

**FORUM:** Special Conference on Securing and Advancing Democracy Sub-Commission 2

**QUESTION OF:** Encouraging youth to participate in local governance and decision making

**SUBMITTED BY:** South Africa

**CO-SUBMITTERS:** USA, UK, France, Croatia, Cuba, Estonia, Djibouti, Rwanda, Germany, Ukraine, Brasil, Norway, Indonesia, Venezuela, Tajikistan, Moldova, Samoa, Ireland, Iraq

THE SPECIAL CONFERENCE ON SECURING AND ADVANCING DEMOCRACY,

*Recognizing* that participation of youth in local governance and decision making also strengthens the commitment to, and understanding of human rights and democracy,

*Further recognizing* that young people need opportunities to become acquainted with their rights and duties, as well as understand that their freedom is limited by the rights and freedoms of others,

*Bearing in mind* that youth's feeling of marginalisation from governance and decision-making is nonetheless justified due to their lack of access to most political institutions to voice their views,

*Expressing concern* that government policy has an impact, directly or indirectly, on young people, even though it is developed and delivered largely independently of their opinion and in ignorance of how it will affect their day-to-day lives,

*Noting with approval* that interaction between elected leaders and youth will be mutually beneficial: local governors, and city leaders could listen to youth expressing their view on the issues affecting their lives and their ideas for addressing them, while young people could get acquainted with political etiquette,

1. Encourages the UN and the Member States to establish youth forums in various locations in each state at least four times a year for the youth to have the regular opportunity to discuss current problems in their states and propose solutions to governments by:
  - a) commissioning government officials and UN representatives to the youth forums in order to:
    - i. create a framework through which the youth has the ability to propose solutions to the current problems worldwide or within a country
    - ii. introduce the youth to the current problems so that the youth can brainstorm possible solutions for the UN and their local government
    - iii. ensure the formality in the youth forums in order to have solutions found and issues discussed in a formal way for the focus of the forum to be current issues and potential solutions
  - b) having the solutions from the youth taken into consideration, carried out and enhanced through the cooperation of the youth with the UN representatives and government officials in the future youth forums in order to use them to solve the problems
  - c) having governments appoint educators to the youth forums in order to include seminars in the youth forums where the youth will be taught of ways to approach the problem and find achievable and realistic solutions in order to enhance their problem-solving skills;
2. Invites all Member States to fully participate in the United Nations Youth Delegate Programme in order to better include their youth to their decision-making process in the UN so that they have the opportunities of finding solutions, by having Member States send more youth delegates to the UN to be able to send delegates to the special subcommittee that will be established under the Environmental Committee and which will include only the youth delegates from the Member States;
3. Calls for the establishment of the United Nations Youth in Local Governance and Decision Making Organization (UNYLGDMO), which will have 386 members made up of one youth and adult member from each Member State as well as include a youth and an adult president that will be

selected through a voting procedure to supervise the organization for four years, in order to:

- a) hold seminars in the Member States for the youth to be educated upon the importance of participating in local governance and decision making, enhancing their problem finding, defining and solving skills
  - b) cooperate with the governments of the Member States to make negotiations in order to enhance the participation of youth in local governance and decision making by:
    - i. encouraging governments to set the age of voting to sixteen years for the local elections and eighteen years for the general elections in order to prompt the youth start participating in local governance and decision making from an early age
    - ii. running media campaigns where the citizens of a state including the youth will be informed about the importance of voting, encouraged to vote and raise their voices through democratic means
  - c) cooperate with the youth in the Member States to collect their opinions about current problems in their countries and possible ways for a solution through questionnaires to solve problems with the youth's input
  - d) establish Youth Leadership Programs that will make government leaders and politicians work with a group of youth for a week every 6 months, in their local and main governments in order for the youth to have the opportunity of understanding the way that their governments function;
4. Urges the United Nations to establish local UN youth parliaments, whose membership will be open to all youth and any young person who would like to state his or her view, watch the debate, be involved can participate, thereby fulfilling the following long-term aims:
- a) get the input and opinion of the youth for the local, regional, and international governmental or UN affairs within a country
  - b) increase young people's participation by giving youth the opportunity to voice their views and opinions through the local parliaments
  - c) create an intimate interaction between elected leaders and youth would as this will be mutually beneficial by local governors;
5. Invites Member States to welcome their youth in the administration of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), getting involved as apprentices or interns and participating in consultative workshops or advisory forums in order to:
- a) allow the youth to be more involved in their communities by which they will also understand the importance of participating in local governance and decision making
  - b) give them the habit of consulting others when they are unsure about something as well as be in the position of offering advice when needed
  - c) make them fully express their views and cooperate with each other for the best advice and views to be given to the leaders through the UN Youth Parliaments mentioned in clause 4 and the United Nations Youth in Local Governance and Decision Making Organization (UNYLGDMO) mentioned in clause 3;
6. Recommends Member States to have an elected young adult minister and youth members beside the appointed minister and adult members in their ministries of youth in order to allow the youth to raise their own voice in topics that affect them directly, share the decision upon how their budget will be used to fulfill their needs and making their society better for them by:
- a) having the youth minister elected through the vote of the youth (ages 14 to 26) who are able to vote in the Member State and allowing each youth or young adult to be a candidate for the position
  - b) having the young adult minister and youth members stay in charge until a new general election or for four years if there is not such a case
  - c) allowing the elected youth minister to appoint an equal number of youth members as adult members in the ministry for them to work in all fields within the ministry just like the adult members

- d) giving equal power to the youth members and young adult minister in the decision-making process, voting and discussions within the ministry of youth
  - e) expanding the work field of the ministry of youth to taking actions to encourage youth to participate in local governance and decision making;
7. Proposes the establishment of the United Nations Voting Investigation Organization (UNVIO), authorized to investigate the reasons why people who have reached the minimum voting age of their respective countries of which they are a citizen choose not to vote in each Member State in order to:
- a) increase the voting participation among the public by doing the following:
    - i. the deployment of voting experts employed by relevant UN agencies, such as but not limited to the international organizations of the United Nations DPPA (Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs), WPAY (The World Programme of Action for Youth), who shall employ as part of their operations to find, discuss on and solve identified problems
    - ii. interviews with experts in the regions of investigation
    - iii. online platforms and call centres through which people will express their views on the reasons that cause the people not to vote, any solution they have to the problem
    - iv. field research in a variety of regions in each Member State
  - b) strengthen democracy in each Member State by finding solutions for problems that cause the public including the youth and young adults who are able to vote not to vote through their identification, debate of problems;
8. Advises the establishment of the United Nations Voting Age Commission (UNVAC) that will include at the very least ten and at most thirty experts on electoral politics, election logistics, public policy experts, and other relevant professionals, in order to determine a recommended voting age for each voting procedures in all Member States by investigating each Member State and elections in these Member States and:
- a) cooperate with each government of a Member State that has an older voting age for an election than the voting age that the UNVAC determined in order to lower the voting age for the specific election to the age that the UNVAC found appropriate, making elections more democratic in each Member State
  - b) aim to create equal and more democratic voting procedures to the youth and adult populations, regardless of racial, ethnic, or gender identity, by authorizing the UNVAC to also investigate the democracy and equality in each election in Member States also with the help of UNDEF, UNDP and cooperating with UN Women and UNDP to communicate with and propose solutions to the governments to fix any noticed problems regarding the democracy and equality during elections in Member States;
9. Calls for the establishment of the United Nations Youth-Led Organisations (UNYLO) that will include twenty experts of sociology, psychology and politics in order to support the youth-led organizations that are formed mostly in LEDCs by and are encouraging the youth to participate in local governance and decision-making by:
- a) allowing the youth organizations in need of recognition, funding and resources to apply to be a subsidiary organization to UNYLO to receive the help of the UN
  - b) accepting applications from youth-led organizations with more need, positive impact on the youth in their society and their community;
10. Suggests the formation of the United Nations Participating Youth in the Media Organization (UNPYMO) in order to encourage the youth to participate in and use the media to get or spread the knowledge while participating in local governance and decision-making by:
- a) having a UNPYMO office in each Member State consisting only of youth and young adults who are interested in creating media content that will address mainly to any and all youth in the Member State

- b) providing education to the youth public in local regions or within the organization regarding jobs and fields in the media industry such as journalism in order to introduce the public to the industry, encourage them to participate in and use the media, provide the best media content to other youth to gain their use of media as well
  - c) having UNPYMO prepare journals, online content, social media posts and relevant content for the youth daily to gain the use of and participation in the media by the youth and make them stay current.
11. Asks all member states to create a social capital culture (defining social capital culture as the support of the individuals living in the society, participating in NGO's and enriching the NGO's through various ways of monetary support which is imperative that a young person who wants to have a voice in general and local administrations in the future should participate effectively in the NGO to develop) and enrich social capital which will be implemented to the community by:
- a) The local governments supporting the NGO's and culture houses such as libraries, museums by:
    - i. Supporting economically,
    - ii. Encouraging the community to support the NGO's
  - b) New policies should be created for young people to participate in NGO's such as:
    - i. Including the social capital culture in the education system for continuity,
    - ii. Promoting the youth that working in NGO's can also be a profession;
12. Encourages the formation of leadership of youth people, including by promoting formal and informal education on leadership, increasing their access to managing and developing their organization and facilitating their participation in cooperatives and other forms of social decision making and governance;
13. Calls for every Member State to also consider providing initiatives for marginalized groups amongst youths through means such as but not limited to:
- a) Reaching out to them through special local meetings or sessions that all add up to voice the problems of marginalized youths on a national level,
  - b) Support them in the making of "neighborhood projects" where they attempt to recognize the root of the problem within the neighborhood, reduce social invisibility and make the neighborhood a more inclusive and accessible place which will be funded by the non-governmental and governmental organizations,
  - c) Support a more inclusive education system where marginalized students including differently-abled students can participate in common classrooms through:
    - i. Going through all the necessary steps to make to school more safe for all children including making the school more accessible from a structural point,
    - ii. tackling social prejudices through the integration of neglected histories in all history curriculums which will also include, features of social groups, entitativity, conformity, exclusion and rivalry, marginalization processes, poverty and social strata, gender and sexism, race and ethnicity, excluded groups and second class citizenships, whilst being funded by UNESCO and the World Bank;