



Statement by Alžběta Filipková and Barbora Kvasničková

Czech UN Youth Delegates

at The Third Committee of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly

New York, 1 October 2019

Thank you for the floor, Mr. Chair.

Let us express our gratitude for speaking here on behalf of the Czech Republic, making the voices of Czech Youth heard. We stand here united for an even better future of us all, as are thousands of our peers during current political and climate gatherings back home.

We consider the year 2019 to be the year of civic engagement of not only youth but of the whole society. Hundreds of thousands of individuals mobilized for the strengthening of democratic values impersonate the will of people to play an active role in matters affecting their lives. In the Czech Republic, by gathering in the same places where the Velvet Revolution broke out 30 years ago, they are also bringing the legacy of the youth of the year 1989 back to life. We cherish the 1989 milestone that marks the formation of the Czech Republic as a free democratic liberal country of today. Especially as it was a result of mainly youth-led initiative, proving that youth is an important moving force of democracy.

We, therefore, call for a broader space for impactful discussions and involvement of youth on all levels. To ensure such approach, intergenerational dialogue must be the foundation of our everyday life. Instead of only listening, being equally listened to. This approach should be stimulated through innovative, interactive and inclusive education.

As stated by the UN Secretary-General: "Education today should combine knowledge, life skills and critical thinking". Seeing that a total of 50% of Czech students find educational content incompatible with both work and everyday life, we wish to enhance more of our skills. Critical thinking, fact-checking and work with information should become part of every educational process to ease the orientation in the rapidly increasing amount of information. As they are crucial for individual orientation in everyday situations and for informed decision making: In one case, the decision making that affects



our and our planets' chances of survival. We, therefore, call for internet and climate literacy enhancement.

Mr. Chair,

We believe the lack of precise work with information, especially on climate change, causes the polarization of our society. Millions of people have been advocating for tackling climate change, yet it remains difficult to find common ground. This, however, is the one issue that puts the human rights of each and every one of us at stake. Let's move the climate dialogue from accusations to mutual trust in the protection of human rights. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights with numerous supporters asserted: "The world has never seen a threat to human rights of this scope." Thus, in solidarity with all people directly affected by natural disasters caused by climate instability, we ask: "Where is the political action we are calling for?" Because to take climate action, is to defend human rights. Because to take climate action is to stand firmly for the normative and legal foundation of our world without compromises. Individually, many young people have already been lowering their carbon footprint to also empower the transition towards a circular economic system. Experiencing this difficulty ourselves, we want our efforts to count more.

With youth empowerment through discussion, cooperation and common action, we can find effective solutions. Neither of us can achieve this alone. And therefore, we give this speech to call upon member-states to open up spaces for greater youth participation. With mutual support, we can make a lasting change, the same way our parents did in 1989. In that year the world stood by us. Now, we stand with the world, to tackle joint problems side by side – together.