



UN Major Group for
Children and Youth
the space for children and youth in the United Nations

United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth
Engagement Report

World Humanitarian Summit

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Istanbul, Turkey

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Background

The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) is a multi-stakeholder process launched by United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in 2012 and coordinated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), aiming to address challenges faced within the current humanitarian landscape and strengthen communication and collaboration.

The process led up to the first ever World Humanitarian Summit, taking place on the 23-24th of May 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey. The Summit gathered representatives from member states, UN agencies, humanitarian actors, NGOs, private sector, science and academia and affected populations to discuss ways to improve humanitarian action along five identified key areas:

1. Prevent and End Conflict
2. Uphold the Norms that Safeguard Humanity
3. Leave No One Behind
4. Working differently to end need
5. Invest in Humanity

The WHS also saw the launch of over 3000 different commitments made towards the Secretary-General's' Agenda for Humanity, by both member states and other actors. The report from the WHS will be up for adoption during the 71st session of the UN General Assembly.

Representation

200 youth participants were invited to take part in the Summit. The United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (UN MGCY) took active part in the nomination and selection of these youth participants, and worked to ensure the availability of funding and information for these participants. Over 30 members of the UN MGCY facilitation team participated in the WHS, along with representatives from UN MGCY member organisations.

Pre-World Humanitarian Summit Youth Forum

A pre-WHS Youth Forum took place on the 22nd of May. The Youth Forum was open for the youth participants of the WHS along with 150 young people from Turkey and 150 young Syrian refugees residing in Istanbul.

UN MGCY was one of the organisers of the pre-forum, together with the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Youth Assembly, UN-Habitat and the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

The forum included breakout discussions around the themes of the WHS, a training on advocacy, a briefing around communication and social media for youth participants during the meeting and speeches from many of the organisers, including the UN MGCY. Members

from the UN MGCY held the training and briefing around advocacy and communication, and facilitated the different breakout sessions.

During the meeting, UN MGCY also worked with members from the United Network of Young Peacebuilders to conduct a consultation with Syrian youth, outlining recommendations towards the international community on their response to the crises in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Special Session on Youth

Leading up to the WHS, the UN MGCY took part in the WHS Advisory Board on Youth, together with several UN agencies and large NGOs. The Advisory Board was responsible for organising the Special Session on Transforming Humanitarian Action with and for Young People. During the special session, UN agencies, NGOs, member states and youth-led organisations stated their commitment towards the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, which was launched during the session. Three youth speakers also shared their experiences as young people affected by humanitarian crises. Among them was UN MGCY member Ehab Badwi, who shared his experiences as a first responder for the Syrian Red Cross and as a refugee.

The special session was very successful, and widely considered to have one of the most concrete outcomes of the WHS.

Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action

The Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action (annex 1) was created by the WHS Advisory Board on Youth and launched during the Special Session on Transforming Humanitarian Action with and for Young People. During the Summit, it was endorsed by over 30 entities, and many more since.

The Compact aims to ensure that the needs of youth affected by humanitarian crises are recognised and met, and that young people have an active and meaningful part in all stages of humanitarian action and humanitarian policy.

UN MGCY took an active part in the creation of the Compact, the launch and signing of it during the WHS, and will continue promoting it after the Summit.

Side Events

The UN MGCY were co-organisers for four side events:

1. Young women: Actors and Victims of Humanitarian Crises,
2. Consultation on the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security
3. Climate Change-Induced Displacement
4. Capacity Building in Support of Young Refugees in Major Cities

In addition, members from UN MGCY spoke in several other side events, including a side event on Safeguarding Health in Conflict, a side event on Youth as Actors: Volunteering in Humanitarian Settings, a side event on “Climate Induced Migrants: Humanitarian and Rights Perspectives” and a side event on Young People at the Heart of Humanitarian Action.

Specifically, the side event entitled Youth as Actors: Volunteering in Humanitarian Settings was organized by GYC partner Reach out to Asia (ROTA) and included inputs from the UN MGCY, the UN-Habitat, and the Istanbul Metropolitan Youth Council. The discussion during this event revolved around the role of youth as actors in humanitarian settings. The UN MGCY representative highlighted the fact that youth volunteerism is multifaceted, and included young people who participate in policy processes like the WHS. The UN MGCY speaker also discussed the work done by young people in the formulation of the Doha Declaration and the Compact, and pushed those present to support youth voices in humanitarian policy processes going forward, as well as provide funding to platforms of youth to continue to coordinate and facilitate strong youth engagement in this work.

A number of MGCY members were part of a side event co-organised by one of the UN MGCY organising partners, Restless Development. The event, titled ‘Young People at the Heart of Humanitarian Action,’ featured an ‘In Conversation with..’ styled section that included three young people from Liberia, Indonesia and Rwanda that were supported by UN MGCY organisation Plan International and also War Child UK. Young members of the MGCY also featured in the panel discussion at the end of the event. Chaired by UN Youth Envoy Ahmad Alhendawi, Regine Guevera, youth focal point for ASEAN, and Augsuta Ashun, a Restless Development former volunteer from Sierra Leone, spoke alongside War Child’s CEO and Crown Agents’ Chair of Board. The event also allowed for participation from the audience, which included a number of MGCY members in attendance. Discussions were had around the implementation of the Youth Compact, with action points that fed into the Special Session on the Youth Compact that took place the following day.

In December 2015, the UN SCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security came with a call to action - the Secretary General was to develop a study, called the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security, to be delivered within two years. The study is coordinated by the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), in partnership with a number of NGOs (the United Network of Young Peacebuilders, one of the member organisations of UN MGCY, being one of them). The World Humanitarian Summit was an opportunity to develop a consultation with young people involved in peace processes, thus we had a Consultation on the Progress

Study on Youth, Peace and Security. The objective was to gather inputs from young people of different backgrounds on how young women and men contribute positively to conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and the prevention of radicalization.

The side event on climate induced displacement was co-organized with many partners. UN MGCY presented the perspective of youth on climate and migration, emphasizing the understanding of climate change as an inherited crisis and the importance of intergenerational equity. We also took the opportunity to highlight a number of youth recommendations from previous events, such as the Doha consultation and the manifesto from the 12th Conference of Youth in Paris last year.

Plenary Statements

During the WHS, ten plenary statements were made by youth participants, under the coordination of UN MGCY. Six of these statements were made by UN MGCY members (Annex 2). These statements spoke about the Compact for Young People of Humanitarian Action, as well as on some of the priority areas of young people as defined in the Doha Youth Declaration on Transforming Humanitarian Aid. These were on the themes of Localisation, Contextualization and Preparedness; Coordination and Communication; Humanitarian Financing; Technology and Innovation and Youth Engagement and Participation.

Outcomes

The summit ended with 9000 participants, 173 member's states, 55 Heads of State and Governments, hundreds of private sector representatives, and thousands of people from the civil societies and Non-Governmental organizations. It has led to an increase in intergenerational reflection and dialogue on global humanitarian challenges pertinent to the highest decision-making of governments and organizations. The summit has also fostered the relationship between global leaders and the young people to collectively address current and shape future humanitarian challenges. Furthermore, thousands of commitments were made and pledges undertaken by the global communities and individuals to reshape the humanitarian assistance to end conflicts and forced displacements. The summit witnessed the launch of the Compact for young people in humanitarian action- which calls for an inclusive environment of young people in decision-making at all levels of governments and other agencies. However, the summit has enabled many young people to interact and network with each other for sharing of experience and best practices.

Annex 1: Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action

COMPACT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Call for UN Member States, UN System entities, Civil Society, Private Sector, Media, Local Authorities and youth-led Organizations to align strategies, approaches and programmatic responses with the principles outlined in the Agenda for humanity in view of reaching all young people and empowering young women, young men, girls and boys to be agents of positive transformation.

We, the participants of the World Humanitarian Summit High-Level Special Session on ***Transforming Humanitarian Action with and for Young People***, have gathered in Istanbul, Turkey, to ensure that the priorities, needs and rights of young women and young men, girls and boys affected by disaster, conflict, forced displacement and other humanitarian crises, are addressed, and that they are informed, consulted, and meaningfully engaged throughout all stages of humanitarian action.

We recognize the humanitarian responsibility to enable and protect the rights, address the specific needs and build on the strengths of all young people. Ensuring young people have the skills, capacity and resources to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from humanitarian situations, will help reduce the costs of and need for international humanitarian support, improve humanitarian effectiveness and strengthen resilience of communities.

Drawing on the relevant international and regional instruments, the Doha Youth Declaration on Reshaping the Humanitarian Agenda, the Global Refugee Youth Consultations, the UN Security Council resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security, and the outcomes of other processes led by, involving and/or targeting young people, we call for a long-term commitment from stakeholders to the following actions:

[Service delivery to young people]

Action 1: Promote and increase age- and gender-responsive and inclusive programmes that contribute to the protection, health and development of young women, young men, girls and boys within humanitarian settings;

[Engagement/Participation]

Action 2: Support systematic inclusion of, engagement and partnership with youth, in all phases of humanitarian action through sharing of information and involvement in decision-making processes at all levels, including budget allocations, and partner with youth in the implementation of the humanitarian response efforts

[Capacity building & Strengthen the local]

Action 3: Recognize and strengthen young people's capacities and capabilities to be effective humanitarian actors in prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, and empower and support local youth-led initiatives and organizations in humanitarian

response, such as those targeting affected youth, including young refugees and internally displaced persons living in informal urban settlements and slums;

[Availability of and Accountability for Resources]

Action 4: Increase resources intended to address the needs and priorities of adolescents and youth affected by humanitarian crises, including disasters, conflict and displacement, and identify ways to more accurately track and report on the resources allocated to young people in humanitarian contexts;

[Data/Knowledge]

Action 5: Ensure the generation and use of age- and sex- disaggregated data pertaining to adolescents and youth in humanitarian settings;

We the undersigned agree to collectively review at regular intervals and be accountable for the progress of the implementation of this compact. By agreeing to this compact, we are accountable for and commit to transforming humanitarian action *for* and *with* young people, guided by the Agenda for Humanity, to prevent and end conflict, safeguard human rights and rule of law, leave no one behind, and invest in young people for now and for the future.

Annex 2: Plenary Statements during the World Humanitarian Summit

Plenary Statement on the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action

Youth make up more than a third of people displaced by conflicts and disasters worldwide. Crises have the potential to erode protective familial and social ties and can leave young people separated from their loved ones, while formal and non-formal educational programs are discontinued and community and social networks broken down. This places young people at risk of poverty, violence, and abuse – not just during crisis, but long into their future.

Despite these issues, youth have shown that they can – and must – be on the frontlines of humanitarian action. Youth are taking the lead in contributing to resilience and serving their societies when disaster strikes or conflict erupts.

As the result, the *Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action* was launched earlier today.

The development of this compact does not just target young people but was driven by the youth engaged in the WHS process.

As a priority, the needs and rights of young people affected by disaster, conflict, forced displacement and other humanitarian crises, are addressed, and that they are informed, consulted, and meaningfully engaged throughout all stages of humanitarian action is crucial to the compact.

25 actors have today made specific commitments to ensure implementation of the following five action points:

Action 1: Promote and increase age- and gender-responsive and inclusive programmes;

Action 2: Support systematic inclusion of engagement and partnership with youth;

Action 3: Recognize and strengthen young people's capacities and capabilities to be effective humanitarian actors;

Action 4: Increase resources addressing the needs and priorities of adolescents and youth affected by humanitarian crises;

Action 5: Ensure the generation and use of age- and sex- disaggregated data pertaining to adolescents and youth in humanitarian settings;

By agreeing to this compact, we are accountable for and commit to transforming humanitarian action for and with young people, guided by the Agenda for Humanity, to prevent and end conflict, safeguard human rights and rule of law, leave no one behind, and invest in young people for now and for the future.

We invite you all to take this crucial step towards a safe and peaceful world. We invite you to commit to the compact, to invest in children, adolescent and youth - to safeguard future generations who are to inherit the decisions taken here today. I commit to the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action. What will you do?

Plenary Statement on Localisation, Contextualization and Preparedness

I am speaking on behalf of the UN Major Group for Children and Youth, and the youth constituency. To gather the inputs of young people for the World Humanitarian Summit, we have engaged in a global offline and online consultation process, and we would like to share their views.

Affected populations, including youth, are best placed to know the needs of their local communities in crises situations and to suggest contextualized and effective solutions. Engaging local youth into preparedness, response, and recovery plans at the local level is essential to reaping the full benefits of a reinvigorated humanitarian landscape.

International standards should be established around the principle of subsidiarity, dealing with localisation of response strategy, participatory needs assessments, preparedness planning and post-crisis delivery.

Community engagement is essential in providing frameworks, policies and action plans that will be sustainable, accepted and endorsed by all parties, which will not only secure local agreement but encourage active participation and ownership of the project being implemented, using locally appropriate resources.

This entails a two-way dialogue of knowledge exchange between external actors and local communities, with investment in capacity building including indigenous knowledge, as opposed to a simplistic knowledge transfer of modern methods, policies, and technological solutions in a non-accessible, punctual manner.

At times, lack of cultural awareness and sensitivity mean that international humanitarian responders risk unintentionally marginalising the affected populations to whom they are trying to provide relief. To prevent such incidents from occurring, youth can be powerful

stakeholders in actively supporting the integration of humanitarian efforts into their local communities and mitigating any backlash.

Dispersed around the world, youth are willing contributors to serve as a resource for both their local community and larger humanitarian community. Either as individuals or organizations, young people have been and will continue to share local knowledge and dedicate their time to ensure appropriate response when answering the call to action. To achieve this, we urge the humanitarian community to strengthen and expand local youth-led initiatives in order to give them the adequate space, access, opportunities, and resources to fully actualize their important role as contributors in society.

Thank you.

Plenary Statement on Coordination and Communication

I am speaking on behalf of the UN Major Group for Children and Youth, and the youth constituency. We have engaged in a global offline and online consultation process for the World Humanitarian Summit to gather the inputs of young people, and we would like to share their views.

Poor communication and coordination among different actors remains one of the most pressing challenges in humanitarian action, having been identified as a main cause of inadequate response and delivery of aid. Although the thematic-orientation of the cluster system works well for some UN entities and governmental partners, it fails to recognize the cross-thematic focuses of many non-governmental organizations and private sector partners.

To ensure a streamlined and coordinated approach, there should be regular and sustained communication amongst the international, regional and national governance and relief mechanisms to avoid overlap and enable robust and well-informed strategies to be built.

Agencies should actively partner and collaborate to have wider impact. In order for more effective stakeholder engagement, we call for a review of the UN cluster system aimed at improving stakeholder coordination and communication through enhanced engagement of modern technologies and local resources. Youth should be recognized as capable bridging agents between international and local actors.

To facilitate coordination and communication at all levels, open platforms for information and data sharing should be established, equipping vulnerable populations in crises with tools for prevention and immediate response. Social networks should be leveraged to disseminate information regarding knowledge, expertise and emerging solutions.

New technologies such as crisis mapping, social networks and other innovations can be used to build partnerships, provide a comprehensive picture of the existing needs and response, and coordinate humanitarian action.

Synergistic partnerships that build a bridge between humanitarian aid and sustainable development are of particular importance. They can help ensure that humanitarian response

supports locally-driven development to mitigate the scale of future needs. In cases where community-level recovery begins before emergency needs assessments has been conducted, adapting coordination mechanisms rapidly is particularly important.

To ensure that humanitarian relief is well-coordinated, timely delivered and fit for purpose, we urge all member states and other actors to work together to establish new coordinating mechanisms, to localize humanitarian action with the full engagement of all stakeholders.

Thank you.

Plenary Statement on Humanitarian Financing

I am speaking on behalf of the UN Major Group for Children and Youth, and the youth constituency. We have engaged in a global offline and online consultation process for the World Humanitarian Summit to gather the inputs of young people, and we would like to share their views.

With the number of humanitarian crises constantly growing, financial resources are being stretched, causing humanitarian operations to become more difficult to carry out and complete. Last year, significant funding gaps led to over half of estimated humanitarian needs being unmet. To meet these needs, states, donors and humanitarian actors should facilitate reforms of existing humanitarian financing mechanisms, promoting accountability and efficacy of humanitarian funding.

The importance of local actors in humanitarian response can not be underestimated, including those affected, who make up ninety percent of first responders. Therefore, there must be a clear mechanism in place to allow for the direct access to financial resources for local humanitarian actors, and a clear reporting and accountability structure for the use of resources.

There is a concern amongst youth regarding the general lack of accountability of humanitarian actors in term of use of finance. To ensure that resources allocated to humanitarian funding is not being misused, lost to corruption or leave behind marginalised groups, all stakeholders should be included in budgeting and financial decision-making. Increased resources should be allocated to meet the specific needs and priorities of children and youth, and their use should be clearly tracked and reported on.

However, simply an increase in financial resources towards humanitarian assistance is not enough. It is crucial to ensure that no financial investments contribute to environmental degradation or fragility, and that all humanitarian action has long-term strategies to avoid aid dependency.

To create a financial and fiscal system that enables sustainability and limits hazard-exposure, we must focus on factors that create liquidity and enable an appropriate

macroeconomic environment. Taxation should be applied to underlying risk factors of humanitarian crises and activities that exacerbate them, by integrating ecological tax reform and social externality taxation along with progressive taxation.

It is also crucial to ensure that no financial investments contribute to environmental degradation or fragility, nor to protract conflicts. In addition, major reductions in military expenditure is also needed. This should be done by operationalizing the Secretary-General's five point proposal on nuclear disarmament and through the setup of an interagency task force chaired by UN Office of Disarmament Affairs to advise on reallocating resources from the military sector to other critical sectors.

To mobilize proper investments for a new humanitarian agenda, non-financial resources must also be strengthened. Investments in technology and innovation, from both formal and indigenous knowledge, are important to further operationalize a new humanitarian landscape. The Technology Facilitation Mechanism, an outcome of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, sets a strong foundation and technology banks should properly be formed to facilitate access to proper resources, enhance capacity building, and increased local infrastructure for effective planning, response, and recovery.

We urge all stakeholders to commit to transparent, accountable and ethical financing of humanitarian action, and to establish financing mechanisms that will enable the quick, effective and direct flow of resources to where they are mostly needed.

Thank you.

Plenary Statement on Technology and Innovation

I am speaking on behalf of the UN Major Group for Children and Youth, and the youth constituency. To gather the inputs of young people for the World Humanitarian Summit, we have engaged in an extensive offline and online consultation process, reaching youth from all over the world.

Millennials often receive negative press for being too technologically dependent, too social media focused, or too disconnected from politics and society. And frankly, we understand the concern. However, to only frame the idea of young people as mindless drones tapping away on phones is to completely miss a new wave of potential and technologically enhanced innovation, which can provide tools that transcend the social, financial, and geographical boundaries that have perpetuated inadequate humanitarian response and recovery. Look out for the Innovation Marketplace for some wonderful innovation that can reshape the approach and efficiency of humanitarian aid.

For example, digital humanitarians siphon vast amounts of social media data to geo-tag messages and images related to infrastructure damage and request assistance. These digital needs assessments are then used to develop preliminary maps for search and rescue

as well as logistics routing in the first 72 hours. In Ecuador, two crisis maps were pulling data from Facebook, emails, Twitter, Instagram, and SMS. One map became the equivalent of an emergency response call system for public services; the other developed a partnership with Uber for food and NFI supply delivery.

SMS-based text messaging systems are being used against voter fraud, for maintaining adequate health supply stock, and for confirmation of aid delivery within refugee camps. Mobile money is uprooting the traditional brick-and-mortar banking systems, and when partnered with digital currencies or blockchain technology, the potential for increased financial transparency is vast.

Expanded API's are enabling greater tech-to-tech communication, thereby breaking down artificial barriers between organizations. Open source code and open source data is allowing more people and different types of people to help address the staggering, complex challenges currently faced within the humanitarian system. As traditional humanitarian actors are stretched to response to a greater number of sudden- and slow-onset emergencies, lowering the bar for effective coordination through expansion of humanitarian partners should be a top priority.

Young scientists have also used technology to innovate the food industry, which has improved relief operations in the Philippines. For example, fruits and vegetables are now available as processed food powder, which are not commonly found in relief packs due to their shelf lives. Since this student-led innovation, relief packs may now be a source of nutrients for victims of disasters.

There are so many more examples - from rapid paper-based screening for Zika Virus, safer suits for Ebola responders, GIS technology for mapping, and much more. There is an exponential rate of innovation, new technologies, and data generation. We must make sure they are put into good use and for the right applications. This involves a discussion on ensuring ethical, people-centered, and contextualized innovations.

Such tools can further help integrate parallel processes, increase adaptability to new scenarios, and design fit-for-purpose solutions that satisfy the unique social, cultural, and environmental needs of local areas. Such an approach allows for new ideas to be generated, proposals to be tested and solutions to be scaled within local contexts, cultures, and capacities.

Young people are considered “digital natives” and we have the knowledge, creativity, and energy to harness the power of innovation and technology for humanitarian relief.

Thank you.

Plenary Statement on Youth Engagement and Participation

I am speaking on behalf of the UN Major Group for Children and Youth, and the youth constituency. We have engaged in a global offline and online consultation process for the World Humanitarian Summit to gather the inputs of young people, and we would like to share their views.

During times of crises, children and youth are not just passive bystanders affected by disasters; they are often strong agents of change within their communities, contributing to short and long-term humanitarian responses in a multitude of ways.

Worldwide, young people are active in volunteering and sharing their skills, time and money, acting as frontline responders during crisis. We facilitate peer-to-peer education about preparedness and non-violence; we help rebuild communities; we quickly coordinate and connect individuals and organizations; we contribute to policy and advocacy initiatives; we even bring reconciliation to divided communities in times of conflict.

It is essential for governments, NGOs and all humanitarian actors to recognise the potential and reality of youth as capable and important actors in humanitarian settings. Their meaningful engagement in humanitarian policy design, implementation, monitoring and review is a prerequisite to fully reap the benefits of a revitalized humanitarian agenda.

We call for an institutionalised Youth Engagement Platform within UN OCHA, to support the systematic inclusion of, engagement of and partnership with youth, in all phases of humanitarian action. Such a platform should institutionalise youth engagement by incorporating young people into all aspects of humanitarian action: from strategy, planning, and policy building to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

In order to enable children and youth to fulfil their potential, they should be educated on disaster risk reduction, humanitarian preparedness, and conflict resolution from an early age. Conscious efforts should be made to build the capacity of children and youth and efforts must be made to empower and support local youth-led initiatives and organizations in humanitarian response.

Specific attention should be given to youth from marginalised populations, such as young refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons living in urban informal settlements and slums. To ensure that youth engagement reflects the wide diversity of young people, an intersectional approach towards stakeholder engagement that allows full access to decision-making spaces is essential.

Stakeholder groups, including youth, also have an important role to play in strengthening the accountability of member states and international humanitarian actors. Clear accountability mechanisms that feeds into the High Level Political Forum for member states and other

humanitarian actors must be established, including civil society and youth-led monitoring and shadow reporting.

Young people have the potential to bring change to local and international communities, when given the knowledge, skills and resources to do so. To not utilise this potential would be a waste not only for youth themselves, but for society at large.

Thank you.