

Arab States' Youth Coalition for Population and Development

Call to Action

Preamble

Acknowledging the Program of Action that was initiated in 1994 in Cairo, where 179 countries met for the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and agreed that all people are entitled to a healthy and productive life without discrimination, and that promoting individual rights and dignity are essential for sustainable development and economic growth.

Recognizing the progress made towards achieving the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action, considerable gaps still exist in the implementation of different areas of the Programme of Action.

Recognizing the role of young people and their impactful participation in revolutions, uprisings and social movements that are taking place in the region over the past 3 years.

Responding to these needs in the Arab region, 70 young leaders convened from all over the region in Cairo in November 2012, and formed the first regional platform ensuring that the rights of young people are met, respected, and protected. Thus, the Arab States' Youth Coalition for Population and Development was established, and six thematic areas were identified: (1) Youth and Migration, (2) Youth Participation, (3) Sexual and Reproductive Health (4) Changing Family Formation, (5) Population, Environment, and Climate Change, and (6) Gender and Gender-based Violence.

Declaring that we as the Arab States' Youth Coalition for Population and Development intend to stake a claim on regional development on behalf of the region's young people, we call upon the Arab regions' states to:

1. Youth and migration

1.1 Establish\strengthen a national governmental entity integrating different stakeholders to foster the rights and conditions of migrants, refugees, internally displaced people and asylum seekers.

1.2 Establish an encouraging environment for young people to reach their potential in their own local communities.

1.3 Ratify and fulfill commitment to the international human rights treaties and conventions on migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

1.4 Increase educational programs and awareness activities, to promote intercultural dialogue and reduce tensions and conflicts about migrant's 'rights.

2. Youth Participation

2.1 Empower young people to effectively participate as volunteers and social agents of change free from abuse, violence and coercion of their rights.

2.2 Effectively engage young people in all mechanisms of national and regional programs and policy development that directly affect their lives, including but not limited to: planning, implementation, decision making, monitoring and evaluation

.2.3 Recognize volunteerism and civic engagement of young people by the different national entities.

2.4 Secure consistent funding for government programs aimed at increasing youth participation.

3. Sexual and Reproductive health

3.1 Ensure young people's access to a full range of quality and confidential youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services tailored to their needs, free from all forms of stigma and discrimination.

3.2 provide comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health education both in and out of schools.

3.3 Commit to Elimination and criminalization of female genital mutilation, all forms of sexual violence and human trafficking.

3.4 Increase funding and resources directed towards national and regional Sexual and Reproductive health and rights related research.

3.5 protect the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS with special focus on accessible, affordable, and acceptable medical treatment and appropriate psychosocial support.

4. Changing Family formation

4.1. Review and amend national laws and policies including civil affairs targeting family, women, youth and children to eliminate child and forced marriages, child labor and secure basic health and education towards fostering human rights and gender equity.

4.2 Commit to provide all forms of support services to all family members, especially to those are subject to all forms of violence, female headed households, and women in formal and non formal labor force.

4.3 Commit to developing transparent mechanisms to protect the rights of children as stated in international agreements especially those living in the streets, children living with disability and those affected by conflict.

5. Population, Environment, and Climate Change

5.1 establish\strengthen national entities, incorporating NGOs, government, youth, private sector, to foster environmental sustainability including strategies, laws and programs.

5.2 Raise awareness about environmental issues and climate change and their impact on populations through the media, education systems, and civil society in an effort to target all sectors of society.

5.3 Commit to manage existing, explore and invest in renewable energy resources to preserve the environment and promote means of recycling and waste management

5.4 Provide financial and technical support towards environmental and population issues, as well as proper infrastructure that is environmentally friendly.

5.5 Support and activate the role of civil society in implementing environmental initiatives.

5.6 establish policies to ensure water and food security and combat desertification.

6. Gender and Gender-Based Violence

6.1 establish and reform national legislation and implement public policies towards achieving gender equality particularly promoting women's political participation, equal and safe access to education and employment opportunities and health services.

6.2 establish and reform national legislation and implement public policies towards combating gender-based violence; with a specific emphasis on criminalizing and eliminating child and forced marriage, sexual violence, domestic violence, female genital mutilation, marital rape and honor killing.

6.3 Engage communities, including marginalized groups, at the grassroots level to build support and gain momentum for gender equality issues.

6.4 integrate gender equality and GBV issues in education programs for young people in schools and out of schools.

6.5 Ensure that all survivors of gender-based violence have immediate access to critical health, psychosocial and legal services including post-rape care, emergency contraception, post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV prevention and access to safe abortion services in all cases of violence, rape and incest, police protection, safe housing and shelter; documentation of cases, forensic services and legal aid; and referrals and longer-term support.

6.6 ensure equal citizenship rights for women and their children.

6.7 embrace diversity and respect for others, regardless of ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, religion, gender, exceptionalities, disability language, geographical area and any other status.