



UN Major Group for  
**Children and Youth**  
the space for children and youth in the United Nations

**UN HABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

“The City Youth Need,  
The World They Want”

## YOUTH STATEMENT

East African Urban Thinkers  
Campus

UN-Hq in Nairobi, Kenya

10-11 February 2016

## INTRODUCTION

In line with UN-Habitat Youth Unit's continued efforts to ensure the voice of the youth is heard, the Unit convened an Urban Thinkers Campus for youth across the region which was held on 10-11 February, 2016 at the UN-Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya.

The 2-day Youth Campus served as a stock taking and innovation forum of urban policies and programmes for young men and women in cities globally. It brought together key partners and stakeholders that support urban youth initiatives that are inclusive, resilient and sustainable. Urban policies and programme for youth will be explored. The stakeholders will explore the need, mechanisms, steps and recommendations for establishing synergies and strategies for a better urban future for young men and women. It created a platform for young people to share experiences and solutions related to sustainable development issues, disaster and risk reduction, environment, human rights, access to public space, social inclusion, governance and forms of participation in decision-making at all levels.

## RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

**Following in depth youth discussions and deliberations made at UTC, the following issues and aspects are recommended for action:**

### **Youth and Environment**

1. Improve waste separation in cities to encourage recycling;
2. Clearance waste to make room for public spaces in cities;
3. Enable youth to leverage on their innovation to make renewable energy affordable;
4. Market green technologies by the use of social media and youth camps;
5. Governments to support local innovative climate initiatives by youth;
6. Ensure youth representation and participation in the local and international energy regulatory consultations, commissions and bodies;
7. Engage youth in research on soil composition and on which crops are most suitable for urban agriculture;
8. Young farmers should be encouraged to participate in agricultural research and development;
9. Encourage creation of urban youth SACCOs to facilitate access to credit, trainings and markets for youth Agricultural products;
10. Improve and monitor implementation of policies to mitigate climate change;
11. Create awareness and build capacity among urban youth on climate change, its effects, adaption strategies and how youth can participate in climate change mitigation;

12. Encourage environmental friendly changes in consumption patterns
13. Actively involve youth in climate change adaption and mitigation initiatives
14. Create and encourage youth networks globally for the exchange of information and ideas
15. Improve education on water, sanitation and hygiene
16. Cultivate a sense of common responsibility on WASH issues through education, awareness creation and capacity development
17. Improve water conservation and catchment in the cities
18. Create and push for implementation of national and international plans for water and sanitation issues
19. Sanitary towels to be zero rated in developing countries
20. WASH issues should, to a greater degree be solved by the urban community instead of the national government

### **Youth and urban planning**

21. Promote gender equality through education, training and capacity development
22. Promote equity and solidarity in gender issues thorough best practice and information sharing
23. Improve monitoring and evaluation of gender policies
24. Review laws regarding single parent to avoid that women are left with the sole responsibility for raising the children
25. Contextualize gender policies; promote different policies in different societies- Best Practices and multicultural interaction
26. Promote transformative masculinity campaigns
27. Promote gender issues without spreading the notion of competition between young persons of different genders
28. Encourage local governments to acknowledge the importance of public spaces for sport activities
29. Put in place policies that ensure that schools are well equipped to deal with talent nurturing
30. Promote policies to deal with substance abuse among young men and women
31. Make sport accessible and inclusive for the urban youth, including youth with disabilities
32. Provide funds to make sure that youth in the cities can enter into major competitions and sport events
33. Encourage healthy lifestyles for urban youth
34. Youth should be involved in the formulation and implementation of land and housing policies
35. Policies should limit the quantity of land owned by a single person, in order to mitigate concentration of land ownership to just a few

36. Ensure that the rent for urban housing is set in accordance to the standards of the accommodations provided
37. Promote awareness campaigns on land and housing issues to strengthen the knowledge among youth

### **Youth and Livelihoods**

38. Promote mechanisms to ensure easy accessibility of capital to urban youth
39. Banks should consider youth as present and future potential investors
40. Governments should give incentives to youths to encourage best practices on access to capital
41. Promote training by financial institutions on best practices in order to enable youth to access funds
42. Decentralize the distribution of youth funds so that more young people have the chance of accessing capital
43. Advocate crowd funding as a source of capital
44. National governments should set up guidelines on fee payment so that everyone pays almost the same amount of money regardless of the school they attend
45. Create a body that regulates school fees in Kenya, which should act as an intermediary between the schools and the parents
46. Education should be made available for people with different needs, such as disabilities and mental handicaps
47. Promote practical knowledge in schools with clearer connection to the labor market
48. Promote youth entrepreneurship in education

### **Youth, Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation**

49. Improve implementation of existing policies in the health sector to ensure access by all regardless of age, gender or social class
50. Promote policies that create awareness on drug abuse and other health issues
51. engagement of youth in innovative and constructive activities as a way of mitigating drug abuse
52. Promote peer programmes to educate youth about drugs and drug abuse
53. Support a collaborative approach between government, civil society and the youth in combating drug trafficking and abuse
54. Improved drug rehabilitation centers for youth
55. Provide young drug addicts with mentorship programmes
56. Improve young refugees' possibilities to engage in decision-making in refugee camps
57. Address the root causes of the refugee crises

58. Improve communication channels for youth in conflict or post conflict zones to give youth access to objective information and an outlet through which they can make their voices heard
59. Governments should support the creation of networks with youth from conflict zones, enabling them to share experience and best practices
60. Encourage initiatives to improve relations and integration between different tribes
61. Enhance regional dialogue engagements, especially among countries with troubled borders
62. Stimulate strong participation of communities in decision-making, especially youth from vulnerable places
63. Ensure LDCs have access to global decision-making processes, and have their voices heard

### **Youth and Governance**

64. Include youth in local government budgetary processes
65. Budgeting needs be on the basis on needs assessment and not presumption
66. Governments must set policies that create ties between budget and leadership integrity
67. Capacities of youth must be built around government processes, both on how, when and who should participate as well as their rights
68. Youth should also be trained on budgeting and finance in order for them to gain the expertise needed for these processes
69. Independent bodies should be created to implement various policies and in order to monitor and evaluate leaders on how they perform
70. Youth should come under one umbrella to work together in peace and harmony to enhance one voice
71. All youth leaders should be elected based on track record, and be engaged as partners and not just as beneficiaries

### **COMMITMENT FOR A WAY FORWARD**

#### **Based on the thematic areas discussed, Youth agreed to:**

*Call* for and continue with youth network creation for sharing experiences and best practices, and information dissemination amongst youth globally;

*Continue* to employ ICT in engaging the community during political deliberations and decision making processes;

**Create and encourage** spaces for dialogue and for people to meet and learn more about each other;

**Request** governments and youth themselves to create job opportunities, and specifically look into creative and innovative job opportunities and provide vocational training & building the technical capacity;

**Request** the international community to strengthen their roles in all youth issues;

**Call** for involvement of youth in peace building initiatives and processes;

**Call** for Governments and international organizations to include youth in decision-making processes, particularly in process of planning cities and services;

**Commit** to massive campaigns to promote a positive message and facilitate the development of a shared identity;

**Call** for governments, civil societies, international organizations and youth themselves to create opportunities for youth to engage as partners, not only as beneficiaries;

**Improve** communication channels – specially focusing on unbiased, objective information that give more voice to civil society.

**THE CITY YOUTH NEED MATRIX**

<b>The city we need is well planned and uphold youth rights</b>	The city we need should provide public spaces for sports
	The city we need should include young people with disabilities in sport activities
	The city we need should provide young person’s access to land and housing
	The city we need should mitigate land concentration to a few hands
	The city we need should be inclusive for both young men and women
	The city we need should provide the urban poor with easy access to basic services

<b>The city we need is a regenerative and Resilient (Climate) city</b>	The city we need should be environmentally sustainable
	The city we need should provide all its citizens with access to washing facilities
	The city we need should have an efficient system for waste management
	The city we need should have an efficient sewage system
	The city we need should be suitable for urban agriculture
	The city we need should be powered by renewable energy
<b>The City we Need is an inclusive City</b>	The City We need provides for youth representation and participation
	The City We Need supports youth as leader and not as beneficiary
	The City We Need encourages campaigns to promote a positive message and facilitate the development of a shared identify;
<b>The City we need is economically vibrant and inclusive</b>	The city we need regards youth as potential investors.
	The city we need provides financial training on best practices to the youth.
	The city we need should have a streamlined education system developing one's interests.
	The city we need should provide good quality and affordable education.
<b>The city we need is a safe and resilient(Conflict) city</b>	The city we need should be free of drugs.
	The city we need should involve young refugees in the decision-making process.
	The city we need should have improved and efficient conflict solving mechanisms.

	The city we need should have improved communication channels.
	The city we need should involve in the decision making process.
	The city we need should provide improved rehabilitation facilities.

**KEY THEMATIC AREAS**

**Youth and Livelihoods**

Ensuring employment opportunities and livelihood are two difficult challenges facing youth in the coming years. The UN has acknowledged this challenge, not least in its Sustainable Development Goal Eight, according to which full and productive employment and decent work for all young women and men should be achieved by 2030. This battle has to be won in the cities, where around half of the world’s population reside.

According to ILO’s latest estimation, the global youth unemployment rate has settled at 13.0 per cent which equals 73 million unemployed youth. Particularly affected are the developing countries, projected to be home to 89 per cent of the world youth population by 2025. Young women still participate to a lower degree than men in the labor market, and their transition period to stable jobs is generally longer.

Developing countries also register a high degree of youth working in poverty. ILO estimates that 169 million youth in developing countries are affected, representing more one third of the youth population. Employed youth are 1.5 times more likely to be living in extreme poverty compared to adults, making it difficult to secure the necessities of life.

Under education is a key factor leading to labor market segregation and inequalities, particularly in developing countries. In sub-Saharan Africa two in three young workers do not have the level of education expected to work productively on the job. An inclusive, resilient and sustainable city provides youth with employment opportunities and access to education.

**Peace Building: Youth in Conflict and post-conflict Zones**

Every day in conflict zones around the world young people are building bridges across communities, working together, educating each other, and helping to manage conflict and promote peace.



These initiatives may often go unnoticed, but young people are vital stakeholders in conflict and in peacebuilding – they have the potential to act as community leaders in peacebuilding, reconciliation, and post conflict reconstruction. Behind the headlines, there is a new generation of peacebuilders, and they are raising their voices. It is important for young people to understand the world around them and their role within it. As technologies change and relationships between peoples grow ever more interconnected, it becomes increasingly clear that the world is much smaller than it seems. By learning about the world, by gaining knowledge and skills, and by using everyday tools to engage with others, we can all share, connect, and join a growing community of peacebuilders.

### **Youth and Urban Governance**

The world is in the midst of a period of rapid urbanization, with over 54 percent of the population living in urban areas today. This trend is expected to continue through 2030 and beyond. Since the mid-1970s, the urban population has more than tripled with more than half the world's 7.3 billion people now living in cities. By 2045, the number of people living in cities will increase by 1.5 times to 6 billion, adding 2 billion more urban residents; and by 2050, 7 in 10 people will be urban dwellers. At the same time, the urban population is becoming younger, with as many as 60% of all urban dwellers expected to be under the age of 18 by 2030. Most of these world's youth – some 90 per cent – live in developing countries mainly in Asia and Africa. These statistics reflects the migration of families to urban centers in search of education, employment and a better quality of life.

Faced with such rapid population increase, many cities especially in developing countries are struggling to accommodate this burgeoning population leading to increased rates of poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion. These inequalities are putting obstacles in the way of economic, social and political development. Young people are most affected and often find themselves challenged by underemployment and unemployment, unequal access to education and participation in governance and decision-making.. In a third of countries, 25 is the minimum eligible age to be a member of the national parliament<sup>1</sup>, such discrimination to a large extent has resulted in youth feeling excluded by their own communities.

Despite these challenges,, youths have proved their abilities to cause positive change in global, social, economic and political developments. In addition to their intellectual contribution and their ability to mobilize support, young people bring unique perspectives that need to be taken into account by Urban Planners and Policy Makers. . Building cities that are inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable will largely be based, among other elements, on the society's capacity to involve youth in urban governance and as well designing of the cities.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-political-participation.pdf>

Utilizing the national experiences and examples from UN agencies and UN-Habitat, the participants in this session will review the roles played by national governments and cities in promoting the integration and participation of youth in urban governance.

### **Youth and Public Space:**

#### *Sports*

The world's youth demographic is unevenly distributed, having over 80% of the world's young people living in developing countries. Ever increasing number of them is growing up in cities which are often not ready to cope with their needs and demands. Young people struggle on multiple fronts, having limited or no access to education, employment and other opportunities. Exclusion from economic, political and social life of their communities, cities and ultimately their countries, breeds disillusionment and hopelessness, leaving young people vulnerable to violent and risky behavior patterns.

Rapid urbanization is a trend dominated by young people. The rising numbers of youth in cities need adequate support systems, space to meet and interact and opportunities to actively participate in urban planning and development. Young

people need accessible and safe spaces to practice sports and hang out to grow into active citizens that care about their environment and living space. Sport is arguably the most popular leisure activity worldwide and one of the most exciting and diverse tool for development, peacebuilding and social transformation efforts, yet not all young people have the same access and opportunities to participate. Geographical, cultural, physical and social obstacles hinder the access; marginalize certain groups of young people even more.

Sport is a fantastic tool to attract, mobilize and inspire the younger generation to meaningfully contribute to creation of inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities.

Chapter 25 of Agenda 21, adopted at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, stated: "It is imperative that youth from all parts of the world participate actively in all relevant levels of decision-making processes because it affects their lives today and has implications for their futures. In addition to their intellectual contribution and their ability to mobilize support, they bring unique perspectives that need to be taken into account."

### **Youth and the Environment**

Youth forms the largest demography to the world's population. The involvement of today's youth in environment and development decision-making and in the implementation of programmes is critical to the long-term success of Agenda 21.'

Young people have important environmental concerns and responsibilities. Because of their longer life expectancy, they will have to live for quite some time with the consequences of deteriorating environment left to them by their parents. Fortunately, youth have a special talent for invention and the development of new forms of action and activism and can generate more effective responses to environmental issues. Addressing the concerns of future generations is difficult in the context of present policy-making; ultimately, however, it is enough to expand time horizons not necessarily many years into the future, but simply beyond the generally short-term focus of current decision-making.

Environmental issues present some of the most profound and complex challenges requiring attention today and in the coming decades. One foundation-building step in enhancing local, regional, national and global capacities to respond to those challenges is increasing environmental awareness. Here the role of youth is central, for it is in the rising generations that heightened awareness can most easily be achieved.

### CONCLUSION

As forward-looking young people, we emphasize the importance of long-term policy measures and solutions aimed at ensuring the health and well-being of present and future generations. Highlighted above are some of the key requirements for a policy framework supporting youth involvement and participation in the New Urban Agenda. All actors must take the necessary measures to support youth in sustainable urban development which can be achieved only through a person-centered approach to each of its social, economic, and environmental pillars. Upholding the dignity of young people must be the primary goal of sustainable urban development and the means by which we create the new urban agenda. Furthermore, good governance is imperative for social, political, economic and environmental conditions to be conducive to the flourishing of each young person. For social development to be sustainable, the fundamental needs of youth must be met, including access to clean water and sanitation, nutrition, basic health care, housing, decent job and education.

