

**FORUM:** Special Conference on Securing and Advancing Democracy (SCSAD), Sub-Commission 2

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

**SUBMITTED BY:** Jamaica

**CO-SUBMITTERS:** Sudan, Vietnam, India, ECA, UNESCO, Japan, Suriname, Moldova, Armenia, Singapore, Marshall Islands, Gambia, Ghana, Mongolia, Samoa, Switzerland, Paraguay, European Union, Ireland, Syria, Belgium

## THE SPECIAL CONFERENCE ON SECURING AND ADVANCING DEMOCRACY,

*Defining* youth as people aged 15 to 24 years as applied by the OECD, which includes the child up to the age of 18 years as applied by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and further noting the variations of definition of the term that may exist on the national and international levels, including the definition of youth in the General Assembly Resolutions A/RES/50/81 and A/RES/56/117, and Security Council Resolution 2419,

*Stressing* that uneducated youth cannot possibly engage in political decision-making without the proper basic education about their country's political situation, and that in order for democracy to be effective, the citizenry that votes in elections and engages in public processes with the government must be informed and must have the right to participate freely in public discourse,

*Emphasizing* that participation in voting is a fundamental right, serving as Article 27 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights that has been reiterated in many conventions and declarations,

*Guided by* the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), adopted in 1995, which provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people around the world,

*Fully aware* that too often youth movements are dominated by the most articulate and socially engaged young people, while the more marginalized groups are excluded,

1. **Recommends** that Member States, in conjunction with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and other relevant NGOs, and funded by the World Bank, establish a ministry, department or office to be primarily responsible for issues surrounding youth participation that will be responsible for:
  - a) facilitating the coordination and integration of programmes, services and activities geared towards youth development political knowledge
  - b) act as a constant intermediate between the government and youth activists, social entrepreneurs, community organisers, volunteers and campaigners;
2. **Encourages** member states to establish a formal education curriculum that would increase trust of political parties and adults in youths as well as increasing the youth literacy rate to create a better-equipped youth to make political decisions through methods such as but not limited to:
  - a) Implementing an international civic education curriculum that
    - i. includes information on how the democratic system works, the philosophy behind democracy, governmental systems, as well as recognizing tyrannical governments and dictatorships while evaluating other currently existing or other pre-existing governments
    - ii. encourages mock governments or democratic systems such as, model UN to create a better understanding of democracy
    - iii. will be set out conjointly with the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) and UNESCO whilst being funded by the World Bank to reach every school
  - b) Increasing the prominence of local schools in villages or underdeveloped regions through
    - i. giving privileges to teachers in underdeveloped regions such as lower tax rates or higher salary handed out by local government systems

- ii. the building of small education centers designated to children, if none is present, whilst being funded by non-profit organizations or governmental entities
  - iii. the appointment of more teachers;
- 3. Further encourages Member States to request secondary schools to provide mandatory classes, co-curricular and extra-curricular workshops and clubs where students start getting involved in local, national and international issues that will most definitely affect them in the future, through education and academic responsibility:
  - a) including topics such as, but not limited to:
    - i. migration and integration
    - ii. violence prevention
    - iii. gender mainstreaming
    - iv. voting procedure
  - b) equipping youth with the necessary skills to create new democratic approaches that can creatively solve the problems that are inherent to the traditional political democratic models
  - c) teaching commitment with the principles of respect, inclusion, integrity, tolerance, transparency and accountability;
  - d) provide mobile education units that move from town to town, particularly in LEDCs, to access areas where schools are not located
    - i. being supported and overseen by UNESCO
    - ii. acting as a pilot where experts will train local professionals to take and later making the program independent
    - iii. using reports sponsored by UNESCO to track the success of this to allow for improvement
- 4. Asks for Member States to provide the necessary basic level of education that is equal for all, with the same opportunities for all youth, in order to prevent youth movements to be dominated by the most socially engaged groups and rather ensure the inclusion of the typically marginalized groups by:
  - a) Ensuring that the youth of this generation is up to date with the political status of their countries as well as others by giving all access to equal information through:
    - i. providing equal access to the media in schools
    - ii. providing public areas in which no payment is required to access the media through public computers or other technological devices;
- 5. Invites interaction between elected leaders and youth by:
  - a) Promoting the mutual benefits that would come as a result, such as but not limited to:
    - i. Local governors, and city leaders listening and understanding the youth, who would have a chance to express their view on the issues
    - ii. Young people getting acquainted with the political etiquette which would drive them to pursue political leadership roles
  - b) Holding youth summits as an opportunity for officials and youth to have meaningful interaction
  - c) Inviting Member States to set up, if they have not yet done so, specialized bodies entrusted with mainstreaming youth issues in parliament's work
  - d) Encouraging youth to host a forum with civil society experts, local government representatives, and State officials to provide concrete recommendations on how a Consultative Council should be created, what it should be implementing, and how it can represent young people in the democratic process
  - e) Establishing a National Youth Parliament
  - f) Allowing youth councils to directly interact with leaders by offering advice to the Prime Minister/President and the government on issues of importance such as but not limited to:
    - i. Employment
    - ii. Access to education

- iii. Strengthening communities
- iv. Climate change;

6. Requests the foreign ministries of Member States to take part in, as well as promote the “UN Youth Delegate Programme” by:
- a) Establishing a selection process that is easily accessible to find out more about, with the assistance of:
    - i. Representatives being sent to explain what the programme is to schools, with a focus on rural areas where internet accessibility is significantly less
    - ii. The usage of advertisements, both physical and online
    - iii. Establishing a website as well as a phone line to receive applications and provide information to those who reach out
  - b) With the aims of the "UN Youth Delegate Programme" being:
    - i. Having the youth be acquainted with jobs that work upon international democracy
    - ii. Promoting the acts of democracy; decision-making; international relations
    - iii. Increasing youth participation in decision-making processes;
  - c) to retain credibility, the members of these programs will be recruited on the basis of:
    - i. their previous engagement towards politics
    - ii. a letter of recommendation from their school
    - iii. an essay outlining their interest in the subject matter
    - iv. the organization can work as a branch of the United Nations Youth Associations to further their ongoing campaign
7. Affirms the importance of the media and its role in building an effective, transparent, fair and equal democracy where youth are able to actively participate in the election of leaders, and requests the awareness and education of the subject by:
- a) Understanding the different roles of the media in our current society
  - b) Acknowledging the media as a platform and medium of deliberation where each individual has a voice and a choice in electing its leader
  - c) Acknowledging the media as a ‘watchdog’ that we rely on for uncovering errors and wrongdoings of those who have political power
  - d) Keeping in mind that the media has the power to change the morals and views of each person by giving information and perspectives on different subjects the media can positively or negatively alter the beliefs of individuals;
8. Suggests Member States to establish a requirement that all active political parties be transparent and more accessible towards youth through methods such as but not limited to:
- a) Encouraging all parties to install prominent youth-wings through youth-led campaigns and seminars that are present in local communities which will also strengthen their presence in the populace thus benefiting the party itself whilst getting the youth involved
  - b) Passing laws and regulations that require total transparency of parties towards the youth as well as the general populace
  - c) Making of accounts on social media platforms run by elected youth representatives of youth wings that work alongside campaign managers to increase prominence on social media platforms which most youths tend to access frequently
  - d) Broadcasting all legislative and/or important sessions/meetings on all possible social media platforms;
9. Urges all countries to help increase awareness of youths regarding societal and global problems which would then serve as an incentive for youth to recognize problems in society and take action, thus reasonably increasing participation of youth in politics by methods such as but not limited to:
- a) Mandatory community service for every person starting at the age of 18 consisting of 6 months in total in accordance with the UN Development Programme
  - b) Providing opportunities for volunteer work in underdeveloped countries for programs

- c) during breaks in schooling, dedicated to youths
- c) Local open seminars and discussions held annually for youths and adults to discuss world problems;

10. Further Invites all Member states to provide privileges for youths to spark projects concerning world problems starting from local districts up to global levels through the form of “start-ups” or other means, which will be similar to incentives for the outstanding projects such as:

- a) Funding for projects which will be provided by governmental entities and the World Bank
- b) Requested aid, besides monetary support, to accomplish the goals of the projects, such as, but not limited to:
  - i. Area for manufacturing
  - ii. Distribution
  - iii. Increasing app or web functionality
- c) Scholarships for the universities within the member-state as long as the project instigators get their education within the state, and upon success, agrees to return to member state if the relevant party now does not live in said state where funding will be provided solely by governmental entities.