

A Case for Continuous Improvement

Suggestions for Further Enhancing Meaningful Youth Engagement in Youth 2030



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Background

The UN Youth Strategy, [Youth 2030](#) was launched on 24th September 2018, during the high level week of the UN General Assembly. It seeks to guide the UN system in stepping up support for the empowerment of young people, while ensuring that the Organization's work fully benefits from their insights and ideas.

The work of the strategy is informed by four (4) foundational and five (5) priority areas. The governance of the strategy is rooted in existing global, regional and national mechanisms and reinforced by a High-Level Steering Committee (HLSC) that provides strategic guidance. The HLSC is in turn supported by the Joint Working Group (JWG), which carries out the day to day work of the strategy.

UN MGCY has been engaged with the strategy since its conceptualisation, and has played an active role in its development and roll out (through being a member of the HLSC and the JWG). This document is based on feedback and consultations from different youth partners engaged in and/or affected by the work of the strategy, and provides forward looking suggestions for further enhancing youth engagement within its composition and delivery framework.

This document has been prepared based on inputs from youth partners and youth consultations organised as part of the work of Youth 2030.

Purpose

Provide specific recommendations to create a stronger enabling environment to enhance diversity, and further empower the voices of youth being left behind in Youth 2030

Current Standing

Initial Composition

The initial allocation of space to youth in the strategy included two (2) seats in the HLSC. *UN MGCY* and *ICMYO* were invited to take these seats. As the formal engagement mechanism in the UN, the UN MGCY follows an *open, universal and equitable model*, and brings in varied youth and youth organisations- *formal, informal, regional, grassroots, international, thematic, large and small*, all with the same voice, access and standing. *ICMYO* as a network brings *the voices of certain/some international organisations - a subset of the universal umbrella*.

Additional Enhancements

Based on joint efforts with the OSGEY, youth engagement has been further strengthened through the following steps:

- Direct youth representation in the strategy has been expanded to include *Young UN*, to bring in the voices of young UN staff members of the UN, and *UN IANYD Youth Caucus*, to bring in youth constituencies mandated to work on specific topics, processes and UN entities.
- The JWG, for each priority of the strategy, has mandated designated spaces for the respective youth constituencies to lead, facilitate and widen the engagement of youth organisations and platforms in the implementation of the strategy.
- The HLSC meetings are now being co facilitated by the OSGEY and Youth. Each JWG task team is co led by a youth entity through all aspects of its work from conceptualisation to delivery.
- Its decision making process can no longer override the youth voice.

Scope for Continuous Improvement

Relative Suppression of Direct Agency of Marginalised Youth Communities

The current model uses a combination of direct and indirect representation of subsets/disaggregation of the scope and diversity of actors in the universal youth landscape.

Such a model creates relative enhancements/privilege for the subsets/disaggregations that are given enhanced direct access compared to others.

When enhanced access is implemented to provide additional support and enhance the voices of marginalised groups, it plays an indispensable role in galvanising their voices and leaving no one behind. Correspondingly, if the practice of enhanced access is implemented wrongly, it perpetuates unjust systems, widens the gap, further marginalises/alienates already marginalised groups, and leaves people behind.

- The current composition of the Youth seats in HLSC **lacks direct representation from marginalised and minority youth groups, inter alia, indigenous youth groups, young refugees, young people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identities, those with disabilities.**
- Similarly, while the HLSC provides **direct enhanced access for some international youth organisations**, there is **no designated seat for the grassroots youth constituency** of the UN, or for youth engaged in national level structures (which are also core target group of the strategy).

Such an arrangement exacerbates already existing relative suppression and loss of direct agency for critical segments of youth. This predicament requires steps in order to enhance the direct agency of groups being left behind.

Joint Leadership

As highlighted above, the *strategy* has set a remarkable precedent by establishing modalities for youth co leads for the JWG task teams, creating dedicated spaces for formal youth constituencies to facilitate the work on priority areas, and by making space for youth to co-facilitate the HLSC meetings.

These arrangements should be further applied in additional leadership roles within the strategy- the *co-chairing of HLSC and joint secretariat.*

Spreading the Obligation

As the strategy is system wide initiative, it is imperative that the obligation to make space for meaningful youth engagement should not be the burden of OSGEY and youth partners alone. The current institutional arrangements do not place any obligation on UN members of the HLSC and JWG to engage youth constituencies/mechanisms linked with them or their young staff members in their work on Youth 2030.

Operationalising modalities and possibly placing conditionalities (for membership) on UN members of HLSC to engage linked youth constituencies and young staff members will be a consequential step in the right direction.

Next Steps

In light of the points raised and in the spirit of continuous improvement, we are making the following suggestions.

Direct Arrangement in HLSC		
Matter	Current	Proposed
Chairing of Youth Strategy	OSGEY	Keep
Chairing of HLSC	OSGEY	Explore (UN / Youth Partners additionally)
Convening of HLSC Meetings	OSGEY and Youth Members	Keep
Secretariat	OSGEY	Explore (in line with the JWG structure)
Ex-officio - Membership (universal umbrella for young UN staff)	Young UN	Keep
Invitation - Membership (universal umbrellas -) for youth entities)	UNMGCY	Keep
Institutional/Ex-Officio - Membership as co chair of UN IANYD	IANYD Youth Caucus	Keep
Invitation - Membership (enhanced access - some international organisations)	ICMYO	Explore Universal Clause - Add -Global Coalition of International Youth Organisations (GCIYO) *open, universal and equitable platform for international youth orgs.
Add - Membership (enhanced access - grassroots youth groups)	None	Add -Grassroots Stakeholder Group/ Constituency in the UN- Youth- <i>IAGYO</i> ¹

¹ International Alliance of Grassroots Youth Organisations

Add -Membership (enhanced access - minority and marginalised youth groups)	None	Add - Collective Coordination of Rights Holders/Marginalised Youth Constituencies at the UN- CMYC ² <i>(inter alia, Indigenous, Refugees and Displaced Persons, Migrants, Disability, LGBTQI+, Work and Descent Based Discrimination)</i> ³
Add - <i>Rotational</i> - Institutional capacity- Membership (National Youth Advisory Mechanisms and/or National Youth Platforms)		Add - National Youth Platforms and/or Youth Advisory mechanisms) for countries under consideration

Additional Engagement in Youth 2030 Activities

Matter	Current	Suggestion
Additional Youth Engagement in Work of HLSC and JWG Members	None	Engagement of Youth Constituencies linked with the UN members of the HLSC in their respective work relating to Youth 2030
Additional Engagement of Young UN Staff	None	Engagement of UN entity specific 'Young UN' networks linked with the UN members of the HLSC in their respective work relating to Youth 2030

²Coalition of Person Centric/Minority Youth Communities,

³Global Indigenous Youth Caucus, Global Youth Advisory Council (Refugees), Migration Youth Caucus, UN Stakeholder Group for Persons with Disabilities- Youth, UN LGBTQI+ Stakeholder Group, UN Stakeholder Group of Persons Facing Work and Descent Based Discrimination

