

11th Session of the World Urban Forum | June 26th-30th, 2022

DECLARATION ON YOUTH & SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION



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DeclarACTION on Youth and Sustainable Urbanization Adopted at the 11th UN-Habitat World Urban Forum Children and Youth Assembly and Presented to Madam Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif

Katowice, Poland, June 26th, 2022

We, the representatives of youth organizations from around the world, gathered at the 11th Session of the World Urban Forum of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in the City of Katowice, Poland, on June 26th, 2022, through this DeclarACTION, declare our right to the city and express our intention to work with stakeholders at the local, national and international level to strive for the meaningful inclusion of youth in the sustainable, inclusive, safe and prosperous development of our cities and communities with the goal of leaving no one behind in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

During the Youth 2030 Cities Forums, young people were asked to share the most pertinent challenges facing their local communities. The most important issues across 6 countries were:

-  Environmental degradation and climate change
-  Employment and economic opportunities
-  Youth governance and inclusion
-  Gender equality & sexual reproductive rights
-  Migration and forced displacement
-  Urban safety and renovation
-  Mental health and wellbeing

Upon approval of these seven thematical issues by the youth leaders present at WUF11 and further debated during the Children and Youth Assembly and Roundtable, young people from around the world agreed to take concrete action steps in order to improve the circumstances of the achievement of these Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, emphasizing that it can only be in unison with government, private sector, civil society, and other stakeholders that these goals may be achieved.

WE WILL ACT...

1. To ensure spaces for youth to discuss ideas, support each other, and create movements for positive change in a safe environment where all voices are heard;
2. To demand that youth are involved in government decision-making, public policies and programme development as young ambassadors who seek to generate sustainable impact;
3. To demand gender equality, and make sure that we are providing the same opportunities, support, and choices for all genders, requiring that we do not leave any child or young person behind;
4. To create an inclusive, democratic, diverse, and participatory society for the defense of indigenous peoples to exercise their rights and preserve their traditions and language;
5. To change the educational systems to include curriculum around sexual reproductive rights, mental health, LGBTQIA+ rights, and other critical and often overlooked issues;
6. To ensure that access to basic needs including mental health and well-being should not be limited based on gender, sexual orientation, age, race, or socio-economic status;
7. In light of the over 100 million refugees worldwide, we must act to guarantee the rights of migrants and refugees as well as demand their protection and basic services including mental health support;
8. To educate everyone about the disastrous effects of climate change and demand political action from our governments to implement mechanisms to combat climate change and to hold all stakeholders accountable for sustainable action;
9. To assure that youth and the communities they live within have access to affordable and accessible basic services such as water, sanitation, public health, housing and education;
10. To prioritize employment opportunities such as green jobs for youth and provide capacity building to strengthen their job skills;
11. To move past these conversations about what must be done to change the world and take urgent steps to positively transform our societies which requires youth, national governments, local governments, inter-governmental organizations, civil society, and private sector to work together;
12. To request that youth constitute 20 percent of total attendees at all future events such as the World Urban Forum, High-Level Meeting, and the UN-Habitat Assembly and ensure youth representation at all panels and political debates to guarantee youth voices are included in decision-making processes.





TO FULFILL THESE COMMITMENTS, WE BELIEVE ALL OF SOCIETY MUST UNITE. AT THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH ASSEMBLY AT THE WORLD URBAN FORUM IN KATOWICE, POLAND, WE IDENTIFY WHAT EACH KEY STAKEHOLDER NEEDS TO DO TO SUPPORT MEANINGFUL YOUTH ACTION TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS.

Youth must demand to be part of government decision-making and the creation of spaces where youth voices can be heard. Youth also having the biggest stake in climate change must act and hold stakeholders accountable through harnessing the power of technology and communication.

National governments must prioritize a green agenda that protects the environment and recognizes that the future of the environment dictates the future of all humanity. Governments must also support the safety and inclusion of refugees, migrants, and other displaced and vulnerable persons, guaranteeing their right to basic services such as water, sanitation, public health, housing and education.

Local governments must pass laws that ensure the safety and security of youth and all diversities and strive to become more transparent and less corrupt. In an effort to improve the wellbeing of youth, local governments must support youth employment, capacity building, and mental health services.

The United Nations must augment the voices of youth not only in spaces of innovation and technology but policy-making and sustainable peace-building processes and highlight their initiatives on a global platform. The UN must also create and encourage the use of technologies such as the SDG Scorecard so that youth can better be part of tracking the SDGs.





Inter-governmental organizations must ensure quality education is upheld and spaces for dialogue are open for all youth. Inter-government agencies must recognize their role in inclusive and safe urban planning and action against the harmful effects of climate change.

The private sector must commit to social co-responsibility programs and invest in habitat regeneration and other initiatives that are not solely based on profit in order to secure the revitalization and strengthening of an environment and diverse ecosystem that can last for many generations.

Civil society must provide adequate education about climate change and mental health and well-being. Civil society must also champion inclusion and diversity and create spaces or marginalized voices to be heard.



THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ONE PARTY ARE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE FROM THE ACTIONS THAT ANOTHER MUST TAKE, BUT RATHER CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED IF ALL ACTORS WORK TOGETHER, LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF ANOTHER, AND INCLUDE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES IN THE FORMATION OF PUBLIC POLICIES AND PROGRAMMING.

CLOSING REMARKS



Highlighted above are young people's recommendations, goals, and actions for localizing the Sustainable Development Goals in towns and cities around the world.

We are ready and willing to partner with our local governments and other stakeholders to join forces toward building more inclusive and sustainable cities and communities.

We ask the governments and local authorities to take urgent steps to ensure that our voices are listened to and actions are taken seriously. As young and responsible citizens who have already been working hard to improve our cities, we commit to continue to be part of the implementation of the action points outlined in this DeclarACTION on Youth and Sustainable Urbanization.

PRESENTED BY:

The participants of the Children and Youth Assembly at the 11th Session of the World Urban Forum in Katowice, Poland.

