

YOUTH DECLARATION
18TH TO 24TH AUGUST 2015
SEOUL AND GOESAN, REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Preamble

71 youth delegates representing 25 countries gathered in Seoul and Goesan, Republic of Korea, to discuss the role of the youth in contributing to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Despite the remarkable progress and unprecedented levels of global attention and effort seen in the last years, the United Nations (UN), along with the Member States and wider international community, were not able to reach the MDGs goals and targets since their introduction in 2000. As a consequence, the UN announced to set a new agenda at the end of 2015 substituting the MDGs with a post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework.

Although the MDGs were unquestionably well-intentioned, the needs and skills of the youth as well as their empowerment were omitted in the framework, and thus the MDGs failed to recognize the youth as strategic actors in the solution matrix. As the international community prepares itself for the launch of the Post 2015 goals, it is important that youth are included as equal partners in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the framework.

Declaration

Recalling the commitment of the United Nations and its Member States to recognize the youth as an integral part in the development of the Post 2015 Agenda, youth in all their diversity should be considered a strategic capacity building player, allowed to assume responsibilities in the political, economic, and social domains in their countries and communities.

To affirm their commitment to bettering the society and to make an active contribution to the Post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals building efforts, the participants of this forum present the following recommendations:

MDG 1 Declaration: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger

Despite a considerable decrease in the number of people living below the poverty line and the proportion of undernourished people in the world, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger remains a considerable challenge in many developing countries. The youth have the *“In the service of youth since 1949”* Page 118 capacity to play a significant role in eradicating poverty and hunger, contributing profoundly with their innovative and fresh perspectives and actions. As such,

We, the youth, commit ourselves to:

1. Increase activity and involvement in local initiatives related to combating poverty and hunger by:
 - a. Organizing programs such as workshops and/or seminars at universities to raise awareness and call for action
 - b. Using printed documents and mass media to reach wider audience
 - c. Supporting and volunteering with non-governmental organizations active in the field of food distribution and donation
2. Advocate for the establishment of youth-focused forums on global issues and sources of poverty and hunger to be able to actively collaborate with each other, learn about good practices, and find effective solutions within the international community
3. Actively support other initiatives concerning poverty and hunger alleviation, including but not limited to, education, employment, and public health, as poverty remains a structural issue rather than an isolated one:
 - a. Establish after-school seminars at secondary and tertiary level educating wider community about the interconnectedness of such issues
 - b. Call for more engagement in community service programs and other volunteering activities in such areas

We, the youth, call on our governments and societies to:

1. Emphasize the creation and strengthening of social safety net policies for the most marginalized through:
 - a. Cash transfers for the poorest and least skilled, conditional upon participation in retraining workshops and any other skills-enhancing programs
2. Continually strive to invest in measures boosting economic competitiveness and improve employment opportunities to all via:
 - a. Investing in education by creating schools and after-school programs and increasing of the number of quality teaching staff
 - b. Activation of the labor force through vocational programs, especially for the low skilled women and youth

- c. Supporting measures improving access and quality of health care, as healthy labor force is a necessary precondition for economic productivity
3. Actively work towards eliminating labor exploitation in all countries, with a special emphasis on children and women by:
 - a. Creating and strengthening legislation on labor conditions and labor exploitation
 - b. Imposing stricter sanctions for not complying with such laws
 - c. Strengthen controlling mechanisms surveying labor conditions in large factories to ensure adequate working conditions
 4. Continue to support civil society measures and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that actively promote poverty and hunger alleviating initiatives by:
 - a. Holding fundraising activities, e.g. concerts, sports events, and other related events
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 - b. Drawing civilians' attention to NGOs activities through increased and non-biased media coverage
 - c. Creating special government-supported funds dedicated to combating poverty and hunger
 5. Invest in rebuilding programs in poverty- and violence-stricken areas to help affected communities heal and recover

MDG 2 Declaration: To Achieve Universal Primary Education

Universal access to education is necessary to ensure the right to self-realization and social economic mobility for all. However, as access to education and quality of education systems vary across countries, there is a pressing need to find solutions to such issues. As such,

We, the youth commit ourselves to:

1. Actively engage in awareness raising measures regarding the importance of primary education, especially for girls, the poor, and children living in rural areas by:
 - a. Promoting and engaging in clubs or other related activities aiming to improve access to education for the communities in need
 - b. Organizing events and door-to-door initiatives in rural and remote regions

- c. Create online databases with free access to primary level learning material to children and their families
 - d. Creating and spreading promotional videos and other measures underscoring the importance of education
2. Contribute to the creation and strengthening of educational facilities and materials for every child by:
- a. Supporting the establishment of nation-wide “academic resource banks” collecting books and other learning material from graduates and distribute them to students unable to afford such items
 - b. Forming an alumni network that strives to improve facilities of their respective schools via giving donations, organizing crowd-funding activities, or volunteering
 - c. Ensuring that funds or donation received are directed through the right channels and actually reach the individuals in need by strictly monitoring the management of finances

We, the youth, call on our governments and societies to:

1. Increase accessibility to schools, regardless of region or remoteness of the settlement via:
- a. Ensuring that more schools are constructed in rural settlements
 - b. Providing transportation to and from school for cases whereby the above cannot apply
 - c. Providing free meals at school for the poorest students to avoid potential drop outs to child labor
 - d. Fund schemes that support low-income families to pay for school expenses
 - e. Create an online database with school materials and videos accessible to all children
2. Improve the general quality of primary education for all by:
- a. Ensuring that teachers are regularly retrained and adequately compensated.
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 - b. Providing monetary and non-monetary incentives to motivate teachers to work in remote and underdeveloped areas.

- c. Distributing materials and organize events that facilitate learning and growth for children even outside of schools that invigorate public interest in education and minimize the risk of dropouts at primary school level, for example via:
 - i. Inter-regional quiz competitions
 - d. Supporting volunteer teachers
 - e. Promoting interdisciplinary learning among students and engaging students in extracurricular activities
3. Increase engagement centered on the eradication of child labor to increase the proportion of children to attend school instead via:
- a. Providing families with a steady flow of income conditional upon the children's attendance at school
 - b. Strengthening the sanction and penalty system for violating laws banning child labor
 - c. Creating awareness via media and campaign denouncing child labor
4. Call on tertiary educational institutions to implement compulsory credit schemes for students to engage in community service, such as teaching assistance in underdeveloped regions

MDG 3 Declaration: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

This council understands Gender Equality as equality of rights, motivation, safety, and freedom of choice for both genders regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual preference, and health state, under all of the political, economic, cultural, social, and health domains.

In order to empower women and remove gender-based stereotypes, while ensuring the inclusiveness of both genders, youth and society constitute the matrix of the solution. As such,

We, the youth commit ourselves to:

1. Actively participate in actions raising awareness and promoting gender equality across their various domains, to both create, and later sustain a fair and just culture within our society. By actions we suggest:
 - a. Establishing initiatives and youth clubs that empower women and target gender related issues, while collaborating with governmental bodies and private sector to amplify positive impact

- b. Organizing public educational campaigns within schools and universities
 - c. Promoting employment opportunities for women, including self-employment
 - d. Share young role models' success stories
2. Support survivors of gender-based discrimination, inequality, or violence. This can involve:
- a. Collect donations to fund counseling programs for the survivors in rehabilitation centers
 - b. Organize seminars and cultural events to address the negative impact gender inequality may cause
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3. Endorse the engagement of men, boys and families as agents of change in promoting gender equality and preventing and condemning violence against women and girls.

We, the youth, call on our governments and societies to:

1. Restructure and enforce laws and policies to promote the eradication of gender based violence and inequality, by which we mean:
- a. Reviewing crime laws and extend punishments for sexual or gender-based crimes
 - b. Extending labor laws to ensure just rights and fair wages for all women and men
 - c. Reviewing the access to education systems with particular focus on equal involvement of males and females in formal and informal education.

MDG 4 Declaration: Reduce Child Mortality

Reducing the mortality rate among children is necessary in order to ensure sustainable growth in each country and building a successful society. Despite global efforts, around 6 million children under the age of five do not survive, and a full one third of those deaths occur due to severe malnutrition. As such,

We, the youth, commit to:

1. Raising awareness on the importance of breastfeeding and intensive care for infants, especially in high risk areas through:
- a. Promoting the establishment of health camps supported by the government and NGOs

- b. Creating video and other interactive campaigns demonstrating correct healthcare practices to communities suffering from high rates of child mortality

We, the youth, call on our governments and societies to:

1. Focus more on building high-tech, evidence-based, cost-effective measures, such as vaccinations and antibiotics, especially in remote areas
2. Encourage safe practices among pregnant women by teaching them about the importance of regular visits of the healthcare establishments to ensure smooth pregnancy
3. Promoting and investing in proper hygienic, sanitation, and cost-effective water supply initiatives, particularly in remote areas to ensure access to clean water to all, especially young children and their mothers
4. Ensuring allocation of high-quality food, vitamin and other nutritional supplements in remote areas in order to prevent malnutrition among infants and young children

MDG 5 Declaration: Improve Maternal Health

Maternal health refers to the health of women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period. Protecting the health of all mothers is a prerequisite for the delivery of healthy babies and plays a vital role in the stability of a family. As such,

We, the youth, commit ourselves to:

1. Volunteer at community service organizations that serve pregnant women
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We, the youth, call on our governments and societies to:

1. Recognize maternal and child care as a national priority by:
 - a. Creating and implementing a national plans for scaling maternal health services through building and modernizing existing infrastructure, including:
 - i. Human resources, transport and communication systems
 - a. Ensuring that health insurance coverage includes a robust coverage of care for pregnant women and their newborns

- b. Ensuring accessibility of maternal services for all women, particularly women from communities who have been historically disadvantaged in accessing said services
 - c. Setting a legal framework for assigning outreach doctors to distant areas
 - d. Building partnership initiatives with civil society institutions, health providers, and the media to optimize resources management and coordinated child care and minimize bureaucratic redundancies
 - e. Providing early education to young women to avoid unwanted pregnancies
 - f. Increasing the availability and quality of training courses for midwives to ensure that high quality child-birth care is standardized and widely available
2. Support research and development programs to gain new insight and innovative solutions to maternal health-related problem

MDG 6 Declaration: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Other Diseases

The international community has made a considerable progress towards achieving the goals set under the Millennium Development Goal 6. The incidence rate of HIV, malaria and tuberculosis infections have decreased worldwide since 2000. Nevertheless, challenges still persist in the Sub-Saharan African region that reports 99% of all deaths caused by preventable diseases. As such,

We, the youth, commit ourselves to:

1. Continue to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases both physically at public spaces and educational institutions and virtually on online platforms, especially in areas where as knowledge about HIV, HIV prevention, and other diseases remain low through:
 - a. Creating teams of young peer educators to spread knowledge in local communities
 - b. Creating user-friendly picture manuals to materials such as malaria safety nets to ensure proper usage
 - c. Door-to-door local initiatives
 - d. Digital channels of communication
2. Actively contribute to decrease the instances of disease infection by promoting responsible behavior by educating youth on sexual and reproductive health and rights through a peer education program

We, the youth, call on our governments and societies to:

1. Promote scientific and technological research in order for the youth to be able to develop innovative tools to collect data, find relative treatments, preventive measures, *“In the service of youth since 1949”* Page 123 and educate society about the existence of HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases by:
 - a. Actively encouraging social entrepreneurship and creation of basic entrepreneurship courses
 - b. Creating and supporting health-focused internship programs at local clinics
2. Strengthen health care systems by:
 - a. Making healthcare accessible and affordable
 - b. Improving the quality of provided services
 - c. Increasing the qualifications of medical personnel
 - d. Developing and evaluating health technologies and practices
 - e. Supporting initiatives focused on improvement of public health
3. Improve global partnership for collecting data on patient monitoring and the spread of infectious diseases to curb the growing appearance of drug-resistant diseases by:
 - a. Sharing technology know-how and providing medical assistance to countries with weaker health care systems
 - b. Matching developing countries and developed countries one by one to cooperate with each other
4. Actively encourage an inclusive intergenerational dialogue and partnership between the local, national, and international community among the youth and adults (such as community leaders and elders) via:
 - a. Public speakers series at popular public places and educational institutions
 - b. Strategic use of mass media and social media networks

MDG 7 Declaration: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability aims to protect the needs of the present generation without affecting the fate of the future one, where the solutions should simultaneously address environmental and economic problems. Environmental sustainability measures have to be integrated into country policies and programs in order to reverse the loss of resources, reduce biodiversity loss, and guarantee a viable planet for the generations to come. As such,

We, the youth, commit ourselves to:

1. Engage in voluntary activities such as:
 - a. Participating in local and global environmental events
 - b. Engaging in youth-led environmental organizations
 - c. Organizing campaigns that promote environment-friendly behavior
 - d. Exploring and developing creative ideas that may lead to eco-friendly inventions

We, the youth, call on our governments and societies to:

1. Play an active role in decision making in the field of environment by serving as a supervisory role of government policies.
2. Recognize the importance of environmental sustainability because it is crucial to be informed about the current issues in order to find effective solutions. It is viable to reach the objective by:
 - a. Organizing local educational seminars and/or forums
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 - b. Inviting environmental scientists and/or experts to share ideas with the wider community
 - c. Supporting environmental research institutions
 - d. Internalizing environmental sustainability in educational systems
 - e. Opening science centers that provide direct interaction with the environment for children.
 - f. Promoting environmental campaigns about local pollution and other environmental issues

3. Promote active participation in environmental activities, such as:

- a. Green idea competitions
- b. Weekly trash-picking
- c. Tree planting Challenges (i.e. ice-bucket challenge)
- d. Green cooperatives for increasing the expansion of renewable energies; (PIMBY: Please in my backyard)
- e. Use rechargeable batteries and solar panel installations
- f. 3Rs (Reuse, Reduce, Recycle)

MDG 8 Declaration: Global Partnership for Development

Official development assistance (ODA) has slowed down in recent years, after increasing significantly in the first decade of the new millennium. Thus, greater funding and innovation are crucial to the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. As such,

We, the youth commit ourselves to:

1. Playing an active role in global partnerships for development through:

- a. Being aware of current development issues by participating in NGOs and noncommercial organizations
- b. Taking part in sharing information of development goals and partnership through:
 - i. Social media and other digital communication sources
 - ii. Participating in exchange programs
- c. Encouraging the international community to adopt the United Nations Official development assistance (ODA) targets of 0.7 per cent in order to ensure sustainable development

2. Working together to build better global partnerships for development through one of the following:

- a. Encouraging partnerships both locally and globally through the internet and all other channels of communication
- b. Participating in seminars, training, and youth conferences

We, the youth, call on our governments and societies to:

1. Improve cross-sectoral communication between non-governmental organizations to better coordinate activities and avoid overlap by:
 - a. Building a committee monitoring the cooperation between organizations
 - b. Working together with the governments of respective countries and society in general by exposing actual problems to government organizations