



WORLD CONFERENCE  
ON YOUTH 2014

**COLOMBO DECLARATION ON YOUTH**

**'Mainstreaming Youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda'**

**Preamble:**

We, the Ministers responsible for youth, young people, representatives of Governments, United Nations Agencies, youth-led organisations, non-governmental organizations and other development partners have gathered in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 6<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> May 2014, at the World Conference on Youth to explore ways and means of mainstreaming of youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda within the agreed framework of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY);

In this regard we the Ministers responsible for Youth, representatives of governments, global youth and civil society organizations;

Note the summary of the discussions held before and during the World Conference on Youth - 2014 incorporated in *WCY2014/ZD/AP/VI*;

Recognizing that ethnic, cultural, religious, gender, political and socio-economic diversities of young people have enabled them to contribute positively to the formulation implementation and evaluation of actions for development strategies and plans through their creativity and capacity for innovation; therefore youth participation in development at the community, local, national, regional, and global levels should be a strong pillar in all current and future development frameworks;

Recalling the Major Group System, as reinforced in the Outcome Document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and in particular the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY) in the Post-2015 Development Agenda; also noting the coordination initiatives made by the national, regional and global youth-led organizations, inter alia International Coordination Meetings of Youth Organisations;

Affirming that the promotion of meaningful participation, the realization of rights and integral development of young people represents some of the biggest challenges that need to be tackled along with the priority areas of the United Nations World Program of Action for Youth (WPAY);

Noting that despite the significant achievements made with regard to the social integration of young people since the Millennium Declaration in 2000, and the first International Year of Youth in 1985, there still remain many challenges which impede inclusive participation of young people, hereby constraining the development of a nation's full potential;

Reaffirming the importance of the World Programme of Action for Youth, its role in guiding United Nations, intergovernmental processes and youth programmes at all levels through relevant plans and programmes and consider the urgent need of effectively implementing it through plans, mechanisms and programs at all levels;

Recognizing the active role that young people are playing in social mobilizations in many regions of the world and their willingness to assume responsibilities in the economic, social and political agendas in their countries and regions;

Recalling the commitment of the United Nations and its Member States to recognize the priorities of youth as an integral part in future development negotiations including the Post-2015 Development Agenda negotiations;



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Identifying the following priorities for action, as agreed upon during the deliberations of the Ministers responsible for youth, young people, representatives of Governments, youth-led organisations, non-governmental organizations and other development partners, in the process of mainstreaming youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda;

Recognizing the “Colombo Declaration on Youth”, a result of deliberations among global youth and Ministers responsible for youth and civil society organizations on youth priorities in relation to current and future development frameworks;

## **Recommendations for Action**

### **Inclusive Youth Led-Development**

1. *Call for an enhanced and active role for youth in policy formulation and implementation and evaluation of processes related to development.*
2. *Urge traditional and emerging development partners to strengthen international cooperation for setting up youth aid architecture, including through South–South co-operation, and mainstreaming a youth perspective in development cooperation programs.*

### **Poverty Eradication and Food and Nutrition Security**

3. *Advance economic policies that reduce income inequality and guarantee young people equal opportunities for development by ensuring gainful employment, education, food security, health, and decent housing.*
4. *Acknowledge the right to food and strengthen poverty alleviation policies and programs with a focus on reducing hunger, by ensuring year-round access by all to affordable, adequate, safe and nutritious food.*
5. *Increase efforts by governments and development agencies in partnership with the private sector to invest in value addition schemes to make agriculture and food production viable employment and entrepreneurial avenues for young people.*
6. *Provide social protections to reduce the vulnerability of all young people, especially young people from marginalized backgrounds.*
7. *Provide awareness for youth on food and nutrition including practices to reduce food waste and post-harvest crop losses.*

### **Realizing Equal Access to Quality Education**

8. *Encourage free universal early childhood, primary and secondary education of the highest quality for all children and young people, based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination and ensure equal and equitable access to education at all levels.*
9. *Ensure qualified teachers and high quality, safe, inclusive and supportive learning environments for all children and young people including girls and other marginalized groups, free from all forms of discrimination.*
10. *Encourage states to fulfill the call of the Rio+20 Outcome Document in supporting non-formal education by including lifelong learning indicators in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.*
11. *Increase recognition of non-formal education and vocational education, including volunteer schemes and Information and Communication Technology models and apprenticeships, as an effective means of empowerment and skills transfer.*

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12. *Encourage* governments of the developed countries to strengthen cooperation with developing countries with funds for scholarships and improvement of education programmes.
13. *Encourage* the use of Information and Communication Technology in education the establishment of inter- and intra-regional youth innovation and technology centers, as a means of disseminating knowledge, skills development, innovation and connectivity, thereby enhancing infrastructure in these areas.
14. *Redouble* efforts to integrate education for democratic structures, sustainable development, along with civil liberties, social leadership, human rights, gender equality, inter-culturalism, and peace education into national curricula.
15. *Achieve* effective learning outcomes at all levels that impart knowledge and skills that match the demands of active citizenship.
16. *Encourage* increase in and optimization of national budgets focused on investment in youth development programs and research, education and in quality educational institutions at all levels.

**Promoting Healthy Lives and Access to quality Health care**

17. *Promote* healthy lifestyles and take steps towards a sustainable framework for health financing, to make adolescent and youth friendly services that are accessible and affordable and ensure the quality of universal health coverage including but not limited to maternal health, HIV/AIDS, non-communicable diseases, mental health, injuries and drug and substance abuse including alcohol.
18. *Encourage* universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and information, with the involvement of youth, regardless of marital status, with a particular focus on women, persons living with disabilities and marginalized groups.
19. *Recognize* the need and encourage provision of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the their review conferences.
20. *Provide* comprehensive sex education based on full and accurate information for all adolescents and youth, in accordance with national laws and/or policies consistent with their evolving capacities whilst, safeguarding the right of adolescents to privacy, confidentiality, respect and informed consent, respecting cultural values and religious beliefs.
21. *Acknowledge* the harmful effects of political and social determinants of health for young people, in particular young people in armed conflicts and under foreign occupation, by adopting health in all policies approach in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, as to reflect that all sectors impact health, and that health impacts all sectors.
22. *Call upon* member states to ensure access to essential medicines by taking action on the gaps in the availability of medicines in both the private and public sectors, and taking steps to lowering the prices of drugs due to intellectual property protection.



23. *Call for* the strengthening of regional healthcare networks supported by better policies which will ensure recruitment, development, training and maintenance of youth in the health workforce.

### **Full Employment and Entrepreneurship**

24. *Promote* youth employment in the Post-2015 Development Agenda by adopting quantitative targets such as young people not in education, employment or training as well as qualitative targets based on the decent work definition according to ILO standards to protect young people from all forms of exploitation and discrimination.
25. *Address* the high rate of youth unemployment, under employment, vulnerable employment and informal employment by developing and implementing targeted and integrated national youth employment policies for inclusive job creation, improved employability, skills development and vocational education and training to meet specific labour market needs of youth, including youth migrants, and increase entrepreneurship, including the development of networks of young entrepreneurs at international, regional, national and local levels, which foster knowledge among young people about their rights and responsibilities in society.
26. *Ensure* provision, in partnership with relevant stakeholders, of career guidance, mentoring, counseling, apprenticeship and quality internships and traineeships for youth.
27. *Create* an enabling business environment and multi-stakeholder partnerships, including between developing and developed countries, that are environmentally sustainable to boost entrepreneurship, including startups and apprenticeship for youth and alternative models of enterprise such as co-operatives and intra-regional business incubators with focus on young women and young persons living with disabilities.
28. *Recognize* and promote youth entrepreneurship and skills development towards achieving inclusive and sustainable economic and industrial development, in particular the social, micro, small and medium enterprises sectors.
29. *Calls upon* the United Nations to support a dedicated day for skills development that would benefit global youth.
30. *Ensure* the dignity and quality of life and equal recognition at all levels and all forms of work providing protection to and empowering sectors of the workforce that are often subject to exploitation and discrimination, especially in work traditionally done by women, young people living with disabilities, and those living with HIV/AIDS, young migrant workers, and other key affected populations.
31. *Achieving* universal global access to adequate social protection, decent work and livelihoods for young people in the formal and informal sectors, by encouraging the ratification and implementation of ILO convention 189, enacting legal protections to provide security in the workplace, social protections, paid leave and promoting the rights of young workers.
32. *Call on* the United Nations system to encourage member states to conduct surveys on available job opportunities for youth and avenues for their skills development and for the United Nations to collate the results.

33. *Encourage* the provision of a budget to facilitate the creation of more and decent job opportunities to young people living with disabilities, displaced persons, youth of various ethnic backgrounds and indigenous communities, young migrant workers, other minority groups, and homeless young people.
34. *Recognize* the need for enhanced cooperation between the relevant bodies responsible for education and labor as well as universities to equip youth with the skills needed by the labor market.

### **Gender Equality**

35. *Support* the adoption of a goal on gender equality, and girls', women's, and other gender identities' empowerment and rights, as well as gender-sensitive targets and indicators to end structural causes of inequality including discriminatory social norms, practices and gender stereotypes that promote inequality between the sexes.
36. *Propose* to the United Nations General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals a set of targets relating to young women, girls and other gender identities, consistent with existing laws, policies and practices, inter alia on ending all forms of gender-based violence, harmful traditional practices, child, early and coerced marriages and providing universal access to health including sexual and reproductive health and rights in accordance with International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.
37. *Urge* the Member States of the United Nations to develop strategies and policies to prevent all forms of violence against women and girls including physical, emotional and economic in public and private spheres, bullying, sexual coercion and all forms of violence whatever the motivation.
38. *Ensure* the equal participation of girls and young women and all other young persons at all levels, including in decision-making, education, and employment, which includes equal pay for work of equal value in accordance with the respective national laws and/or policies.
39. *Promote* gender perspective in the formulation and implementation of youth policies and, resource allocation and budgeting, whilst also providing equal access to public assets and resources in equal partnership with young people.
40. *Ensure* the full engagement of men and boys as strategic partners and allies in promoting gender equality and preventing and eradicating gender based violence against women and girls, discrimination and harassment, emphasizing the need to put an end to the culture of silence surrounding gender based violence.
41. *Ensure* the full engagement of states and international organizations as strategic partners and allies in promoting gender equality and preventing and condemning violence, especially kidnapping of women and girls for sexual and other unlawful purposes.

### **Ending Systemic Inequalities**

42. *Recognize* the cultural, ethnic, religious, gender, sexual and socio-economic, racial, linguistic and ability diversity of young people and implement strategies to address the root causes of systemic inequalities in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.
43. *Urge* Member States to promote equal opportunities for all to eliminate all forms of discrimination against young people including discrimination based on race, colour, ethnicity, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, health, gender or other status, and to foster social integration for social groups such as young persons living with disabilities and HIV/AIDS, young migrants, indigenous groups, young people living in rural areas, armed conflict, under foreign occupation, working in the informal economy and refugees, on an equal basis with others
44. *Recall* commitments to pass and enforce laws to protect the poorest and most marginalized girls, boys, adolescents and women affected by violence, and to repeal laws, policies and practices that discriminate against young people based on their age or otherwise violate their rights.
45. *Improve* measurement on the progress of inclusion of the most excluded and marginalized groups, including programs to ensure effective education systems for young persons living with disabilities and learning difficulties.

### **Empowering Marginalized Youth emphasizing the Most at Risk Young People**

46. *Call on* governments to report on and address the economic, social, cultural and political constraints facing the most marginalized young people within each country.
47. *Urge* Member States to develop programs and policies to eradicate the stigma and violence against the most marginalized groups of young people, including among others, people with disabilities, Afro-descendants, indigenous, migrant youth, out-of-school and unemployed youth.
48. *Support* youth organizations and National Youth Councils in an effort to reach out to self-organised groups of marginalized young people, including apartheid communities, such as Roma and Travelers.
49. *Ensure* convenient and equal access to health, education, employment opportunities and services for all young people without discrimination of any kind on any basis.
50. *Urge* governments to support the adoption of a Small Island Developing States specific sustainable development goal with targets on children and youth, which promote a shared vision and solidarity towards sustainable development.



### **Ensuring Inclusive Recreation, Sport and Culture**

51. *Encourage* the funding and investment in sport, leisure, art and cultural programs and facilities in and out of school for young people in order to enable all youth to participate thereby facilitating free access to at least one sporting and one cultural activity in their local communities in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.
52. *Recognize* the important role that recreation, sports and culture can play in social integration, healthy life style, the elimination of social stigma and therefore encourage young people to pursue careers in the arts and sport.

### **Environmental Sustainability, Disaster Risk Reduction and Youth Centered Urbanisation**

53. *Recognize* that climate change is closely linked to development issues, and thereby understand intergenerational equity is crucial, as well as the recognition of the importance of engaging the young generations in the climate discussions, keeping in mind the special needs of young people in developing countries, especially in Least Developing Countries, Land-Locked Developing Countries, Small Island Developing States.
54. *Request* the United Nations system and states to explore and address the effects of urbanisation, climate change, disasters and environmental degradation on young people.
55. *Call on* Member States to further explore the proposed High Commissioner for Future Generations as well as other relevant mechanisms on the topic as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations entitled 'Intergenerational Solidarity and the need for Future Generations'.
56. *Support* the Chair's summary of the 2013 Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction calling for a youth and children's forum.
57. *Improve* strategies to prevent and mitigate the risks of disasters to include youth, ensuring youth participation in the development and monitoring of plans and indicators to reduce community risks and resilience guidelines.
58. *Call upon* relevant authorities to promote youth friendly cities to further youth engagement in implementing the Post-2015 Development Agenda and to strengthen positive socio-economic links between cities and rural areas.
59. *Integrate* disaster risk reduction education at all levels of the school curriculum.
60. *Call for* the inclusion of safer schools and hospitals in the Post-2015 commitments.
61. *Promoting* long term sustainable urban planning that takes into account population growth, natural resource utilization, eco-system preservation, public space accessibility, efficient transport and waste management improves living conditions and prioritizes the rights and needs of the slum dwellers and informal settlers; we call governments to include youth in the process of formulating the new UN-Habitat agenda.

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62. *Taking note of* the fifth assessment reports of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and its findings that indicate the urgent need to reduce absolute levels of carbon emissions to address climate change impacts.
63. *Promote* Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns by young people.

**Realizing Peace, Reconciliation and Ending Violence**

64. *Recognize* and increase the role young people, especially young women, play in conflict prevention, peace building, conflict resolution, post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction efforts.
65. *Demand* an end to the application of coercive and unilateral measures that affect the rights of the youth and development.
66. *Demand* to cease politics that undermine the internal order of countries, violating the proposals and principles celebrated in the Charter of the United Nations and International Law.
67. *Reaffirm* the commitments of the United Nations system to protect children and young people from unlawful recruitment, including kidnapping for military purposes and terrorist activities.
68. *Increase* opportunities in education and employment for all youth, especially those affected by armed conflicts.
69. *Increase* opportunities in peace building education and employment for all youth especially those affected by armed conflicts.
70. *Promote* inclusive and effective post–conflict rehabilitation and reintegration policies, programs and mechanisms recognizing and dealing with the underlying causes of conflict.
71. *Develop* policies and programs to identify and address factors that put young people at risk of engaging in crime and prevent youth violence.
72. *Implement* a wider range of options that pursue restorative justice for the children or youth in conflict with the law as instead of imprisonment, and pursue other similar measures outside the criminal justice system.
73. *Strengthen* and promote the role of young people and youth organizations in building peace in their communities, countries and regions.

### **Achieving Good Governance and Accountability**

74. *Encourage* governments to become party to and implement, without delay, the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), and promote good governance, freedom of information, transparency and accountability.
75. *Further encourage* governments, international organizations, including those of the United Nations system, international financial institutions, development partners and other relevant stakeholders to assist developing countries in implementing youth policy and programs through technical assistance and capacity building activities.
76. *Make* every effort to strengthen the rule of law and establish mechanisms and institutions that are accessible, independent and well-resourced to enable the political and civic participation of young people and ensure justice for all by increasing access to legal services.
77. *Ensure* justice for all, including access to legal services, user-friendly information and impartial media and open data as tools to enhance the participation of civil society, including youth, in the Post-2015 Development Agenda and outcomes and decision making processes at all levels relevant to children and young people through open government processes.
78. *Encourage* the development of basic guidelines and risk indicators to better inform child and youth specific policy and monitor progress.

### **Youth Rights**

79. *Draw* the attention of the United Nations system, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Member States to the call by young people and youth organizations to launch a participatory, inclusive and transparent process among member states, youth and youth organizations, building on, inter alia, the experience of countries that already have developed legislation, which may lead to a Convention on Youth Rights.
80. *Recognize* the urgent need for the fulfillment of young people's human rights and responsibilities and their right to redress in a manner appropriate to their age.
81. *Encourage* the establishment of a permanent youth department within the United Nations with representations in member countries to support and follow up local youth programs.

### **Inclusive Youth Participation**

82. *Call on* the Secretary-General of the United Nations to establish a permanent forum on youth, for youth and governments to facilitate a sustained dialogue including on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.
83. *Enhance* integration of youth into democratic political processes and official government delegations in a meaningful way at local, national, regional and international levels with a special focus on young women and youth belonging to marginalized groups by inter alia strengthening existing programs such as the United Nations Youth Delegates Program and volunteering programs;

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84. *Reaffirm* political and resource commitment to youth-led organizations and youth-led constituencies active in sustainable development and other international policy processes with the aim to increase the participation of youth, and achieve greater geographical balance in participation, particularly from the Global South.
85. *Create* safe spaces and institutions for young people, to express their concerns and have their voices heard at all levels.
86. *Empower* youth and marginalized groups by strengthening intergenerational and international partnerships and solidarity among the generations, tailored policies, budgeting, creating safe spaces and mechanisms for meaningful participation of young people with efforts to include the most marginalized in the development, monitoring and evaluation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.
87. *Recognize* existing youth movements, both regional and global, as stakeholders in the current discussion on mainstreaming the participation of youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.
88. *Recognize* the crucial role young people should play in decision making processes regarding political, economic, cultural and environmental development of our planet, and propose a target on youth participation in political decision making and accountability processes in the Post-2015 Development Agenda and ensure that age is an indicator for monitoring the processes of relevant targets in the Agenda.

### **Our Commitment going forward**

BASED ON THE PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED, THE PARTICIPANTS RESOLVED TO:

89. *Take* necessary measures to work in partnership with all stakeholders including parents, young people, civil society, international organizations, member states and development cooperation agencies to implement the priorities identified in the Colombo Declaration on Youth.
90. *Continue* the ongoing discussions within the framework of the United Nations General Assembly regarding the effective implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, as well as strengthening mechanisms of coordination within the United Nations System to support global, regional and national policies and programmes for youth.
91. *Urge* the United Nations Agencies, Governments, the International Community at large, and all other relevant stakeholders to give particular attention to the areas of shortfall in the implementation of the World Program of Action for Youth.
92. *Encourage* further support and accountability for existing platforms of youth-led organisations and implement measures to explore the establishment of permanent mechanisms that allow for full, effective, structured and sustainable participation of young people and youth-led organizations in relevant decision making processes;
93. *Call for* a standalone goal targeted at increased investment in the global-aid architecture, youth empowerment and private sector investment in strengthening global, regional, national and local partnerships for and with youth in the development, implementation and monitoring of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.



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94. *Call for* clear targets and indicators focused on youth as a cross-cutting issue throughout the Post-2015 Development Agenda to ensure all targets are measured by indicators disaggregated by age, gender, location, linguistic base, wealth status, level of education, disability, ethnicity and key population status.
95. *Consider* making available adequate funds to meet the needs of youth; including by creating and/or supporting the development of national youth policies and Action Plans for Youth; including its monitoring and evaluation, and the institutionalization of measurement mechanisms such as, but not limited to, youth development indexes.
96. *Calls on* the Secretary-General of the United Nations to incorporate the Colombo Declaration on Youth as a significant input to mainstreaming youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda and make appropriate reference to it in his synthesis report;
97. *Encourage* member states to table the Colombo Declaration on Youth at the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly so as to acknowledge and welcome the recommendations.