

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

Colleagues and friends,

We, the youth delegates to the UN, represent before you a whole new generation – a generation of young, determined and motivated people who carry the privilege and responsibility of shaping tomorrow's world. This is particularly relevant for Bulgaria's young people, who are the first to develop in and contribute to a democratic society that upholds the virtues of civic involvement. The youth in our country is now becoming aware of the power of **youth participation**. As youth delegates we represent a culture, in which young people have recognized that by engaging in the establishment of a civic society and by influencing policy-making on various levels, they ultimately determine their own future. Therefore, the Bulgarian delegation would strongly encourage a shift in the focus of the work of UN's Youth from "What the UN can do for us" to "What we can do for ourselves".

In our preparation for this forum the Bulgarian delegation devised a mechanism to promote youth participation around the world and thus achieve a significant advancement in all priority areas of the World Program of Action for Youth. This approach will foster a closer link between youth and the UN and greatly diminish the current lack of awareness about the issues the Organization deals with that is prevalent in Bulgaria and probably around the globe.

First and foremost, it is of primary importance to enhance youth input in policy-making on all levels by vastly increasing the scope of youth employment and expertise through an active promotion, not enforcement, on behalf of the UN. To this end, youth delegates should be included in all UN committees and bodies that are concerned with social and developmental issues. Also, youth NGOs should be incorporated in the circle of organizations that consult the UN. Another step that could be undertaken is fostering the efficiency of Youth UN Associations through cooperation with the World Youth UN Association and potentially support for worldwide events such as the UN Youth Day.

Mr. Chairman,

The most crucial step in the process of stimulating active engagement and cooperation with the United Nations, however, is funding youth activities related to WPAY. This practice has proven efficient and mutually beneficial in other organizations such as the European Union. Nevertheless, we do not aim at creating an unwieldy and bureaucratic project-funding system, but instead an efficient tool that would enable participation on part of any group of active young people. Our proposal is to provide a budget for national UNDP agencies, UN Offices for Drugs and Crime or other agencies related to young people, which would on their part support proposals put forth by a person of legal age under the only condition that the envisioned activities relate to the problems set in the WPAY. This is a system that has been extremely successful at local level and increasing its scope would lead to the empowerment of a huge number of young people, that would be able to plan and organize projects on a local, regional and national level while advancing the goals of the United Nations. Further development of this idea might even lead to the establishment of a permanent youth advisory body to the Organization in the future.

A groundbreaking innovation such as directing funding not towards experienced large NGOs but towards active informal groups of individuals will particularly kindle the interest of young people in developing countries that seek a way to express themselves and be heard around the world. It will not only promote UN amongst young people around the globe and it will not only introduce the organization as a key actor in promoting youth participation. It will contribute to a significant improvement in all 15 areas of the WPAY adopted by this very committee, but above all it will enable young people to be proactive and help them realize that ultimately they determine their own fate, regardless of gender, race and ethnicity.

It is a popular understanding that people from all ethnicities, ages and backgrounds participate in the activities of the United Nations. Therefore, by working towards our personal well-being and the well-being of our family and society, we work for the United Nations. This is especially true for us young people, who are credited as the future of this Organization! In conclusion, we believe that united in concerted efforts and driven by commitment and passion, we can make this new generation the UN generation.

Thank you.