



Statement by Petra Bezděková a Zuzana Vuová

Czech UN Youth Delegates

at The Third Committee of the 71nd session of the UN General Assembly

New York, 5 October 2016

Honourable Chair,
Distinguished Delegates,
Dear Fellow Youth Delegates,

I would like to thank for the opportunity to speak today on behalf of the Czech Republic Czech and its youth.

We find ourselves in a world where youth is extremely underrepresented in democratic systems and disillusioned about their future. In a world where young people question democracy because they think their voice is not heard within the system.

We find ourselves in a world where for children and youth, education is crucial guide to their social and cultural background. And free access to information shapes their opinions and personality. However, children and youth may find themselves lost in the amount of information they are dealing with on every-day basis. That might lead to confusion and frustration, often used as an advantage for dangerous propaganda of extremist and terrorist groups. Therefore, promotion of quality education that fosters critical and other valuable skills is important part of sustainable youth development. Participation of children and youth in decision-making in schools must be part of it.

We also live in a world where university degree is not enough to secure a job. Sometimes pursuing a degree leaves students with extreme financial burdens on their shoulders. Availability of training opportunities and internships, almost often unpaid, is crucial for enhancement of youth employability and chances for decent work. The whole society could be profiting from easier access of youth to labour market. Despite all efforts made in recent years the number of unemployed young people is



still alarming. Establishment of effective collaboration between educational institutions and future employers and relevant stakeholders is a priority. Paid internship should become the norm.

Madame Chair,

It has been mentioned time and time again, but it is critical we direct more attention to the issue of youth civic engagement. Inclusive and participatory channels of communication are key for our democratic structures to remain legitimate.

Besides, we cannot talk about sustainable development without the inclusion of youth, and let me remind you that youth now constitutes more than half of the world's population. Not only we cannot afford to be silent, we also refuse to remain passive bystanders.

It is vital that the youth are given the platform to express their voices and participate in the decision-making processes. I call on you to continue pushing for our youth agenda, to include us further in the implementation of the Agenda 2030, and to intensify the efforts to inspire young people, and to encourage our confidence and promote success.

Help us open the window of opportunity and watch us galvanize positive change. Let our contributions count because youth empowerment and global prosperity go hand in hand and are mutually reinforcing.

Lastly, as many of our today's challenges transcend borders, we need to respond globally, act in unity, and embrace diversity. As the first-generation Vietnamese born and raised in beautiful country of the Czech Republic, I want to make clear that marginalized and minority groups are fully capable contributing positively to our communities. Let us harness the multiplier effect potential that inclusion and diversity have.

And yet at the same time, let us be even louder in denouncing all forms of discrimination and be more aware of the disadvantaged groups and the deep-rooted forms of socioeconomic inequalities.

I sincerely hope that soon, our youth will no longer be considered a vulnerable group but rather a source of inspiration, innovation and initiative.

I also aspire to wake up to an open minded and unbiased world, where every person's human rights are respected and valued in an equal manner.



Madame Chair,
Dear Fellow Delegates,

I invite you to join me, join us, in making these ambitious goals happen.

Thank you.