

The Hague Youth Manifesto 2020

- For the future of the UN, written by the future of the UN -



The Hague Youth Manifesto -24 Oct. 2020

“Intoku”

- Doing good without expecting anything in return-

Introduction

The presence of young people on the international stage is slowly gaining momentum. Over the years we have seen numerous youth-led initiatives, protests and or petitions popping up all over the globe. The notion that young people lack the knowledge, skills and or passion to contribute in order to solve problems, is still an often heard misconception.

In the last couple of months we have seen that the COVID-19 Pandemic caused a massive shift in international diplomacy. Conferences were cancelled, fora did not take place and the voice of millions of young people remained unheard on the international diplomatic stage. Efforts have been made to include young people on certain levels, these efforts however were unfortunately not substantial enough.

The goal of this document is to look beyond the pandemic and or the status quo we're living in. Our main objective is to ensure that all topics that directly concern young people will no longer be discussed without young people. We want to prevent the occasional press moment as a symbolic gesture out of goodwill. Instead we want to establish our presence formally and most importantly; permanently. Seeing that the UN will celebrate its 75th anniversary today, we will not let this jubilee go in vain. We are present here today either digitally and/or physically in order to co-create and strengthen this multilateral body we all so desperately need.

Politics and diplomacy nowadays have the tendency to feel like an exchange of interchangeable positions. We as the youth agitate heavily against this notion of quid pro quo. Do not expect from us that we will be a part of the old fashioned way of doing things. We ask for deeds performed “pro bono” for the good cause. Which is in this case, our cause.

Some of us are already past the point of seeking empowerment, as you might know we are not a homogenous group, we each have our own different needs and demands. All we ask for now is a permanent seat at the table in order to voice these needs.

There can be no meaningful youth participation without direct and permanent youth consultation.

2020 The Hague Youth Manifesto - Our key demands

- 1. We demand: the creation of an annual UN report that thoroughly examines the role of young people within the broader framework of the system of the United Nations and its member states. This report should especially be understood within the context of SDG 16.7 and should therefore go deeper into the goal of: “ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels”.***
- 2. We demand: accessibility for young people with regards to the designing, implementing and monitoring phase when it comes to the creation of new UN policies. This should be considered as a tool that aims to prevent the creation of unconsulted policies.***
- 3. We demand: the direct involvement of young people in all of the resolutions adopting organs of the UN (General Assembly, Security Council and the Economic and Social Council) during the drafting stage of resolutions. The previously mentioned negotiations should be deemed essential when the draft resolutions refer to young people and or their affected position in relation to that specific matter. This includes the negotiations before and after tabling the resolution.***
- 4. We demand: that in order to promote more youth participation from the “Global South” financial support should be provided for those young people who don’t have access to the required financial means. In order to prevent the overrepresentation of young people from certain prosperous socio-economic backgrounds, this financial support especially includes that all UN-internships should be paid for.***

5. We demand: that in order to normalize youth participation and the presence of young people within UN Bodies, specific youth quota should be implemented that ensure the presence of young people.

6. We demand: that different stakeholders within the global youth are to be recognized and if needed are heard separately. This distinction is important due to the heterogeneous nature of the global youth. Such special distinctions include, but are not limited to: gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, religion, ethnicity, disabilities, age & belonging to a minority group.

With regards to the distinction based upon age, young people have different needs based upon the phase of life they find themselves in. Distinctions that stipulate the position of adolescents, children and young adults for example allow for better understanding and thus better youth participation.

7. We demand: an integrated and inclusive say in processes on sustainable development and or any other issues related to biodiversity loss and the climate crisis. In the spirit of intergenerational equity, young people should be included structurally on determining the way forward.

8. We demand: an annual meet-up with the office of the Secretary General and the office of the Youth Envoy. The aim of the meet-up is to discuss the contents of the intended annual UN report as mentioned in demand number one.

In addition to this annual meet-up we also urge the UN to conduct a Voluntary Review every five years with regards to the status of youth participation within the UN.

Please note that: "We" stands for the United Nations Youth Representatives/Delegates and their respective constituencies.

Let everything happen to you,

beauty and terror.

Just keep going. No feeling is final.

- Rainer Maria Rilke -