

## **Youth Millennium Development Ambassadors Initiative**

### **Regional Youth Development Declaration 2013**

Resolution adopted at the end of the Regional Youth Development Summit by delegates and participants at the summit held at the National Youth Commission, Freetown, Sierra Leone, March 19 – 21, 2013

#### **The Youth Develop Summit Participants Adopts the following Youth Development Declaration:**

##### **1. Fundamental Values and principles for youth development**

- a. We, the leaders of youth and youth focused organizations from governmental, non-governmental and inter-governmental agencies, have gathered at the National Youth Commission Headquarters in Freetown, Sierra Leone from 19 to 21 March, 2013, as we move close to the 2015 target year for the Millennium Development Goals, to reaffirm our faith as young people and future leaders of our world, in the possibility of building a globally interdependent developed world.
- b. We have gathered here as individuals who represent ourselves, families, communities, organizations and nations, as well as pledging to take responsibility to share our deliberations with youth leaders and organizations throughout our region and the world. We recognize the fact that as youth leaders, we have a collective responsibility with other leaders to continue to promote and practice the ideals of value for human life, equality of men and women, old and young and utility of personal and public resources for the well-being of all people and our environment. As young leaders we have to be recognized as the future leaders who have been responsible for the welfare of all the world's people, especially the most vulnerable and, in particular, the children and youths of the world, to whom the responsibility for future belongs.
- c. We reaffirm our commitment to the theme of our deliberation "Putting Youth at the Heart of Development" and we believe that in every generation, young people have always made a difference in building a better world. We re-emphasize the importance and significance of young people and their relevance and capacity to lead and make sustainable contribution have increased, as technologies have made it easier to become increasingly interconnected and interdependent to work together.
- d. We are determined to remain available for positive contributions to the creation of a just and lasting peace all over the world, which is the age long desire of both the young and the old. As young people, we shall continue to dedicate our energies and talents to productive efforts that will support the realization of global development by contributing to bridging international and intra-national development divide that plaque our present world.

- e. We recognize and advocate that to address the present challenges of underdevelopment in the age of globalization; young people should be positioned at the heart of global development efforts. We support the United Nations stand that “that the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for the entire world’s people”. We recognize that globalization offers great opportunities, at present its benefits are very unevenly shared, while its costs are unevenly distributed. We recognize that young people all over the world as developing individuals face special difficulties in responding to this central challenge and utilization of the great opportunities. Therefore, we submit that only through broad and sustained efforts inclusive of young people, to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity, can globalization be made fully inclusive and equitable. All post 2015 efforts should include policies and measures, from local to the global levels, which consider the needs and aspirations of young and developing individuals.
2. We consider certain fundamental values to be very essential to youth development in the new millennium. These include:
    - a. **Youth Freedom and Responsibility:** Young people should have the rights and responsibilities to live in free societies and be responsible in building such societies that respect their value, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice. While young people aspire for freedom of expression, freedom of education and all forms of freedoms, society should help young people take responsibility accordingly. Engaging young people of development of their society will help them appreciate freedom and will make them become more responsible.
    - b. **Youth Equality:** Young people all over the world transcending their religious, races and regions or access to personal or public resources should not be denied or deprived the opportunity to benefit for development. The equal rights and opportunities of all young people must be guaranteed and assured.
    - c. **Youth Solidarity:** The fundamental challenges that young people all over the world face on daily basis should be addressed in ways that involves the present young and old people as well as ensure provision for the future generation not to be confronted with similar challenges. Wherever such challenges occur, young people should mobilize support for their peers and colleagues in sustainable ways. The most disadvantaged youths should be supported and encouraged by others who are better positioned.
    - d. **Youth Tolerance:** Young people all over the world must respect the older people as well as their peers despite the differences in their belief, culture and language. Differences within and between young people should be neither feared nor repressed, but cherished as a precious asset of humanity. A culture of peace and dialogue among all young people should be actively promoted by young people in their societies.

- e. **Youth Respect for nature:** Young people should show prudence in the development, utilization and management of all personal and/or public resources, in accordance with the precepts of sustainable development. Young people must ensure that the immeasurable riches provided to them by nature be preserved and passed on to the future generations. The current unsustainable patterns of production, distribution and consumption of resources must be changed in the interest of the future generation of young people.
  - f. **Youth Shared responsibility:** Young people must become active in taking responsibility for managing socio political, economic and social development of their communities, as well as prevent increasing threats to peace and security around the world. These responsibilities must be shared among the youths of the world and should be carried out in very sustainable ways. As the largest population in the world, young people must become an active force for peace and security in the world.
3. In order to translate these universally shared values by all youths around the world into action areas, we have listed some key areas that should be accorded special attention.

### **Youth Peace, security and disarmament**

- a. Young people should no effort around the world in seeking to be free involvement in the scourge of war, whether within or between States, which has claimed the lives of several people around the world within the 21t century. Young people should support all efforts seeking to eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction but become active in peace building, ensure security of lives and properties.
  - b. Youth leaders should devote efforts toward the creation of youth development councils at all levels as well youth peace and security force that will prevent conflicts from escalating into violence and wars as well as prevent insecurity.
4. To this end, the youths resolve to:
- a. To strengthen respect for the rule of law by young people in every society, and to ensure compliance by members of youth organizations and youth focused organizations and agencies.
  - b. To make the Youth Development Councils more effective in youth development, maintaining community peace and security by devoting their youthful energies and public to conflict prevention, peaceful resolution of disputes, peacekeeping, post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction.
  - c. To strengthen cooperation between youth development councils and other agencies and organizations devoted to youth empowerment at all levels.

- d. To take very concrete steps against involvement and use of young people in terrorism, violence and other anti-social behaviours inimical to youth and social development.
- e. To redouble all efforts toward the implementation of programs for the reduction and eradication of drug abuse and illicit drug use by young people around the world.
- f. To become active participants in fighting all transnational crimes, especially trafficking of young persons, smuggling of prohibited items and involvement in money laundering.
- g. We urge youth associations and organizations to promote the participation of youth in sports and eliminate all forms of violence and criminality in sports and to support all efforts to promote peace and human understanding through youth sports.

### **Youth Development and poverty eradication among young persons**

5. Governments around the world should spare no effort to free young people around the world from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, but devote resources to sustainable youth development programs and projects. As youths, we should remain committed to making the right to youth development a reality for every youth around the world and to free youths from want through provision of their basic needs.
6. We resolve therefore to work as young people to create a new world where all young people will have opportunities that are conducive to development and to the elimination of youth poverty.
7. In seeking to achieve the objectives of youth development and poverty eradication, young people need to become active in the good governance of their nations and creation of platforms for youth participation in elective and appointive positions in government.
8. We are deeply worried and concerned about the obstacles that young people face in mobilizing the required resources to have access to quality education, healthcare services and other areas of youth development. We will therefore make every effort to ensure the creation at all levels of a special Youth Development Fund to support youth initiatives for their development.
9. We also continue to advocate for the need to address the special needs of youths in the least developed countries and disadvantaged youths. We call on the governments and other older persons:
  - a. To develop and endorse the policy, a policy of duty- and quota-free access to development opportunities like higher education, healthcare, etc for young people;
  - b. To implement the freedom of education policy that will allow young people have access to quality education and funding for education with minimal difficult conditions; and

- c. To grant more generous development assistance, especially to youths that are genuinely making an effort to cultivate the right attitude, right knowledge and skills that they will apply in creating jobs for reduction of unemployment and poverty.
- d. We recognize the special needs and problems of the youths in landlocked developing countries, and urge donors to increase financial and technical assistance to the youth in such countries to meet their special development needs and to help them overcome the impediments of geography by improving their transit transport systems to be able to connect with other young people around the world as well as provision of access to information and communication technologies.

10. We resolve further:

- a. To reduce by three quarters, by the year 2030, the proportion of young people whose income is less than three dollars a day and the proportion of young people who suffer from hunger and, by the same date, to halve the proportion of young people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water.
- b. To ensure that, by 2030, youth everywhere, will be able to complete a full course of senior secondary schooling and that all youths will have equal access to all levels of education.
- c. By 2030, to have reduced youth mortality by three quarters.
- d. To have, by then, halted, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS, the scourge of malaria and other major diseases that afflict youths.
- e. To provide special assistance to youths infected, affected and orphaned by HIV/AIDS.
- f. By 2030, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of young people living in slums around the world by providing appropriate youth housing policies that enables youth to inherit or own houses.

11. We also resolve:

- a. To promote youth equality and the empowerment of youth as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate youth development that is truly sustainable.
- b. To develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work.
- c. To encourage the pharmaceutical industry to make essential drugs for young people more widely available and affordable by all young people who need them around the world.

- d. To develop strong partnerships with the private sector and with civil society organizations in pursuit of youth development and youth poverty eradication.
- e. To ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies, are available to all young people.

### **Protecting the environment that young people live and grow**

12. We must spare no effort to free all young people, from the threat of living and growing in environments that are being destroyed by human activities, and whose resources would no longer be sufficient for their needs. We must ensure that young people become active in the quest to address climate change challenges and should empower young people to avoid destruction of the environment through bush burning, deforestation and other unfriendly activities against the environment.
13. We resolve therefore to adopt in all youth environmental actions a new ethic of conservation and stewardship by young people and, as first steps, we resolve:
  - a. To make every effort to ensure that young people embark and support activities that will embark on the required reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases.
  - b. To intensify the collective efforts of young people for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.
  - c. To press for the full implementation of the resolutions on climate change and preservation of the environment.
  - d. To empower young people to stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources by developing water management strategies, which promote both equitable access and adequate supplies.
  - e. To intensify cooperation to reduce the number and effects of natural and man-made disasters, especially by young people and those that affect young people.
  - f. To ensure that young people have free access to information on natural resources and how to effectively produce, distribute and consume resources in nature

### **Youth Human rights, democracy and good governance**

14. We will continue to encourage the promotion of participation of young people in democracy and strengthen the rule of law, as well as respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development of young people.
15. We resolve therefore:

- a. To ensure that young people respect fully and uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the rights of young people.
- b. To strive for the full protection and promotion around the world of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for all young people.
- c. To strengthen the capacity of all young people to implement the principles and practices of democracy and respect for human rights, including the rights of young people.
- d. To combat all forms of violence against young people and to work toward the development and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Youth.
- e. To take measures to ensure respect for and protection of the rights of young migrants, young migrant workers and their families, to eliminate the increasing acts of youth racism and xenophobia in many societies and to promote greater harmony and tolerance among all young people.
- f. To work collectively with all young people for more inclusive political processes, allowing genuine participation by all young citizens in the world.
- g. To ensure the freedom of the young media professionals and youth media programs to be developed and granted the right to be aired publicly and to inspire the creation of voices of youth media programs.

### **Protecting the vulnerable young people**

16. We will continue to work toward ensuring that all young civilian populations that suffer disproportionately the consequences of natural disasters, genocide, armed conflicts and other humanitarian emergencies are given every assistance and protection so that they can resume normal life as soon as possible.
17. We resolve therefore:
  - a. To expand and strengthen the protection of young civilians in complex emergencies, in conformity with international humanitarian law.
  - b. To strengthen international youth cooperation, including burden sharing in, and the coordination of humanitarian assistance to, youth refugees and to help all young refugees and young displaced persons to return voluntarily to their homes, in safety and dignity and to be smoothly reintegrated into their societies.
  - c. To encourage the ratification and full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Youth and to discourage the involvement of youths in armed conflict and on the sale of young people, youth prostitution and youth pornography.

### **Meeting the special needs of disabled youths**

18. We will advocate and promote the development of disabled youths and assist them in their quest for survival, relationship/association with others as well as access to and ownership of resources for sustainable living, thereby bringing disabled youths into the mainstream of youth development initiatives.

19. We resolve therefore:

- a. To mobilize for the full support to be provided to disabled youths.
- b. To encourage and sustain structures for preventing youth diseases and to promote stable funding for young persons with disabilities and to develop **ability in disability**.
- c. To take special measures to address the challenges of disabled persons poverty eradication and sustainable development.
- d. To help build up the capacity of disabled youths to tackle the challenges they face in life and to empower them for successful living.

### **Strengthening the Youth Development Initiative**

20. We will continue to make the Youth Development Initiative a more effective model and instrument for engaging young people in their personal development through the periodic holding of youth development summit, youth development declaration, youth development goals formulation, youth development ambassadors, youth development councils/commissions, youth development programs and youth development funds.

21. We resolve therefore:

- a. To reaffirm the significance of continuing hosting of youth development summits to bring youth leaders to deliberate on youth development issues and taking actions.
- b. To intensify our efforts to promote the youth development initiative in all its aspects.
- c. To strengthen further the Youth Development Councils, building on its ability to engage young people in their development and to facilitate the realization of bridging the global development divide.
- d. To strengthen the Youth Development Programs, in order to ensure that there are on-going initiatives to ensure full development of young people.
- e. To encourage regular consultations and coordination among the Youth Development Ambassadors in pursuit of their functions in facilitating development of young people, by young people and for young people.



- f. To ensure that the Youth Development Fund is managed in ways that the funds are provided on a timely and predictable basis to carry out the youth development programs and projects.
- g. To urge youth leaders and organizations to establish Youth Development Secretariat to make the best use of available human and material resources.
- h. To strengthen further cooperation between the Youth Development Secretariats and Youth Ministries, in responding to various needs of young people and to give greater opportunities to young people in the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society, to contribute to the realization of the youth development goals and programs.
- i. We request Youth Development Ambassadors to review on a regular basis the progress they make in their communities in implementing the provisions of this Youth Development Declaration, and ask the Youth Development Secretariat to issue periodic reports for consideration at the Youth Development Assembly and as a basis for further actions of youth development.
- j. We solemnly reaffirm, on this historic summit in Freetown, Sierra Leone, that the Youth Development Ambassadors are an indispensable growing network of young people who are committed to promoting global youth development. We therefore make this declaration for development as our determination to support the Youth Development Initiative and to ensure that the objectives and goals are achieved
- k. [http://isslcouncil-sl.blogspot.nl/2012/10/national-youth-development-summit-on\\_7556.html](http://isslcouncil-sl.blogspot.nl/2012/10/national-youth-development-summit-on_7556.html)

**Regional Youth Development Summit on Post 2015 Agenda  
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