

Baku Commitment to Youth Policies

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www.youthpolicyforum.org

A Common Cause

Marking the 20th anniversary of the *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond* and reaffirming its importance as an overarching global youth policy framework, and recalling the *Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes*, the First Global Forum on Youth Policies specifically aimed at elevating the youth policy debate, with the particular purpose of advancing youth policy development and its full and effective implementation at all levels. This global event was co-organized by the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, and the Council of Europe, with the support of youthpolicy.org and hosted by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Azerbaijan in the framework of Azerbaijan's Chairmanship of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers.

Bringing together over 700 participants from 165 countries, with a strong participation of ministers responsible for youth, as well as experts, youth advocates, civil society representatives, United Nations agency representatives and international and regional organisations, to discuss youth policies through three different lenses (thematic, structural and region-specific), the Forum responded to the crucial importance of looking at youth policy work in a holistic and multi-stakeholder perspective.

The Forum provided an unprecedented platform for these diverse stakeholders to take stock of progress made in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth policies at various levels since the United Nations General Assembly adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth in 1995: it distilled lessons learned and good practices and also identified remaining gaps and challenges, in particular within the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Throughout the three days of the Forum, the participants debated youth policy-related issues by looking at key thematic areas, guiding principles and common denominators as well as regional frameworks and priorities of youth policies.

The outcome of all these discussions helped shape a common understanding of key guiding principles for integrated and inclusive youth policy development that will serve as a milestone in defining and exemplifying what is needed to advance youth policy development and implementation with and for youth.

Forum's Findings

Within the context of ongoing social transformations, sustainable human development depends on the well-being of youth and on how far their concerns and aspirations are addressed with and for them, through participatory and inclusive policies. At all levels, youth policies should be guided by, and promote, a set of key guiding principles that are indispensable to meaningful and inclusive youth policy development and implementation.

Youth Policies should be:

Rights-based – designed and implemented within a human rights-based framework, in line with the country's global and regional commitments.

Inclusive – ensuring equal opportunities for every young person to achieve their full potential in life, including the elimination of barriers of inclusion, especially of vulnerable groups and enabling civic participation of all young people.

Participatory – designed, developed, implemented, monitored and evaluated with the meaningful participation of young people, and with the involvement of all concerned stakeholders, from the local to the national level, in both rural and urban settings, and in all development contexts, including post-conflict and transition situations.

Gender-responsive – enabling specific actions to promote gender equality, ensure young women are equal partners to young men, and to address gender-based disparities in all settings, from political to socio-economic and cultural.

Comprehensive – adopting a holistic approach to youth development, through increased collaboration across policy sectors, ministries and other relevant entities as well as by providing an integrated strategic framework that guides legislation and measures affecting youth.

Knowledge-based and evidence-informed – developed and regularly updated, based on the collection, analysis and dissemination of quantitative and qualitative information on the situation, needs, challenges and opportunities of young women and men in a given context.

Fully resourced – have adequate, transparent and dedicated resources for implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and maximizing available resources through coordination and by enabling multi-stakeholder partnerships and shared ownership

Accountable – nationally and locally owned and led, and regularly monitored and evaluated, against specific youth development targets and indicators, with the active participation of youth.

Commitments

Based on the above findings emanating from the First Global Forum on Youth Policies, the co-conveners commit to and call for:

- Further promoting and supporting the implementation of the *World Programme of Action for Youth*;
- Promoting synergies between youth policies and broader development policies and frameworks, particularly in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and means of implementation thereof;
- Establishing a Global Initiative on Youth Policies to support the development and implementation of youth policies through technical assistance, sharing of expertise and knowledge, and advocacy;
- Regular convening by the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth of an International Stakeholders Meeting on Youth Policies, bringing together the main regional and global actors to enhance global partnerships and coordination on youth policies;
- Strengthening regional and cross-regional collaboration and partnerships in the field of public policies on youth;
- Designing and implementing processes and fostering partnerships that enable inclusive, and multi-stakeholder involvement in youth policies;

- Strengthening the promotion and application of governance mechanisms that encourage transversal and cross-sectoral coordination and work, as well as efficient and effective national-to-local implementation;
- Further developing tools, indicators, methodologies and practical research, including the identification of successful practices, that would allow to build and maintain a solid knowledge and evidence-base for effective, inclusive and gender-responsive youth policies;
- Further promoting and supporting youth civic engagement and meaningful participation in decision-making and political processes and institutions, including by promoting youth involvement through informal networks, platforms and channels; and by making specific efforts to promote young women's participation;
- Enabling greater youth involvement in strong, sound and inclusive youth policy monitoring and evaluation systems.