

CIVIL SOCIETY – UN PREVENTION PLATFORM

Focused discussion on identifying ways and means of more meaningful engagement of youth in the work of the General Assembly

Statement

As the Civil Society-UN Prevention Platform – co-facilitated by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and Quaker UN Office – we work to support the UN's prevention agenda through strengthening coordination and information sharing between civil society organizations and the UN at all levels.

Based on our experiences, young people bring unique and innovative perspectives, methodologies and practices to uplift prevention action. Yet, young people see little policy and financial commitments towards their meaningful participation in the UN work at all levels. Notably, the proposed focus areas of the New Agenda for Peace are silent on the inclusion of young people.

The UN of the future will be the same UN of today if we do not reflect on the past and work together to bring young people to support prevention in the spirit of the UN Charter.

We propose the following 4 priorities to ensure that young people and the UN build strong and impactful partnerships around prevention:

The UN and Youth partnership requires systemized and institutionalized mechanisms for engagement: ECOSOC is a useful model of inclusive youth engagement. A Youth Focal Point for the General Assembly could be appointed, following the example of ECOSOC's Youth Focal Point, to support diverse youth participation in the work of the General Assembly. This Focal Point should work with the Major Group on Children and Youth and Global Coalition on YPS, among other youth coalitions to outline clear modalities for ensuring inclusive and coordinated youth participation.

The UN and Youth partnership must be transparent and accessible: Young people should have clear guidance on how to engage in various processes and have equal opportunities to engage. MGCY and GCYPS can support the General Assembly in selecting youth speakers who would be able to speak on behalf of youth (as opposed to individual organizations) and providing inclusive and participatory positions and advice to the General Assembly on how to better integrate youth.

The UN and Youth partnership requires an opportunity to engage in decision-making and follow-up: We commend the efforts of the General Assembly in having youth deliver statements at its meetings. This promotes visibility and recognition but more is needed in order to learn from young people. A process could be created to report back on how youth perspectives and recommendations are integrated in UN work and which recommendations are not taken forward with reasons why.

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The UN and Youth partnership requires effort to advance protection: Global engagement should not bring safety risks to young people. The Security Council has recently started taking this seriously under the leadership of its Member States. The exchange of experiences as well as establishment of systems that enable protection are required to ensure that young people can meaningfully engage.

We Thank You!