

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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VIDEO MESSAGE ON INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY 12 August 2020

The theme of this year's International Youth Day – “Youth Engagement for Global Action” -- spotlights the ways in which the voices and activism of young people are making a difference and moving our world closer to the values and vision of the United Nations Charter.

This year's Youth Day occurs as the lives and aspirations of young people continue to be upended by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some have lost their lives, and many have seen family members and other loved ones perish.

The vulnerabilities of young refugees, displaced persons, young women and girls and others caught up in conflict or disaster have grown more acute.

A generation's very formation has been jeopardized, their steps towards adulthood, identity and self-sufficiency thrown off course.

Some have taken on care burdens or are suffering from increased risks of hunger, violence in the home or the prospect of never being able to resume their education.

But this generation is also resilient, resourceful and engaged.

They are the young people who have risen up to demand climate action.

They are mobilizing for racial justice and gender equality and are the champions of a more sustainable world.

They are peacebuilders promoting social cohesion at a time of social distancing, advancing an end to violence globally and advocating harmony at a time of rising hatred.

Many are young women who have been on the frontlines in mobilizing for justice and climate action — while also serving on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response.

Realizing the promise of this generation means investing far more in young people's inclusion, participation, organizations and initiatives.

I call on leaders and adults everywhere to do everything possible to enable the world's youth to enjoy lives of safety, dignity and opportunity and contribute to the fullest of their great potential.

Thank you.