



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

12 July 2018

Excellency,

As part of my commitment to bring the United Nations closer to young people, I convened a Youth Dialogue on 30 May 2018. The Youth Dialogue participants included high-level representatives, ambassadors and young changemakers. We heard about challenges and solutions to some of the most pressing problems facing youth. The discussions focused on the themes of the event: education, employment and the prevention of radicalization leading to violent extremism. In this regard, I have the honour to transmit herewith a summary of the Youth Dialogue.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Lajčák', written in a cursive style.

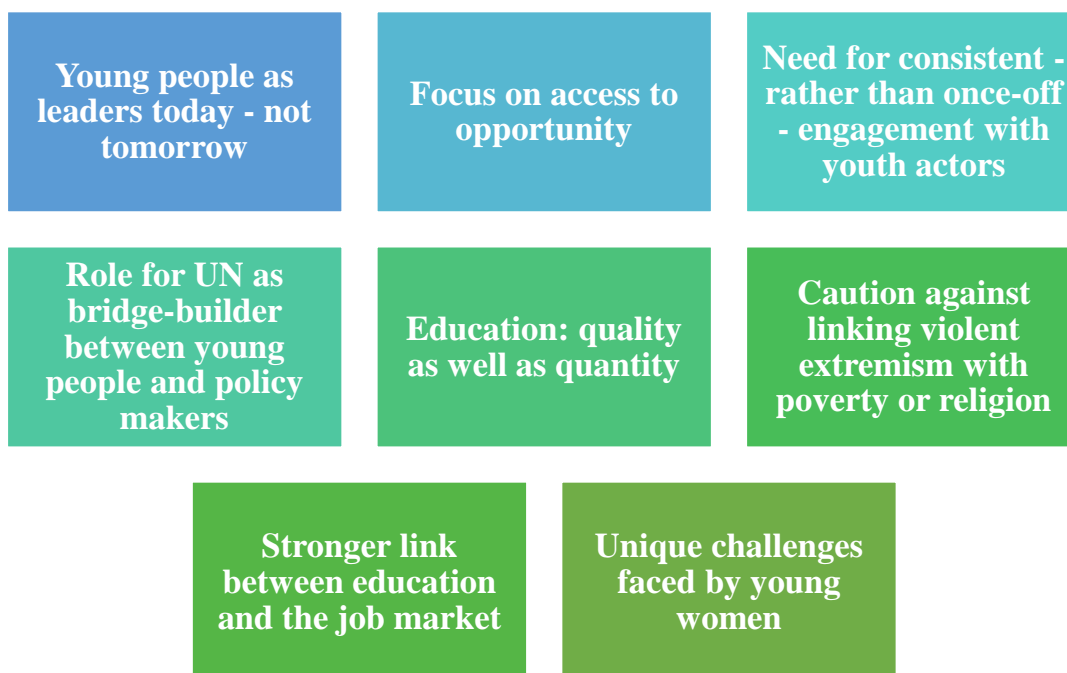
Miroslav Lajčák

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

YOUTH DIALOGUE – PRESIDENT’S SUMMARY

The President of the General Assembly convened a one-day Youth Dialogue on 30 May 2018, with the purpose of listening to young people and focusing on the topics of education, employment and the prevention of radicalization leading to violent extremism. It consisted of an opening segment, two chats, an open mic session and a closing segment. A Youth Media Zone ran in parallel to the Youth Dialogue. This document contains a written summary of the event, photo summaries of each segment and 10 action points from the President based on the contributions made during the Youth Dialogue.

Snapshot of key messages:



Opening Segment

The opening segment ran from 10:00 am to 11:00 am and interventions were made from the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajčák; Sheikha Hind Bint Hamad Al-Thani, Vice Chairperson and CEO of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development; Mr. Pita Taufatofua, Tongan Olympian; Ms. Mari Malek, DJ and founder of “Stand For Education”; The Secretary General’s Envoy on Youth, Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake; and Mr. Emmanuel Kelly, Singer and Songwriter.

The President of the General Assembly outlined the importance of convening this Youth Dialogue – to listen to young people. The President stated that the United Nations is here for all people, and young people, in particular, have a lot to contribute (earth on the youngest stage ever with more than 50% of people under 30 years old). He spoke about his interactions with many youths around the world and their frustration at not being included in important decisions

affecting their lives. On education, he emphasised the need for quality education and access to it. With regard to employment, the President asked for young people to share their experiences in relation to getting decent jobs and underemployment. He called for more strategic thinking on what we can do to ensure that young people, and in particular young women, have better access to the job market. On radicalization and the risk of violent extremism, the President highlighted that it is a very complex issue that we do not fully grasp. He invited young people to share their views and advice on these issues and to speak freely.

During the opening segment speakers:

- highlighted the importance of education for young people and spoke of Sustainable Development Goal 4 as a universal right.
- described the Youth Dialogue as a milestone in our journey to implement the 2030 Agenda and said that young people cannot be left behind.
- encouraged young people to pursue their dreams and not to be discouraged by failure.
- highlighted the importance of education for girls, with one speaker stressing that child marriages and early motherhood affect girls' access to education.
- outlined that half of the world's population is under 25 years old and have been lucrative targets for extremists but that not everyone is a ticking bomb.
- shared personal stories to show that youth have the power to make big changes. The stories included: 1) the story Mohammed Sidibay a former child soldier, who is now a peace activist. With this story it was emphasized that education is the key to conflict prevention; 2) the story of Peace Adobola from Abuja who advocates for girls' education and seeks partnerships to provide sanitary pads at school; and 3) the story of Rita Kimani, founder of FarmDrive, an enterprise committed to improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in Africa by using new data-driven technology to increase the availability of capital.



Chat 1: The future of work – Bridging the gap between education and employment

The Chat ran for one hour, from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm. The moderator was Ms. Jamira Burley. The speakers were: Ms. Shamoy Hajare, Founder of the Jamaica School for Social Entrepreneurship; Ms. Safaath Ahmed Zahir, Founder of Women and Democracy; and Mr. Mohamed Sidibay, Peace activist, Global Partnership for Education.

It was highlighted that 75 million young people are leaving school without prospects for decent jobs. The mismatch between the education people get in schools and what is actually needed in the job market was acknowledged as well as the need to address this gap. It was stated that the education systems need to change to suit new realities, which could be country specific. The need for investment in education and the fact that 264 million children still do not have access to education were underscored.

Speakers stated that quality education should be a fundamental right and viewed as a necessity for everyone. Some advocated for teaching entrepreneurship and innovation in school.

Speakers also emphasized the role of the private sector in promoting education and offering opportunities for decent jobs.

Internships were highlighted as one opportunity but it was recognised that many do not have the means to access them. At the same time, a lack of opportunities for young people in some countries was underscored.

The need to create an enabling environment, including laws and policies, by both Governments and the private sector in order to ensure that job markets provide opportunities and the education system provides the necessary requirements skills was stressed.

It was said that it is not a lack of money but a lack of political will to address the issues of education and employment.

The need for women to have equal access to education and job opportunities was stressed, including rural women. The point was made that world leaders should appoint women to positions of responsibility and leadership.

Speakers said that young people with the power to make change have a responsibility to other young people.

The critical importance of environment protection was underscored and the fact that new jobs should be environmentally-friendly, promoting the green economy and addressing climate change. It was stressed that we need to develop skills that promote this objective through adequate education.



Chat 2: Prevention of Radicalization and Violent Extremism – What are the Push and Pull factors?

The Chat ran for one hour, from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm. The moderator was Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme. The speakers were: Ms. Joy Bishara, Student at Southeastern University; Dr. Siniša Vuković, Assistant Professor for the Conflict Management Program and Global Policy Program at Johns Hopkins University; and Mr. Farea Al-Muslimi, Co-Founder and Chairman of Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies.

One of the main messages was that the extremist groups develop when institutions fail to provide what they should – whether basic (food, healthcare) or complex (security, opportunities, political representation).

It was outlined that people in the age group of 12-19 years old is most vulnerable to radicalization. Participants said that we are still fighting the symptoms and not the disease and that we need to focus more on preventing radicalization and violent extremism. This included diverting more funding to prevention.

Speakers outlined that radicalization is a complex process and should not be linked to unemployment only. Data was shared to indicate that root causes of violent extremism include political/social exclusion, marginalization, lack of opportunity.

It was highlighted that religion should be seen as an opportunity, not a problem. UNDP study, “Journey to Radicalization”, actually found that the longer someone stays in religious teaching, the less likely they are to become engaged in extremism.

Speakers also made the link between extremism and conflict. It was stated that extremism does occur in peaceful settings but extremist groups have grown in places affected by conflict.

The media was identified as both a solution and a risk. The example was given of Boko Haram using social media to communicate with fighters all over the country while at the same time a social media campaign #bringhomeourgirls led to the liberation of Chibok girls.

The growing trend of young people to read only news that fits their own ideology/leanings – and to reject anything outside the box was identified as worrying.

The need for respect, love and care when combatting terrorism was emphasised as well as the need to teach children tolerance within the family, in classrooms and through the media.

The link between identity and radicalization was highlighted and the idea that when your own or your “group’s” identity is overly emphasized, you can become radicalized easier.

Speakers dispelled the myth that there is a direct link between poverty and extremism. It was stated that violent extremism is more likely to be caused by political disempowerment than poverty. Speakers also rejected the narrative that youth are a problem and instead said that youth hold the solutions.



Open Mic

During the open mic segment, held between 3:00 pm and 5:45 pm, 34 speakers made interventions on education, employment, prevention of violent extremism and the need for dialogue, outlining many challenges and solutions.

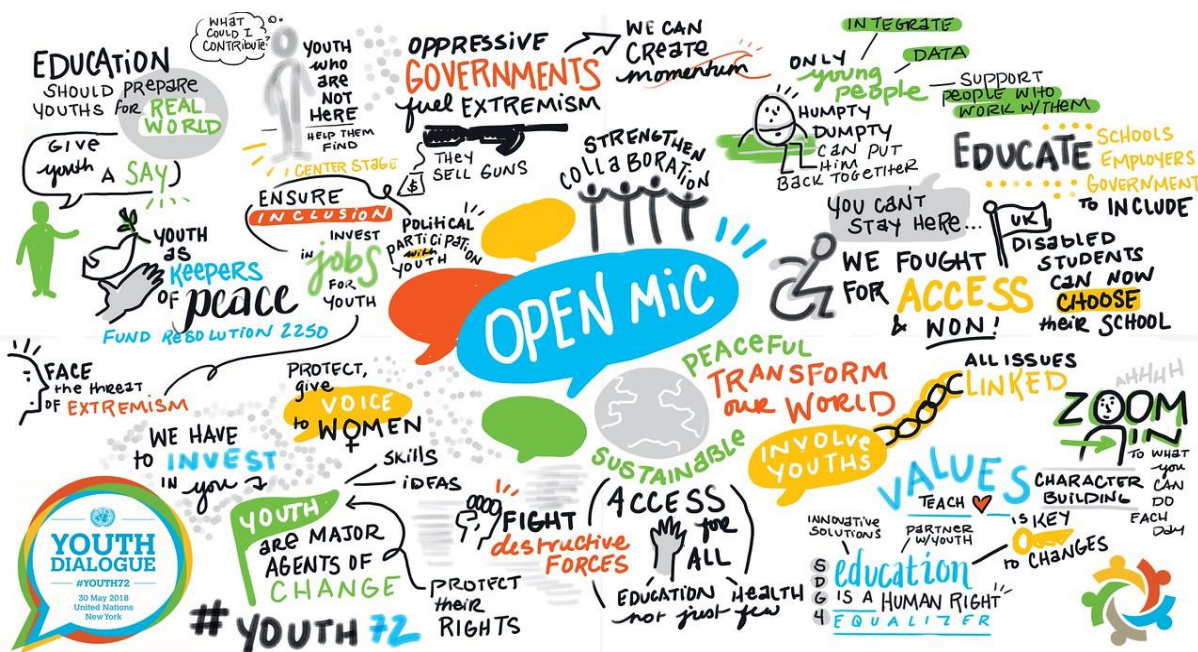
Many participants highlighted that education is critical for sustainable development. Participants also spoke of the need to teach the Sustainable Development Goals in schools. Some said that education is a human right. Access to education for people with disabilities was highlighted.

Many cited education as a tool to fight against and prevent radicalization and violent extremism. The need for a holistic education which includes not just skills training but values and character building was mentioned as well as the importance of non-formal education. Some participants advocated for a change in education curricula to reflect the issues of radicalization and how to avoid exposure to this menace. It was highlighted that only 2% of humanitarian funding goes toward education in times of crises although evidence shows that in times of crises children identify education as a top priority.

Speakers also said that education should prepare young people for work. While youth unemployment was highlighted, many also spoke of the fact that many young people are in working poverty or underemployed. Some stressed the need to change school curricula to keep up with the labour market and called for the promotion of entrepreneurship. One speaker called on the United Nations Secretariat to pay interns.

The speakers dispelled the notion of young people as just victims and perpetrators of war and spoke about the role of young people in peace. References were made to Security Council resolution 2250 on Youth Peace and Security and calls were made for funding to implement this resolution.

Social media was highlighted as an avenue to promote peace.



It was mentioned that governments have a role to play in preventing radicalization and violent extremism. Marginalization and unequal treatment of young people were identified as factors that could lead to violent extremism. Speakers underscored the need for communication between government and youth directly.

Some shared the view that meaningful inclusion of young people can provide an avenue for identification and expression while diffusing social tension and preventing radicalization. Further, it was stated that we must ensure that young people have their say in decision-making. The need to include young people in the peacebuilding process was also mentioned.

The need for youth-led solutions, dialogue and the importance of listening to young people were underscored.

Many highlighted the importance of love, empathy, understanding of each other's cultures and compassion for peace and sustainable development.

Speakers stressed the importance of young people in saving the planet and environment. Some outlined challenges facing young people, including climate change, unemployment, gang violence and access to healthcare.

The need for gender-sensitive policies was stressed. It was highlighted that girls in crises around the world are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than boys.



Closing Segment

The President thanked participants for sharing their stories and for the solutions which can be replicated in other places and handed over to Mr. Emmanuel Kelly to wrap up the event.

Links to the Youth Dialogue

The Opening Segment, Chat 1 and Chat 2 can be viewed in full using this link: <http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/treaty-bodies/watch/part-1-president-of-the-general-assemblys-youth-dialogue.-youth72/5791519661001/?term=&page=6?lanfrench>

The Open Mic Segment can be viewed in full using this link: <http://webtv.un.org/search/part-2-president-of-the-general-assemblys-youth-dialogue.-youth72/5791892202001/?term=youth%20dialogue&sort=date>

Youth Media Zone

The Youth Media Zone ran parallel to the Youth Dialogue from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm in the United Nations Correspondents' Association Room. It consisted of interactive spaces and a series of interviews.

The *first interview* was entitled *Let's talk about Sports! Why Sports and Development go hand in hand*. The moderator was Mr. Brenden Varma, Spokesperson for the President of the United Nations General Assembly and the speakers were Mr. Pita Taufatofua, Tongan Olympian and Ms. Chanelle Sladics, Professional Snowboarder.

The full interview can be viewed using this link: <http://webtv.un.org/search/lets-talk-about-sports-why-sports-and-development-go-hand-in-hand-youth-dialogue-media-zone-youth72/5791419101001/?term=youth%20dialogue&sort=date>

The *second interview* was entitled *Missing Peace: The Role of Youth in Conflict Prevention and Sustaining Peace*. The moderator was Mr. Sherwin Bryce-Pease, President, United Nations Correspondents Association and the speakers were H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the United Nations General Assembly; Ms. Ella Okko, a spokesperson for the “Lennons” Peace Ambassador group, a Finnish youth initiative created by Crisis Management Initiative; and Mr. Leonardo Párraga, Social entrepreneur, Founder of the BogotArt Foundation, and Co-founder of the campaign Cartas por la Reconciliación.

The full interview can be viewed using this link: <http://webtv.un.org/search/missing-peace-the-role-of-youth-in-conflict-prevention-and-sustaining-peace-youth-dialogue-media-zone-youth72/5791458561001/?term=youth%20dialogue&sort=date>

The *third interview* was entitled *Politics Reclaimed! Promoting Youth Political Participation*. The moderator was Mr. Sherwin Bryce-Pease, President, United Nations Correspondents Association and the speakers were Mr. Nasir Adhama, Special Youth Adviser to the President of Nigeria and Ms. Tierney Oberhammer, Director of Production at Flocabulary.

The full interview can be viewed using this link: <http://webtv.un.org/search/politics-reclaimed-promoting-youth-political-participation-youth-dialogue-media-zone-youth72/5791491137001/?term=youth%20dialogue&sort=date>

The *fourth interview* was entitled *The Future of work: a young entrepreneur's guide to success*. The moderator was Mr. Rehman Siddiq, Entrepreneur and social activist, Chief Editor at The Youth Observer and Founder and CEO of MacroHype. The speakers were Mr. Jay Hammonds, VIP Operations Technician at Facebook, Forbes 30 Under 30 for 2018 and Ms. Kelly Lovell, CEO of Lovell Corporation and My Effect Inc., Youth Mobilizer and Social Entrepreneur.

The full interview can be viewed at this link: <http://webtv.un.org/search/the-future-of-work-a-young-entrepreneurs-guide-to-success-youth-dialogue-media-zone-youth72/5791512096001/?term=youth%20dialogue&sort=date>

The Way Forward

During the Youth Dialogue participants focused on what has already taken place (exploring, for example, best practices, lessons learnt and experiences). A key aim of the Dialogue, however, was to focus on the way forward.

The discussions therefore featured many ideas about what can change and how we can effect this change. After carefully listening to the key messages during the Youth Dialogue, the President has compiled 10 points for further action.

Many are targeted at national governments, though NGOs, United Nations agencies and other actors could play a major role in advocating for them or directly enacting them.

10 Action Points from the President of the United Nations **General Assembly:**

- 1) **Listening** to young people. This means inviting them to the table, for example through national oversight groups, which allow for interaction with government officials.
- 2) **Bringing** the United Nations closer to young people. This could entail more user-friendly social media campaigns, or more events like the Youth Dialogue.
- 3) **Using** education to prevent radicalization. Curricula could be adapted to the new realities of radicalization and violent extremism, in order to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to resist targeting by extremist groups.
- 4) **Encouraging** international donors to put a stronger focus on quality, in the context of educational funding. There could also be more in-depth needs assessments, with the aim of linking training and educational development to gaps in employment markets.
- 5) **Rolling out** workshops and training on entrepreneurship, interview skills and innovation in schools and universities;
- 6) **Developing** outreach initiatives, to educate young peacebuilders on UN Security Council 2250, dealing with Youth Peace and Security. UN Agencies involved in implementing this resolution could also engage in online and in-person surveys and consultations.
- 7) **Designing** gender-sensitive policies across all government bodies and UN agencies, with a special focus on young women.
- 8) **Investing** in green opportunities for higher youth employment.
- 9) **Using** communication strategies and tools to debunk damaging myths, which associate young people with crime, anti-social behaviour, or violent extremism – and highlighting the overwhelmingly positive role young people play in societies.
- 10) **Including** young people in all decision-making processes, particularly where young people are most affected.