



## Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice – IIMA

SALESIAN SISTERS OF ST. JOHN BOSCO – Human Rights Office

NGO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United

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### Joint Oral Statement

Submitted by

**IIMA – Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice**

# YOUTH EMPOWERMENT A Human Rights Perspective

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#### With the support of

Comitato per la promozione e protezione dei diritti umani

Don Bosco Network

Don Bosco Youth Network West Africa

Fundación Jóvenes y Desarrollo

Misiones Salesianas

VIA Don Bosco BELGIUM

28<sup>th</sup> HRC Session  
Geneva, March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2015  
Item 8 GD –Follow-up and Implementation  
of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action  
Speaker: Ms. Ilse Damaris GONZÁLEZ BARRETO

## **YOUTH EMPOWERMENT: A Human Rights Perspective**

IIMA, on behalf of this NGO coalition<sup>1</sup>, would like to recall that 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 major challenges with regards to full enjoyment of their rights, as recognized by the international community on several occasions.<sup>2</sup>

Among many obstacles faced by young people we consider **inadequate political and social participation** as one of the main cause of current inequalities suffered by youth.

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 conditions conducive to fostering positive changes.

In this regard, the **transition from childhood to youth** is particularly delicate and pertinent. **Special attention should be given to the effective implementation of Child participation and accordingly Youth participation**, as requirements for the full implementation of youth rights and key conditions to unlock youth's potential in turn promote and protect the human rights of others.

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. **Fully implement the Right to Participation as established by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and ratify the Third Optional Protocol of the CRC** in order to reinforce and complement national and regional mechanisms allowing children to submit complaints for violations of their rights.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the co-signing NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC, this statement enjoys the support of the following NGO partners: Comitato per la promozione e protezione dei diritti umani, Don Bosco Network, Fundación Jóvenes y Desarrollo, Misiones Salesianas, and VIA Don Bosco BELGIUM.

<sup>2</sup> See, *inter alia*, the UN Secretary General's Five-Year Action Agenda ([http://www.un.org/sg/priorities/sg\\_agenda\\_2012.pdf](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](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_185950.pdf)).