



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Tokyo

Democracy, Peace and Prosperity

National Diet of Japan, Tokyo, 27 and 28 May 2015

Outcome Document

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On 27 and 28 May 2015, 189 young men and women parliamentarians from 66 countries gathered in Tokyo, Japan, for the IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians. This Conference was the first to be organized jointly by the IPU and an IPU Member Parliament. The purpose of the Conference was to identify ways of addressing major challenges impacting youth today and devise a roadmap for parliamentary engagement in this endeavour. The average age of the parliamentarians attending the Conference was 35.5 years. In our deliberations, we were joined by the Presiding Officers of both Houses of the National Diet of Japan, Mr. Tadamori Oshima and Mr. Masaaki Yamazaki, as well as the IPU President, Mr. Saber Chowdhury and the IPU Secretary General, Mr. Martin Chungong. A team of experts from specialized United Nations agencies and civil society organizations also took part in the two-day event.

We wish to warmly thank the IPU and the National Diet of Japan for convening such a significant event. We believe that the Conference has succeeded in taking us one step closer to achieving our goal of addressing the obstacles to youth participation and self-realization in a peaceful, safe and youth-friendly socio-economic environment. It has also fulfilled its purpose as a youth-led political platform of networking and debate.

The previous IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, held in Geneva in October 2014, focused specifically on youth participation in politics. The Geneva Conference underscored the need for young people to participate actively in politics and recommended a series of robust measures to promote such participation through the democratic process.

This Conference in Tokyo has focused on *Democracy, Peace and Prosperity*. It was held for the dual purpose of further strengthening links between young legislators from around the globe and devising new and creative solutions for peace and prosperity in a world where young people are bearing the brunt of the socio-economic crisis and are the primary victims of the violence and conflicts that threaten the present and the future of their societies.

In our deliberations, we stress that democracy, peace and prosperity are interlinked. Through unrest, disillusionment, apathy or political disengagement, young people are demonstrating their aspiration to democratic, peaceful and prosperous societies. We have confirmed that it is critical to involve youth as key stakeholders and decision-makers. We firmly believe that there can be no strong democracy, no lasting peace and no sustainable prosperity without the contribution of young people, who represent a major segment of the population in many countries.

All societies need the power of youth to achieve a better future. Young people have a long life ahead of them and must consider the world from a long-term perspective. This means that youth empowerment can enhance the sustainability of our communities and our world.

We emphasize the need for democracy to be more representative of young people. We reiterate the recommendations previously made in Geneva to enhance youth participation in politics, namely to:

- Adopt and implement youth quotas;
- Lower the voting age and align the age of eligibility to run for office with the age of eligibility to vote;
- Make young people part and parcel of all political decision-making processes at the legislative and the governmental levels, as well as at the national and local levels;
- Introduce a paradigm shift in politics, including through ICTs, to make politics more amenable to young people's contributions;
- Start youth empowerment in politics in the early years of schooling, with the requisite adaptation of school curricula;
- Empower women in politics as young women face double discrimination based on gender and age; and
- Continue the global youth-led platforms spearheaded by the IPU, such as the permanent Forum of Young Parliamentarians and the annual Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians.

We reaffirm that prosperity and well-being should be the main objectives of socio-economic policies. Young people have to be recognized, respected and included as an integral part of development and decision-making. We see democracy, human rights, gender equality, social equity and justice as key ingredients of prosperity.

We are concerned by the high rates of youth unemployment and the emerging trend of the educated unemployed. Some of us referred to the youth unemployment crisis as an "unemployment bomb" about to explode anytime and expected to result in social unrest and violence.

We expressed deep concern over the fact that many young people are neither in employment nor in education. Young people are also overrepresented in temporary work as part-time and precarious jobs are on the rise. Young women are doubly disadvantaged in terms of access to the youth labour market and the pay gap. The disproportionately high percentage of young people aspiring to migration and the attendant loss of life among them are particularly worrying. The main cause of migration among this population group is sheer desperation, with young people willing to go to any length to migrate to what they perceive to be greener pastures.

We often hear that the world is committed to addressing the needs and interests of youth and to tackling the challenges they face. As young parliamentarians, we now call upon governments, international organizations and other stakeholders to take action on the following:

- Education remains a key goal and a crucial sector even if it does not offer all opportunities to access the job market. We recommend that education be free, compulsory and better adapted to the needs of the job market. Skills development needs to be expanded and adapted constantly to evolving employment opportunities.
- We call for the implementation of youth-empowerment initiatives in business and gender equality in the job market.
- Entrepreneurship should be promoted, including by allocating funds and facilitating access to loans for young entrepreneurs. We also recommend the provision of greater support to sectors that need to be sustained by young people, such as agriculture.

The principle of equality needs to be better applied to youth employment policies and legislation. We wish to draw particular attention to the obligation to promote and respect the specific needs and rights of young migrant workers and first-time workers.

- Regional and international cooperation are needed to better regulate the job market and to ensure that education matches in practical terms the needs of the current job market at the local, regional and international levels .
- We are witnessing high rates of teenage pregnancies in many regions, road traffic-related deaths and injuries and other behaviours that impact on young people's health. We recommend that health policies become adolescent-friendly by including objectives and programmes to facilitate information and skills-development, promote a safe environment for young people and provide them with health and counselling services. Such policies also need to focus more on youth and require accurate data and sound evidence. We have taken note of the ongoing consultative process aimed at renewing the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health and we welcome the opportunity that the Strategy offers to draw greater international attention to adolescent health.

We have also taken note of a certain number of ongoing global processes for the design of the new post 2015 development agenda. These include the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the global pact on climate change and the agreement on Financing for Development. We undertake to work in our parliaments for the outcomes of all these processes to reflect the needs of the people, especially youth. We will urge our national authorities to ensure that appropriate language is included in these agreements recognizing the role of parliaments and the IPU in the implementation of the new development agenda.

In this respect, we welcome the inclusion in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction of provisions relating to the role of parliament and the IPU. We pledge to work with our parliaments and governments to ensure to promote a robust parliamentary contribution to these processes.

We stress that young people should not be seen as perpetrators of violence and conflict although many are recruited by violent extremist groups. We affirm that young people are prone to and victims of violence and conflict, including armed conflict. Ultimately, they should be protected. We are dedicated to promoting greater involvement of young people in proactive peacebuilding. We believe that inclusive, tolerant societies and the inculcation of a culture of peace can contribute to this undertaking.

We believe that education and employment, youth engagement in politics and youth involvement and leadership in community forums, civil society organizations, youth associations, sports and arts can contribute to the general welfare of society and are key to halting the involvement of young people in violence and conflict.

We also believe that the legislative and policy response to the involvement of young people in violence and conflict should not be reduced to merely a security and military response. We call upon parliaments to adopt and implement United Nations Security Council resolutions 1624 on Prohibition of incitement to commit terrorist acts, 1373 on Creation of Counterterrorism Committee and 1325 on Women, peace and security.

We are convinced that the anti-radicalization response should be transformed into a comprehensive framework of action based on respect for the human rights of young people, women and children, fundamental freedoms and socio-economic development. This should include:

- Legislation, policy and funds to guarantee compulsory and free education that encompasses programmes to combat violence and manage conflict;

- Legislation to criminalize hate speech;
- National and social cohesion;
- Youth policies that include violence- and conflict-related programmes and projects that are sufficiently resourced;
- Appropriate measures, including quotas, to promote equal opportunities in the job market;
- Involvement of young people in all consultations, debates and decisions related to counter-terrorism and addressing violence and conflict;
- Removing the stigma attached to victims of violence by providing medical and social care;
- Challenging gender norms and enacting legislation to protect young people from violence, in particular violence against young women and girls;
- Ending the alienation of young people, including by creating targeted opportunities for them to contribute to campaigns, programmes and projects at the community level;
- Supporting youth access to sports and arts; and
- Without prejudice to freedom of information, ensuring that the media, and especially social media, do not serve as vehicles for conveying hate messages.

As young parliamentarians, we are committed to ending the manipulation of young people for political gain. We want to work with the older generation to build societies that offer equal opportunities and greater justice for young people.

We urge the United Nations to consider including young people in peacebuilding missions. We also urge our national authorities to invest more in young people's participation in peacebuilding, including by reducing military budgets. We are committed to upholding the "Do no harm" principle, which means ensuring that young people's participation in peace processes does not in fact end up aggravating the situation.

We stress the need for youth policies to be established in consultation with young people through various channels that would facilitate the involvement of various groups of young people. Where such policies already exist, we commit to working for their review. Where they do not exist, we encourage our national authorities to establish such policies. We urge the IPU to gather these policies, disseminate them widely and to undertake comparative research to guide policy orientation.

All societies need the power of youth to achieve a better future and we, as young parliamentarians, will work to implement the different measures we are calling for in this document and to mainstream a youth perspective in the work of our respective parliaments, including through the establishment of youth caucuses.

We request the support of the IPU in:

- *Continuing to organize annual conferences for young parliamentarians, such as this one, since they provide both a training opportunity for young parliamentarians and a global forum for taking positions on youth issues;*
- *Organizing regional or international thematic workshops to ensure ongoing discussion between young parliamentarians;*

- *Holding workshops for young parliamentarians, young leaders from the business world and entrepreneurs in order to gain a better understanding of opportunities and challenges facing youth in business and young entrepreneurs and devise targeted solutions;*
- *Functioning as a global youth political observatory and, to that end, continuing to gather information on youth participation in parliament;*
- *Conducting in-depth studies on youth involvement in various regions;*
- *Providing tools that would inform youth-related policy orientation; and*
- *Continuing to encourage young people's involvement in IPU bodies and, by so doing, continuing to set an example of political integration;*

We would like to express our gratitude to the National Diet of Japan and the IPU for having afforded us the opportunity to address such major issues on a unique youth-led global platform of parliamentarians.

We look forward to meeting again in 2016 to discuss further ways and means of improving the lives of young people globally. The delegation of Zambia has extended an invitation to the IPU to organize the 2016 Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Zambia.