



37th UNESCO General Conference
Item 5.5 - Conclusions of the 8th UNESCO Youth Forum
Presentation by the 8th UNESCO Youth Forum delegates
Education Commission (ED), 8 November 2013

“Mesdames et Messieurs,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We stand before you as representatives of the world’s youth. We are only two, but over 50% of the world’s population today is under the age of 30. The modern day global challenges are faced in all parts of the world and by all generations, but it is the young people who are often most affected. Climate change, severe youth unemployment and the global financial crisis have a major impact not just on our generation but also on the generations to come. In order to find sustainable, long-term solutions, youth should be included in all decision-making processes, at all levels.

Today, we have the honor to present you the outcomes of the 8th UNESCO Youth Forum under the theme of “Youth and Social Inclusion: Civic Engagement, Dialogue and Skills Development”. Over 500 participants from all the regions of the world, including youth delegates from 135 countries, came together to discuss UNESCO’s Operational Strategy on Youth 2014-2021 here in Paris last week. The result contains 10 concrete policy recommendations and 15 action projects that contribute to the implementation of the strategy. This is our voice on our future.

Firstly, we fully support UNESCO’s focus on quality education. Improving the quality of the formal educational systems should be a priority in the post- 2015 development agenda, especially in terms of measurable outcomes. Media and information literacy, entrepreneurship skills, technical and vocational education, and education for sustainable development and peace should be included in the curricula. In order to strengthen the quality in educational institutions we urge the Member States to thoroughly consider the proposal for a global convention for recognition of higher education.

Equipping young people for life is not only about building new capacity through formal structures, but also recognizing youth’s skills and competences gained through non-formal and informal education and training. Furthermore we encourage the Member States to develop tools and mechanisms for validating this knowledge more effectively.



Secondly, we want to highlight the importance of mandatory early childhood civic education and the concept of global citizenship. Young people need to know how to get involved and have a say in civil society. We want to put global citizenship, participation in democracy and decision-making and intercultural dialogue in the heart of educational systems, with a strong focus on equal opportunities. Dialogue between young people and politicians on topics such as environment, economy, health, and education should be encouraged to prevent conflicts and social exclusion.

Thirdly, we would like to raise the issue of youth employment in relation to education. Young people are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults and almost 75 million youth worldwide are looking for work. Member States must prioritize youth employment by undertaking the following measures: narrow the gap between educational systems and labor markets; support quality internship opportunities accessible for all; provide job opportunities especially in green economy; and encourage entrepreneurship and social business.

We are very grateful that UNESCO has decided to make youth a high priority. In order to include the views and unleash the potential of all young people, we call upon the member states to involve youth in the General Conference by making youth representatives a permanent part of national delegations. Youth involvement in the drafting of the Operational Strategy on Youth has been substantial. To further develop the established sense of inclusiveness and ownership, we strongly recommend UNESCO to engage youth also in the implementation and evaluation process of the strategy.

We are happy to engage in a constructive dialogue in order to ensure the implementation of our recommendations and to find together the solutions to our shared world's challenges.

Je vous remercie!

Thank you very much for your attention."

***Presentation prepared and delivered by Ms Hanne Sofie Lindahl (youth delegate of Norway) and Ms Ilona Rozenboom (youth delegate of the Netherlands)**