



Youth Delegates deliver bold Youth Resolution

Youth Delegates made youth opinion count in the negotiations of the UN General Assembly Youth Resolution entitled 'Programmes and Policies involving youth.' Through five negotiation sessions, several bilateral consultations and countless 'brainstorming' meetings between Youth Delegates, the world's youth now have an advocacy instrument in the UNGA 64 Youth Resolution that addresses the contemporary issues associated with eleven complex components of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY).

The process to create this year's Youth Resolution was unique. This year, for the first time, young people anywhere could help create the resolution's draft by participating in the preceding online youth consultation. This meant that already Member States had a Youth Resolution to work with that had been directly informed by youth opinion globally, which gave legitimacy to resolution wording such as, *"climate change and loss of biodiversity, is one of the principal concerns of young people worldwide."*

Every negotiation has its battles. Our challenge throughout the negotiations was to influence different country representatives to think of the current needs of young people and understand what 'youth participation' should look like. We had success in this regard in seeing the resolution discuss youth diversity, the impact of the financial crisis and the institutionalisation of youth participation throughout public, private and civil society sectors.

Youth Delegates worked together to support to each other's proposals wherever possible. Julie Lødrup and Jens Kihl, Youth Delegates from Norway, worked hard to give the resolution a strong gender perspective. They were challenged by some States who did not see the Youth Resolution as the place for gender advocacy, however Youth Delegates rightfully and successfully backed Norway to ensure each WPAY priority area had an awareness of the overt injustices done to girls and young women.

(read more and find out which demands were presented on page 2)



Follow-up: What will happen after New York?

At the last evening on which almost every Youth Delegate (YD) was still in New York one question was dominating the discussion: How will you follow up the work and the questions that are still open?

Alejandro Javier pointed out that for the YDs from the Dominican Republic the highest priority will be to stabilize the programme, since 2009 was the first year his country has sent YD to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Emily Büning, one of the German YDs stressed the importance a follow-up, through which the content and demands of the resolution will be handled in Germany: 'the first meetings are already fixed in order to talk to politicians and the ministries about what has to be implemented and how it could work'.

Gita Hulmanova from Slovakia adds that for her the collaboration with and involvement of youth-led organisations plays a key role in the aim to implement the decisions that are taken by the UN on the national level. 'Too often this dimension is ignored – hence we risk failing in our efforts to improve the situation for young people' Hulmanova points out.

The Dutch YD, Jordy Sweep, is this week back in New York – together with his successor, Elsa van de Loo. She was selected on the international UN Day. Sweep explains: 'the experiences from the last years have shown that a comprehensive handover from one YD generation to the next is essential if we want to have a real and positive impact as YDs'. [FM]



YD will be present at COP15

2009 is a crucial year for the climate change debate and the future of our planet. In December the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP) 15 will take place. Several YDs will be present in order to ensure that the voices of young people are heard in the negotiation. 'Youth is one of the most vulnerable groups and is highly effected by climate change' explained Yolisa Modise, one of the Botswana YDs, as a key note speaker during the side event on climate justice. Chris Varney from Australia is one of the YDs who will attend COP15, and he clearly points out: 'Copenhagen is probably our last chance to mitigate a disaster – we have to seal the deal and the demands we as YDs presented at the side event will be my orientation as a YD'. (find the demands on www.unyouth.com) [FM]

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Youth Participation works!

The negotiations on the biannual Youth Resolution of the UN General Assembly are never easy. But one area where the member states not only agreed but also demonstrated progress is youth participation.

October 13 the European Commission and the European Youth Forum invited UN Member States and UN agencies in Brussels and New York for an interlinked video conference to feed into the negotiations.

Consultations must continue

All the speakers in the side-event highlighted the consultation with youth-led organisations leading up to drafting the resolution on youth. The Youth Delegates around the table expressed happiness over this initiative of Portugal, Senegal and Moldova and thanked the UN Programme on Youth for their facilitation.

– Switzerland supports this consultation process and we think this practice must be put in place also for UN publications on youth, like the World Youth Report, says Tobias Naef, Switzerland. During the UNGA Switzerland has been lobbying for the next World Youth Report 2011 to focus on migration.

(read more and find out which demands were presented on page 3)

A strong Youth Resolution (continued from page 1)

Our awareness of the everyday experiences of young people and the current gaps in service delivery helped us make the resolution relevant to challenges facing youth today. Youth Delegates from Switzerland (Tobias Naef), Netherlands (Jordy Sweep), and Germany (Falko Mohrs and Emily May Buning) made good contributions to the paragraphs on substance abuse, HIV/AIDS and information and communications technology, ensuring that issues such as stigmatization and equal access to services were included.

Furthermore, the resolution made bold moves forward on climate change, juvenile justice and youth participation. The combined efforts of Youth Delegates from Germany, Tanzania, Peru (Denisse Becerra) and Switzerland helped the climate change paragraph promote the involvement of youth in renewable sectors and an increase in the environmental education of youth.

For the juvenile justice priority, Youth Delegates from Australia (Chris Varney) and Thailand (Siriwan Limsakul and Manop Sinfunphankawi) advocated for increased support services to ensure juvenile detention develops young detainees for reintegration into community. Finally, all Youth Delegates were very pleased to see the resolution reaffirm the call for more youth representatives in national delegations, and give attention to disabled young people and also those socially excluded.

After this success in the negotiations, Youth Delegates will now lobby our own governments to implement the resolution through national policies and prepare future Youth Delegates for the next Youth Resolution in 2011. Thank you to everyone for their support throughout our work on the resolution! [CV]



Youth Participation works! (continued from page 2)

Need for National Youth Councils

Youth participation is interpreted differently in different regions of the world. But there is growing recognition for the need of National Youth Councils to follow and feed into national policies affecting youth. The resolution calls for support to the establishment of independent National Youth Councils (NYCs).

– Now is the time for implementation, says Christoffer Grønstad, vice-president of the European Youth Forum (YFJ). YFJ is already working for the establishment and strengthening of NYCs in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Turkey and Serbia. – With this resolution we can call for more support also from the governments, says Grønstad.

Must look forward

The Youth Delegates are in general happy with the resolution. But Linda Wallberg, Sweden, is not happy with everything. – There is a tradition for the UNGA resolution on youth to point out the way forward. What are the next steps to develop the World Program on Action for Youth? What will the UN do to push Member States to implement the program? And when? This element is not as strong as we would wish. There is a demand for the development of indicators for the World Program of Action for Youth but no deadline, she says.

Some of the demands from the side-event:

- The work on indicators for the WPAY must involve youth-led organisations
- The coordination on youth issues between UN programs and agencies must be formalised in time to be launched at the World Youth Conference in Mexico in 2010 – and involve youth organisations
- Young people, through youth-led organisations, must be consulted in the World Youth Reports and Secretary General's report on the implementation of the WPAY [CG]

Working breakfast on youth unemployment with the ILO

Young people representing 14 countries from various regions of the globe met on 14 October 2009 at the working breakfast on youth unemployment organised jointly by Youth Delegates from Romania and Slovakia. Ms Elena Gastaldo, invited expert from the International Labour Organisation, shared the ILO findings on the obstacles young people face when entering the labour market.

Youth unemployment around the world has risen sharply during the financial and economic crisis. This shows the vulnerability of youth, as they are among the first ones to be laid off during the cut down in the number of employees. With youth unemployment rate being twice as high as the total unemployment rate even in many developed economies, it is time to send out a strong call for effective solutions to the governments. In her presentation, Ms Gastaldo mentioned the need to insert youth employment policies into national macroeconomic policies, as active labour market policies often offer only a short term strategy.

In the lively discussion that followed, the YDs expressed their views on youth unemployment in their regions. Chris Varney, the Australian Youth Representative says: "In Australia between June 2008 and June 2009, the number of unemployed 15-24 year olds have increased from 60.000 to 255.000. Government, the private sector and civil society have all reacted to prevent young people's long-term employability being damaged by early unemployment. Hence whilst the challenge is intense, it has been encouraging to see that the concerns of young people have been at the centre of many of the responses to *the crisis and subsequent unemployment*." [GH]

We'd love to hear from you! Please contact the editors Christoffer Grønstad (European Youth Forum) and Falko Mohrs (Germany) on youngnews09@googlemail.com.

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