



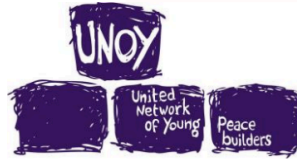
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Empowering Youth for a Peaceful Future: Advancing the Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) Agenda at the Summit of the Future

High-Level Side Event during Summit of the Future | 19 September 2024, 4:30 PM-6:00 PM EDT
Summary Note

This high-level side event, hosted on the margins of the 2024 Summit of the Future, was co-organized by the Permanent Missions of Malta, Finland, Denmark, France, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations, in collaboration with the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders). The event brought together key members of the Group of Champions on YPS, alongside young peacebuilders and UN Member States, to inspire intergenerational collaboration and to build momentum for the full implementation of the YPS Agenda and the YPS Action set forth in the Pact for the Future.

In a period marked by increased global instability, driven by militarised conflicts, socio-economic disruptions, and devastating impacts of climate change on the lives of the people, young people significantly contribute to preventing conflicts and sustaining peace. They address intersecting crises, including climate change, conflict, and socioeconomic inequality. They advocate and create spaces for sharing, strengthening and amplifying their work through national coalitions. Their strategies are built on local knowledge, intergenerational collaboration, and the mobilisation of grassroots networks to create sustainable, lasting peace. The international community has recognised the urgency of embedding youth leadership into every stage of conflict resolution, from preventive diplomacy to post-conflict reconciliation. This commitment is embedded in the three Security Council resolutions on [the Youth, Peace and Security \(YPS\) Agenda](#). However, the global policy framework on YPS and aspirations that underpin it have yet to fully translate into action.

Building on the Collective Power of Member States

In 2023, the international policy debate on YPS was significantly strengthened in comparison to the previous years. This achievement was in part due to the leadership of Member States on the UN Security Council (hereafter, the UNSC). Japan has organised the debate in March on conflict

prevention through the empowerment of all actors including women and youth (13 March 2024), followed by Malta's initiative to hold an open debate on the role of young persons in addressing security challenges in the Mediterranean (17 April 2024) and Mozambique's initiative to hold an open debate on the role of women and young people in the maintenance of international peace and security (24 May 2024). These initiatives set the precedent for the UNSC to better integrate the YPS considerations in their deliberations.

Further, in 2023, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan joined forces with Finland to reinvigorate and strengthen the engagement of Member States on YPS in the global policy debate through the Group of Champions on YPS. Moving forward, the Group of Champions could play an essential role in mobilising resources, advocating for policy coherence, building momentum for YPS implementation, and strengthening global policy utilising the opportunities presented by the 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review (2025PBAR), upcoming 10th Anniversary of the YPS Agenda, and the implementation of the Pact of the Future by September 2028.

Priority Areas for the Consideration by Member States

To support the progress achieved and ensure consistent evolution of the YPS Agenda, young peacebuilders outline several priorities for the consideration of Member States:

- *Political commitment of Member States remains insufficient.* There are very few Member States that put the YPS Agenda on the priority list of their engagement in the global policy discussions. Resulting from this, *the global commitments on YPS are relatively weak and financial resources dedicated to youth-led peace initiatives remain insufficient.*
- *The engagement of young peacebuilders in decision-making at all levels is often superficial, ad-hoc, tokenistic and limited in scope.* In many cases, young people even face reprisals for their advocacy. This means that young people continue to have little opportunity to influence the actual outcomes of decision-making that affects them¹. Largely, the reason for such limited engagement is predefined rules of engagement that reinforce existing power dynamics and lack of inclusivity measures. .
- *Member States might not have the capacity or the knowledge when it comes to the YPS implementation.* Young people and their networks can provide valuable assistance in this and become equal partners.

The challenges faced by young peacebuilders are particularly amplified when it comes to the experiences of young women, disabled individuals, refugees, and other groups in vulnerable situations. The conflict leaves them with fewer opportunities to return to school or participate in public life. They are also disproportionately impacted by sexual and gender-based violence.

The path forward: Building Civil Society-Member States partnership for sustaining peace

With the crisis of the international system resulting from the lack of the ability of this system to respond to contemporary challenges, diverse young peacebuilders around the world are losing their trust in global governance systems. As they still remain hopeful, the momentum around the Summit of the Future creates an opportunity for the international community to collectively decide to change the approach and reshape the path forward in a way that meaningfully includes young peacebuilders in decision-making at all levels.

The Group of Champions can broaden the scope of youth engagement and ensure that youth voices are integrated into decision-making at all levels in their national actions, as well as in the global policy space. The work of the Group of Champions could lead to concrete actions to support the financing of the YPS Agenda, the establishment of the YPS regional and national

¹ The Canadian Coalition for YPS launched Moving Beyond Tokenism: A Toolkit to Empower Youth in Civic Spaces. The toolkit could be found at: <https://www.canadayps.org/more-than-tokens>.

frameworks and strategies, the support for local youth peacebuilding networks, and ensuring that young people can independently and on the basis of their own perspectives contribute equally to building a future where we will live. This will offer tangible lessons learned and provide evidence of impact to bring more governments on the path of inclusive and comprehensive impactful action through an intersectional and intergenerational approach. One example of such partnership is the Youth Sounding Boards established by the government of Denmark as consultative groups in support of embassies with the purpose of providing ongoing input on selected policy, strategic and implementation issues.

What can be done?

The following recommendations could be considered by Member States in their efforts to implement the Pact for the Future and the 2025 BAR and 10th Anniversary of the YPS Agenda in 2025:

- **The Group of Champions should consider:**
 - **systematically engaging with young peacebuilders** in co-developing plans for Member States' strategic collective and individual engagement. This includes the efforts to implement relevant provisions of the Pact for the Future ([A/RES/79/1](#)). The Group of Champions can regularly extend invitations to young peacebuilders through the Global Coalition on YPS to support its work and guide its strategic plan. Young people can provide required conflict analysis, advise on what are the needs at the country level and what approaches could work.
 - **discussing the proposed YPS language that was not included in the final document of the Pact for the Future.** The upcoming opportunity of the 2025 PBAR and the 10th Anniversary of the YPS Agenda in 2025 present the space for Member States to develop a common understanding of the priorities required to strengthen the YPS implementation.
- **Member States should consider:**
 - **continuing to bring the YPS Agenda as a priority on the PBC and UNSC Agenda**, integrating YPS principles into mandates of peacekeeping missions and peace operations, as well as in the Council's prevention efforts. In this, Member States should consider facilitating opportunities for young people to participate in relevant UNSC discussions, with necessary protection protocols in place to support their participation.
 - **dedicating quality financial support for the work of young peacebuilders.** Such support could be provided through Member States' bilateral support or out of their national budgets. In this context, Member States could consider following up on the implementation of relevant provisions of the 2022 General Assembly resolution on Financing for Peacebuilding ([A/RES/76/305](#), OPs 7, 8). As youth-accessible funding for YPS is one of the most underfunded areas of YPS, the impact of the YPS Agenda can only be determined by the funding available for these efforts whether at the national or global levels.
 - **providing in-kind political and technical support to young peacebuilders.** Every Member State can support young people in advancing sustainable peace. Government representatives could share their lessons in efforts to support capacity building in mediation and conflict resolution. They can partner with educational institutions to implement online learning platforms and mentorship programs.
 - **adopting fully-funded regional and national YPS action plans and strategies**, in line with the commitment made in the Pact for the Future ([A/RES/79/1](#), para 41(b)). The community of practice launched by the government of Finland could be a great resource in this regard.

- **Member States' missions should consider:**
 - **appointing dedicated YPS focal points.** It is often the case that the focal point on YPS at Member States' missions have a variety of other responsibilities; however, this is also an opportunity to have YPS integrated in Missions' engagement on various topics, as opposed to confining YPS to the YPS-only policy discussions. At the same time, the focal point on YPS should have dedicated time and effort to ensure proper engagement on this topic.
 - **encouraging the engagement of capitals on YPS to ensure strong political support for the YPS Agenda.** While many Member States' Missions staff understand the value YPS bring, unless the capitals are involved, it is hard to ensure consistent and sustainable follow-up.
- **The UN Secretary-General should consider:**
 - **extend the timeline for the second progress study on youth peace and security** mandated by the Pact for the Future ([A/RES/79/1](#), para 41(c)) and ensure that the process is led by young peacebuilders under the leadership of an independent expert.
 - **requesting the UN System to partner with young peacebuilders to design, implement and evaluate its projects.**
- **All international stakeholders should consider:**
 - **advancing the professionalisation of peacebuilding** to ensure that the engagement of young people goes beyond volunteerism and provides adequate professional opportunities for young people. This could be facilitated through internships, traineeships, fellowships, and actual professional practice.
 - **not confining youth engagement to the topic relevant to YPS but across all of the thematic issues on their respective agendas.** It is very important to engage youth actors across all global policy topics, including climate change.
 - **prioritising intergenerational dialogue mechanisms for action.** Youth advisory councils or boards within governments and their embassies could be a good practice.
 - **investing in young people's mental health.** Mental health and psychosocial support come in, creating an environment where young people can constructively engage in peace processes.