

Peacebuilding Commission

Ambassadorial-level meeting on Youth, Peace and Security

7 June 2023

Chair's Summary

On 7 June 2023, the Peacebuilding Commission convened an Ambassadorial-level meeting to discuss regional efforts in advancing Youth, Peace and Security and the linkages between regional, national and local efforts, with the participation of the United Nations Secretary-General's Youth Envoy, the African Union Youth Envoy, the Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the International Political Affairs Sector of the League of Arab States, a representative of ASEAN Youth Organization, a youth-led civil society organization in Southeast Asia. The Commission members reiterated the important role of young people as agents of positive change and stressed the need to support their full, effective and meaningful participation in peacebuilding efforts. They encouraged all relevant actors to continue efforts and strengthen partnerships to advance the Youth, Peace and Security agenda at regional, national and local levels. They further called for protection of youth working on peacebuilding, provision of adequate, predictable and sustainable funding for youth-led peacebuilding efforts, and support for education, capacity-building and employment.

1. On 7 June 2023, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), H.E. Mr. Ivan Šimonović convened an Ambassadorial-level meeting on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) to discuss regional efforts in advancing Youth, Peace and Security and the linkages between regional, national and local efforts, as well as the Commissions efforts' in advancing the YPS agenda.
2. In his opening remarks, the Chair emphasized the vital role of youth in peacebuilding efforts. He noted that young people should not only be seen as victims, but as agents of change, highlighting their essential and positive roles in leading efforts to build and sustain peace across the world. He emphasized the important role played by the Commission, guided by its Strategic Action Plan on Youth and Peacebuilding, in promoting meaningful engagement of youth in peacebuilding. He noted that the Commission can play a role in connecting the efforts and advocacy of young people with the regional, national, and local efforts in peacebuilding and sustainable development. He called for further strengthening the Commissions efforts in mainstreaming the YPS agenda.
3. **Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth**, commended the Commission's important role in supporting young people and their organizations in advancing peace and mainstreaming the YPS agenda. She noted the progress made in implementing YPS initiatives at global, regional, and country levels. She underlined that at global level, the YPS agenda has been integrated and national commitments have been solidified, highlighting the High-Level Global Conference on Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes in January 2022, as a milestone. She emphasized the importance of global and regional coordination mechanisms, such as the International Steering Committee to facilitate the implementation of this Five-year Strategy on Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes and regional coordination efforts by civil society, in facilitating multi-stakeholder collaboration and

knowledge sharing on the YPS agenda. She highlighted efforts made by regional organizations in institutionalizing the YPS agenda, including the African Union's Continental Framework for Youth, Peace and Security, the joint action plan of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Nations and the development of a strategy by the League of Arab States. She further highlighted national level efforts to develop YPS strategic frameworks. She stressed the need to address remaining challenges, including inadequate resources, a lack of meaningful youth engagement in policymaking and decision-making processes, and a gap between input by young people and its impact. She called for: (1) addressing existing financing gaps for youth-led initiatives and youth organizations by designating sufficient resources for youth; (2) strengthening national and regional coordination platforms with youth and civil society; and (3) strengthening accountability and follow-up with young people.

4. **Ms. Chido Cleopatra Mpemba, African Union Youth Envoy**, noted that despite political and socioeconomic barriers to youth participation, many young people have made efforts towards peace, reform and effective governance in Africa. She underlined that young peacebuilders' initiatives have harnessed talent and creativity to resolve conflict, strengthen social cohesion, encourage dialogue and facilitate reconciliation. She noted that the Continental Dialogue on Youth, Peace and Security in 2022 reflected on the progress of the implementation the Continental Framework for Youth, Peace and Security, and leading to the adoption of the Bujumbura Declaration. She noted that African Youth Ambassadors for Peace play important roles in the acceleration of development and implementation of National Action Plans in each region, bringing political leaders and youth together. She informed that the experience-sharing roundtable in April 2023, organized by the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department of the African Union Commission, brought together representatives from AU Member States that have adopted National Action Plans, those that have officially begun the process of developing National Action Plans, and Member States that have expressed strong interest. She stressed the need for solidarity with youth in conflict-affected settings and called for timely and context-specific support. Emphasizing that youth are part of the solution, she called for integrating youth into decision-making and building strong foundation for their meaningful participation, including through addressing inadequate resources, exploitation of youth and a lack of platform for coordination among young peacebuilders.
5. **H.E. Mr. Khaled Mohamed Almanzlawi, Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the International Political Affairs Sector of the League of Arab States**, reaffirmed the commitment of the League of Arab States and its member states to advancing the YPS agenda in the region. He noted that key challenges remain in promoting involvement of youth, including poverty and unemployment caused by a lack of interest in education. He highlighted five factors that would help further advance the YPS agenda in the Arab region: (1) support young Arab leaders who challenge stereotypes; (2) support young people's political, economic, and social empowerment; (3) invest in the development and effective implementation of an educational curricula to ensure the creation of work opportunities for young people; (4) prevent extremist groups from recruiting youth by promoting justice, combatting corruption, and engaging in more cultural and scientific programmes; and (5) foster youth training and capacity-building through collaborative efforts between governments, the private sector, and civil society organizations. He emphasized that the League of Arab States focuses on continuously developing youth sector and its primordial role in peacebuilding and development

efforts, including through developing the first Regional Strategy for Youth, Peace, and Security, in collaboration with the United Nations Liaison Office to the League of Arab States, UNFPA, UNDP, and Folke Bernadotte Academy. The Arab Strategy for Youth, Peace and Security (2023-2028), endorsed by the Council of Arab Ministers of Youth and Sports in March 2023, provides a guiding framework for the Member States to develop national plans and programmes, facilitating the youth's meaningful civic and political participation, including in mediation and negotiations, he explained.

6. **Mr. Ahmad Afryan, Program Director of the ASEAN Youth Organization**, building on his organization's experiences in advancing the YPS agenda in Southeast Asia, emphasized the importance of creating platforms for young peacebuilders to exchange good practices and lessons learned. He introduced the progress in the region in advancing the YPS agenda, highlighting the first ever UN-ASEAN workshop on YPS and his organization's contribution to regional efforts. He stressed the need for capacity-building for young peacebuilders. He emphasized the importance to use digital technologies to facilitate interaction and collaboration among youth and with relevant stakeholders both in urban and rural areas, highlighting benefits of online tools, including social media, podcasts or online courses such as AYO Academy established by his organization. He called for recognizing young people as strategic partners, leaders and knowledge holders, and raising awareness about the importance of meaningful participation of youth among stakeholders. In this regard, he stressed the need to ensure a safe environment for youth participation, emphasizing the "do no harm" principle and intergenerational dialogue as key. He called on the Commission to recognize the need to address obstacles for young people's access to funding, such as language barriers and complex administrative procedures.
7. **Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support**, commended the PBC's role in mainstreaming the YPS agenda, guided by its Strategic Action Plan on Youth and Peacebuilding. She highlighted the progress made by the Commission, including increasing number of youth briefers and greater number of outcome documents that include youth-related recommendations. She highlighted youth-related issues that need particular attentions and called for (1) greater mainstreaming of the YPS agenda; (2) further institutionalization of the YPS agenda to facilitate efforts at the regional, national, and local levels; (3) developing YPS strategies and action plans at regional and national levels through participatory and intergenerational processes that systematically involve youth; (4) creating accountability mechanisms and ensuring follow up with youth; (5) avoiding the tokenization of youth involvement; (6) recognizing youth as a diverse group; and (7) ensuring access to financing for young people and their organizations working on peacebuilding. She highlighted the work of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs in advancing the YPS agenda in collaboration with Member States, regional organizations, and other bodies of the United Nations, as well as the work of the Peacebuilding Fund, especially its Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative.
8. Member states welcomed the briefings and made the following remarks:
 - They commended the progress made by youth and youth organizations, regional and subregional organizations, Member States and civil society organizations in advancing the

YPS agenda. They commended the positive strides made by the Commission in implementing the Strategic Action Plan on Youth and Peacebuilding.

- They recognized youth as a diverse group, with regards, for instance, to geographic regions, gender, and socioeconomic opportunities among others, and emphasized the need to avoid stereotyping and reinforcing negative perceptions of youth. They noted the importance of intergenerational dialogues to promote social cohesion.
- They called for the full, effective and meaningful participation of youth in all aspects of peacebuilding and decision-making processes and underscored the importance of education, capacity-building and employment opportunities.
- They stressed the need to avoid tokenization of youth and ensure that their participation is meaningful, including through hearing their voices and following up with youth.
- They highlighted the importance of empowerment of youth and creating inclusive and sustainable economic opportunities.
- They stressed the importance of adequate, predictable and sustainable funding towards youth-led initiatives, recognizing the responsibility of each Member State in this regard.
- They called for development and implementation of regional and national action plans and regional frameworks to accelerate the implementation of the YPS agenda.

9. In response to the interventions on the floor, briefers underscored the importance of political will in the implementation of the YPS agenda and called for sustained efforts to support young people and their organizations working on peacebuilding. They emphasized the importance of creating an environment that is conducive for youth people to grow, develop, and lead. Such an environment would feature protection of youth, recognition of diversity of youth, and inclusion of young people in peacebuilding and decision-making processes, briefers noted.

Chair's recommendations

- Support the important role of young people as agents of positive change and advocate for full, effective and meaningful participation of youth in peacebuilding efforts at all levels;
- Encourage youth and youth organizations, regional and subregional organizations, Member States and civil society organizations to continue to advance the YPS agenda and call for strengthened partnerships among global, regional, national and local actors;
- Call for adopting a contextualized implementation approach, creating opportunities for the meaningful engagement of youth in peacebuilding as well as developing and implementing regional and national YPS frameworks;
- Recognize the demographic and geographic diversity within youth cohorts;
- Continue efforts to ensure the protection of youth working on peacebuilding and an enabling and safe environment for their participation, including through the provision of education and capacity-building and creation of employment opportunities;
- Provide adequate, predictable and sustainable financing for youth-led peacebuilding efforts; and
- Call for implementation of and follow up on the YPS agenda and related decisions and proposed activities, and advise the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to take action in this regard, as appropriate.