

Youth Consultation on the Establishment of the UN Youth Office

6 October 2022

SGI would like to submit the following input to the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General addressing the questions raised for the consultation:

Within the framework of the resolution A/RES/76/306 how can the UN Youth Office improve meaningful youth engagement across the UN system and its main pillars of work?

Young people and their energetic engagement represent the solution to the global challenges we face; they hold the key to achieving the goals set by the UN toward 2030. In this regard, we hope that the UN Youth Office would work to ensure that young people can engage in formal, periodical discussions at various meetings at the UN. Enhancing opportunities for youth participations at the beginning or middle of sessions and meetings rather than at the end is crucial for meaningful participation of youth.

How can open and continuous engagement of youth be ensured in the work of the UN Youth Office?

- Vision

We believe that when youth have “a place to stand,” they can leverage the potential of the UN. The UN Youth Office’s role should not be limited to reacting to immediate challenges but also include identifying the future direction of the UN and bringing focus to that purpose. In doing so, it is crucial for the office to try to bring the voices and perspective of youth from diverse backgrounds, such as those struggling in poverty, those living in conflict areas and those compelled to live as refugees.

- Venue of Sessions

The UN Youth Office should be open to participation from all countries. Regular sessions and meetings could be held online, with face-to-face plenary sessions for important decisions held in various locations on, for example, a biannual basis. The outcome of each plenary session would be shared throughout the UN system for incorporation into its various decision-making processes. We firmly believe that the creation of a UN Youth Office that meets in or near the places most affected by the issues under discussion would be a breakthrough in strengthening partnership between the UN and civil society.

- Meeting Format

Rather than the standard speaker-by-speaker format of UN meetings, the office should encourage meeting formats that promote lively discussion among all youth representatives. Also, it is ideal for the youth representatives to participate in meetings not as representatives of their respective countries but as representatives of their entire generation.

- Partnerships with Universities

The UN Youth Office should work to engage universities to bring educators and students from around the globe, facilitating cooperation among various stakeholders and accelerating momentum toward the achievement of various goals in the promotion of peace and security, sustainable development, gender equality and human rights.

The Soka Gakkai is a global, community-based Buddhist organization with a membership of over 12 million people around the world that promotes peace, culture and education centered on respect for the dignity of life. The Soka Gakkai International (SGI) as a non-governmental organization has been in consultative status with ECOSOC since 1983. The SGI strives to strengthen connections between individuals, civil society and the UN in order to build a peaceful, just and inclusive world. Our focus areas of work include peace, disarmament, sustainability and climate change, human rights education, gender equality and women’s empowerment and humanitarian relief.

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