



POSITION PAPER ON THE NEW GLOBAL AGENDA (POST-2015 / SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS)

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Introduction

In September 2000, world leaders came together at United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets to be reached by 2015, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Equally in 1992, world leaders came together in Rio, Brazil to adopt the Agenda for the 21st Century and sign a number of environmental agreements. This agenda created local agenda 21 and engaged officially a number of key stakeholders, including young people, in the UN negotiations for the first time.

Both these process, or tracks, have remained separate and soiled until the Rio+20 conference in 2012 declared that the two processes should come together in the Post-2015 agenda which has now been dubbed the Sustainable Development Goals.

Significant progress in reducing poverty has been made since both of these conferences. However, the advancement of this framework has been uneven and insufficient. The full achievement of the MDGs remains a distant aspiration and much more needs to be done to deliver the results for an inclusive and sustainable development where the rights and freedoms of every human being are fully realised.

The debate on what should follow the MDGs when they expire in 2015 has mobilised actors across the world. This is a tremendous opportunity for young people and youth organisations to share their development needs and priorities and enhance their role in shaping and delivering the next global development framework.

Approximately 18% of the world's population is between 15 and 24 years old and 87% of the youth population lives in developing countries. It is also estimated that nearly 45% of all young people aged 15 to 24 live on less than two dollars a day. According to the European Union statistics, 29.7% of young people in the EU aged 15 to 24 are at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

It has become widely accepted that the new framework will have to go beyond the old north-south dichotomy, be universally relevant and require work at home and abroad for every county. Since the publication of the report of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on Post-2015, it has also become widely agreed that data should be better, more varied and disaggregated, and that the framework will have failed if anyone is left behind. This is what is called the 'no one left behind' concept. However, how this can be implemented remains unclear.

In presenting the new framework, there is often reference to goals, targets and indicators, which follows from the success of the MDGs. Goals are overarching political statements (i.e. end poverty), targets are what the framework aims to achieve (e.g. make sure no one lives bellow \$1.25 a day PPP) and indicators are the measurement of what the framework aims for (e.g. percentage of people in full time work on less than \$1.25 a day PPP). There may be many targets and indicators under each goal and some indicators could be shared

between goals and targets.

This indicates that the situation of youth in Europe will be dramatically affected by this new global agenda which will aim to address poverty, limited access to resources, education, healthcare and employment, along with social discrimination, lack of participation in decision-making, violence and conflicts, environmental degradation and climate change that hinder the realisation of their rights, with worrying implications for both young people themselves and the society.

The current debate on the new Global Agenda is therefore central for young people and youth organisations. The European Youth Forum wants to make sure youth organisations participate in this process in a manner that upholds their valuable role as actors, contributing to the design of a future global agenda that is able to deliver on the improvement of the situation of young people in Europe and around the world while clearly taking their rights into account when addressing the root causes of poverty, inequality and other global challenges.

The European Youth Forum vision for a world beyond 2015

Purpose

The purpose of the framework should be to build a global commitment focusing on the accountability of head of states and governments as well as leaders of global, regional and local institutions in implementing policies and programmes pursuing real and measurable progress towards eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development in all three of its dimensions by 2030.

Principles

To successfully address the complex and interrelated economic, social and environmental challenges confronting the world today and deliver on the ambition of eradicating poverty through sustainable development, “business as usual is not an option”. A fundamental shift in world leaders’ approach to the global challenges is needed to build a transformative agenda for young people that helps create the Europe and the world that they want.

The Youth Forum believes that such a shift can be achieved through the following:

- A new agenda grounded in a **rights-based approach**, reflecting the international standards for civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights and fundamental freedoms and based on the principles of **equality and non-discrimination, intergenerational equity, and accountability**.
- **Participation** at all levels for all people in the design, delivery and implementation of the future framework
- The principle of **non-regression**, where no agreement can be less than that already

agreed ensures a more ambitious framework than anything that has gone before.

- An agenda reflecting a **global partnership**, founded on participatory mechanisms of global shared responsibility and accountability, where decision-makers and other stakeholders based around the UN Major Group system (with Children and Youth as a separate group) jointly formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate development-related policies and actions.
- **Sustainability** must be embedded in the future framework, based on the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. Only through addressing these interrelated elements in an integrated way will we be able to strive for more policy coherence and a holistic vision of development, and ensure that global economic and social development are achieved while staying within the planetary boundaries.
- Recognising young peoples' role in **creating peace and security** from community level up and ensuring that young people are not seen as victims but as positive agents creating peaceful societies, which is a prerequisite to development
- The principle of **policy coherence** must be present to avoid silos in goals and policy making. It is necessary to ensure all relevant actors at global, regional, national and sub-national level and from across different policy areas, such as trade, investment and finance, agriculture, energy, environment, education, health, migration and defence, do not undermine the efforts towards sustainable and inclusive development and have a commitment to achieve the goals,
- A **universal agenda** is essential. It must be universally agreed and applicable - both in developing and developed countries – with targets and indicators that stretch all countries, using a time-bound, qualitative and quantitative agenda based on universal goals, with contextualised measurable targets, where relevant, reflecting regional and national realities, for greater accountability, monitoring and ownership.
- The creation of **new and better data** to cover gaps in monitoring and of more **disaggregated data**, on the grounds of age according to year cohorts, gender identity, sexual orientation, sex, disability, income, social groups, level of education, rural/urban. Benchmarks against which progress can be measured are also recommended to enable a regular review process and rapid change.

Features

Considering the situation of young people across the world, and the impact this will have on the next generation, it is essential that youth is given due attention in the coming agenda. We want to see a strong focus placed on the empowerment of young people and the identification of youth-specific targets and set of indicators, drawing on the World Programme of Action for Youth and its set of recommended indicators.

Looking at our work plan this paper focuses on a few essential areas: **Quality Education, Quality Jobs, Governance & Participation and finally Equality & Non-discrimination.** It should be highlighted that datasets which put young people at the heart of other areas (such as health, transport, justice and anticorruption) are key for an integrated framework and further work will be required to identify with our partners in the Major Group of Children & Youth (which is the main interlocutor for the European Youth Forum and the process).

Particular focus should be taken to support the work of organisations supporting sexual and reproductive health and rights as a key issue for young people. Whilst the Youth Forum will not take a lead in this area, due to its technical nature, the issue remains a top area for young people and for the Youth Forum to support. Equally, issues around environmental degradation, climate change and the equality of access to natural resources are also highly technical issues, which the Youth Forum will support through the banner of future generations and through organisations and coalitions that specialise in these areas.

Quality Education

By 2030 we want to achieve universal and free access to quality formal and non-formal education, vocational training and lifelong learning at all levels, ensuring that quality learning outcomes in literacy, numeracy and life skills are achieved by all.

To achieve this aim, all actions taken should be guided by the following core principles¹:

- the learner is put at the centre of the learning process, so all actions to improve education are guided by the best interests of the learner and involve the learner.
- educational systems are inclusive, norm-critical, non-discriminatory, flexible and culturally-sensitive, avoiding any type of “one-size-fits-all” approach.
- educational providers in all different educational systems, including formal and non-formal education must cooperate in view of capitalising on the expertise from each field and ensuring complementarity between systems.

An important priority for this post-2015 agenda is to empower children, youth and adults to be active global citizens, able to engage in and transform their societies and the world. Any education system should embrace elements of development education, human rights education, education for sustainable development, education for peace and conflict prevention, intercultural and interfaith education, citizenship education, health and sexuality education.

National systems of quality assurance of education systems based on internationally agreed benchmarks and tools should also be set up.

A new level of ambition is also required to guarantee that all dimensions influencing the quality of education are addressed, including: the participatory role of learners in the

¹ European Youth Forum Policy Paper on Quality Education, 2013 (6317-13): http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/03/0317-13_POLICY_PAPER_QUALITY_EDUCATION_FINAL_withExSum11.pdf

learning process and governance; the support and training available for educators; the creativity and relevance of pedagogical methods and materials; the supportive and non-discriminatory nature of the learning environment, as well as the relevant support structures and infrastructures.

Delivering on this quality education will require further support to youth organisations, acknowledging their central role as providers of non-formal education, which contributes to the empowerment of young people, from their development as individuals and as active members of society, to their inclusion in social and professional life.

The progress we aim for can only be achieved through adequate financing and taking specific measures to reach the most vulnerable and marginalised, namely girls and young women, those living in rural areas, people with disabilities, those in situations where they are forced to work, migrants and minorities.

Proposed targets and indicators

Target	Indicator	Source ²
Ensure every child and young person completes primary and secondary education	Net enrolment ratios Out-of-school children and youth Completion rates	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
Ensure all children and youth are provided with primary and secondary education of quality and achieve recognised learning outcomes in literacy, numeracy and life skills	Percentage of children and youth who reach minimum benchmarks in primary and secondary grades	
	Ensure that all children and youth are taught by a trained teacher who is able to impart knowledge and life skills	
Ensure equal access to quality tertiary and higher education with recognised learning outcomes	Net enrolment ratios	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
	Percentages of children and youth who reach minimum benchmarks in primary and secondary grades	
Ensure all young people and adults have equal access to quality technical and vocational training and lifelong learning opportunities, through formal and non-formal education, with recognised learning outcomes	Youth and adult literacy and numeracy rates	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
	Percentages of youth and adults participating in training after formal education	ILO

² The data sources suggested are indicative. There may be others. If not existing, new data sources need to be created.

	Percentages of youth and adults who reach minimum benchmarks in transferable, technical and vocational and life skills	
	Percentage of young people who have access to at least two non-formal education opportunities	
Eliminate inequalities in education	Inequality gaps in access or learning - disaggregated data by youth population groups	
Increase the quality of education systems and infrastructures	Percentage of educational institutions that have adequate teaching and student support	
	Percentage of educational institutions that have safe and adequate infrastructures, facilities, resources and learning materials	
Ensure adequate financing for the achievement of education goals	Percentage of public expenditure on education in GNP and in government expenditure	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
	Percentage of public expenditure on education by level of education	

Quality Work

By 2030, we want to ensure equal and sustainable decent work for all young people. Quality employment is a crucial element for the autonomy and wellbeing of young people, improving their access to healthcare, adequate food and adequate housing, and avoiding the pitfalls of poverty and social exclusion.

The agenda must guarantee that all young workers are provided with quality and stable employment, a decent and fair wage, safe working conditions, representation and social protection. All forms of discrimination in the labour market must also be eliminated³.

The world must commit itself to create an enabling environment to increase employment levels, create quality employment opportunities for young people and support measures that promote their integration in the labour market and reduce poverty. Vocational education and training must be integrated in this agenda as an important element facilitating young people's transition into the labour market, as well as quality internships and apprenticeships.

³ See, in this regard, the European Youth Forum Policy Paper on Youth Employment, 2013 (0166-13): http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2013/08/0166-13_PP_Employment_Final.pdf; and Publication on Quality Jobs for Young People, 2013: http://issuu.com/yomag/docs/yfj_qualityjobs_en_issuu_

Furthermore, the world in 2030 should see increased opportunities for young people to successfully engage in entrepreneurship, including through adequate start-up financial support for young entrepreneurs. These opportunities would provide a way for young people to create sustainable futures for themselves and gain autonomy, as well as to foster innovation across the business sector and reinforce social and environmental values that can lead to a growing green economy.

Proposed targets and indicators

Target	Indicator	Source ⁴
Increase the number and proportion of decent work for young people (by x and x%)	Regular and irregular youth employment rates	ILO
	Shares in satisfactory and non-satisfactory employment, youth	ILO
	Informal youth employment rate	ILO
	Involuntary part-time youth employment rate	ILO
	Shares of overeducated and undereducated young workers	ILO
	Temporary youth employment rate	ILO
	Shares of young people earning below average wages, average wages and higher	ILO
	Vulnerable youth employment rate	ILO
	Stable youth employment rate	ILO
	Existing youth-targeted employment policies and social protection mechanisms, including components regarding vulnerable and marginalised groups of young people	
Increase the participation of youth in employment (by x%)	Youth employment rate	ILO
	Youth unemployment rate	ILO
	Youth employment to population ratio	ILO
	Labour force participation by youth rate	ILO
	Share of youth not in employment, education or training	ILO
	Existing policies to promote the transition between education and decent employment	
Increase the coverage and level of social protection of young people	Percentage of young people in poverty receiving income support	

⁴ The data sources suggested are indicative. There may be other. If not existing, new data sources need to be created.

	Public social protection expenditure targeting working young people as % of GDP and total government expenditure	
	Percentage of young people benefiting from income security through social protection	
Improve livelihoods for young workers	Young people working poverty rates	
Increase the number of youth entrepreneurship initiatives	Existence of youth entrepreneurship support policies and mechanisms	
	Access to finance for young entrepreneurs	
	Entrepreneurship education at primary, secondary and post-secondary level	
Eliminate inequalities related to employment	Percentage of young people discriminated on the basis of age, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, sex, disability, ethnicity or nationality	

Governance and participation

By 2030 we want to ensure democratic governance in all countries, including fair, responsive and accountable structures. We also want to see the elimination of discrimination and inequalities in public services and private entities, and ensure the rule of law, access to justice and participation.

We want to guarantee to all young people the full enjoyment of all of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to information, participation and justice⁵; and the freedom of association, assembly and speech: all guaranteed human rights⁶. This includes guaranteeing their effective participation in the life of society and decision-making, with particular attention to be given to the most vulnerable and socially excluded, among others girls and young women, those living in rural areas, with disabilities, LGBTQI, unemployed, living with HIV, migrants, minorities, young people in poverty and those who are part of language minorities.

Achieving better youth participation is also vital to foster a culture of responsible, proactive and democratic citizenship⁷. Young people should therefore be empowered and included

⁵ Reference to the principle 10 of the Rio Declaration 1992

⁶ See European Youth Forum Policy Paper on Youth Rights, 2012 (0527-12): http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2013/10/0527-12_PP_Youth_Rights_FINAL.pdf

⁷ See European Youth Forum Policy Paper on Citizenship Education, 2013 (0450-13): <http://www.youthforum.org/policypaper/policy-paper-on-citizenship-education/>

in participation in decision-making processes at all levels, including in elections, based on principles of autonomy, continuity, representativity, competence and sufficient information. This should include the establishment of participatory, accountable and structured mechanisms for youth engagement in a meaningful way at all levels as regards the definition, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and actions related to them. At the international level, this should include the creation of a permanent forum on youth and the fulfilment of youth delegates both at national and EU levels.

It is also crucial to ensure that national legislation complies with international law and agreements, including human rights covenants, conventions and treaties.

Ensuring that there are genuine and credible electoral processes, as well as representative and transparent democratic institutions, along with an increased engagement of young people and young people standing for elections within formal political processes, is also key in the world we want to achieve beyond 2015.

Proposed targets and indicators

Target	Indicator	Source ⁸
Ensure young people are provided opportunities to be active in society	Youth volunteering rate	Commonwealth Youth Development Index
	Number of active youth-led organisations	
	Existence of youth policies and representation	Commonwealth Youth Development Index
	Existence of youth-targeted initiatives promoting open information and data, namely as regards national and local governments, their activities, budget and expenditure	
Increase young peoples' participation in political processes	Existence of policies for citizenship education for young people in the formal and non-formal education systems	
	Existence of youth participation mechanisms in decision-making	
	Youth ability to express their political views	Commonwealth Youth

⁸ The data sources suggested are indicative. There may be other. If not existing, new data sources need to be created.

		Development Index
	Voter education for young people	Commonwealth Youth Development Index
	Percentage of young voters freely turn-out	
	Lower voting age to 16 years old	
Improve young peoples' access to justice	Percentage of voting age young people registered to vote	
	Percentage of young people standing for elections	
	Percentage of seats held by young people in parliaments and national and local governments	
	Existence of mechanisms for the protection of the rights of young people in contact with justice systems and in conflict with the law	
	Provision of civil complaint mechanisms specifically for young people	

Equality and non-discrimination

By 2030 all forms of inequalities and discrimination against young people must be eliminated, in accordance with the international human rights covenants, conventions and treaties. All young people must have an equal opportunity to enjoy their rights and fundamental freedoms and to fulfil their potential.

Young people face multiple discrimination, on the basis of age, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, disability or other status. This is an obstacle to their full participation in the political, economic and public life of their societies and the development of the society as a whole. Therefore, multiple discrimination must be eliminated through the adoption of appropriate legislative and other measures and the establishment of legal protection mechanisms of the rights of young people.

In order to guarantee equality for all young people, a strong investment is also required to ensure their decent employment and social protection, access to quality universal services, namely in the field of education, health, well being, food and housing.

Proposed targets and indicators

Target	Indicator	Source ⁹
Eliminate discrimination against young people in political, economic and public life	Existence of legislation prohibiting discrimination against young people	
	Existence of protection mechanisms of the rights of young people	
	Percentage of young people standing for elections	
	Percentage of seats held by young people in parliaments and national and local governments	
	Existence of legal mechanisms protecting the rights of young people	
Guarantee equality for all young people	Poverty gap ratio by age	
	Age earnings ratio	
	Existence of policies providing facilities to young people as regards the access to education, health, housing, employment and social protection	
	Percentage of young people in poverty receiving income support	
	Public social protection expenditure targeting working young people as % of GDP and total government expenditure	
	Percentage of young people benefiting from income security through social protection	
	Data disaggregated by age and youth population groups	
	Percentage of young people experiencing violence and harassment	

⁹ The data sources suggested are indicative. There may be other. If not existing, new data sources need to be created