

WUF11 SESSION CONCEPT NOTE

CHILDREN AND YOUTH ROUNDTABLE

Transforming our cities for a better urban future

1. List of Partners Contributing to the Session:

- UNICEF
- Fondation Botnar, Youth 2030Cities Project
- UNFPA
- WUF Youth Council (Poland)
- International Youth Conference / IAAI
- Ukrainian Youth (TBC)
- PLAN International

2. Key Words:

Youth, children, peace, cities, inclusion, participation, governance, climate change

3. Objectives of the Session:

- explore current issues that affect young people in today's complex environment affected by pandemics, conflict and climate change.
- discuss strategies which mitigate the impact of conflict on young people (children, adolescents and youth) in terms of escalating violence, breaks in education and skill development, health and wellbeing, degraded livelihoods, and growing inequities
- review relevant research on young people resilience in responding to issues such as conflict, pandemics and climate change. Share promising practices related to resilience building, peace and security as it relates to cities and inequality
- propose interventions to support young people and their allies in creating inclusive and peaceful cities
- call for action for addressing global security issues and peace building strategies to support young people's well being

4. Summary:

Cities have become younger – most of the three billion people under the age of twenty-five live in urban areas, and it is estimated that 60% of urban populations will be under the age of 18 by 2030. This is happening in parallel with growing inequity, lack of access to basic services and increased violence.

Young people are an integral factor in sustaining peace. In recent years there has been a significant shift towards recognizing young people and their roles in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. It began with the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250 (2015).¹ This formalized the youth, peace and security (YPS) Agenda, which has only been strengthened with the adoption of UNSCR 2419 (2018)² and UNSCR 2535 (2020).³ Each new resolution builds upon the work of the last with the latest clearly calling for accelerated implementation of the YPS agenda.

Supporting the constructive roles of young people in creating inclusive and peaceful cities allow cities and countries to harness their contributions in the present and in the future. Youth make special contributions to this agenda through engaging their peers, working at community level, sustaining dialogue when others have lost hope and bridging divides in polarized contexts. Additionally, when youth engage in building peaceful inclusive cities, they learn to value it, and gain skills that allow them to support communities throughout their lifetime.

Young people's participation in peace and security is also about realizing young people's right to participation. Participation is a human right enshrined in **Article 12** of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This is key as young people, especially young women, often face structural barriers to participation in formal and informal decision-making spaces, both physical and digital ones.

The Roundtable will also feature a special UN Habitat initiative, *Youth 2030 Cities*, an urban governance initiative that seeks to build the capacity of youth leaders, and aims to promote the meaningful participation of young people to contribute towards sustainable urbanization. Youth 2030 Cities participants have produced DeclarActions and young representatives will share their knowledge, ideas and solutions to transform urban environments.

This Roundtable will bring together young people, governments, civil society, academics, and government representatives in an intergenerational dialogue and explore what innovative strategies are being used, and how youth, adults and others can support these strategies towards a positive outcome.

5. Guiding Questions for Discussions:

- Highlight key strategies that can be used to engage young people and their allies in creating inclusive and peaceful cities?
- What are the key elements of these strategies that make them a success? Can they be replicated?
- What evidence as stories can you share as strategies that youth have used to share their knowledge and ideas to influence city plans?
- What research has been conducted on young people's participation in governance, their inclusion and their role as peacebuilders?
- How can the UN and governments engage young people in identifying solutions to improve city planning. The help young to bring about positive change?

6. Expected Outcomes and Impact:

- proposed interventions by UN and government to support young people and their allies in creating inclusive and peaceful cities
- validated methods both by experience (young people) and research (academics, policy makers) on inclusive and peaceful cities

7. Session Format:

The format of the session will be Davos style led by two moderators who will allow opening questions, and then ask a series of questions on the issues. Audience members will have $\frac{1}{4}$ the time of the event to ask questions, as well as using Mentimeter to check ongoing opinions.