



Statement by Simona Petrů and Kristina Šůsová

Czech UN Youth Delegates

at the Third Committee Informal Debate of UN Youth Delegates

online, 21 October 2020

Thank you for the floor, Madame Chair.

Firstly, let us express our gratitude for the opportunity to speak here on the behalf of the Czech youth, as this year, it is more important than ever before. The COVID pandemic caused various problems to the major part of our society, including youth. There are two major issues we would like to address in this matter.

The first one is mental health. The most heavily impacted by the pandemic are the lives of youth. Lack of socialization, closed schools and cancelled social events are only some of the significant changes in the lifestyle of youth which contribute to a bad condition of their mental health. In Czechia, 36 % of people between 18 and 25 years suffer from some kind of mental disorder now, which is three times more than before pandemic, and this number is the highest one among all age groups.

It would be unwise to underestimate this issue. We urge you to consider youth people and their mental health when making restrictions and we urge you to make psychological help for youth as accessible as possible. Because mental health matters too.

And the other issue is access to education. Due to the ongoing pandemic, schools have been swiftly closed all around the world affecting more than 1.5 billion schoolchildren. According to UNICEF, globally, 1 out of 3 of those children missed out on remote learning. This gap may influence the rest of their lives, some of them might never return to school and some of them might never catch up with their more fortunate peers.

We urge you to ensure that all students get access to resources and tools necessary to continue their education from home. We urge you to sympathize with students and take in account exceptional circumstances in which many of them find themselves right now when designing and applying new educational policies.

The impact that the pandemic has on the youth might not be visible now but we will have to cope with the consequences in the next decades. Young people suffer too but their pain is marginalised. Their voices are ignored. Their actions are disregarded. Listen to us and show us that we matter! Thank you for the floor.