

Youth Declaration

The 25th International Youth Forum

“Youth and World Peace”

August, 20-27, 2014, Seoul and Muju, Republic of Korea

Preamble

75 youth participants from 40 countries gathered in Seoul and Muju, Korea from August 20th to 27th, 2014 to discuss ideas on how youth can contribute to the realization of sustainable world peace.

World peace is the condition when individuals in all states, nations and regions are free from the fear of violence or conflict. It is antonymous with war and conflict that endanger the safety of people and societies.

According to the UN Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples 1965, young people should be raised in the spirit of peace, justice, freedom, mutual respect and understanding. The promotion of equal rights for all human beings and all nations, economic and social progress, disarmament and the maintenance of international peace and security are crucial elements towards this end.

Declaration

The participants of this forum affirm that the above definition remains relevant to the youth of their respective nations. The realization of world peace can be undertaken from local to international levels as there are various activities that are classified as peace-building. While there are clear personal benefits of peace-building in the present, the participants recognize that the future impact on society is of greater importance.

The Youth are the greatest asset to a country as the youthful period is a time of passion and emotion, which when directed, can catalyze new mindsets, new movements and ultimately new societies. Due to the unique position of youth within society, their input in development programs is crucial to achieving desired objectives. It is undeniable there is an imminent need to create a conflict-free environment and a culture of peace.

The participants of this forum have identified the relevant denominations involved in the universal peace making process. These groups are International Organizations, Governance, Society and Acts of Individuals. Due to the breadth of these groups, the participants have further subdivided them into the categories of: Youth, Education, Government, Local Communities, Private Enterprise, the Media, International Governmental Organizations and International Nongovernmental Organizations. These smaller, more specific groups, allowed for a more candid debate between participants.

To affirm their beliefs in these ideals and to make an active contribution to the peace-building effort, the participants of this forum present the following recommendations:

Youth

Youth, as the future of the world, has indispensable role in achieving world peace. Youth should aim to not only change their attitude towards people, traditions, religion and belief in order to accomplish a global harmony, but also feel the responsibility to defend the frontiers of peace and non-violence.

We recommend that youth should:

- a. Play an active role in raising awareness in local and international communities through social media, education, culture, technology and sports activities.
- b. Volunteer in organizations that work for community service, in order to contribute a vital role in developing the future of the society as well as themselves.
- c. Participate in political activities to raise awareness and encourage reforms that ensure good governance, accountability, and transparency.
- d. Opine on current conflicts in the world in public assemblies and governments, both IGOs and NGOs.
- e. Flourish the ideas of internationalism and multiculturalism.
- f. Build cooperation and have collaboration among youngsters from different countries in order to form strong bonds.

Education

Education ought to not only correct perception and belief of world peace but also promote activities that can prepare them for future contribution. We believe, both formal and non-formal education play a major role in promoting world peace.

Therefore, we suggest:

- a. Approach to History education that not only gives room for open interpretation but also holistic view of the world.
- b. Endorse further of Peace and Conflict studies in order to develop fundamental and professional knowledge of the world peace.
- c. Grant ample governmental financial aid to both native and foreign students, who will benefit from their experiences of diverse cultures in exchange programs.
- d. Invest in foreign language education, especially that of language in developing

countries, so that students can open new points of perspective of the world.

- e. Invite experts and guest speakers, as well as running workshops on various issues in order to enhance students' comprehension of world peace.
- f. Stimulate students to organize campaigns and sessions via social networks (Youth development websites, social media, etc.) to increase and spread the awareness of world peace.
- g. Encourage students' involvement in community services and volunteering programs so that they can recognize the global wealth gap.

Government

Nation-States remain the main unit of governance despite the growing importance of international organizations. Governments, as the primary decision-making bodies at the head of States, possess the authority within their own legal systems to wage war against other nations, direct diplomatic action, set the priorities during budget negotiations, among other responsibilities. Therefore, the participation of governments is vital to foster world peace while integrating youths as agents in this cause.

To this end, we propose the following recommendations:

- a. Governments should legislate to make sure youth is formally educated in the values of non-discrimination, peaceful conflict resolution and mediation, intercultural appreciation, and any and every other value which amounts to peace.
- b. Government should allocate resources to public programs, private individuals, and private organizations with the objectives of bringing together youth from the homeland or abroad, or both. Such resources should be allocated on the basis of a competitive application process. Therefore, the aim is that these youth may establish enduring relationships, social and professional connections, and engender mutual understanding and peace.

These programs may constitute one of these or a mixture of several:

1. Education seminars;
2. Cultural and artistic events;
3. Sports competitions and exhibitions;
4. Intercultural and interreligious experiences;
5. Civic engagement programs;
6. Sessions of mutual understanding between youths of conflicting regions or States;
7. And others.

Governments should not fund programs of the following nature:

1. Partisan;
 2. Insensitive to ethnical, national, religious or social groups.
- c. Governments should allocate resources to the promotion of the role of youth, to both highlight its position in society among its fellow citizens, and inspire youth to be more engaged in its local, regional, national and international community. By promotion we suggest:
1. TV, radio, newspaper, magazine and Internet ads;
 2. Public speeches;
 3. Street signs and banners;
 4. And others.
- d. State institutions should be inclusive of youth by ensuring their representation. These institutions should also designate new avenues exclusively for youth to voice their needs and ideas, thus influencing public policy; engage and cooperate with their peers in various geographical magnitudes, and create further opportunities for other members of their cohort.

Local Community

Local community plays an integral part in achieving sustainable world peace as it affects those involved at a personal level and facilitates connections across different socio-economic groups.

We therefore recommend that local communities:

- a. Create a program to promote self-sufficiency to address the gap on existing policies to gradually eradicate community issues such as disease, poverty and unemployment.
- b. Raise awareness of cultures and beliefs through peace-related programs at the grass-root levels.
- c. Improve the efficiency of gathering feedback and encouraging discussion when lobbying for support of the needs of the community and its people to the government.
- d. Recognize and reward the contributions of youth in local communities to increase involvement in volunteerism.
- e. Collaborate with other local communities when organizing events to foster better understanding across social groups.

- f. Introduce local leadership training for youth.

Private Enterprise

Private Enterprise, whether presented as a for-profit or not-for-profit model, must engage in the promotion of peace and youth involvement. We recognize the necessity of the proliferation of corporate social responsibility and its importance in contributing to social stability, integrity, and world peace. It is imperative that the private sectors foster a positive relationship with society and to achieve a form of mutual respect.

We recommend that the private enterprises act upon the following:

- a. Support the youth with training and educational opportunities which empower them with practical and competitive skills to employ a more global understanding and perspective of social dynamics.
- b. Provide resources to promote youth peace-keeping and training activities such as international conferences, seminars and leadership workshops.
- c. Recognize the advantages of corporate social responsibility not only in society, but also in business.
- d. Encourage business models with regard to social issues and production of goods or services that contribute to their solution and well-being of the society
- e. Cooperate with INGOs to empower youths to create cross-cultural connections.
- f. Fostering the value of global citizenship by developing a multicultural work environment through youth training programs and employment
- g. Facilitate exchange programs for young employees among business partners to stimulate networking through intercultural experiences.
- h. Create a platform for youth social entrepreneurship to spread goodwill both within and out of the enterprise.

Media

The media is a powerful tool able to disseminate information quickly to a wide audience while simultaneously educating the public about important social issues. Nowadays, we can observe that media, and especially new media, are playing a vital role in shaping the identity of today's societies. Thus, the media can have a great impact on the role of youth and its contribution to achieving world peace.

We recommend that the media:

- a. Portray organizations, companies, and projects that present positive youth initiatives throughout the world. Media can inspire youth to take more proactive actions to change the current situation by showing an alternative and more positive side of the world news. In addition, media outlets can create specific sections dedicated to youth initiatives.
- b. Give more space to peace journalism, portraying peace building efforts, in addition to war journalism with the goal of having more balanced information.
- c. Establish their own charter that bans hate speech and promotes diversity whether it is diversity of opinions, ethnic groups, religions, sexes or ages, etc. This charter applies to both the company and produced content. By diversifying their workforce and giving voices to various groups, media companies can fairly represent the current multicultural society and can increase mutual understanding.
- d. Develop social media outlets and systems to connect youth and build interactive global citizenship through networking. This can be achieved by encouraging young people to use new media as a way to interact, express themselves, and expand their knowledge on different subjects.
- e. Increase visibility within the traditional media of alternative information sources such as citizen-journalism and social media.

International Governmental Organizations (IGOs)

IGOs play both the role of director and facilitator in issues affecting youth and world peace. They are expected to strengthen current initiatives, implement new policies, establish beneficial partnerships with other IGOs and to connect individuals and groups with higher institutions.

In order to effectively progress these roles, we recommend:

- a. Promote existing organizations already facilitating food, shelter, clothes and education for those who need it, with a special focus on youth, keeping in mind that many conflicts can arise because of the economic polarization within a country or region.
- b. Create a mobile space, either physical or digital, where individuals and groups can communicate with another, become involved with current projects, create new

initiatives and prevent overlap with an ultimate goal of increased dialogue, mutual understanding and global activism.

- c. Raise awareness of peace through IGO outreach and encouraging the implementation of curriculum by means of unbiased peace and human rights education in schools.
- d. Enforce individuals and groups to become more connected to their respective IGOs through encouraging transparent IGO activity, IGO outreach, consultative bodies and accountability. This includes accessibility to information regarding individual rights in the legal system.

International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs)

International Non-Governmental Organizations, due to their apolitical nature, are able to work across political boundaries to directly interact with individuals, making them a crucial component of world peace. Their key roles in the peace effort primarily include creating a platform for dialogue and promoting conflict resolution through the use of soft power.

To better connect INGOs with youth, we recommend that they:

- a. Create a repository of INGOs working in peace initiatives to better align common goals by providing access to information about ongoing and future projects to reduce overlap, promote transparency and accountability.
- b. Encourage better feasibility studies to promote effective implementation, maximization of resources, and project longevity.
- c. Increase visibility of peace initiatives through public agendas by furthering cooperation between INGOs and governments.
- d. Allocate specific leadership positions within INGO departments for youth to create more youth-friendly projects and a more inclusive dialogue.
- e. Hold more youth gatherings to address current world peace issues, develop youth-focused solutions, and better inform youth through volunteerism about INGO roles.
- f. Enhance collaboration with educational institutions to encourage dialogue, constructive debates, and cultivate a culture of peace.