



SOLVE Conference 2021: Empowering Youth for the Promotion of Peace and Prevention of Conflicts

WE SOLVE TOGETHER

#SOLVE2021

SOLVE 2021 DECLARATION

We, the participants of the SOLVE 2021 Conference, having gathered virtually on the 20th and 21st of September 2021 for the purposes of the SOLVE2021 Conference entitled “Empowering Youth for the Promotion of Peace and Prevention of Conflicts”;

Taking note of the United Nations Security Council’s “Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda”, comprised of UNSC Resolutions 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018), 2535 (2020), that recognizes young people as drivers of change and as agents of peace, and the Council’s “Women, Peace, and Security Agenda” that underlines the special role of women as agents of conflict prevention, resolution, and post-conflict development;

Acknowledging the importance of youth empowerment with regard to the promotion of peace, and to its meaningful participation in all steps and stages of peace processes and conflict resolution, a participation that allows youth truly to influence the outcome of these processes with the aim of ensuring the achievement of sustainable peace;

Expressing concern with regard to the low levels of meaningful youth participation and inclusion in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping processes, and underlining the need to ensure that young peoples' voices are heard and their meaningful participation is ensured;

Stressing the need to address the root causes of mass emigration and "brain drain" of young people and to consider ways of creating favorable conditions within the countries for the young population, in order to prevent these movements;

Recognizing the role of social media in providing young people with a platform to express themselves and to promote peace;

Acknowledging the underrepresentation of young peoples' voices on a national and international level as an obstacle to their engagement in conflict prevention and peace building efforts as well as a root cause of conflict;

Taking note of the challenges faced by youth movements in implementing ideas and finding the resources to put them into practice;

Expressing our concern that economic hardship within a country, a lack of belonging to the community and desperation are among the main root causes of conflicts that affect young people and that stand in the way of them taking action in their own communities;

Stressing the potential role of technology with regard to preventing human trafficking and helping victims receive support;

Acknowledging the special vulnerability of children, youngsters and women in conflict and post-conflict settings concerning trafficking in persons and economic and sexual exploitation;

Fully aware of the danger of technology being used by human traffickers as a means of detecting and approaching potential victims of trafficking as well as a means of facilitating trafficking in persons in general;

Taking note of the particularly challenging situations faced by forcibly displaced persons, whether domestically or internationally, including poverty, stigmatization, violence, exploitation and lack of access to basic rights;

Recognising inter-religious and geopolitical tensions across the globe as root causes of humanitarian crises, such as forced displacement, and the loss of life and freedom;

Stressing the link between climate change and international security, as well as the impact of climate change as a “threat multiplier” at all levels of government and society;

Noting the threat that fast-spreading extremism and terrorism poses to youth wellness and world peace, and aware of the exploitation of digital platforms by terrorists and violent extremists;

Mindful that willingness to learn from and co-exist with others is needed in the process of peacebuilding;

Highlighting the role of young people as agents of climate action and promoters of peace, in the form of awareness raising, sustainability projects, and dialogue with decision-makers for climate solutions;

Recommend the following:

With regard to conflict management, conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding;

1. The creation of official intergenerational interventions and activities on a national level, such as the inclusion of youth delegates in national, regional and international forums, in order to enable a meaningful dialogue and exchange between national decision makers and the youth.
2. The creation by iSCAN of a platform hosting a community of dialogue, exchange of good practices, cooperative initiatives between like-minded young individuals who want to drive

change, namely young experts, professionals, and activists, which will be actively advertised and promoted, so as to reach as many youth as possible and perhaps constitute the stepping stone for a similar greater initiative by the international community.

3. The strengthening of national and international awareness raising programmes within schools and universities, engaging both students and civil society, as well as the international community regarding the systemic issues that fuel conflicts, in order to build a new generation that cares more deeply about these issues.

4. The embracing of the United Nations Security Council's "Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda" and the "Women, Peace, and Security Agenda" by all civil society stakeholders, and their use as advocacy tools with the aim of requesting from governments meaningful and substantial inclusion of youth in all "tracks" of peace processes.

5. A more proactive civil society advocacy agenda aimed at youth empowerment in conflict resolution and peace processes, both through the promotion of the inclusion of the "youth aspect" in the official negotiations or unofficial parallel consultations and via the inclusion in these processes of young people with expertise in several fields pertaining to conflict resolution, as for example in international law and related fields.

6. The development of concrete national or international safety frameworks and/or safeguards for youth activists who participate in peace processes, in order to make sure their true concerns and requests are being heard without them being in danger.

7. The inclusion of grassroots local organizations of young people from conflict areas in peacekeeping operations' initiatives, in order to incorporate "youth aspects" into the peace process with a view to highlighting young peoples' role in "creating peace".

8. Youth should actively participate in peacebuilding activities on a local, national and regional level, allowing them to understand their role in preventing conflicts and their contribution in "creating" peace.

With regard to addressing special vulnerabilities in conflict and post-conflict settings;

1. Organising comprehensive awareness-raising programs by relevant civil society groups, targeting potential victims, policy-makers and the society as a whole with regard to the special

vulnerability of forcibly displaced persons, of women and children to the issue of trafficking and of sexual and economic exploitation.

2. The implementation of human rights-focused strategies and activities at the national level, aimed at preventing and detecting trafficking in persons, as well as at the establishment of an adequate support and counseling system for victims that is gender- and age-sensitive, and tailored to the victims' specific needs.

3. Include survivors' voices in the development of technological solutions to human trafficking and build applications that are "easy to use" for people vulnerable to and victims of trafficking.

4. Ensuring that personal data of victims of human trafficking is protected when this is shared to provide them with legal and other services.

5. The creation of international, regional, and national fora that include and welcome young people's viewpoints and initiatives to tackle issues of trafficking, economic and sexual exploitation.

With regard to the culture of peaceful coexistence, action against terrorism, and climate action;

1. For governments: uphold the obligation to respect individuals' freedom of religion and to strengthen efforts to empower marginalized groups of people, such as women, youth, and indigenous peoples, in order to ensure their meaningful participation in decision making at the local, national, and regional levels.

2. The fostering of a culture of transformative education that provides a safe environment for youth to engage with inter-religious, intercultural, and anti-terrorism topics at all level of the community as well as in education institutions.

3. Organize a yearly forum under the auspices of iSCAN aimed at bringing young people together for a dialogue with civil society, policy-makers, and other actors in the areas of peace, security, and sustainable development.

4. The promotion of the principle of “intergenerational equity” and the support of initiatives aimed at fostering intergenerational dialogue in the fields of international security, sustainable development, climate action and the well-being of future generations through concrete actions.

5. The support towards an inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach to climate change mitigation, terrorism prevention, global security, and peaceful coexistence, including through education, policy-making, business practices, social media actions.

Agree to follow and monitor the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations and to report on the progress made during SOLVE2022.

Declaration signed by (all names or individuals and organizations)