Department for Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Social Policy and Development

Expert Group Meeting
'Youth, Development, and Rights'
13-14 November 2013
New York

Presentation Briefs

To help participants prepare for the sessions and discussions, below short overviews of the topics to be presented by each expert.

1. Political Participation

Leonardo Castilho: Overview on political and civic participation

Please see accompanying document attached
'EGM_OHCHR_Human_Rights_Youth_July_2013.pdf'

The document provides the Executive Summary of the outcome report of an Expert Group Meeting held by the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights in Geneva in July 2013 on the Human Rights of Youth. The meeting was organized to analyse the human rights framework applicable to young people, and to formulate possible ways forward for the human rights of youth at an international level. The outcomes of the meeting will provide the basis of Mr Castilho's presentation.

Jorge Cardona: Overview on political and civic participation - synopsis from presentation

[Are youth (age 15-14)]… 'in a position to exercise their Political Participation and Civic Engagement rights like any other group in today's society?

Or, on the contrary, are there any circumstances that make it advisable to engage in a process of specification of youth rights regarding Political Participation and Civic Engagement?

As we all know, the International Bill of Human Rights, mainly composed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two Covenants of 1966, has had a process of specification of rights following two main lines:

- First, concerning particularly serious violations which have been regulated specifically (such as in the case of racial discrimination, torture, enforced disappearances, genocide, etc...)

- Second, concerning certain groups of people for whom it was considered necessary to establish a specific rights framework, given that these groups were in a situation of structural vulnerability regarding the respect for their rights.

Regarding the latter, in turn, we can distinguish two groups:

- Those who are in a situation of structural vulnerability derived from the personal characteristics of those forming the group (the case of children, the elderly ...)

- Those who are in a situation of structural vulnerability derived from context (social, political, economic, cultural) such as the case of women, migrant workers, indigenous groups, etc,…

However, we must recognize that in the development of rights specific frameworks, there are groups of people who have been taken into account on the basis of both characteristics, such as people with disabilities, whose structural vulnerability is caused at the same time by their personal characteristics and the existence of a social, political, economic and cultural context that has created artificial barriers that prevent them from fully exercising their rights.

These groups of people find themselves in a situation where they encounter various barriers (be they physical, cultural, legal, economic, political…) to the equal exercise of their rights. Therefore special measures have been needed to protect them in situations of particular vulnerability and to empower them in the exercise of their rights, and to give them a means to enforce them.

The question before us today is the following: Are young people, aged 15 to 24, in a situation of structural vulnerability in the exercise of their rights of Political Participation and Civic Engagement, derived either from their personal characteristics or from social, economic and / or political structures, which require the adoption of specific measures to avoid their discrimination and to ensure equality in the exercise of their rights?

Or, on the contrary, do the characteristics of this group of people and their status in society not allow us to identify any particular problems in the exercise of these rights?

Alejandro Morlachetti: *Barriers to civic and political participation of Migrant Youth*

Whether on their own or with family, adolescents and youth are increasingly migrating in search of survival, security and improved standards of living. Young migrants have great potential to contribute to the populations they join, and migration presents positive opportunities for young persons, as well as for countries of destination. However, policies must be in place to ensure that young migrants are able to adjust and contribute to new environments and to realize their full potential. Therefore, it is important to promote the civic and political participation of migrants in the host country.

The civic participation in migrant community organizations can help them to settle in and to develop a social network. However, other civic organizations working with youth in general also have a responsibility to involve and encourage these particular groups into their work.

Participation in the political decision-making process promotes integration. The granting of political rights is a democratic means of expression and at the same time gives responsibilities to voters. Documented migrants who have resided regularly for a specific period of time in the country may have access to the right to vote at the municipal and local elections. Most of the time participation in national elections are granted after citizenship is granted. But that may take several years.

The enjoyment of civil and political rights is inextricable linked to the enjoyment of social, economic and cultural rights. Access to education and civic and language education is essential to engaging young migrants in civic and political activities. Providing resources for migrants to learn the language of the country of destination is a major part of this.

Finally, it should be noted that the situation is particularly difficult for those young migrants who are undocumented. The lack of separation between immigration enforcement and the provision of services and the mechanisms for protection and redress further dis-empowers migrant youth, as they are unable to claim their rights and access protection without potential negative consequences as a result of their migration status.

There should be initiatives to support and empower them, as well as migrant and youth-led organizations, to carry out such activities. These initiatives should recognize the importance of empowered participation of undocumented youth in civic and political life as would-be 'citizens', in practice if not on paper. Regularization of migrant status is a key tool to promote integration in host societies facilitating political and civic participation of undocumented youth.

Why is it important to include youth and other underrepresented groups in policy making?

For the representative democracy to work, social representativity is very important. Policy makers that forget or are not willing to include key populations, will fail in making policies that are shaped for a diverse population. Key populations, such as youth, women and various minority populations, represent a resource that will be absolutely critical in achieving development goals. If we want development in society, we cannot fail in addressing the needs and possibilities of such important groups of society.

What are the barriers?

The challenge of discrimination hinders several groups to participate fully in society. Some of these barriers are lack of legal rights, such as the right to vote or run for elections. Others represent social barriers. Also, some of the efforts of including underrepresented groups have the opposite effect. For instance: What is the difference between youth participation and *real* youth participation?

Possible solutions

All local and regional governments must show that they are aware of the implications of Article 12 of The Convention of the Rights of the Child and similar articles in other relevant conventions and treaties, addressing the rights of other key populations. Further, participation bodies must be based on the principle of representativeness, not merely representation, and the participants must be given the opportunity of real participation. There are also other mechanisms to ensure inclusion, such as economic and other support structures, democracy education in schools, cooperation between governments and NGOs etc.

2. Civic Engagement

Andrea Landry: Barriers to civic participation of Indigenous youth
North America

The focal point for discussion during the afternoon session of the Expert Group Meeting on Youth, Development, and Rights on November 13th, 2013 will revolve heavily around barriers to civic participation of Indigenous youth. This issue is not only prevalent in North America, but globally. As one of the North American focal points for the Global Indigenous youth caucus, research and discussions in this realm has been relatively high. In Canada alone, 90% of Indigenous youth would rather vote in Band Council elections over municipal elections. Band Council elections involve voting for Chief and Councils of a First Nations reservation. The reasoning behind this is simply in the fact that most Indigenous youth in North America feel that the federal government systems in Canada are colonially constructed, and include a grim history that has left Indigenous youth feeling excluded. Yet, through historical analysis and highly inclusive processes of Indigenous youth, a broader understanding of the importance of being politically engaged is being built. This

primarily has to do with the Indigenous social movements occurring in Canada, whereas Indigenous youth are leading the way in attempting to create political change in a variety of forms. These forms include education, inclusion, leadership, and mentorship. An in-depth analysis of statistical information, best practices, and recognizing the colonial history of North America will be looked at to bring forward the realities of Indigenous youth in North America.

Ivana Savic: *Youth Structures*

We are living in the youngest world ever, and the world goes through transformative changes. Hereby, it is well understood that youth plays a key role in development. On the one hand, young people have been initiating changes in their communities and society and have been recognized as important partners in development. On other hand, youth-led structures are faced with numerous challenges, some of which limit the ability of youth to sustain their initiatives and develop them up to their full potential. In order to address those challenges, it is of great importance to shift the paradigm from fulfilling the needs to fulfilling the rights of youth, to building partnerships and to ensuring equal opportunities for all, and especially for initiatives led by young people.

Therefore, the focus of the presentation is three fold:
1. to provide an analysis of the youth-led structures, including functions they have for the young people;
2. to provide an overview of the current situation of the youth-led sector;
3. to provide recommendations on strengthening the youth led structures, especially in the context of the capacity development and sustainability of youth-led initiatives.

Pablo Angulo: *Civil Society Organizations*

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AS INSTRUMENTS TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO ENGAGING POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

According to UNDP, less than 2% of the youth worldwide are members of parliaments. If we consider only young women, this number decreases. This is the consequence of barriers that hinder effective political youth participation. Another argument often considered is that young people are not necessarily interested in political and civic participation; however, this argument can be refuted by the higher rates of youth participation within Civil Society Organizations.

In this sense, CSO's serve as instruments to overcome barriers to engaging political institutions by several means. Firstly, by showcasing the nature of these barriers and providing technical assistance on how to overcome them. Secondly, by filling the voids left by political institutions whether in capacity building or knowledge-sharing. Thirdly, by amplifying the voices of young people and extending its reach. Fourthly, by providing themselves the spaces that political institutions are not

providing and absorbing the young people that political organizations are not engaging.

The presentation will try to answer fours questions:

1. How can CSO's help overcome these barriers?
2. How to increase youth participation within political institutions?
3. How to effectively bring youth voices closer to political institutions?
4. How to assure that CSO's provide the spaces that political institutions are not providing?

3. Economic Participation: Recognition

Jean-Pierre Kallanian: Skill recognition of non-formal learning for disadvantaged youth overview

- Economic participation of disadvantaged youth (applications, interviewing, social skills, self advocacy, basic work ethics)
- The need to recognize non-formal learning (nfl) for disadvantaged youth (why it is important)
- Accessibility and Awareness (of organized nfl opportunities)
- Impact of impermanent placement on nfl (homeless and youth involved in social welfare systems - foster care)
- Discrimination and Privacy (youth in conflict with the law)
- Proof and Documentation (migrant and trafficked youth)
- Self Advocacy and Inclusion (self-worth and integration with non-disadvantaged youth)

Andrea Bateman: Qualifications recognition

ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework: Qualifications recognition
Qualification frameworks can be national or sectoral (e.g. covering one or two education and training sectors – such as TVET) or regional.

The countries in geographical regions often trade together strongly and have mobility of people between each other. To remove barriers to trading and ease mobility of people these countries sometimes collaborate to link their qualifications systems. This is sometimes simply a recognition arrangement, a memorandum of understanding between learning providers in countries but it can also become a meta framework (regional framework of levels) that each country relates its qualifications levels. The best known regional framework is the European Qualifications Framework.

Currently there is a common reference framework being developed in the ASEAN countries (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam).

ASEAN countries have a combined population of almost 600 million. There are considerable differences in the population levels, sizes of economies and levels of per capita income across member countries. While there are labour flows between member countries they are not as great as those of some other regions.

In the ASEAN region some countries have established comprehensive National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs), while others have well established sectoral framework, and others are yet to develop or are in the process of developing qualifications frameworks.
Within this context the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework aims to accommodate different types of NQFs that are at different stages of development, ranging from the in principle and conceptual to the fully developed and functioning NQFs.

Key purposes proposed for the framework include:
- Support recognition of qualifications
- Facilitate lifelong learning
- Promote and encourage credit transfer and learner mobility
- Promote worker mobility
- Lead to better understood and higher quality qualifications systems.

Please also see accompanying document/reading material **'Qualifications Frameworks and quality Assurance Education and Training'** *February 2013, prepared for the World Bank by Ms Bateman and colleagues. Provided by the World Bank.*

4. Economic Participation: In the Workforce

Amy Huziak: In the Workforce: Contracts and Benefits

Young people are now the majority of the world's population, but are still for the most part, shut out of positions of power and decision-making. Globally, young workers are facing a situation of high unemployment and underemployment, a precarious job market and a declining access to benefits, public services and social protections. Young people who are able to access formal employment often find themselves with less favourable terms and conditions than older workers, including less job stability, lower pay and few to no benefits. Contracts for non-unionized young workers are increasingly short-term, meaning workers are unable to work up to higher rates of pay or advance within an organization without having to move between jobs.
At the same time, austerity budgets from conservative governments worldwide mean that young people have less, or more difficult access to quality public or

workplace pensions, health benefits, and social securities. With declining wages and job instability, this means that young workers are less able to absorb the costs that this withdrawing of benefits presents.

So, how do young people ensure quality employment, job stability and access to benefits? How do we reinforce labour rights and strengthen labour law to defend good jobs and the rights of young working people? Young people are increasingly turning to the labour movement, organizing new unions and extending the arm of labour into the unorganized workforce. Change must come both from the ground up, with empowered young workers bargaining for better contracts and benefits, as well as legislatively, with strong supports for both unionized and non-unionized workers enshrined in law.

Rory O'Sullivan: Internships

I'll begin by briefly discussing the employment situation for young adults in the United States over the past few decades. In short, wages and employment levels have shrunk substantially, particularly for young men over the past 10 years. There are two reasons for this. First, the 2001 Dot Com Crash and the Great Recession disproportionately impacted youth. Second, there has been a long-term secular decline in the proportion of young adults with jobs. This stems from the increased skill required by the 21st century labor market.

Unfortunately, America's education system is ill equipped to transition the majority of its students to this labor force. There are no longer union jobs that train workers after high school. Neither does the U.S. have a system that incorporates work-based learning into its educational model at scale.

Internships are one (decentralized) way in which U.S. students gain work experience that builds professional skills. Technically, interns are not employees of the company. The DOL has specific standards in place that require significant training on the part of the employer for an intern to work without pay. In practice, however, these regulations are frequently flouted. Given high levels of youth unemployment, young people feel tremendous pressure to "get their foot in the door." They will often accept unpaid or poor quality internships just to have the chance to put something on their resume and build professional relationships. I'll finish by discussing a few solutions we see to the problem of unpaid internships.

Jeremy Liddle: Youth Entrepreneurship

Topics to be considered include:
- Mr. Liddle's personal story of youth entrepreneurship and its social impact
- History of the G20 Young Entrepreneurs Alliance
- Learnings from Accenture, Ernst and Young & McKinsey research about challenges facing young entrepreneurs
- G20YEA Partnership with UNMC and opportunities for entrepreneurship to change the world