. Youth participation in public accountability processes can be as trained monitors and data collectors, analysts or advocacy campaigners.

5.0 Youth Leadership in the Sustainable Development Agenda (Rio +20 and Post-2015)

Less than four months before the Rio+20 conference, the engagement of young women and men across the globe remains weak, if not tenuous. Whatever the reason behind this poor inclusion of youth, it is clear that the future will be determined at Rio+20 without adequate participation and meaningful input of those that must live in such a future.

Young women and men remain committed to sustainable development and the values that underpin it, and demand a right to be included in decision-making that will have a direct impact on their future. Young women and men welcome the attention being given to strengthening of the environmental dimension of sustainable development. Much still needs to be



achieved in order to ensure coherence and collaboration within and outside the UN system. In this regard, Rio+20 needs to provide a strong push for the UN system as a whole to deliver integrated sustainable development support across the three strands (economic, social and political), leveraging the critical role of youth in democratic governance and sustainable development. The Rio+20 Conference should recognize that the fullest integration of environmental, economic and social dimensions is essential at the local, national, regional and global levels if sustainable development is to be achieved.

5. Youth Leadership in influencing the post-2015 Global Development Agenda

Young people support a single set of global goals in the post 2015 global agenda which are universally applicable and speak to all facets of the development spectrum and are inclusive of all elements currently covered by the MDGs and, where any of these are not adequately incorporated in a new SDG, will promote the development of additional goals to ensure the purpose and spirit of the MDGs remain. It will be important to engage youth in the discussions, as well as specifically reach out to those from vulnerable and marginalized communities that are traditionally excluded from citizen dialogue processes.

The new set of global goals should address basic, fundamental rights to a larger degree than the MDGs, and this agenda needs to be pushed by young people. Additionally, the new set of global goals should address young people specifically as a target group.

The SDGs must communicate objectives not only for the bottom billion or for developing countries but for the planet,

with developed countries having as important a role to play as developing nations. SDGs must be transformational and must involve the fullest integration of all three strands of Sustainable Development in each goal.

Much work needs to be done to agree on the parameters for goals. Getting acceptance of the principles and crosscutting issues that will inform SDGs will, in itself be a huge task before Rio and should ideally include youth. Getting agreement on a SDG process at Rio need not cut across the post-2015 process nor sully the MDGs. UNDP and other UN agencies needs to collate and disseminate experiences of ways in which young men and women have participated in political transitions to motivate young people in other regions. Examples could be drawn from Nepal (role in constitutional revolution), Rwanda (Gacheche courts), Macedonia (online radio station with Albanian and Macedonian speaking youth), Sri Lanka (Government host of UN forum to mainstream youth participation in post 2015 agenda) and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This could also enhance participation of young people through media that already engages them and is friendly. Ensure Special Advisor to the UNSG on youth issues plays role in advocating for inclusiveness of youth and civil society in the post 2015 agenda. Include youth in high level panel task force under the SG on preparation for post 2015. Reach out to youth organizations for participation in national level dialogues during the 50 consultations globally to sure youth inclusion, participation and ownership in shaping the post 2015 agenda. Lobby government to disaggregate data especially with regard to youth so that youth programmes can be justified and implemented.



ANNEX C

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YOUTH 21: BUILDING FOR CHANGE

We, members of the Global Urban Youth Research Network established by UN-Habitat, have listened to you for the last four days, not as dispassionate observers, but as advocates and as intergenerational partners. We have been asking ourselves:

How can we best be your allies?

In response to that question, we have drafted this short statement of support and a proposal for partnership. This statement is meant to support your recommendations and stimulate further research and dialogue.

We agree with you that there are not enough data on youth. And the data that do exist have often been shaped without the participation of youth. By contrast, our approach is to engage youth in research, as experts of their own realities.

Why is research important?

To accomplish goals for youth and community development, one needs resources. But resources are scarce, and, therefore, decision making about how to allocate those resources must be based on evidence. Evidence must be based on research.

What do we mean by research?

Research is a disciplined form of investigating what happens in communities and with the people who live there, including young people. Research may marginalize certain groups, especially the vulnerable or excluded. But, research also has the potential to give voice to the voiceless and make visible the invisible.

A good example of youth research is the mapping exercise by youth living in the slum of Kibera who used modern technology to conduct research about their community. Through their research, they identified medical clinics and other resources in their community. Their research has made their community visible and showed it as a place of many assets and not just challenges. Building on the local strengths identified, this research can be used to negotiate resources, advocate for their needs, and generate their own strategies for change.

Where do we go from here?

We believe that everyone can be a researcher. Everyone is qualified to participate by bringing their unique expertise and knowledge to the research project. Even more, we believe that research must be done not on youth but with youth. Policy-makers and change-makers, like you, need evidence on which to base their decisions. We encourage you to integrate research into your work to bring about progressive change. In addition, we invite you to partner with us in ongoing research efforts.

Submitted by UN-Habitat’s Global Urban Youth Research Network, including among others:

Asha Bajpai, Carole MacNeil, Tizai Mauto, Padma Prakash, Willem van Vliet, Pamela Wridt, Chris Yeomans



