



# Recommendations by the Youth of Latin America and the Caribbean for the Post 2015 Agenda

LAC 2014 REGIONAL YOUTH FORUM  
MAY 12, 13 AND 14, QUITO, ECUADOR

## Foreword

Mr. Ahmed Alhendawi, Special Envoy for Youth for the Secretary General of the United Nations, proposed holding a forum in the year 2014 to regional directors of several United Nations agencies, which would serve as a mechanism for dialogue and consultation with all sectors with a vested interest in young people and with key youth actors. This was understood to be an important step in the process to transfer the results of this consultation to the global consultation process for the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

Young people, youth organizations and networks are meeting in Quito, Ecuador, on the 12th, 13th and 14th of May 2014 at the regional youth Forum for Latin America and the Caribbean, to discuss the 5 central themes associated with the United Nations Global Plan for Youth (SWAP). These 5 central themes are: Employment and Labor; Health, including Sexual and Reproductive Health; Violence; Education and Youth Participation, with regard to viewpoints specific to the region. The aim of this activity is to identify young people's priority recommendations.

This document is an input that will be presented at the Economic and Social Youth Forum (ECOSOC) in June 2014, which will be added afterward to the Post 2015 Agenda global process.

The issues currently affecting young people force society as a whole to react urgently in order to provide answers to their demands, to regard youths as key actors in the development of various aspects where their voices do not echo. The answer must be directed toward guaranteeing the inherent rights of children, adolescents and young people. Governments must commit to undertaking efforts to fulfill the demands contained within this document.

As pertains to these recommendations, adolescents and young people in Latin American and the Caribbean are considered to be youths. Special attention is paid to women, populations of Afro descent, indigenous peoples and tribes, communities living with HIV/AIDS, as well as LGBTQI communities. Environmentalist networks and collectives, handicapped people, drug users, the homeless, sex workers, people deprived of their freedom, documented and undocumented migrants, and refugees also receive special attention.

In addition, Interculturality will be understood to be an approach that bolsters ethnic and cultural identity, based on equal cultural exchange grounds, and on conditions of equal opportunities, with a view to recovering the historic and cultural memory as a fundamental element of the dignity and sovereignty of peoples.

The process of consultation, dialogue and reflection engaged upon by young people during the LAC Regional Youth Forum recommends the following to States and Governments:

## Employment and Labor

1. To guarantee inclusive participation by civil society, with a special emphasis on youth, to influence States to create and design policies aiming to incorporate vulnerable individuals into the workforce, such as handicapped people, people of diverse sexual orientation, those living with HIV/AIDS, indigenous and tribal peoples, Afro descendants, migrants, with inclusion and without discrimination.
2. For States to recognize and guarantee the rights and freedoms of young workers, to give priority attention to the freedom of labor unions and to other types of associations, as well as to collective bargaining, social security, and the right to strike without giving prior notice.
3. States must acknowledge that caretakers' work has been the invisible economic motor of countries, and should therefore promote research to generate indicators linking young people to domestic work as non-sustainable employment, which in many instances is unpaid, with a view to the implementation of policies for the redistribution of social benefits with an eye on social security.
4. To guarantee that States will implement public policies for the redistribution of income in an equitable manner between those who generate it and benefit from its production based on capabilities and equality among workers.
5. For States to guarantee that activism shall be recognized as work experience.
6. To bolster education and training aimed at a new sustainable social and productive development model.
7. For States to guarantee and promote the acquisition of knowledge of labor law rights since high school.
8. For States to Guarantee that education will not be subjugated to production: in fact that the former will serve as a tool for innovation to bring about sustainable production. This entails that people, in this case young people, will be the ones to foster new models for social and productive development.
9. States must create mechanisms to eliminate precarious employment and which force employers not to evade tax responsibilities, and to assume legal and collective responsibilities.

10. For States to promote recognition of volunteer work and the formalization of internships, guaranteeing Decent Employment.
11. For States to provide financial and legal assistance, training and incentives to environmental, social and cultural entrepreneurs, through community processes based on self-management, association and the deepening of collective ties, its permanent monitoring to guarantee legality.
12. States must guarantee alternative entrepreneurship processes which have the building of social, environmental and artistic ties as goals. States must support local initiatives by young people for sustainable practices that promote employment within an environmental framework including collectivism and cooperatives, supporting them through direct investment.
13. States must promote the decentralization of sources of decent jobs toward rural areas, guaranteeing access to necessary basic services, education and sustainable technologies, in order to foster a balance between human development and nature.
14. States must focus on promoting the recovery of the agricultural sector, in order to allow young people to revalue ancestral<sup>1</sup> and millenary knowledge,<sup>2</sup> fostering Good Living in rural life in order to reduce migration to cities.

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<sup>1</sup> The term Ancestral refers to an origin rooted in the practice of passing knowledge along from generation to generation, reason whereby there is a relationship to ancestors or an association with them.

<sup>2</sup> The term Millenary refers to a very ancient period of use in a certain location and by peoples.

## Health

1. States must guarantee the highest level and completeness of public health, focused on human rights, which are inter-cultural, with linguistic pertinence, gender, inter-generational sexual diversity, free from stigmas and discrimination, which is affordable, differentiated and friendly, established with necessary mechanisms for ensuring the exercise of the right to health through social protection that includes coverage of social security systems with the allocation of a sufficient and sustainable budget.
2. Acknowledge and guarantee full exercise of both sexual and human rights.
3. Guarantee sustainability of comprehensive care, differentiated from needs and realities of adolescents and youth, including sexual and reproductive health, ensuring access without any type of discrimination to supplies, such as modern contraceptives including the Morning After Pill.
4. Guarantee evidence-based comprehensive and lay sexual education, at all levels, with an intercultural focus and linguistic pertinence, as measures for decreasing teenage pregnancy and eradicating all types of violence, including sexual.
5. Eradicate socio-cultural patterns and legal barriers that prevent the exercise of the right to health and limit access to services, including sexual and reproductive health, such as: the requirement of a minimum age, the requirement of notice, consent from guardians, fathers, mothers, spouses; discriminatory and punitive practices against sexual diversity and gender identity, and the criminalization of HIV transmission.
6. Develop and apply policies and programs that legalize abortion, guaranteeing riskless and free access, as well as previous and posterior care for abortion without mandatory waiting periods, notification requirements, nor consent from fathers, mothers, and/or guardians, spouses, nor a minimum age; favoring reduction of maternal morbidity and mortality, social justice, life project, privacy, the right to decide and the sovereignty of bodies.
7. Attend to comprehensive needs by acknowledging youth diversity in terms of HIV, with a multi-sectorial response which guarantees education, treatment,

accompaniment, free access to counseling, HIV testing, purchase, distribution and access to supplies avoiding any antiretroviral and reactive treatment, to eradicate AIDS related deaths, mother-child transmission, stigmas and discrimination geared to youth and adolescents living with HIV.

8. Promote public policies of education, risk reduction and care, and harms of illegal and legal drug consumption, as a mean to ensure the health of drug users as an inseparable matter to the right to decide.

9. States must acknowledge food sovereignty and safety as a human right, specifically the provision of healthy, nutritional and culturally appropriate food, generating nutrition education based on healthy and permanent habits for production, selection and consumption; good agricultural practices which will prevent soil degradation and erosion, as well as the presence of genetically modified organisms, use of pesticides, fungicides, and artificial fertilizers in food.

10. Address social determinants that influence comprehensive health such as: food sovereignty, sustainable development models, education regarding health related matters including sexual and reproductive health, sanitation services, drinking water and healthy environments.

11. States must guarantee access to youth of mental healthcare services, with the objective of decreasing high rates of morbidity and mortality that they present.

12. States must promote educational policies regarding mental health for youth and adolescents, creating greater acceptance of mental disorders for those who receive mental healthcare services.

## Education

1. States must ensure the right to education, which is accessible, free, high quality, transforming, public, lay, intercultural, non-sexist, gender focused, and without any discrimination that encourages new masculinities. In addition, budget must be allocated for student access, permanence, and culmination of different education levels. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary that States increase investment destined to ensuring quality education.

2. Education at the following levels: university, technical, and high school must be democratic and controlled by the education community, which is made up by students, professors, non-teaching staff, parents, guardians, and others, who will be in charge of the control, administration and oversight of educational facilities, which is known as joint management.

3. Education must be transforming, linked to, and an advocate for decent and worthy work to generate alternative development models, which must be sustainable and supportable, acknowledging the value of non-formal popular education and a hands-on learning process. Similarly, continuous training is important for teachers which will allow students to develop abilities, attitudes, and aptitudes, including the use of TIC's as teaching tools.

4. Include comprehensive sexual education, focused on gender, which is scientific, lay, and of sexual and intercultural diversity, with linguistic pertinence in plans, programs and curricula designs in all education levels, considering specific youth needs.

5. Promote intercultural and environmental education with linguistic pertinence, prioritizing revitalization of native languages, identities, cultures, world views, ancestral<sup>3</sup> and millenary<sup>4</sup> knowledge, and to rescue historic memory of indigenous, tribal, and afro descendant communities, consolidating and respecting autonomy processes from an equality standpoint.

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<sup>3</sup> Supra.

<sup>4</sup> Supra.

## Youth Participation

1. Ensure participation of adolescents and youth in the development, execution, surveillance and validation of multi-sectorial public policies at all government levels, through the allocation of a sustained budget and binding mechanisms.
2. States must develop public policies geared to adolescents and youth, considering particular realities and contexts.
3. Implement policies and programs that promote the exercise of the right to leisure, participation, recreation and time off, ensuring investment in recovery of public spaces for these purposes, as a mechanism for promoting cultural exchange, with the objective of reaching mutual understanding, respecting cultural diversity and solidarity.
4. Ensure political participation quotas in order to have youth diversity in elected office.
5. Promote affirmative actions to ensure alternation, renovation, gender parity, and the representation of different generations of youth in decision making, leadership, and state positions.
6. States must invest in processes of recognition, development, and strengthening of the different ways of youth participation.
7. States must provide spaces and mechanisms for accountability, social auditing<sup>5</sup> and management transparency at all government levels, ensuring a broad and effective youth participation.

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<sup>5</sup> Social Auditing is what we understand by the process of monitoring, following up, analyzing and evaluating government performance; consequently, making public officials accountable for their actions and decisions, expressing citizen voice and promoting a more inclusive government.

# Violence

1. Drive public policies to the elimination of all forms of violence towards women through prevention and education programs and processes in all cycles of life for women and men in new masculinity building.
2. Guarantee that States implement social protection systems in order to contribute to criminal activity reduction, acknowledging it as a manifestation of social, financial, territorial, ethnic, gender and cultural gaps, as well as of the lack of opportunities for a consumption model, and violence as a result of human rights violation.
3. Provide the development of a process towards a peace culture in public and private environments, through non-discrimination and respect of youth diversities.
4. Acknowledge that criminalization of protest weakens social movements and reduces youth political participation and advocacy, infringes human rights, through the discrediting of social processes; States must ensure freedom of expression and association without previous notice, to recognize and validate it as a revitalizing and collaborative element for the social fabric.
5. Acknowledge femicide as the highest expression of violence towards women, especially against adolescents and youth, which must be punishable under legislation, as a result of a misogynistic, patriarchal, and sexist culture, that reproduces power structures which undermine the right to live a life without violence.
6. States must ensure society development and participation in a peaceful environment, without violence through improved and accurate use of coercive forces, in human rights care that seek safety reestablishment and social wellbeing, preventing crime.
7. Ensure due processes where those wrongfully convicted can have access to restorative justice.
8. Guarantee existence and implementation of a judicial framework that ensures criminal penalty for committing hate crimes especially against women, sexual diversities, afro descendants, indigenous communities, youth living with HIV, youth with disabilities and working youth; as well as to restructure laws that create exclusion of effective access to justice, for example abortion criminalization.
9. Promote policies and programs that allocate budget towards the prevention and care of human trafficking cases, implementing a comprehensive system based on rights restitution principles.

10. Create a regulation council, made up of the civil society, State entities and media, at national level, whose actions are to:

- Restrict all programming and advertising that promotes objectification of women, strengthens stereotypes, violence, racism, and discrimination.
- Build content quality standards, from a human rights perspective, defining programming standards that promote equality, diversity, fairness, and justice.

11. Promote recovery of public spaces by encouraging art, culture, and sports according to the different realities through comprehensive initiatives for coexisting in society.