

WIDENING THE DEMOCRATIC SPACE: THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN PUBLIC DECISION MAKING

Extract of the recommendations included in [the report of the Chair \(A/HRC/34/46\)](#).



In 2016, the United Nations Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law held its first session, with 600 participants from Member States, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, regional and intergovernmental organizations, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations, including youth advocates and representatives of youth organizations from all regions. This document is an extract of the recommendations included in [the report of the Chair \(A/HRC/34/46\)](#).

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATES

Creating an enabling environment for effective participation of youth in public decision-making

21. A gender-sensitive approach to the implementation of laws, programmes and measures relating to young people is imperative [...].
22. [...] promote the full realization of all human rights, in particular the rights to the freedoms of opinion and expression, association and peaceful assembly, as a prerequisite to the effective enjoyment by youth of the right to participate in public affairs.
23. [...] adopt specific measures to ensure that young people participate without discrimination in the design, implementation and evaluation of any laws, regulations, policies, programmes or strategies affecting their rights. [...] particular attention should be given to the direct participation of youth with disabilities in the drafting of laws and policies affecting their human rights, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
24. [...] take all appropriate measures to ensure the full exercise by young women and girls of their right to participate in public affairs. [...]
25. [...] create structures and adopt measures for the regular, effective and meaningful participation of youth in all established national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up on the implementation of State obligations under international human rights law.
26. [...] ensure full and effective participation of youth in public affairs [...]
27. [...] take effective measures to protect young human rights defenders and youth organizations against any violence, threats, intimidation, discrimination, pressure, reprisals or any other arbitrary action, including abuses by non-State actors. States should exercise due diligence in preventing violations and abuses against women human rights defenders [...]
28. [...] protect the right to education and the regulatory framework for public and private education systems [...]
29. [...] include human rights and citizenship education, including media literacy, in the curricula at all levels of general and vocational education and training. [...]

30. [...] provide teachers, trainers and youth leaders with the necessary initial and continuing training in citizenship education and human rights. States should also support non-governmental organizations, in particular youth organizations, including through adequate financial assistance, and recognize them as valuable partners in providing citizenship and human rights education.

From formal to transformative participation of youth

39. [...] consider adopting or amending national legislation to align the minimum voting age and the minimum age of eligibility to run for office.

40. [...] consider introducing quotas with the aim of increasing youth participation, with adequate gender balance in parliaments and other elective positions. When quotas are introduced, monitoring of compliance and implementation of sanctions for noncompliance should be envisaged.

41. [...] establish or strengthen accessible and inclusive structures, such as local youth councils, youth parliaments or other consultative mechanisms, to foster youth participation in all institutions. Such mechanisms should be grounded in law, provided with an adequate budget and tasked with the formulation of recommendations that should be acted upon and followed up.

42. [...] collect data to track youth participation, representation and inclusion in political processes and institutions. [...]

43. [...] increase access to the Internet for marginalized and excluded youth, including through media education programmes. [...]

44. [...] provide an enabling legal environment and financial support to youth-led media [...]

45. [...] promote an intergenerational dialogue within existing policymaking structures. [...]

Participation of youth in sustainable development and human rights protection in specific contexts

55. [...] ensure that young people are encouraged to develop a sense of opportunity and ownership in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals [...]

56. Traditional media should disseminate information to help youth, particularly youth with no access to the Internet, understand the SDGs [...]

57. [...] allocate adequate political, technical and financial support to ensure that Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) is relevant to local communities [...]

58. [...] establish mechanisms for the sustainable, effective and meaningful participation of youth in peace negotiations, peacebuilding and transitional justice initiatives and processes. [...]

59. [...] The media should promote the positive role of young people in peace-related initiatives, as well as disseminate successful stories of youth-led initiatives at the local level.

60. [...] Any measures and programmes to prevent violent extremism should comply with human rights norms and standards and include a major focus on strengthening the local and endogenous capacities of youth for preventing violent extremism and on supporting the resilience of communities to threats of violent extremism, including through mutual support and community-based mentorships.

61. [...] develop violence-prevention strategies that are in full compliance with their human rights obligations and that go beyond simple security responses [...]

Moving the global youth agenda forward: the role of youth in shaping the agenda of the United Nations and Regional Organizations

69. [...] guarantee the effective promotion and protection of the human rights of youth, including the inclusive, full and effective participation of youth in decision-making.

70. [...] guarantee the right of young people, individually and in association with others, to unhindered access to, and communication with, international bodies, in particular the UN, its representatives and human rights mechanisms. [...]

71. [...] consider creating mechanisms to ensure effective and meaningful participation of youth in the work of the Human Rights Council [...]

72. Civil society organizations, in their respective areas of expertise, should more consistently draw attention to issues related to the human rights of youth [...]

73. [...] invest in education, training and awareness-raising initiatives at the local level to raise awareness among young people with regard to regional and international human rights instruments and mechanisms, including individual communication procedures.

74. In the context of the universal periodic review, Governments and civil society organizations should regularly submit information and make recommendations about youth rights. Youth-related recommendations should be widely disseminated by Governments and civil society organizations in order to ensure adequate follow-up.



This publication has been funded by the Swedish Government through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

The recommendations shared in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Swedish Government.