



27th HRC Session
Geneva, September 22nd 2014
Item 8 GD –Follow-up and Implementation
of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action
Speaker: Mr. David Sanabria

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT: A Human Rights Perspective

Statement submitted by
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And co-signed by

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Thank you, Mr. President.

The Vienna Declaration and Program of Action has established the principle of the universality of human rights. Nevertheless, we note with deep concern that youth are facing categorical challenges with regards to full enjoyment of their rights, as recognized by the international community on several occasions.¹ Recently, even more than in the past, we assist to the tragic involvement of young people in the most dramatic conflicts currently experienced in several countries. As victims or as perpetrators of human rights violations, young people are protagonist in many current conflicts and social tensions.

Inadequate political and social participation, unemployment, lack of decent work, and barriers to access quality education have serious impacts on youth and are often the cause of extreme reactions by young people.

The most dramatic acknowledgment stems from the recognition that youth have the capacity to significantly contribute to sustainable development. Youth have the potential to play a key role in conflict resolution and human rights' implementation for the society at large, if they have access to conducive conditions to foster positive changes.

In compliance with the VDPA, we call on all Member States to:

1. **Take concrete action** at local and international levels to empower young people and promote their human rights.
2. **Systematically mainstream** the implementation of youth human rights into Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures, and the Universal Periodic Review.
3. Establish, through a Human Rights Council resolution, a **Panel Discussion** to identify challenges and share methodologies to ensure respect for the rights of youth.

Thank you, Mr. President.

¹ See, *inter alia*, the UN Secretary General's Five-Year Action Agenda (http://www.un.org/sg/priorities/sg_agenda_2012.pdf) and the 2012 ILO Resolution on the youth employment crisis (http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_185950.pdf).