

Make Development Work FOR Youth, WITH Youth!

Nairobi Youth Statement to the 2nd High Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation

Nairobi, Kenya / November 28, 2016

We, the youth attending the Second High Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), are speaking up, coming together and rallying for inclusive development that works for us and with us.

This statement is a reflection of our eagerness and strong intent to be involved and actively participate as equal and independent partners in effective development cooperation – a discourse and a process that do not only shape our societies comprehensively today but our future and those of the coming generations ahead.

The fire inside us comes from the need to change our world – a world where profit precedes people’s interests; where the current development model benefits only a few and exacerbates inequality; where unsustainable economic growth threatens the people, the planet and its fragile ecosystem; where education is a human right many youth and children are still being denied; where many youth are underutilized (they are unemployed, in irregular employment, most likely in the informal sector, or neither in the labor force nor in education or training); where the absence of opportunities and the presence of conflict and fragility force many away from their families and communities; where many youth and children are in situations of vulnerability.

This is the reality of our world today, of our youth. We need to address these challenges together to enable a better world where youth and children can fully enjoy their human rights and their own development.

Traditionally, youth and children have been seen merely as recipients of global decisions, plans and compacts. What the world leaders decide affects us. International trade agreements and development plans shape our societies, our present and our future. While they are worthwhile initiatives, many of them are lacking – the perspective and active and meaningful involvement of youth.

“Investing in the youth” takes more than making youth recipients of policies and programs of adults. It should mean enabling youth participation at the societal and communal level by putting every child in school, every youth in education, and every young adult in decent employment. It should ensure youth have access to basic rights and decent living conditions as a pre-requisite for participation, their communities, decision-making and development.

It should also mean enabling access and participation of youth in formal processes by creating inclusive and safe spaces for all people independent of gender, age and background.

Effective development cooperation is meant to address our largest intergenerational problems. Intergenerational problems require intergenerational solutions. Intergenerational solutions require intergenerational dialogue.

The youth are dynamic and vibrant. We are discerning, critical and unafraid to speak up and act. And as we speak, many of our youth the world over are engaging, building and joining movements, and working towards the realization of a world imagined – a world where all people are working and are benefiting from genuine development, prosperity, justice and peace.

This is the world the youth and children want. But we cannot do it ourselves. Let us work together in the spirit of inclusivity and universality, accountability and transparency, and a multi-stakeholder approach.

Through the GPEDC HLM2 Youth Forum, we convey the following challenges:

1. That the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) recognize and officially acknowledge the youth sector as official partners and stakeholders for development. Concretely, we want the Outcome Document to reflect this;
2. That an environment be enabled, through creation of space in the economic, political and social platforms, for the engagement and active contribution of youth in the development discourse in all levels (local, national, regional and international) through the universal application of effective development cooperation;
 - a. Specifically, the GPEDC should fully integrate youth participation in mechanisms, procedures and processes to influence decision-making at all levels and develop an age- and gender-specific youth indicator that can monitor, measure and report this framework. To start the process, a task force with clear youth representation be formed to frame the youth indicator or a global partnership initiative;
 - b. Equally, a youth indicator needs to be created to monitor, measure and report the participation of children and youth in every age level, i.e. in education, in employment, in democracy, among others; and
 - c. A global delivery roundtable should be convened to build capacity among the youth and children as well as provide financial support for youth-led socio-economic empowerment initiatives. In this roundtable, in the spirit of inclusive partnerships, accountability and transparency, the youth should join and participate with governments, philanthropists and other stakeholders to commit in making this work.
3. That all stakeholders, youth included, hold ourselves accountable to all our commitments, build partnership and cooperation, and commit ourselves to doing more for effective development; and finally
4. That development and development cooperation be reimagined (a) to progressively fulfill the rights of the impoverished and marginalized, with the million of youth among them, and (b) to balance growth with the planet's carrying capacity, for a better world that the youth will inherit.