



United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

Topic B: Strategies to enable young people to participate meaningfully in peace processes

Introduction:

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is the organ of the United Nations responsible for maintaining peace and security in the world. The capacity to take coercive measures for the prompt resolution of crises and to ensure the protection of civilians in conflict situations, makes the committee aware of the various threats that civilians face in today’s international conflicts, most of which have devastating consequences. Countless wars have cost the security and well-being of civilians (or even their lives) thus presenting conflict prevention and peacebuilding as significant factors for the development of society.

Historically, governments, NGOs, the private sector and the civil society have been responsible for decision making procedures, addressing conflicts and their causes, and the prevention of conflicts, excluding young people from participating in these processes. Regardless of the fact that they constitute future generations and have a huge potential in contributing to the efforts of peacemaking, youngsters have mostly been ignored.

In 2015 the UNSC adopted the “youth, peace and security” resolution, recognizing the relevant role of the youth in the preservation of international peace and security, and acknowledging the fundamental pillars of action (protection, participation, prevention, partnership, disengagement, and reintegration). The UNSC maintains international security by encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, thus protecting individual and collective rights through diplomacy and international cooperation.

As a committee, the UNSC promotes mechanisms that enable young people to have a voice and participate meaningfully in peace processes, recommending effective responses at local, national, and international levels. It is essential to invest in the youth’s capacities, funding support and building an unbreakable strength. The goal is to eradicate their exclusion and the structural barriers that limit their participation, thus supporting partnerships where young people are considered and viewed as essential partners.¹

¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. “Guidance Note-Youth, peace and security”. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. (n.d.) Access January 13, 2024. <https://amg.um.dk/tools/youth-in-development/youth-in-peace-and-securityguidance-note#:~:text=Moreover%2C%20youth%20offer%20a%20number,with%20more%20set%20dogmatic%20discourses>





Concepts and definitions:

- **Peace:** “freedom from war and violence, especially when people live and work together.”²
- **Peacekeeping:** the arrangement of national or multinational forces to help control and resolve an actual or potential armed conflict between or within states.³
- **Strategy:** “detailed plan for achieving success in situations such as war, politics, business, industry, or sport, or the skill of planning for such situations.”⁴
- **Violence:** “extremely forceful actions that are intended to hurt people or are likely to cause damage.”⁵
- **Youth:** age group between 15-24, regarded as between the categories of child and adult, usually not considered in programs designed for their needs. Not being children or adults, their necessities are not precisely covered.⁶
- **YPS Agenda:** “the Young, Peace and Security agenda aims to enable, support and increase young people’s agency on peace and security matters and meaningful participation at all levels of decision- making.”⁷

Current issue:

Since December 2015, when the UNSC unanimously voted on resolution 2250, youth has been considered essential to the Sustainable Development processes and policies to achieve peace and security.⁸

Besides promoting participation and interest, recognizing that the youth influence the promotion of peace, the transformation of conflicts, and the prevention of violence are key subjects to the resolution. The aim is for young people to not only see themselves as victims of a series of circumstances that threaten their physical, emotional, and mental integrity but

² Cambridge Dictionary. “Peace”. Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.) Accessed January 13, 2024. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/peace>

³ Caplan, R. Peacekeeping/ Peace enforcement. Encyclopedia Princetonia. (n.d.). Access January 14, 2024. <https://pesd.princeton.edu/node/561>

⁴ Cambridge Dictionary. “Strategy”. Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.) Accessed January 13, 2024. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/strategy>

⁵ Cambridge Dictionary. “Violence”. Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.) Accessed January 13, 2024. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/violence#google_vignette

⁶ United Nations. (n.d.). “Youth”. <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/youth>

⁷ United Nations. “Youth, peace and security| Peacebuilding”. United Nations. (n.d.). Access January 14, 2024. <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/policy-issues-and-partnerships/policy/youth#:~:text=The%20Youth%2C%20Peace%20and%20Security%20Agenda&text=It%20urges%20Member%20States%20to,participate%20meaningfully%20in%20peace%20processes.>

⁸ Quintilla, R. O. (2016). *Resolución 2250 del Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU: Juventud, Paz y Seguridad*. Youth4peace.info. https://www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2016-11/2016.09%20-%20UNSCR2250%20-%20Romeral%20Ortiz%20Quintilla%20-%20PolicyPaper_14_CAST.pdf





to also be actors of positive transformation in their communities, being promoters of peace and preventing violence.⁹

Youth involvement began to have greater performance in States to achieve sustainable development, as recommended by the UN through the 2030 Agenda. A clear example can be seen in resolutions 1702, 2535, and 2070, which are included in the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), in coordination with the national government, with the aim of providing job opportunities to young people at risk of social exclusion, as well as the continuity of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs to reduce violence in communities.¹⁰

The Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda (2015) has become the first instrument in understanding the importance of young people in the process of peace, as well as being key in achieving sustainable development in States. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), through the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), in collaboration with The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Secretary-General's Youth Envoy, have been instrumental in the development of this agenda.¹¹

According to available data, there are more young people alive now than there have ever been in the history of humanity. The UNFPA established that there are 1.2 billion young people aged between 15-24 years old, accounting for 16% of the total global population; approximately 600 million of them live in conflict zones.¹²

Young people play a key role in maintaining peace and contributing to various efforts and strategies to achieve and maintain peace in different societies, organizations, and countries. As mentioned in the introduction, the UN and its different committees have implemented different programs that intend to engage and encourage young people to participate in these kinds of processes.

There are still barriers that affect the involvement of youth participation. Such obstacles are structural and institutional barriers, as well as cultural prejudices that continue to limit the ability of young people, especially young LGBTQI+ members and young women, in participating in said processes.

Despite all the actions taken to this day, stereotypes, myths, and panic policies are affecting the will to fight for peace. The most convenient way to include young people is

⁹ Quintilla, R. O. (2016). *Resolución 2250 del Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU: Juventud, Paz y Seguridad*. Youth4peace.info. https://www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2016-11/2016.09%20-%20UNSCR2250%20-%20Romeral%20Ortiz%20Quintilla%20-%20PolicyPaper_14_CAST.pdf

¹⁰ Quintilla, R. O. (2016). *Resolución 2250 del Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU: Juventud, Paz y Seguridad*. Youth4peace.info. https://www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2016-11/2016.09%20-%20UNSCR2250%20-%20Romeral%20Ortiz%20Quintilla%20-%20PolicyPaper_14_CAST.pdf

¹¹ *Youth, peace, and security*. (n.d.). UN.org. Accessed on January 15th, 2024. <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/policy-issues-and-partnerships/policy/youth>

¹² State of World Population | United Nations iLibrary, (n.d.) <https://www.un-ilibrary.org/content/periodicals/15648567>





through the United Nations Youth Strategies: Youth 2030 - Working with and for young people UN.¹³

For youth participation to be meaningful, an adequate degree of interaction and power sharing is required, thus ensuring that young people can raise their voices and allowing for the diversity of perspectives and experiences.¹⁴

International initiatives:

In response to low levels of participation, a network of youth, peace and security focal points was established at headquarters in 11 peacekeeping operations, 13 special political missions and 24 United Nations entities for youth involvement. Furthermore, out of the 114 resolutions adopted by the Security Council between January 2020 and December 2021, 33% include references to youth¹⁵. The aim is not only to increase the number of young people who participate but also to protect those who do so and may run the risk of stopping their actions due to social, cultural, political, geographical, and economic issues.

Since 2019, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth has led a multi-stakeholder alliance that resulted in a five-year strategy towards peace and mediation processes that are more youth-inclusive and responsive to their needs. The strategy was launched at the **High-Level Global Conference on Youth Inclusive Peace Processes**, held in January 2022. The Conference was co-sponsored by the Governments of Colombia, Finland, and Qatar, and organized jointly with civil society and United Nations partners.

The UN's Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs has leveraged technologies and innovation to expand the inclusion of youth in political and peace-making processes. Examples include large-scale digital dialogues to support the work of special political missions on the peace processes in Libya and Yemen. There has been large and noticeable youth participation in the political sphere, where young people interact with national political and security actors through forums organized by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), thus increasing their role in the implementation of peace agreements.

In Cameroon, Chad and Gabon, a network of 1,800 young peace ambassadors, with the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Office against Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Volunteers program, contributed to conflict prevention and treatment mechanisms.¹⁶

¹³ *YOUTH 2030*. (n.d.). UN.org. Accessed on January 15th, 2024. https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/UN-Youth-Strategy-Spanish1.pdf?_gl=1*1t2aa9g*_ga*MTE1OTU5ODM3Ny4xNzAyOTUyMjU2*_ga_TK9BQL5X7Z*MTcwNTQ1NjQxNC4xMi4wLjE3MDU0NTY0MTQuMC4wLjA.*_ga_S5EKZKSB78*MTcwNTQ1NjQxNC43LjEuMTcwNTQ1ODA5Ny41Ny4wLjA

¹⁴ UNDP (2023). *La importancia de la participación juvenil en la construcción de la paz*. (s/f). UNDP. Accessed on January 15th, 2024. <https://www.undp.org/es/colombia/blog/participacion-juvenil-construccion-de-paz>

¹⁵ *Idem*

¹⁶ *Idem*





In 2015, the Security Council unanimously adopted **Resolution 2250**, recognizing the threat to development and stability due to the radicalization among young people. It is the first resolution to specifically address the positive contributions of young people in conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding. It also recognizes the potential of young individuals as agents of change and acknowledges the need for their inclusion in decision-making processes related to peace and security.

This resolution defines youth as individuals aged 18 to 29, recognizing the specific challenges and opportunities faced by this age group and emphasizing the importance of including them in peace keeping processes at the local, national, and international levels, particularly in institutions responsible for maintaining peace and security. It also highlights the need to protect young people from violence, recruitment, and exploitation during armed conflicts, calling for efforts to promote the reintegration and rehabilitation of those who have been involved in armed groups.¹⁷

The **Youth, Peace and Security Agenda (YPS)** is a comprehensive framework developed by the United Nations to address specific needs of young people in conflict affected areas, built up on the Security Council Resolution 2250. The Agenda emphasizes the importance of youth participation, protection, and empowerment in all phases of conflict prevention, resolution, and recovery. It establishes the pillars of action as its key points: participation, protection, prevention, partnerships, and disengagement and reintegration. In addition, it urges Member States to give young people a greater voice in decision-making processes at local, national, regional, and international levels, and to consider the implementation of mechanisms that would facilitate the participation of young people in peace making actions.¹⁸

The **Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund** is the United Nations leading instrument to invest in prevention and peacebuilding; the fund supports UN responses to address critical peacebuilding opportunities, connecting development, human rights, and peacebuilding pillars. On the other hand, **UN Women** works to promote gender responsive peacebuilding and emphasizes the importance of young women's participation in these processes. It aims to amplify the voices of young women in conflict-affected areas and address the specific challenges they face.¹⁹

¹⁷ "Security Council, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2250 (2015), Urges Member States to Increase Representation of Youth in Decision-Making at All Levels" | UN Press (2015, December 9) <https://press.un.org/en/2015/sc12149.doc.htm>

¹⁸ About the Youth, Peace & Security Agenda, (n.d.) <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/policy-issues-and-partnerships/policy/youth>

¹⁹ UN Women. (2018). Young women in peace and security: At the intersection of the YPS and WPS agendas. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/4/young-women-in-peace-and-security>





What is missing?

While progress has been made in recognizing the importance of enabling young people to participate meaningfully in peace processes, there are still gaps and challenges they need to be addressed, some areas include: ²⁰

- National Implementation and Accountability
- Support for Youth-Led Initiatives
- Youth Inclusion in High-Level Decision Making
- Capacity Building and Training Programs
- Collaboration with Young Networks
- Addressing Structural Barriers
- Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms

Guiding questions:

1. How does youth participation assist in the Sustainable Development Goals in your delegation?
2. How do youngsters participate in political decisions and violence prevention in your delegation?
3. What successful examples of youth participation in peace processes can you find in your region and/or delegation?
4. What barriers (cultural, legal, economical, etc.) currently limit the development of young people to participate in the restructuring of peace and international cooperation in your region and/or delegation?
5. Are there any limitations to the YPS-Youth agenda that do not allow progress in participation in your delegation? Why?
6. Why is it important to include young people in peace processes? Why is their voice and perspective so unique and essential?

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