

Final Statement of the NGO Global Meeting World Youth Conference 2010

Keep your promises and make them true!

We, 208 representatives of youth-led NGOs from 153 countries, have gathered in Mexico on the occasion of the World Youth Conference 2010 to advise decision-makers on priorities for the global youth development agenda, and hold them accountable to the promises established in the Millennium Declaration and other international agreements.

We remind the decision-makers present that the largest ever generation of youth is also one of the greatest assets for achieving development – but, so far, the lack of progress to achieve the MDG's has been disappointing. Almost half of the world's population is under 25 years of age and 85 per cent of the 1 billion people aged 15–24 live in developing countries. Therefore, the needs and the role of youth must be recognized in national economic development plans. As Kofi Annan once said: "The youth are not only leaders of tomorrow but partners of today"¹ and, "A society that cuts itself off from the youth severs the lifeline; it is condemned to bleed to death"².

By failing to achieve their own Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Governments are not only leaving young people in poverty but are also jeopardizing the future of their own countries. Still, as the annexes to this statement clearly demonstrate, we recognize that we have an essential role and responsibility in making the MDGs a reality and we stay committed to strengthening global cooperation and investing what is needed in order to eradicate poverty – both before and after 2015.

In return, we expect recognition of the need to invest in youth to achieve development, and of the crucial role of youth-led organizations and non-formal education in our joint efforts to ensure Human Rights and social and sustainable development. Therefore:

Convinced that investment in youth leads to development in every single country of the world, we have assessed and consulted the needs of young people from various backgrounds.

Conscious of the particular needs of young people in general, as well as of the diversities of young people, we have aimed at meaningfully involving marginalised and socially excluded young people.

¹ Presentation on the role of youth and youth organizations; don the 1st of July, 2003 at the 2nd meeting of High Level Panel of Secretary Generals Youth Employment Network.

² Kofi Annan; Secretary General of UN: address to the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, Lisbon, 1998

Concerned that our governments are failing to deliver what they promised in the Millennium Declaration, we are now looking beyond 2015 and the achievement of the MDGs.

Recognizing civil society organizations' role of collaboration, participation and monitoring to reach common goals,

We demand

Governments and ministers responsible for youth, ministers of finance, ministers for development, ministers of family and gender issues and other decision-makers with impact on our daily lives, to undertake all the measures necessary to recognize young people as subjects of rights and to guarantee the full exercise of these rights, aiming at equal conditions by taking into account different characteristics such as age, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, urban and rural backgrounds, disabilities, etc, and to:

1. Develop national and international legislative measures, such as the Ibero-American Convention on Youth Rights and the African Youth Charter, to ensure a human rights-based approach to the development of national youth policies.
2. Guarantee the rights of young people, including the right to safety, food and water; the right to education; the right to health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights; the right to decent work, the right to freedom of assembly, expression and movement; the right to participation; and the right to non-discrimination.
3. Pay particular attention to marginalized youth, including young people at risk of discrimination on the basis of age and gender identity, sex, racial or ethnic origin, migration, sexual identity or sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, and facilitate their full participation and inclusion in society.
4. Analyze and debate, in the framework of the United Nations Commission for Social Development, the initiative to establish a UN Convention on Youth Rights, bearing in mind and assessing already established legal mechanisms like the African Youth Charter, the Ibero-American Convention on Youth Rights and the Revised European Charter on Participation of Young People in Local and Regional life.
5. Engage and invest in the efforts of youth-led organizations in achieving the MDGs and recognize youth-led organizations as important actors for development.
6. Strategically and continuously invest in youth when designing national development programs, and also ensure participation — including through funding mechanisms — of youth-led organizations in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Programs — as well as National Youth Policy — respecting and guaranteeing the cultural identity of young people.

7. Through social dialogue and consultation on youth, establish programs to overcome both the economic and environmental crisis, through creating jobs for young people, in particular, in the renewable and “green” sectors.

8. Recognize the links between the World Program of Action for Youth and the MDGs and reinforce the efforts carried out by national governments in order to achieve the MDGs by 2015.

9. Implement new or strengthen existing national plans of action on the World Program of Action for Youth in order to achieve the MDGs.

10. Together with young people, identify the root causes preventing the achievement of the MDGs and identify solutions for overcoming these.

11. Take the opportunity of the 2010 MDG Review to not only recommit to the MDGs as a whole but also commit to particular goals and targets on the national and regional level with a specific focus on youth.

12. Support and conduct research on youth issues and strengthen access to statistics on youth development — disaggregated by gender, age and region — in order to facilitate an evidence-based approach to youth policy.

13. Define, together with the UN secretariat and youth-led organizations, how to improve the coordination between UN agencies, member states and civil society on matters related to the UN youth agenda.

14. Recognize and strengthen the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development.

15. Request the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development take the necessary political and operational role in the implementation of UN policy and cooperation with youth-led organizations, ensuring youth-led NGO participation from all regions of the world and include them in the work of the network.

16. Ensure that the UN Program on Youth, as the permanent co-chair of the network, is adequately staffed and resourced in order to actually implement UN policy on youth, including supporting member states in their implementation of the World Program of Action for Youth.

17. Commit, during the International Year of Youth, Dialogue and Mutual Understanding, to invest at least 5 per cent of the national defense budget in youth development programs in future national budgets.

18. Do their utmost to end all wars, occupations and conflicts and recognize youth-led NGOs, with their ability to create bridges between communities and social groups, as privileged actors in the promotion of a peace culture in pre- and post-conflict environments.

19. Initiate, through the UN General Assembly and the Commission for Social Development, the preparations for a revision of the World Program of Action for Youth in 2015, stemming from an evaluation of the implementation of the WPAY.

20. Mandate the UN Secretary General to publish a World Youth Report in 2013, focusing on how young people are contributing to the achievement of the MDGs, in order to prepare for a youth-friendly and participatory post-2015 development agenda.

21. Establish and support institutions and mechanisms that can provide technical, political and financial support for youth-led NGOs and non-formal education.

Our recommendations have come to life through an extensive consultation with youth-led NGOs. We stress the absolute necessity of national governments doing the same on local, regional and national levels when developing and implementing all national policy affecting youth.

We demand Governments to:

Poverty

1. Adopt a strategic plan and policies to combat rural and urban poverty, taking into consideration their different manifestations.
2. Decentralize the focus of economic systems toward a redistribution of natural resources, land and basic services, ensuring that they are free, of high quality and accessible for young people, including vulnerable groups, such as children and young women and young people from conflict areas, remote areas, minority youth and youth with disabilities.
3. Ensure that the voices of young people and local communities are heard to guarantee an economic policy that is holistic, gender sensitive and respectful of individual identity and culture. Youth organizations should play a key role in the reduction of poverty and hunger and governments should provide the proper environment, financial support and recognition of this.
4. Support formal and non-formal education that includes diverse agricultural training programmes to be developed for youth and led by youth.
5. Promote a genuine agrarian reform, taking into account the impact of climate change on food security and poverty, which recognises the social, environmental

functions of land, sea, forests and natural resources in the concept of food sovereignty.

Education

1. Guarantee and facilitate enrollment, participation and retention of young people in educational institutions at all levels, including secondary, tertiary, technical and vocational, free and quality education. This education should promote universal Human Rights values, without any kind of discrimination and with special attention to girls, women, indigenous and young people living in poverty and in vulnerable situations, such as — but not limited to — young people with disabilities and those living with HIV/AIDS. Governments must guarantee the fundamental right to secular education.
2. Improve the quality and relevance of educational curricula in public schools at all levels and orient educational programs (in native, foreign and official languages) toward the comprehensive development of young people; including intercultural, civil and peace education, solidarity, Human Rights education, education for sustainable development, evidence-based comprehensive sexuality education to achieve MDGs 5 and 6, emotional development, the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as the formulation of competencies and conditions for employability, taking into account the necessities of the local context.
3. Develop and invest in non-formal education programs, and strengthen, recognize and certify existing education programs run by youth-led NGOs to guarantee participation of young people in these processes.
4. Put in place programs for early childhood education, literacy and life-skills; address school drop-out, with a special emphasis on adolescents; offer a second opportunity to young people that have not completed basic education; and strengthen our efforts to achieve the MDG 2 goals and targets of universal primary education, which should be accessible, provide scholarship opportunities, and special programs for people with education interrupted by emergencies and conflicts.
5. Increase public and private investment in improving the quality of public educational institutions at all levels, including new informational and communication technologies, the incorporation of native, official and foreign languages, and continuing educator training programs, including programs in sensitization and training in teaching with a youth perspective, based on

teaching evidence, and encourage critical thinking and interaction among students by engaging students in the framing of development of curriculum.

Health

1. Guarantee the full realization of the right to the highest level of physical, mental and social health for young people, and strengthen our efforts to achieve the goals and targets of MDGs 4, 5 and 6; above all, the target lagging farthest behind, MDG 5b — Universal Access to Reproductive Health by 2015;
2. Establish public policies, increase financing and implement the principles of the Paris Declaration³ to guarantee young people have universal, free or affordable, non-discriminatory access to health. Remove legal barriers that restrict young people's access to health.
3. Increase the quality and coverage of health systems and healthcare services, with due attention to Sexually Transmitted Infections, HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other diseases, including non-communicable diseases. Recognize the specific health needs of marginalized and socially excluded young people; for example, young people living with disabilities.
4. Achieve universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services for all young people, as agreed in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, and ensure that young people living with HIV (YPLHIV) are meaningfully involved at all levels of the response. Recognize that the health and welfare of YPLHIV is both a Human Rights imperative and a public health priority.
5. Fully recognize young people's sexual and reproductive rights, particularly the right to choose, through achieving universal access to confidential, youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, including access to evidence-based comprehensive sexuality education, in formal and non-formal settings. Implement key effective interventions in the continuum of care for maternal health, including access to a full range of contraceptives and safe abortion.⁴

³ Country Ownership

Alignment – donor countries aligned behind the country objectives and local systems

Harmonization – donor coordination

Results-Based management

Mutual Accountability

⁴ Packages of interventions for family planning, safe abortion care, maternal newborn and child health (Geneva: WHO, 2010)

6. Recognize violence as a barrier to health and eliminate all forms of violence, including gender-based violence and female genital mutilation/cutting.
7. Strengthen or establish youth-friendly harm reduction programs and affordable treatment and rehabilitation programs, in order to address the vulnerabilities of young people, including the use, abuse and dependency on drugs, alcohol and tobacco.
8. Meaningfully involve young people in every aspect of all health programs, including those that encourage a healthy lifestyle; as well as raise awareness of nutrition, eating disorders and obesity.

Employment

1. Recognize that, according to the ILO, youth unemployment has increased since the year 2000 and that the situation for young people who are seeking jobs has been made worse by the recent economic crisis. We are therefore fully committed to the achievement of MDG 1b and MDG 8, target 16, which call for the creation of decent work, especially for women and young people. We demand a reinforcement of the role of the states through fiscal and increased investment to enable them to adopt public policies that regulate the labor market and industrial relations in the framework of a new development model that guarantees equity and social justice.
2. Encourage youth to become job creators by supporting comprehensive programmes to promote sustainable enterprises, business start-ups that include entrepreneurial training, micro-finance offering non-collateralized loans, business incubators, tax breaks and simplified business registration for youth. Focus on youth job creation in the green economy by encouraging low-carbon / no carbon businesses, with a special focus on groups in vulnerable and marginalized situations.
3. Reaffirm the recognition and implementation of the ILO Global Jobs Pact and decent work commitments, which are fundamental to meeting the MDGs.
4. Reaffirm the importance of effective tri-partite social dialogue as a necessary dynamic for the development of national public policies that effectively include the concept of decent work in national development plans. We strongly call for the recognition of the freedom to form and/or join trade unions, and collective bargaining systems, in order to facilitate a true social dialogue.
5. Encourage partnerships and co-operation among governments, the private sector, employers' organizations, trade unions, higher education institutions, youth-led NGOs, and civil society to create coherent, internationally recognized, professional qualifications to foster increased employment opportunities.

6. Implement employment creation policies and programs through capacity development, education and vocational training of young people to increase employability; especially for people in vulnerable situations, such as young women, young people in rural areas, urban marginalized areas and young people with disabilities.

Gender Equality

1. Guarantee for all young people, especially young women, comprehensive sexuality education, including healthy relationships education.
2. Partner with media and civil society to develop a mechanism to prevent the objectification of young women and young people of different gender identities; in particular, those that promote gender-based violence.
3. Recognize lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, intersex and queer (LGBTTIQ) identities as part of the spectrum of gender and sexual identities and ensure that young people that identify themselves as such have their Human Rights upheld; as outlined in the Yogyakarta principles in reference to gender and gender-based violence, and uphold the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the Beijing Platform for Action; the Cairo declaration on population and development; and the Convention of Belem do Para.
4. Refocus their efforts on achieving MDG 5 (Maternal health); in particular MDG 5(b), by achieving universal access to reproductive health services to ensure reduction in deaths related to maternal mortality and unsafe abortions. Governments must also guarantee that gender identities do not impact on the ability to acquire and sustain decent work.
5. Develop and implement legal frameworks, including for education that addresses gender-based violence (including those who are transgender), and violence because of sexual identity, and provide legal and social services to support vulnerable groups when necessary.

Technology and Innovation

1. Ensure universal, non-discriminatory, equitable, safe and affordable access to technology and research, and remove the barriers to bridging the digital divide, including through transfer of technology and international cooperation; thus, completing the MDGs.
2. Support the establishment of an international fund, funded on a voluntary basis by UN member states, to decrease the difference in technology capabilities between countries.

3. Promote, finance and support research, development and application of technologies created by young people.
4. Encourage the participation of young people in the generation and distribution of knowledge through information and communication technologies; use these technologies to deepen intercultural dialogue and encourage respect for social, cultural and religious diversity; and provide appropriate, accessible infrastructure and measures to equip young people with the corresponding knowledge and skills to use this technology.
5. Encourage the use of open source technologies and open standards. Ensure Internet neutrality and uncensored technology.
6. Guarantee protection against arbitrary interference with privacy. Ensure that no third parties have access to sensitive data without direct, continuous, consent.

Culture

1. Recognize and guarantee the cultural, ethnic, racial and linguistic diversity of all communities, with a special focus on indigenous youth and indigenous peoples, those living in rural communities, and Afro-descendant people.
2. Provide access to resources and public policies for the cultural and artistic expressions of youth and invest in the development of cultural exchanges.
3. Develop strategies and implement action against any manifestation of cultural practices that violate the basic Human Rights of individuals or groups, regardless of their socio-cultural or economic status, gender identities, sexual orientation, abilities, religion or geographical background.
4. Implement public policies that support inter-culturality and trans-culturality by integration of formal, non-formal and informal cultural education that allows youth to recognize culture in their everyday life.

Justice and Security

1. Research and identify the root causes of youth violence and instability, and prioritize early intervention and preventative measures based on this research, in order to reduce and eradicate the criminalization of youth in society by government and civil society.
2. Guarantee that the right of access to justice is never compromised by security initiatives; they are inextricably linked. Therefore, governments and state representatives must respect the rule of law in order to ensure that they are not abusing their power against young people, such as young Human Rights defenders, political and social activists.

3. Recognize that justice is also based on social dimensions, including equal opportunity and fair distribution of resources; accordingly, they must seek actions that ensure this, without any kind of discrimination, and with special attention given to vulnerable groups.
4. Recognize that young people are among the most affected groups in armed conflicts, and:
 - a. empower young people and recognize their right to be conscientious objectors to military service, and protect them from any negative consequences of this decision;
 - b. focus on strategies that allow stable, post-conflict and post-prison development; in particular, the sustainable and social reintegration of youth victims and survivors, with due respect for reconciliation, rehabilitation and the resilience of young victims; and furthermore, recognize and include youth organizations working on this areas;
 - c. re-allocate budgets used for the military and armaments toward support the development of young people.
5. Give attention to the gender construction of violence in order to overcome behavior patterns that reproduce violence, both that of male-male violence as well as violence against women.

Participation

1. Create a legal framework, with appropriate monitoring mechanisms, for young people to be partners and active participants in all levels of society (local, national, regional and international), assuring their access to civil and political rights, and including the right to vote at a maximum age of 18.
2. Support existing structures and encourage the creation of new structures for youth participation by supplying them with adequate resources, including, but not limited to, education, information, material resources and funding, giving special attention to vulnerable groups of young people.
3. Ensure the autonomy and respect the specificity of all structures promoting youth participation, by and for youth.
4. Promote the creation of independent local and national youth councils, composed of youth organizations, in all countries and integrate them into the decision-making process, based on the principles of co-management and compulsory consulting.
5. Encourage international and regional interaction in all sectors of youth participation, and promote cooperation by providing appropriate support; for

example, by including youth delegates, selected in a democratic manner, in all national delegations to international fora.

Sustainable Development

1. Recognize that education for sustainable development is key to achieving a more sustainable global society and therefore integrate sustainable development into new and existing curricula. Furthermore, non-formal learning, especially that provided by youth-led NGOs, should be stimulated and recognized as an important method of raising awareness, fostering change and sustainable production, reducing consumption and increasing waste-management. This training includes vocational education for green employment, sustainable lifestyles and the sharing of formal and non-formal educational best practices.
2. Guarantee the participation of young people in the environmental strategies of both governmental and private actors, and in programs oriented towards sustainable development and sustainable management of natural resources; in particular, with a special focus on biodiversity and climate change. Governments should develop a rights-based approach to participation, recognising young people as important actors at local, national and international levels, while acknowledging cultural diversity.
3. Commit to a fair, adequate and legally binding climate deal. Such a deal should strengthen and support the force of youth-led NGOs in mitigation and adaptation strategies. Furthermore, governments should cooperate for technology transfer in the field of renewable energy and capacity building, ensuring that all countries have equal access to green technologies to achieve the necessary post-carbon energy infrastructure.
4. Choose radically for building a green economy within the framework of sustainable development and poverty eradication. To fuel the green economy, young people should have access to quality green jobs and be encouraged toward sustainable entrepreneurship and innovation. A major role for the UN Youth agency mentioned later in this statement should be to support youth-led sustainable development projects.
5. Develop common international standards for the regulation, supervision and evaluation of the environmental impact assessments for both private and public projects, and embed within the assessment a critical role for civil society. Moreover, the International Court of Justice should become competent for compliance with existing environmental and social international legal norms such as the Kyoto Protocol.

International Migration

1. Promote dialogue between countries of origin and receiving or transit countries

- to uphold the Human Rights of all migrants, including social and economic rights, and establish formal and informal facilities as contact points to ease integration of migrants.
2. Ratify international treaties on migration and displacement, and to create, implement and monitor policies and conditions to make migration a voluntary, consensual and informed decision benefiting the individuals but also the societies of origin and destination.
 3. Create opportunities (capacity building, training and technical assistance) to support migrant youth as actors in local development, through small and medium enterprises and NGOs.
 4. Recognise the role of non-formal education programs and activities based on Human Rights education, conflict transformation and intercultural dialogue to implement social and cultural integration.
 5. Implement appropriate policies and provide necessary information in order to prevent irregular migration, human trafficking, sexual abuse and climate migration, taking into consideration vulnerable groups such as minors, women, and people with disabilities.

International Cooperation

1. Revise and reinforce the existing frameworks for international youth cooperation, and consider the possibilities of improvement by merging current structures and creating a UN Agency for Youth as proposed by the African Youth Charter, the pre-conference of Bahia and the Istanbul Action Plan agreed by the World Youth Congress 2010 and presented to the Mexico World Youth Conference by the government of Turkey.
2. Increase funding for international youth actions and define outcome indicators that can be used by national and international organisations to align their efforts and develop cohesive strategies.
3. Accelerate progress in achieving the MDGs by emphasizing the role and active participation of youth, providing them with the necessary resources and means for action, and ensuring exchange of experiences and expertise.
4. Reduce the gaps between the youth of developing and developed countries, increase the representation and participation of developing countries in international cooperation, and support and recognize national and regional youth platforms and policies as a basis for global cooperation.

5. Enable and increase youth participation in international exchange programmes by facilitating mobility and formal procedures, in order to generate bonds of fraternity, promote understanding of global issues, and the need for and benefits of global cooperation.
6. Set transparent and common conditions for the use of international development assistance, both in the creation of youth policy and national development; these conditions being tailored according to local needs, thereby increasing the participation of beneficiaries in the decision-making over the use of resources.