ENGAGING YOUTH IN OUR GLOBAL FUTURE

UNA-Canada Submission on Youth Consultations for the International Assistance Review and Sustainable Development Goals

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

United Nations Association in Canada
Association canadienne pour les Nations Unies
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One of the great powers of the United Nations Association in Canada (UNA-Canada) is the ability to convene meaningful dialogue on global issues important to Canadians and global citizens. In July 2016 UNA-Canada, with the collaboration of UN-Habitat and UN Women, conceived and implemented a youth consultation programme in support of Global Affairs Canada’s International Assistance Review (IAR). The aim of the IAR was to establish an international assistance policy and funding framework that would focus on helping the poorest and most vulnerable people, and supporting fragile states, while advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Therefore, the framework of the youth consultation programme became embodied in UNA-Canada’s commitment to youth engagement and inclusivity, including those most marginalized, in global affairs discussion while also ensuring that Canada’s Minister of Youth mandate to include the youth voice in policy processes is being undertaken at all working levels.

This youth-led programme enabled UNA-Canada to consult youth from across the country, including Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa. Canadian youth voiced similar concerns about international assistance across the country, and this is mirrored in this report. At the same time, each community visited demonstrated its unique concerns and innovative solutions to current problems faced by population in developing countries which displayed the diversity in Canadian youth and their own societal experiences.

A significant realization through the consultation process was that Canadian youth are genuinely concerned with their counterparts in developing countries. Canadian youth feel privileged to live in a society that celebrates and prides itself in its inclusivity and multicultural values. This privilege has empowered Canadian youth to take on global responsibility for those youth in developing countries that have limits on their potential. Thus, this report is created with the purpose to place the voice of Canadian civil society and youth at the centre of international development assistance and the policy process.

UNA-Canada would like to extend our thanks to our partners, UN-Habitat, UN Women, and hosts throughout the country. A special acknowledgement goes to the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, and Parliamentary Secretary to Minister Bibeau, and a youth herself, Karina Gould for demonstrating enthusiasm and support for our consultation process. Lastly, thanks are due to the UNA-Canada youth team for leading and reporting the programme to our diversified pool of participants and partners. Now, we look to the Canadian government and global civil society to address global issues and implement sustainable solutions to advance the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

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MESSAGE
FROM
KARINA
GOULD
Parliamentary Secretary
To The Minister
of International
Development

This is an important time for Canada on the world stage. Like many donor countries, Canada is looking to better respond to opportunities and challenges in the new global context. That is why our government is taking the time to review Canada’s international assistance. We want to determine the best way to deliver on our commitment to help the poorest and most vulnerable people, who are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Young people are already impressively contributing to Canada’s international assistance efforts all over the world. As the Prime Minister regularly points out, you are not only the leaders of tomorrow but are already leading today. As such, your voices must be actively involved in contributing to policy processes.

You represent a generation of true Global Citizens, made possible by a world that is connected like never before by new technologies and social media.

We understand, as a government, the importance of engaging youth not only on issues that affect them directly but on all issues of national and global importance. With the right opportunities and tools, you can change the face of your communities, Canada and the world.

That is why your presence at this consultation is truly appreciated. Your opinions, ideas and experiences are valuable and will help inform the review process.

I congratulate the United Nations Association in Canada in partnership with UN-Habitat, UN Women, and The Simons Foundation for bringing you together to have this important discussion. We look forward to receiving your input as part of our International Assistance Review.

I wish you a productive, stimulating and inspiring consultation.

MS. KARINA GOULD, M.P.
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development
INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAMME

During July 2016, the United Nations Association in Canada (UNA-Canada), the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat), and UN Women conducted a nationwide series of youth consultations with the goal to elevate the youth voice on the International Assistance Review (IAR) undertaken by Global Affairs Canada (GAC). This document is a compilation of youth recommendations and views on international development according to GAC’s identified policy issues.

The consultations undertaken convened more than 100 diverse Canadian young leaders from Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa, aged 16-29. The conversations were organized to address the policy issues identified by GAC for the IAR and the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The importance of youth involvement in international development policy, and also in urban and national policy implementation, was echoed in importance throughout the country. The following questions provided the framework of each consultation:

- What is the role of youth in international development? Should youth in developing countries and youth-led organizations be supported by Canada to undertake development work?

- What are the key areas that Canada should focus in empowering and improving the wellbeing of young people in areas such as education, skills training, governance engagement, and health?

- How should Canada support girls and young women in areas like education, skills training, governance engagement, health, and safety?

Cities play a vital role in sustainability – What are the urban issues that are critical to youth globally? (Some urban issues: housing, transportation, jobs, crime and safety.)

These consultations included young leaders across the country, as well as leaders on global citizenship. Notable was a presentation by Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell to the Toronto consultation. As past Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and UN-Habitat, Her Honour emphasized the importance of UNA-Canada’s work to convene youth to discuss sustainability and global responsibility. By prioritizing prosperity, innovation, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability, civil society advances the SDGs and the IAR’s policy issues. Her Honour also highlighted Canadian natural resource abundance and social capital which increases our global responsibility.
UNA-Canada is a historic, national charity with a mandate to educate and engage Canadians on the United Nations (UN) and international issues that concern us all. UNA-Canada “grows global citizens”. For seventy years, through a National Office in Ottawa, twenty volunteer Branches across the country, and over twenty thousand members, UNA-Canada works in partnership with the private sector, all levels of government, the United Nations, international organizations, diplomatic missions, and civil society on national and international issues including climate change, health, gender equality, education, diversity, social justice and innovation. UNA-Canada provides a leading policy voice in UN and international issues with Canadians.

UN-Habitat is the United Nations programme working towards a better urban future. Its mission is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all. Mandated by the UN General Assembly in 1978 to address the issues of urban growth, it is a knowledgeable institution on urban development processes, and understands the aspirations of cities and their residents. For close to forty years, UN-Habitat has been working in human settlements throughout the world, focusing on building a brighter future for villages, towns, and cities of all sizes. Because of these four decades of extensive experience, from the highest levels of policy to a range of specific technical issues, UN-Habitat has gained a unique and a universally acknowledged expertise in all things urban. UN-Habitat is currently leading the renewal of the UN systems urban and human settlement mandate through the Habitat III process, which will culminate with the adoption of the New Urban Agenda in the Habitat III conference held in Quito, Ecuador in October 2016.

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women’s equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women’s leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women’s economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting.
THE UNITED NATIONS CONTEXT

Over its 70 year history, the United Nations has created critical norms and resolutions promoting Member States to shape policies that promote global development and peace and security. Following the clear lead of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his Ministers of International Development Marie-Claude Bibeau and Foreign Affairs, Stéphane Dion, UNA-Canada recommends that the Government of Canada particularly incorporates UN Resolutions into its development policy moving forward:

1. UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL (UNSC) RESOLUTION 2250 – INCREASING REPRESENTATION OF YOUTH IN DECISION-MAKING AT ALL LEVELS (2015)
   Adopted in 2015, Resolution 2250 urges member states to consider ways to elevate the voice of youth in decision-making at all levels – locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. In particular, this resolution is aimed at the de-radicalization of youth and to ensure adequate and comprehensive solutions to issues faced by the 3.5 billion young people living on the planet.

2. UNSC RESOLUTION 1325 – WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY (2000)
   Adopted in 2000, the resolution affirms the important role women have in the prevention of conflict, peace negotiations, peace-building, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses the importance of their equal participation in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

3. WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR YOUTH
   The World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) was passed by the General Assembly in 1995. It is a blueprint for national action and international support to foster conditions and mechanisms to promote improved well-being and livelihood among young people. The WPAY covers fifteen priority areas: education, employment, poverty and hunger, the environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure-time activities, health, girls and young women, HIV/AIDS, information and communications technology, inter-generational issues, armed conflict, the mixed impact of globalization, and the full and effective participation of youth in society and in decision-making.

4. NEW URBAN AGENDA (HABITAT III)
   The New Urban Agenda (NUA) will be the UN’s new mandate for sustainable urbanization to be passed at Habitat III in Quito, Ecuador in October of 2016. The NUA is built from the deliberations on human settlements and urbanization previously and codified in the Vancouver Declaration of Habitat I (1976, Vancouver) and the Habitat Agenda of Habitat II (1996, Istanbul). The NUA is a global roadmap towards sustainable urbanization for the world.
This document is written within the global context of a demographic youth “bulge”. There are more people under the age of 25 today than ever before, totaling nearly three billion or almost half of the total global population; 1.3 billion of that total are between the age of 12 and 24. In recognition of the unprecedented impact of youth globally, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon appointed his first ever Envoy on Youth. The Envoy on Youth Ahmad Alhindawi has stated that youth are both leaders of today and tomorrow. The Envoy and UN Secretary General have taken the stand that governments need to see youth as more than passive actors in global development, due to both their demographic dominance, especially in the developing world and developing world cities, but as well their ingenuity, innovation and passion to effect positive change. If the proper support and investments are made, youth can be forced for positive change; yet, if youth are not invested in and engaged meaningfully, the opposite may happen and youth can become disillusioned which in certain circumstances can lead to violence and upheaval.

Emerging from these consultations is a strong focus on youth leadership – what the UN has called “youth-led development” - where young people take the lead in their own community’s advancement in partnership with adults.

This document is organized by thematic recommendations according to the policy issues of the IAR, identified by GAC. These include Health and Rights of Women and Children, Clean Economic Growth and Climate Change, Governance, Diversity and Human Rights, Peace and Security, Responding to Humanitarian Crises, and Delivering Results. However, as UNA-Canada, and its partners, embarked on its nationwide youth-led initiative, addressing youth policy issues was a recurring message across the country.

As a result of this call for youth engagement, a key recommendation to the Government of Canada is to add the theme of Youth-led Development within the IAR policy issues framework.

This submission has incorporated a Youth-led Development thematic component, in addition to the pre-determined policy issues identified by GAC. UNA-Canada and our UN partners recommend, in concurrence with our Minister of Youth, that the intersectional youth voice be elevated not only in Canada but across the globe through representation in various levels of policy processes as well as through grass-root initiatives. Detailed recommendations from Canadian youth for youth in developed and developing countries can be found under Youth-led Development within the thematic recommendations below.
HEALTH AND RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

In discussion about how the Canadian government can further their support for women in areas such as education, health, accessibility, and partnerships, young leaders emphasized the need for promoting a culture of empowerment and intersectional feminism. Education has been and will be a crucial component of advancing SDG 5 - Gender Equality - and SDG 10 - Reducing Inequalities - and has to include members of diverse communities, including men and boys. Furthermore, youth consultations brought strong attention to the needs of the LGBTI community, especially regarding sexual health, and the most pressing health issues that are costing women’s lives in developing countries, such as maternal health and reproductive rights. There was also an overarching recognition of the importance of a gender and intersectionality lens on International Assistance, in coherence with the consultations 57% of young female participants. There was also a focus on the needs of indigenous women in Canada and globally. The challenges faced by this group are considerable – poverty, lack of affordable and decent housing, high unemployment, among others – which at the root level are grounded on colonial suppression of languages and indigenous cultures. The youth consulted expressed a strong need for the Canadian Government to support and advocate for this population.

Actionable Recommendations:

EDUCATION

• School curricula in primary and secondary schools in developing countries need to be a continuous incorporation of gender equality education and awareness in alignment with intersectional approaches to gender and feminism;
• By emphasizing education from middle childhood (9-13), the global community will be educating youth into incorporating the advancement of the SDGs into their daily life. This will have feedback effects on their families and broader community; the goal is to make attaining the SDGs accessible;
• Men and boys need to be educated on the importance of their role in advancing SDG 5. For example, education on the importance and value of engaging women in male-dominated fields of study/work;
• Women and girls need to have leadership opportunities in schools through informal, non-formal and formal activities;
• The history of indigenous people’s globally must be taught and understood. Their inherent right to self-governance must be recognized.
PARTNERSHIPS

• There should be incentives, both financial and non-financial, for corporations to launch and maintain social awareness campaign on feminism and gender equality. The government should create an environment of cooperation in the corporate sector to maximize international reach;
• Intersectional approach to these campaigns needs to be incorporated; attention to women of colour, transgender women, and other marginalized women groups;
• A framework for this initiative can be the current campaign being implemented in Toronto against Islamophobia; ads can be found on bus stops and other heavily-used public spaces;
• Partnerships with agencies that execute grass-root level initiatives are vital to implementing actionable policies regarding women and girls. These agencies should include UN agencies, microfinance institutions, and private sector entities. These institutions should also prioritize inclusive and diverse employment, understand different intergenerational needs, and provide empathy-based learning opportunities;
• Emphasis needs to be on partnering with microfinance institutions, as this provides avenues for women in smallholder ownership to innovate. This would empower women and girls to become successful entrepreneurs, creating long-term winnable outcomes to both the family and the economy, and simultaneously diminishing the unequal financial and material opportunities available to women in agriculture and industry;
• Examples were brought forward by UN-Habitat of programmes funding youth-led initiatives directly as being very effective - UN-Habitat’s Urban Youth Fund.

ACCESSIBILITY TO SAFE SPACES

• Safe spaces need to be accessible for women to convene and discuss challenges faced within their respective communities;
• These spaces lead to grass-root level initiatives that should be supported by Canada, as these are initiatives that address the most vulnerable populations;
• These spaces can and should be used for safely reporting harassment situations and be equipped with educated professionals that would include transgender women and women from ethno-cultural or religious minority groups, as they are more likely to be victims of sexual abuse and street crimes. This will empower women in their communities;
• Participants identified a number of different programmes which support safe cities for young men and women.

HEALTH

• Reproductive and maternal health education and protocols need to be advocated and supported for women in developing countries, as this is a leading cause of death for young girls that can be addressed through education in informal and formal institutions;
• Similarly, efforts to end Female Genital Mutilation need to continue and expand;
• Canadians should support education on HIV preventive measures in developing countries. It has been proven that education and preventive measures are more cost-effective than curative methods. This will have effects on women empowerment, health of children, and men’s role in international development and gender equality;
• Mental health programmes need to be funded, especially in the LGBTI and Indigenous communities intermestically. Community gatherings to discuss and assess these issues is vital for decriminalization and safety of cities, and reducing stigma.
CLEAN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The development of clean economic growth and action on climate change was a widely discussed topic throughout the consultation process. Combating climate change through green public transportation infrastructure investments, green internships, and providing sustainable opportunity to the private sector were some highlights mentioned. There was also an emphasis on affordable clean energy for developing countries through local population training on ‘quick wins’ on carbon reduction, among other methods.

Actionable Recommendations:

GREEN INTERNSHIPS

- The Government of Canada should sponsor more international internship opportunities that focus on experiential learning for youth to grow the developing world’s green economy sectors. This will grow young people’s skills in applying a sustainable approach to sectors such as policy research, engineering, agriculture, transportation, energy, and waste management. At the same time, these internships will advance developing countries’ economies in a more sustainable manner and teach the next generation how to work according to the advancement of the SDGs. Such an approach also addresses youth unemployment and enthusiasm to embrace the green economy and the urgent issue of promoting innovation and entrepreneurship;

- UNA-Canada’s Canada Green Corps innovation was described in response to these calls in each session. The innovative programme addresses local challenges on climate and environment while building a green economy, and addressing the issue of youth un- and under-employment and the dispiriting ‘gig economy’.
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- The Government of Canada should support and invest in innovative clean public transportation systems in developing countries that will assist youth travel within their cities and urban areas. This is vital for accessibility to employment opportunities and mobilization from rural and urban areas. Youth should be included in the development of these projects so that employment opportunities are available to those who need it most;
- Eco-friendly and efficient transportation is vital for public and youth safety—car accidents are one of the largest global causes of youth death;
- Developing countries have an opportunity to learn from urban planning failures in developed countries, in this way they are able to innovate on successful plans and plan their cities in a more sustainable manner.

MICROLOANS

- Microloans should be accessible for youth entrepreneurs through skills and/or business training programmes that are based on country-specific needs. Moreover, loans should be provided at discounted interest rates to allow for further flexibility and success for young entrepreneurs living in developing countries;
- Microloans should be bundled with savings and insurance plans so that the most vulnerable populations are able to cope with negative income, health, and weather shocks that might hurt their business and well-being.

PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN SDGS

- Firms need to be further involved in the promotion and implementation of the SDGs pertaining to sustainable economies and climate change;
- There should be financial incentives for firms to take on promotional campaigns on the SDGs tied with their corporate culture, priorities, and product target market to eventually develop or enhance corporate social responsibility.

AFFORDABLE ENERGY

- There needs to be support for youth to access energy in an affordable manner. One example is to fund solar energy systems that not only provide clean energy for communities but also educate and train local population on the benefits of solar energy;
- Informing and training local populations on clean and green energy will have feedback effects on the community by sparking interest, curiosity, and uptake rates on clean and green actions.
GOVERNANCE, PLURALISM, DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The youth programme highlighted that a governance model more supportive of human rights in other countries, within the private sector, indigenous communities, and women should be implemented. Although we are accustomed to a diverse and inclusive community in Canada, this is not necessarily the case in other areas of the world. UNA-Canada ensured that the consultations which informed this submission were representative of the diverse Canadian population, a key approach to creating diversified perspectives not only within this thematic group but also among the others and the IAR overall.

Actionable Recommendations:

CORPORATE AND GRASS-ROOT LEVEL GOVERNANCE

• Instead of blindly supporting corporations that work abroad, especially in extractive industries, companies should be held more accountable for human right violations by the Canadian government by imposing operation limitations depending on their human rights track record;

• The Government of Canada should focus more on grass-root level organizations including youth serving and youth-led civil society that are elevating the most vulnerable people through capacity and resilience building, entrepreneurship, microfinance, job security, and other sustainable approaches to economic growth.
MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

- There needs to be more pressure from the Canadian government to the international community on advancing education and awareness on sexual diversity - as this will advance SDG 10. There needs to be funding available for programmes to take on frameworks such as the United Nations Free and Equal Campaign to spread awareness and decrease stigma around sexual diversity, but also to fund innovative programmes that address mental and sexual health, and urban issues faced by the LGBTI community;
- In particular, an intersectional approach needs to be used to promote awareness on sexual diversity;
- Programmes such as the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) which previously funded local LGBTI workshops and events should be expanded;
- The LGBTI community should be reflected in global declarations such as the New Urban Agenda;
- Indigenous communities, both abroad and in Canada, need to be supported and heard regarding their needs for inclusion into society, recognition of their sovereignty and way of life. Canada needs to implement infrastructure development in Northern communities that could serve as frameworks for other countries within their own reconciliation efforts with Indigenous communities.

WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE

- Canada needs to be a visible advocate of women in governance as this a vital entry point to amend inequitable legislation and reform social norms concerning gender inequalities. This will elevate Canada’s open feminist position in the world and put pressure on other countries to follow;
- In any support capacity Canada must be an advocate for an intersectional approach to human rights, especially gender equality if the nation would like to be reputable as a truly inclusive and progressive Member State and international actor;
- A special focus should be placed on young women’s engagement in governance at all levels;
- Faith and culture-based approaches to multidimensional development programming both carries risk and can minimize the risk of creating an exclusive society;
- Emphasis should be placed on mental health programmes, as these should be created and implemented appropriately to participants’ backgrounds, rather than universally implementing them through western-style psychological methods;
- Acknowledge that lateral violence exists within marginalized groups, thus inevitably portraying the need to create spaces where these entities can convene and create solutions through external normative reviews that incorporate qualitative and quantitative methods. This will enable the creation of inclusive and safe societies.
The consultations’ primary conversation around peace and security led to how youth in developing countries lack ample opportunity to grow, learn, and live sustainable lives. The need for global understanding of different cultures and for real economic opportunity was a critical discussion point. Adequate education about diversity is essential in order to ensure that youth do not become radicalized. This is especially true in countries engulfed in conflict. In these situations, youth are often introduced to violence and extreme views rather than learning skills in primary, secondary, post-secondary, or vocational institutions.

**Actionable Recommendations:**

- Cross-cultural exchanges for youth both in developed and developing countries should be coordinated and facilitated by the Government of Canada. This will enhance global understanding and cooperation which leads to a more peaceful and secure world;
- Cross-cultural internship programmes such as ones offered by youth serving and youth-led organizations and the UN provide a working model that promotes global understanding in the areas of human rights, HIV/AIDS awareness and sustainability projects, urbanization and leadership development;
- The perception of colonization in international development needs to change through youth empowerment and education. To do this, the ideas of youth in developing countries need to be considered and implemented. This will empower young people’s ideas while curbing the perception of country hierarchy due to history;
- Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security is one of the only security council resolutions to reference youth and youth-led agencies directly as key player in bringing about peace;
- The need to expand the role of youth in peacebuilding, both in giving them opportunities through education and skills training, and in engaging them in resolving conflict in their home countries was recognized;
- The important role of the diaspora from conflict countries engaging their home communities was recognized as an important way to engage youth in conflict cessation;
- UNA-Canada hosts the largest, national diversity initiative and has done so for over 15 years. Supported by the Government of Canada, sub-national governments and the private sector, this work must continually be invested in for each new generation – and should maintain a passive anti-radicalization frame.
RESPONDING TO HUMANITARIAN CRISES AND THE NEEDS OF DISPLACED POPULATIONS

In the midst of a global humanitarian crisis, the youth conversation centred on humility and acceptance. Youth also recognized that our own inclusive society country has its own challenges addressing xenophobia and implementing successful integration programmes. Programmes that address equality in how men and women are treated in the aftermath of humanitarian crises were seen as key. New resources should be devoted towards the mental health challenges of those affected by humanitarian crises. Lastly, youth expressed their concern with young male and female refugees’ need to continue their education and be provided with skills training to eventually return to living healthy and productive lives.

**Actionable Recommendations:**

- The Government of Canada should invest in educating, promoting, broadcasting and publically displaying local projects it funds relating to humanitarian crises within Canada. This needs to be done so that the Canadian public can see the needs of the developing world;
- Moreover, this should be done by utilizing the capacity and talents of youth in the developing world by showcasing their struggles - but also show how Canadian assistance helps them to utilize their talents to better their quality of life;
- For example, there should be money invested in a short film in Colombia to showcase how the commitment from the Canadian government for post-conflict development affects access education and job opportunities, compared to them not have had the opportunity to utilize these funds;
- Further work needs to be done to combat youth mental health challenges created by refugee and humanitarian crises. Many young people coming from humanitarian crises suffer from severe mental health conditions. There needs to be increased resources and financial support devoted to providing psychologists and mental health practitioners the necessary training to efficiently deal with refugee-specific mental needs. One example of this includes continuing and amplifying the work done by Jack.org;
- Humanitarian assistance should be prioritized to women and girls. This will ensure this group is provided with the support they need during times of uncertainty. Incorporating a feminist lens to humanitarian assistance will ensure that both SDG 5 - Gender Equality - and 16 - Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions - are met;
- Precautionary measures should be taken to make communities more resilient to natural disasters. This includes providing expert-led advice on urban centre resistance to areas that are most probable to being affected by natural disasters and ensure better access to emergency services during and after disasters.
DELIVERING RESULTS: IMPROVING EFFECTIVENESS, TRANSPARENCY, INNOVATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Throughout the consultation process, themes that were included to improve effectiveness on international development projects were induced in the open data concept. By making failures and successes available to the public, and simultaneously ensuring these projects are monitored according to set indicators by the Government, Canadian civil society would strengthen its position in international development. In addition, creating a strong reporting system to taxpayers that would display efficient allocation of their dollars reaching the most vulnerable populations would ignite trust in international assistance. By having access to this data and bundling it with training sessions for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Canada will improve its delivery methods and create a culture of transparency and an environment that would foster innovation and partnerships.

Actionable Recommendations:

OPEN DATA

- The quantitative and qualitative results of youth - in terms of their involvement in international development assistance should be better showcased. This will demonstrate to young people living in developing countries that Canadian youth are not complacent with the current conditions and are actively engaged in making the quality of young people’s lives better around the world;

- This can be done through tracking metrics of Canadian youth involvement in the international development sector by GAC;

- The Government of Canada should publicize problems in international development to CSOs so that the public can come up with innovative solutions. An example of this model is how the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) operates some crowd solution seeking;

- GAC needs to have an online platform that not only showcases publically promising practices but also failures. This will demonstrate to civil society and international development research organizations what type of development practises work and do not;
• In particular, this will highlight how development assistance has successfully and unsuccessfully reached the most vulnerable and marginalized communities;

• International agencies such as the UN should also share metrics.

RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT AND URBAN EXPERTISE

• Grass-root organizations and small CSOs need to be better supported in terms of their Results Based Management (RBM) abilities. Often CSOs know solutions that work best but lack the capacity to properly track and measure their results. If Canada is going to continue with RBM, small local CSOs and grass-root organizations should receive the training to adhere to the Government of Canada’s reporting procedures;

• If trained properly in RBM, this will ignite a strong civil society and advance transparency and result in a more inclusive and integrated society;

• Alternatively, for those using RBM it should be stated that there was a recognition that this was not necessarily the most appropriate framework to promote and share promising practices;

• Canada needs to export expertise in urban design, especially in accessibility methods. Many developing countries lack urban planning accessibility frameworks. Advocating and supporting initiatives that get disabled people in conversations about how cities are built is vital for sustainable growth and infrastructure;

• The government should fund programmes that remove physical barriers and make cities more accessible for everyone;

• Toronto was cited as a progressive city for accessibility.
A common and significant portion of the overall discussions was the role and leadership of youth in policy processes, international development, technology, accessibility and innovative learning opportunities – what we are calling Youth-led Development. This is a term coined in Canada in the 1990s and now used in official UN policy documents such as Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security to denote youth’s leadership in their own communities and countries development. Canadian youth are knowledgeable about the issues of youth in the developing world but displayed frustration in the lack of opportunities available for them to have a voice and participate. Although the youth participants appreciated initiatives such as the Prime Minister’s Youth Council, they also demonstrated motivation to take it further by addressing youth involvement in implementation and monitoring of programmes in Canada and abroad.

### Actionable Recommendations:

**YOUTH INCLUSION**

- Youth should be consulted in a timely and recurring manner so that the youth concerns are being considered, rather than undermined;
- There needs to be more links between rural and urban communities. Youth engagement should be coordinated so that these communities are integrated for knowledge exchange opportunities;
- Discussions with youth refugees need to take place to identify what they need to succeed in their new society. It should also be considered to identify what skills they need to help rebuild their country for diaspora youth who desire to return;
- LGBTI youth, both in Canada and abroad, need accessible resources especially in middle and high school as their identities develop and flourish. This includes education and awareness of sexual diversity as well as mental health;
- LGBTI youth, emphasis on transgender youth, need to have mentorship programmes available;
- Canada should encourage vulnerable youth to become more civically engaged through formal accreditation incentives and other initiatives;
• UNA-Canada’s empathy-based Model UN’s, The New Diplomacy of Natural Resources and Model Arctic Council and Youth4Water are initiatives that were cited as opportunities to become global citizens and for youth to lead on issues of concern;

• Newcomer and refugee youth need to be involved in discussions and need to be consulted if Canada wants to remain a leader in multiculturalism, especially with the rise of xenophobia;

• Canada’s bid to the Security Council should be a stepping stone to elevate our global reputation on youth engagement. The Canadian delegation to the UN should incorporate an elected youth delegate system to better serve the needs of the Canadian youth;

• Canadian government needs to advocate for youth representation in international summits such as HABITAT 3;

• Education needs to be prioritized in development assistance, not only higher education, but most critically elementary and secondary school as this is when soft and hard skills are learned, increasing capacity building and resilience;

• Youth need to be empowered and education is key to facilitate empowerment;

• There needs to be a concise and applicable definition of youth, as age ranges within youth groups demonstrate different needs. Special attention needs to be drawn into middle childhood;

• The Canadian government should utilize its comparative advantage in research to address alcohol and tobacco use within youth groups. This will increase urban safety and empower youth;

• Data on and for youth should be available for free and shared widely so that educational pop ads, for example, can be tailored to youth interest to educate them on sustainable approaches to their activities;

• Historically, Canada has prioritized funding for youth-serving and youth-led organizations through its Development Agency. If Canada was to regain its positive global reputation, as the Minister of Youth has worded it, this funding should be reinstated;

• Development aid should take into consideration where it could have the most impact within Canadian values framework in terms of educating young students;

• It is more beneficial to spend development assistance on educating a marginalized community abroad than to bring a few youth to from developing country to Canada. A whole community being elevated from poverty will have greater impact than one student being educated at a Canadian post-secondary institution. However, this will only occur if young people receive quality education and are given the tools to live in a sustainable manner in their home country;

• Continuous support for youth in areas of post-conflict peace building should be allocated, as these are some of the most tormented youth in the globe.
SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOFTWARE INVESTMENT

- There needs to be investment in social media and accessibility to this technology in developing countries. Social media is a valuable resource that can be utilized to identify the needs of youth around the globe, and also can be used as a platform for youth around the globe to connect and express their views;
- Social media also decreases youth segregation in the developing world and creates a more inclusive world, rather than the illusion of competition between developing and developed countries;
- There needs to be country-specific toolkits available that could be downloaded online that would educate youth on how to fundraise for a cause, create forums for discussion, and creating youth leadership around the advancement of the SDGs;
- An online platform should be developed that would have an informational list of organizations that are interested in incorporating youth into their programmes, organization mandate, and the advancement of the SDGs;
- There is a vital need for a formal online platform to connect youth from across the globe to induce in conversation and dialogue of their country-specific needs regarding development and economic growth, according to SDG 8;
- Partnerships with Silicon Valley, social media, software and internet companies is needed to advance sustainable and innovative international development initiatives;
- Mapping and other geo-spatial technologies should be promoted.

WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING

- The Canadian government should incentivize higher education institutions, large and small, to partner with institutions in the developing world so that information sharing is more accessible. This would also enable the creation of co-op programmes funded by the corporate sector, foundations, and government to alleviate the financial burden of youth in developing countries. This would enhance cultural and work exchange while imposing work-integrated learning opportunities to develop skills that would enhance institutions in the youth respective economies;
- A mandatory criterion in co-op programmes should be to incorporate a more sustainable approach to assigned projects with the collaboration of the CSR department, where one exists. This would ensure youth are developing project management skills in a sustainable manner and are in accordance with the SDGs.
- Matching youth from developed and developing countries within a co-op program would enable sharing process methodologies that the youth would otherwise not be exposed to;
- These programmes should be formally accredited to elevate the youth stance in the economy;
- The Canadian government should consider tax-breaks and non-financial incentives to Canadian companies abroad so that they are incentivized to hire youth from developing countries, not only for coop but also for young professional development programmes. The government should also appoint an external agency to monitor and report the treatment of the youth within the companies and address how much of the youth
voice is actually implemented. Clear indicators should be provided to the external agency so that they are clear on what to address and look for;

• An increase in experiential learning needs to occur;

• Canadian youth should have more opportunities to go abroad through formal exchange programmes, but most importantly youth from developing countries should have accessibility to come to Canada to work/study;

• Paid internships for both Canadian youth and youth in developing countries stimulates the economy and undermines the unpaid internship system which is only accessible for privileged communities;

• UNA-Canada has over 20 years of successful UN internship programmes focused on local development and on youth employment, and now on igniting the green economy and innovation;

• Travel grants should be available for youth in developing countries to come to Canada to study and work;

• There should be grants and financial opportunities available for youth in the developing world that are only attainable if students go to higher education and study a specific program that is needed to spark their country’s economic growth;

• The Canadian government should reform its visa acquiring process, as it can be a rigorous process for international youth to come to Canada to study or work. This makes the experience a selective and privileged one, welcoming only foreign elites;

• Visa requirements could be eased by making students speak/write about what they will do with their education/work experience back in their home country after they have completed their study/work term here;

• The Canadian government should finance and support young entrepreneurs by executing entrepreneurial workshops according to country-specific needs;

• Youth skill development, with a special emphasis on women, should include software abilities. Coding camps and workshops that are taught by women for women need to be available in developing nations. This will create healthy economic competition in the job market and women could be elevated in different communities as assets and innovators.
THANK YOU

UNA-Canada in concluding this submission, thanks the Government of Canada for opening this important consultation, and receiving our submission on the voice of Canadian youth.