

Consultative Meeting on the 10-Year Review of the World Programme of Action for Youth

Coimbra, Portugal

31 January to 3 February 2005

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING

Introduction

1. We, representatives of international, regional platforms and national youth organizations have met from 31 January to 3 February 2005 in Coimbra, Portugal with representatives of the United Nations system agencies, funds and programmes, and other inter-governmental organizations, to review the implementation of the World Plan of Action of Youth and of new United Nations concerns in the field of youth.
2. We thank the Portuguese Government and the Portuguese National Youth Council for co-organizing the meeting and acknowledge the initiative of the United Nations to consult with youth organizations. We are also thankful to our host Academic Association of Coimbra and recognize its example of volunteering and effective youth participation.
3. We welcome the World Youth Report 2005 - Report of the Secretary General, that reflects progress made in the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) and which served as the basis for our considerations and recommendations. We also welcome the opportunity that this meeting provided to build partnerships between the youth representatives and the United Nations system's agencies, funds and programmes.
4. We call upon the secretariat to communicate the recommendations and concerns expressed in this document to the 60th session of the United Nations General Assembly, as well as in the other UN relevant meetings prior to the General Assembly and we recall the GA resolution [A/C.3/59/L.18/Rev.1](#), of 2 November 2004 which decided to hold two plenary meetings at its sixtieth session, in 2005, on the 10-year review of the World Programme of Action, as well as preparatory roundtable, both with a strong participation of youth organizations.
5. We stand for Global Solidarity and co-responsibility of the international community in reducing the regional, social, cultural and economic inequities that are barriers to the fulfillment of the basic rights to all young people. Central to improving the situation of young people in the world is the fulfillment of their human rights. In the past ten years the global community has come to a deeper awareness of the importance of a rights based approach to development. We welcome this important development and believe that this should be integrated into future youth policies aiming at achieving all Human Rights to all young people.
6. At the beginning of the new Millennium, we reaffirm the need for the United Nations System to assist the implementation of a global and cross-sectoral youth policy and we encourage the promotion of comprehensive youth policies developed with and by young people at the international, regional and national levels, in sensitive consideration of national realities and of the specific needs of particular target groups in order to ensure a relevant improvement in the present and future conditions of young people worldwide.
7. It is acknowledged that since the WPAY has been introduced in 1995, several important steps towards its effective implementation in consultation with its beneficiaries have been taken, including the organization of a World Conference of Youth Ministers in 1998, the introduction of the participation of

youth delegates among national delegations to the General Assembly and the organization of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations system.

8. We reaffirm the 10 priority areas for youth highlighted by the WPAY in 1995 and acknowledge the five new issues of concern presented at the forty-first session of the Commission for Social Development in 2003. We acknowledge the importance of these five new issues of concern and believe that they are cross-cutting issues that should be seen in the context of the existing 10 priority areas.

9. Overall, the seeming growth in awareness within the United Nations system of the need for better and higher quality consultation with the communities of concern, such as the young people beneficiary of the United Nations and national policies, is highly welcomed.

10. Nevertheless, much remains still to be done to create conditions conducive to the full implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth at all levels, from national to international. In our view, the following limitations remain barriers to the effective implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth:

- The evidence base for policy making seems to be limited. The United Nations system needs to enhance its capacity for the effective collection and co-ordination of data on the actual situation of youth worldwide, and for its effective presentation for use in policy development;
- There is a clear need to improve the current framework of consultation for the development of youth policy so as to include relevant intergovernmental co-operation, consultations with competent and representative non-governmental organizations and other youth structures. In addition, without adequate and sustainable financing and clear channels for mainstreaming youth issues within the United Nations system, the present framework cannot become effective and sustainable;
- Despite clear divisions of responsibilities among United Nations agencies, there is a lack of co-ordination as regards to the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth;
- There is still no accepted and implemented mechanism for evaluation of the achievements and impact of the World Programme of Action for Youth, despite the existence of feasible indicators for youth policy evaluation that could be scaled up to global relevance;
- As an important tool for analysis of the achievements of the WPAY, the World Youth Reports have a very low impact on governments and international institutions and do not serve to boost their commitments to its implementation.
- The question of how to conceptualize cross-sectoral youth policy remains a challenge. Further clarification and articulation is needed concerning the scope of childhood policy and its relation to youth policy, as well as competition between mainstreaming agendas and the needs of specific target groups.
- It remains difficult to reach the full potential of a cross-sectoral policy, different agencies consider the objective of the policy in different terms – youth as problem or as a human resource within an agenda of development or survival;
- Mainstreaming of cross cutting issues within the youth agenda remains limited. Examples include the issues of gender equality, the importance of volunteerism, geographical isolation of remote regions, migrant groups; young people with disabilities, refugees, indigenous young people and minorities.

10 years on – Growing Challenges

Globalization

11. 10 years after the introduction of the World Programme of Action for youth, Globalization and its impact on young people, in particular in terms of the threats and opportunities it poses for their life chances, represents the new back-drop and context for multilateral youth policy making at the global

level. Young people today alternately suffer and benefit from the process of globalization, often disproportionately to the rest of the population. The World Youth Report 2003, the most recent research available, provides ample evidence that the benefits and burdens of the process of globalization are not equally shared. This has rightly been recognized by the Secretary General as an emerging priority area for the work of the United Nations.

12. More attention must be paid to capitalizing on the opportunities and positive aspects of globalization in the benefit of “all” young people. Young people clearly affirm their belief in “alter-globalization” rather than “anti-globalization”, as an alternative, more democratic and fair approach to global development. Global solidarity has to stand as significant value to further develop.

13. In order to bring about a more equitable international global governance, young people should be involved in permanent decision making processes and should be educated to become active members of the community involved in the political, social, economical life of their countries.

14. The digital divide remains a significant obstacle to youth development, in both the North-South and the rural – urban context. It should also be noted that the unprecedented growth in transnational media and information and communication technologies facilitate young people to see migration abroad as an opportunity to improve their lives.

15. Often, the image of countries represented by the media does not reflect the actual reality, therefore more attention should be brought on this in order to prevent migration or so that mobility happens in a safe and informed manner. In this context we are particularly worried with all the forms of trafficking of young women and young boys and the crimes that develop around this issue.

This newly identified context demands:

- Improved consultation with young people and governmental support to the creation and development of independent national youth platforms, on the model of national youth councils, to better represent the interests of the diversity of young people present in the overall population;
- A better focus on rural people, refugees, indigenous people, people with disabilities, girls and young women and assistance for them to play an active role in the local community; The recent commitment of the UN on these fronts are welcomed and participation mechanisms for young people on this process should be encouraged.
- The expression of global solidarity and partnership among the UN system, governments and civil society organization with the aim of providing basic tools and structures for development;
- Initiatives like the World Bank’s Framework for action with Youth and the Youth Employment Network should be further spread in order to become effective means to transform the present reality.

Linking the WPAY with the Millennium Development Goals

16. We welcome the introduction of the Millennium Development Goals agenda of the United Nations and the commitment and resources that it creates. For the first time several youth issues have been prioritized as worthy of immediate or progressively achieved targets for world action. The Millennium Declaration provides the opportunity for young people to play an active and leading role in promoting their own needs, concerns and issues effectively using the Millennium Development Goals framework while at the same time contributing to their promotion. This is the true meaning of a Global youth partnership for development. It has also been noted that the MDG framework, as the global priority action plan in the field of development with resources attributed to it, provides additional legitimacy to those working towards the implementation of the WPAY.

Youth Policies

17. While we welcome the ongoing development of a consensus inside the United Nations for more participative policy making and the development of holistic multilevel and communicative youth policies, the triangulation of research, civil society and government participation in youth policy development is often missing from both United Nations and national level action.

18. This “standard” has proven an effective approach on regional level and could be “scaled-up” in consideration of contextual adaptations. The legitimacy of policy making needs to be considered from the outset building in to the development of consultation and other processes of co-operation around youth policy globally.

19. In the long run, there is a need for the development of a clearer consensus on youth related work of the United Nations. **Such Policy is necessary to give the United Nations Programme on Youth the appropriate institutional authority to have the capacity to co-ordinate youth action among different agencies.**

20. The development of a “policy” means to marshal resources for its implementation. Without budgetary and human resources for implementing the provisions of the WPAY, so far unavailable, it will remain a mere declaration of principle.

21. Finally, further work is needed to ensure that priorities within the WPAY, which in theory represent solid elements of policy, are integrated into local and national policy planning. For this, intergovernmental co-operation is essential and can be both initiated and encouraged by the United Nations. Further, the use of recognized standards for youth policy development provides governments with incentives to approach the institution as a source of expertise in the often complex process of policy making.

A) Youth in the Global Economy: Poverty and hunger, Education and Employment

Poverty and Hunger

22. Many children and young people continue dying every day due to hunger and poverty being most of them live in rural areas, the response to this unfortunate reality remains a priority. We are deeply concerned with that development aid for hunger and poverty does not always reach the poor people in the local communities, due to the mismanagement of funds and corruption and that efforts should be made to address governance issues associated with the allocation and utilization of development aid. Education represents is a sustainable part of the solution to poverty eradication.

We recommend:

- Urgent promotion of consultation and inclusion of youth in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).
- Imperative accountability and transparency from the side of governments and NGOs in their operations in order to end corruption and nepotism. It is crucial to build solid and Democratic governance mechanisms, in order to reduce corruption and increase transparency and accountability. Youth organizations can support the governments in promoting **active citizenship** among youth groups in the population.
- Concrete efforts are made towards bridging the gap between the rich and the poor by involving the different parties and stakeholders in the process.
- That special emphasis should be placed on the development of **basic education and skills training for rural youth.**

- That Governments should ensure the quality of **youth participation in policy development** through various consultative processes thus creating more effective and transparent programmes.
- Sustainable support has to be provided to young people in order to allow **to start livelihoods** that could make them and their family less vulnerable to hunger.
- **Sustainable development** and respect for the **environment** as well as **human rights** based approach to poverty should be emphasized.

Education

23. Education is considered the basis for the real sustainable development of nations. Investing in youth is crucial for economic growth and social development. Although progress has been made in some countries by increasing access to education, the majority of countries are not on track to achieve the goals of the 'Education for All' agenda. This unsatisfying progress has been the result of several factors including: lack of formal national school systems, insufficient investment in public education institutions and infrastructures, the inability of families to afford to send children to school, unequal opportunities for girls and young women, and the underappreciated role of teachers.

Recommendations

Governments, through their Ministries of Education, are urged to:

- Invest at least 6 per cent of their budget in education, as suggested in the report "Learning: The Treasure Within," a report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, made in Paris, in 1996.
- Put in place policies, structures and infrastructures that will allow a **free formal and public primary education for all**, with specific attention to girls, poor people in urban and rural areas, street children, indigenous youth, youth with disabilities and refugees.
- Ensure **quality basic education** that will allow children, youth and adults to learn how to read and write their own language, and be numerate.
- **Life skills learning and methods of non formal education** should be integrated into the primary education system. It is recommended that school curricula include crucial topics such as HIV/AIDS, sexual education, conflict prevention, active citizenship, etc....
- Governments are strongly encouraged to **work with national youth non governmental organizations** that can provide a holistic approach through a peer to peer methodology.
- Ensure that all young people have equal access to higher education not based on the ability to pay, as laid down in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Place particular attention on the role of teachers in the community, and ensure adequate levels of teacher training and support as well as competitive wages, in order to mitigate teacher 'brain drain' from developing countries.
- Promote closer links between secondary and tertiary education and the world of work through such activities as vocational training, work placements and internships. Efforts should be made to ensure these forms of work experience are not exploitative of youth.

Employment

24. Youth employment remains a significant challenge everywhere. Unemployment is an economic burden on society and can, in cases, be a factor in social instability and conflict. Of concern to all is the quality of employment, particularly with regards to the millions of youth struggling to survive in the informal economy in jobs without prospects, earning poor wages, with no social protection and often in hazardous conditions.

25. The unavailability of, or limited scope, of data on youth employment presents challenges for youth organizations working to develop effective and responsive programmes to facilitate youth employment.

26. Participants shared a number of successful initiatives, such as partnerships with the private sector to provide **training and internship** opportunities and **multi-stakeholders approaches to national policy development**. The role of **voluntary service** organizations was recognized with regard to giving more opportunities for youth to gain experiences and life skills which could increase their employability.

Recommendations

Governments are urged to:

- **Encourage youth participation** in developing policies to address youth employment.
- Invest more in creating **equal job opportunities for young women and men**, as well as minorities including people with disabilities, refugee youth and other disadvantaged groups.
- Focus on the supply side and the demand side of the employment question. Governments should therefore promote not only skills training and vocational education but also address macro-economic challenges to create more jobs in the labour market.
- Learn from and replicate successful policy responses to youth employment. One such model which should be supported is the **multi-stakeholder approach** taken by the Youth Employment Network which brings together different actors (different governments ministries, workers, employers, youth etc) at the national level to create a holistic approach to the problem.
- **Training and ongoing support** should be provided to help youth establish, sustain and grow youth businesses.
- **Promote micro-credit and other financing** schemes for youth entrepreneurship.
- Pursue fair trade policies which ensure the protection of the rights of the local labour force, provide fair prices for commodities and protect the environment.
- Develop mechanisms to facilitate ease of transaction from school to work.
- Promote the ILO Declaration on the fundamental rights and principles at work and ratify the ILO Convention within the declaration.

B) Youth in Civil Society: Environment, Leisure, Participation and Intergenerational relations

Youth and Environment

27. We recognize the importance of focusing education and action on 'sustainable development' which includes environmental awareness and the importance of addressing environmental degradation which is linked to poverty (e.g. slum dwellers). Wars and conflicts have undermined environmental conditions in conflict areas (e.g. chemical weapons usage, land mines, and others). Climate change and sea level rise connected to Global Warming is also a major concern, especially in low shore areas, as was noted in the Mauritius Strategy for the further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States adopted in January 2005.

28. At this moment in time we clearly agree there is awareness about environmental issues, both from the side of governments and youth, but **we are lacking action.**

29. There are far too many environmental governmental bodies, with specific approaches and working methods that create difficulties and build resistance for policy changes and implementation. Better coordination mechanisms are needed in order to avoid the duplication of efforts and waste of resources.

30. There has been a boom of environment related youth organizations in the last 10 years, which reflects on one side the involvement and interest of young people on environmental issues, and on the other side an increase of youth participation through youth organizations on environmental discussions and concerns.

31. Whilst it is right to recognize the potential of the Youth NGOs in contributing to environmental issues, it should be remembered that each National Government has specific responsibilities in relation to the environment and sustainable development and that this responsibility should not be passed solely to the Youth NGO's.

Recommendations:

- We call for co-operation between the governmental bodies (i.e. ministries involved with education and environment) in order to facilitate more effective action and implementation with regards to sustainable development.
- We have identified the need of education on sustainable development through the three educational channels available. Sustainable Development should be included in the school curricula (formal education), at the same time as we need to provide families with the necessary awareness knowledge and information (informal education), and youth organizations should provide training for young people (non-formal education).
- Governments and UN agencies should promote and follow the values of economic, social and cultural diversity in Sustainable Development.
- Governments must encourage where possible the use of existing social and traditional structures to manage and protect the environment (e.g. fishermen).
- There is a need to create a wider platform that can act as a coordinating body of youth NGO's playing active role in this area of work.
- Sustainable development must be promoted and integrated in cross sector policy at local, national and International level.

- We urge international organizations, UN agencies and governmental bodies to apply the principles of sustainable development to their working practices (e.g. by recycling of paper).
- We urge all Governments to improve efforts towards the provision of and access to safe drinking water.
- Governments should ensure that working methodologies and operations in the private sector must be environmental friendly and transparent in nature.
- Governments must facilitate access to relevant information for youth organizations, in order for enlightened decisions can be made.

Personal Development (previously referred as Leisure)

32. There is a lack of differentiation in WPAY between rural and urban youth who have different requirements. Urban and rural habitats need to be safe in order for youth communities to be able to fully enjoy them. There is a lack of facilities for youth activities and when facilities exist often there is a lack of supervision and guidance.

33. We recognize that conflicts and wars prevent young people from benefiting from leisure time. School drop-outs and unemployed youth should be addressed with leisure time programmes that can provide qualification (e.g. Non-formal education as a tool for crime prevention, sexual education and family planning, leadership, HIV/AIDS prevention, and others)

34. We believe that spirituality is an important aspect of personal development for youth and should be included in the WPAY.

35. Sport improves the quality of life and health status, however technology has been replacing sports in some countries recently. Music is also a tool for the development of cultural identities, such as hip hop. Volunteerism should not be considered as a leisure time activity and must be recognized as a key factor of development in society, for example through relief activities.

Recommendations:

- Governments should promote the culture of fair play in sports and non-violent online games.
- Governments should ensure physical structures and supervised programmes; venues for leisure in urban planning and rural development.
- UN Youth Centers for youth related activities should be created. (i.e. European Youth Centers)

Youth Participation in Decision-Making Processes

36. Young people feel that although they are participating in consultative processes, they are not always involved in final decision-making and are excluded from the fundamental policy making. There is a contradiction between what is stated in policies and what happens in reality. Youth should be involved in policy-making and this should be considered not only as a good thing for the young people but also for the policy and the government themselves. We also need to engage young people in public governance.

37. The youth movement has grown in the last ten years and better and bigger coordination between the youth NGO's has evolved (i.e. World Social Forum, Commonwealth Youth Forum, European Youth Forum etc.). Youth organizations are the ideal space for youth empowerment however some regional youth organizations still have difficulties accessing international bodies like the UN.

38. It should be recognized that youth participation in political processes also happens outside of political parties as youth NGO's offer additional ways for youth to engage in decision making processes and policy formation. Thus, the Youth NGO's need support in capacity building Programmes.

39. We recognize the development of virtual youth communities; however we do not believe that they replace traditional youth organizations. There should not be a distinction between "traditional" and "new" youth organizations, as was done in paragraphs 52 to 56 of the World Youth Report 2005, but only the reference to credible youth organizations.

40. The Internet should not be considered as a main vehicle for youth participation but a tool to promote it. Internet does not replace the already existing forms of youth participation, it complements it.

41. We believe that young people participate in decision making because they believe passionately in issues that concern them. This is contrary to paragraph 55 in the World Youth Report 2005 which suggests that some youth only participate in decision making for the purpose of enhancing career opportunities.

Recommendations:

- We recommend the strengthening of the youth Programme of the United Nations as a coordinating body for the UN agencies approach to youth issues.
- ICT's should be used as a tool to promote youth participation.
- It is important for governments to promote a culture of Decision making amongst young people. Youth diversity should be taken into consideration when involving youth in decision-making processes. (People with special needs, migrants, refugees, indigenous people and minorities).
- Governments and International organizations should promote and support more internship programmes in local and International bodies as a way to integrate young people in the work developed by the institutions.
- Government should support the creation and on going development of Independent National Youth Councils, composed by youth NGO's in all countries within a specific timeframe to be determined.
- Governments should be encouraged to send youth representatives to UN. Method of co-management between youth NGOS and governments can be used as a good way to ensure youth participation in UN system (e.g. Council of Europe).
- Governments should consult with youth NGOs to learn best practice relating to methodologies used in engaging young people in decision making.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT's)

42. We recognize that ICT's provide many benefits to lots of young people but it is important that ICTs do not displace the fundamental value of real participation. At the same time ICTs have also created 'Socially disabled people' and space for the promotion of sex, human trafficking and prostitution. Digital divide and age divide is very much connected to ICT's and scarcity of accessibility of tools and means of ICT's is big concern. Literacy and numeracy are pre-conditions for the access to ICT's. It should also be noted that ICT's do not guarantee transparency or anonymity.

Recommendations:

- Governments should expand their use of ICT's as a tool for employment through e-commerce.
- Peer to peer education should be used as a tool to introduce ICT's to young people.
- Local Languages should be included in the use of ICT's, to facilitate their wider use.
- ICT's should be free from government censorship and international taxation.
- Facilities and tools should be made more widely available to promote wider access to ICTs.
- ICT's bridge gap between generations and provides opportunities for young people to contribute to the development and creation of knowledge.
- Poverty reduction strategies should include ICT programmes, with emphasis in rural youth, young women and girls.
- The term "disadvantaged people" should be with "people with special needs."
- Governments should take social responsibility and apply preventive methods to protect young people from addiction to vulgar areas of ICTs, such as pornography.
- The Government should focus on and promote ICT's as tools for education.
- Governments and International Organisations should promote the integration of ICT's for community development (i.e. young entrepreneurship, micro-credit).

Intergenerational relations

43. Much still needs to be studied about the relationship between different generations. It is recognized that participation in political and economic activities is not fairly distributed among generations. It is important for networking to be promoted between generations and for advice to be shared between different generations.

Recommendations:

- Governments and international organizations should facilitate the creation of mentoring programmes (sharing of experience).
- Adopt attitude to dialogue and resolve conflicts in the youth, teachers and parents.

C) Youth at Risk: Health, Drugs, Delinquency and discrimination of girls and young women

Health

44. We highlight that much work still to be done to improve the health conditions of young people globally and that this should be a priority to Governments and UN System. It is clear that the health of young people is influenced by many factors including poverty, environment, social and cultural context.

Recommendations:

- Governments should protect the right of youth to access and use youth-friendly reproductive health information, education and services that are affordable, confidential and non-discriminatory.
- Involve youth in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of reproductive health services.
- Government should integrate health education into the formal curriculum of education. This should include the differences between communicable and non-communicable diseases.

- Ensure that information regarding sexual and reproductive health is scientific and free of taboos but remains sensitive to cultural diversity.
- Ensure the provision of maternal health services, including emergency obstetric services, to young pregnant women.
- Governments should provide free, high quality health services to all youth.
- Governments should promote healthy eating habits in both developed and developing countries.
- Promote health and safety in the workplace.
- Governments should place more emphasis on the awareness of and understanding of mental health issues amongst young people.
- Governments should focus on the prevention of communicable diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria.
- Focus on the issue of immunization – create an alliance for preventing illnesses at a low cost.

Substance Abuse (Previously referred to as Drugs)

45. The discussions recognised that the key issues were very broad. Action needed to be taken not only to address substance abuse but also to understand the complexity of the social and political systems that support and promote substance abuse. Despite increased awareness of the risks associated with substance abuse, demand for tobacco, alcohol and drugs remain high. The majority of young people are in some way exposed to the use of harmful substances which increases the risk of poor health.

Recommendations

We urge governments to:

- Research and disseminate information about the root causes of substance abuse.
- Address the abuse of pharmaceutical drugs by using a multi-sector approach that includes the involvement of pharmaceutical companies, health professionals, young people and governments
- Focus on regulating advertising as a method of tackling the abuse of tobacco, alcohol and inhalants,
- Provide decent work alternatives to farmers, workers and their families involved in the tobacco industry and in poppy and coca farming.
- Develop and implement campaigns and policies against tobacco use.
- Encourage rehabilitated drug users to participate in prevention programmes.
- Promote peer education and life skills education to combat drug abuse.
- Promote community-based youth friendly rehabilitation programmes.

Juvenile Justice (Previously referred to as Juvenile Delinquency)

46. It is important to acknowledge that the large majority of young people are not engaged in crime. It was felt that efforts should be focused on rehabilitating young people involved in crime and supporting young people who are involved in organised crime against their will.

Recommendations

We urge governments to:

- Differentiate between petty crimes, violence, violent and organized crimes when presenting statistic data on youth crime;
- Acknowledge that young people can be placed in situations in which they are pressured or forced to commit criminal acts.
- Restrict permits for and have laws to control weapons

- Promote leisure time activities, engage youth in crime prevention activities and emphasize leadership training
- Promote economic programs via SMEs (small and medium enterprises) and cooperatives to encourage youth to participate in the economy/community.
- Promote the value of families, work, active and participatory citizenship in society.
- Promote a culture of crime prevention with a focus on life skills education and positive self-development, including self-esteem, psycho-social competencies and emotional intelligence.
- Rehabilitation should be strongly emphasized within prison settings.
- Encourage the adoption of alternatives to prison for drug abusers;
- End mandatory sentencing for drug abusers.
- Stop the capital punishment of children and young people, as laid down in the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Girls and Young Women

47. Girls and Young women face unequal treatment in the worlds of education and work. The gender based discrimination, violence against women, female infanticide, genital mutilation, sexual abuse and exploitation remains a big concern for the young people. Access of reproductive health services to prevent sexual transmitted diseases and pregnancy is limited in nature.

Recommendations

We urge governments to:

- Develop, review and modify discriminatory legal mechanisms in order to protect girls and young women rights against physical and psychological violence.
- Ratification by all member states and particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- Take immediate actions to end trafficking of young women.
- Work with boys and men to support gender equality.
- Promote same-sex youth groups, and support NGOs who work in this manner to support the empowerment of girls.
- Enact and enforce legislation to protect girls and young women from female genital mutilation, early and enforced marriage, female infanticide, and honour crimes.
- Ensure equal access and rights of young women to primary, secondary and higher education.
- Guarantee equal rights for young women to own and inherit property and land and have access to credit.
- Promote and ratified the ILO on equal pay for equal work.
- Ensure the participation of women in decision-making processes.
- Recognize sexual and reproductive rights.
- Emphasize the right of women to fertility control;
- Encourage the development of male contraceptives.
- Focus on action at local level to challenge local practices of discriminating against women, such as female genital mutilation.

HIV/AIDS

48. We recognise the alarming rate of young people been infected everyday with HIV/AIDS, which is caused through unsafe sex. There is a deep concern of the gender imbalance in infection rates and there is no cure to HIV/AIDS, unlike other sexually transmitted diseases.

Recommendations

We urge governments to:

- Simplify procedures for accessing funds available for HIV-AIDS prevention while recognizing that the feminization of the HIV/AIDS epidemic requires urgent action.
- Work in partnership with NGOs including the allocation of sufficient funds for their work.
- Educate on living with HIV and AIDS, both as a society and as individuals.
- Ensure access to free and confidential voluntary counselling and testing.
- Promote the “A (abstinence) B (Be faithful) and C (Condom use) approach” to prevent HIV/AIDS while recognizing that women are often unable to negotiate within sexual relationships.
- Develop programmes aimed at effectively empowering girls and young women to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS for both girls and young women AND men.
- Promote life skills and peer education.
- Involve community and faith based leaders to play an active role in disseminating accurate and scientific information in preventing, treat and care for HIV/AIDS.
- Develop appropriate policies for high-risk groups.
- Promote a comprehensive package of appropriate services for injecting drug users including needle Syringe exchange programmes, referral for treatment, et cetera.
- Provide access to affordable life saving drugs including ARVs and post contact prophylaxis.
- Provide accessible treatment, counselling and care for people living with HIV and AIDS.
- Special care should be taken of children infected and affected by AIDS, including orphans.
- Work to end stigmatization and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS, including rights to higher education and employment.

Youth and Conflict

49. We understand and believe that young people remain very vulnerable with the reality of civil war and armed conflicts around the world. We believe that violence provokes violence leading to unending chain of intergenerational problems in the civil life and rights as a human being. We are deeply concerned about children and young people in conflict effected regions who turn to be refugees and Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs), they unable to enjoy or ensured of the basic human rights. We strongly state and condemn the unacceptable exploitation of children in governmental or non-state armed forces.

Recommendations

We urge governments to:

- Implement the commitment in the Lisbon Declaration, adopted at the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth in 1998, promoting and protecting the rights of peoples, including youth, living under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation, particularly those peoples’ right to self-determination, and recognize the urgent need to ensure the rights of youth to live in free democratic, secure and peaceful societies.
- Promote the participation and engagement among youth groups and NGOs to work with conflict affected youth, including refugees and internally displaced young people.
- Ratify the optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts.
- To completely ban the exploitation of children in armed forces.
- Uphold the right to conscientious objection to engaging in armed conflicts.
- Facilitate opportunities for formal and non-formal education designed to promote peace and conflict prevention and reconciliation.

- Recognize and encourage youth and youth organizations in peace building and reconciliation, among refugees and IDPs in conflict-affected region.
- Ensure greater participation of youth, including young women in peace building.
- Special protection should be on girls and young women in conflict effected regions, to avoid the risk of becoming victims of sexual and gender-based violence as well as exposure to HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancies.
- Ensure the right of young women and girls to have access to emergency contraception.
- Improve and promote partnerships, develop sense of co-responsibility with UN agencies, international development actors and governments to improve the existing educational system to ensure adequate enrolment of refugee students in primary, secondary and post-secondary education.
- Provide greater access to skill training and employment opportunities to youth in conflict affected.