



**McGill University's IRSAM Youth Advisory Delegation (IYAD)
Oral Statement to CPD56**

Presented on behalf of the McGill University, the International Relations Students' Association of McGill (IRSAM), and the IRSAM Youth Advisory Delegation (IYAD) participants, who have consultative status to the United Nations' Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), to the 56th session on the Commission on Population and Development.

Thank you Distinguished Chair, Excellencies, and fellow delegates, for the floor.

As an entirely youth-led organization representative of International Relations Students' Association of McGill University located in Montréal, Quebec, Canada, we urge governments to use an intersectional approach in the review of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development with an emphasis on the meaningful participation of youth in policy making.

Considering the priority theme of the 56th Session on the UN Commission on Population and Development (CPD56) as *Population, Education, and Sustainable Development, as well as the Actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development*, our delegation has devised a report focusing solely on youth, providing key recommendations to address issues relevant to access to education, youth mental health, inequality, disability justice, sexual and reproductive health (SRHR), global health, population policies & trends, urbanization, in tandem with the sustainable development goals. Our delegation has also undertaken the task of engaging in community consultation events, engaging with the local youth-based community organizations and key stakeholders, placing particular emphasis on equity-deserving populations and marginalized communities when taking part in grassroots organizing.

Our goal is to advocate on behalf of the youth who are not only present in this room, but those who do not have the privilege of being in this room with us today. Our policies and recommendations highlight the intrinsic value of youth. We, as the future of our societies, strongly believe that the issue of youth representation is critical in achieving sustainable development. As an overlooked sector of the population, it is a fundamental right of young people to have equal opportunities to participate in decision-making processes that affect their past, present, and future livelihood, ensuring sustainable and livable futures for youth globally. Unfortunately, this right is often not fully realized, as young people are frequently excluded from the decision-making tables due to their age, lack of experience, or perceived lack of contribution to society.

Following the priority theme of CPD56, while we all are lifelong learners, adolescents and youth are the most impacted by barriers to education. Emphasizing the importance of education as a fundamental right, we call upon all members present today to prioritize achieving equitable



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access to education for all young people, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. School closures and the pivot to hybrid and e-learning have highlighted the significant disparities in access to education, with marginalized youth being the most affected. We emphasize the economic disparities and the barriers to accessing quality education for marginalized youth, particularly racialized youth, women, and girls. We urge member states to take swift action to address the educational challenges faced by young people during the pandemic. This includes providing resources and support to ensure that all young people have access to quality education, particularly those from marginalized communities. We must prioritize the well-being of young people and invest in their education, as it is a critical component of achieving the sustainable development goals.

CPD highlights an important week for youth globally. As we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and strive for a just and sustainable future, we must acknowledge the changes that governments and states need to make in order to create better opportunities for the future generations to come. Hence, we urge governments to recognize youth education and their impact on young children and fulfilling their inherent responsibilities by:

- Equitably distributing public schooling funds on a needs-basis instead of by tax income, emphasizing schools in low-income neighborhoods;
- Partnering with NGOs to educate on the importance of education for marginalized groups and removing the unique barriers to achieve SDG 4 of quality education, including expansion of assistive technology;
- Expanding access to free prenatal, neonatal, and midwife care for youth under the age of 18;
- Anti-stigma-based education of diseases, like Monkeypox and HIV, that disproportionately affect certain groups, like MSM and expanding access to PrEP;
- Increase food aid and funding to the agricultural sector to combat malnutrition;
- Curriculum revision to include key aspects of climate change that can educate the youth and promote climate relief practices;
- Adapt to new and standardized technologies that ensure an equitable access to new information and ideas

As a youth body, we are aware of the challenges that come with implementing such solutions globally, however, efforts need to be made in order to promote an adequate and just future for upcoming youth generations. However, we believe with the inclusion of youth voices and increased youth participation at events such as these, we are one step closer to achieving a more just, equitable future for all. Thank you distinguished chair, ambassadors, and all individuals present here for providing us with the opportunity to voice out concerns of young people.