



40th Session of the HRC
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Item 3 – General Debate
Speaker: Neomi Thijs

Oral statement submitted by
**VIDES International –
International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education, and
Development**

Co-sponsored by
**IIMA – Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice
European Youth Forum**

MOVING YOUTH AGENDA FORWARD

Thank you, Mr. President.

This NGO coalition reaffirms the need to develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere opportunities to enable their full, effective, and meaningful participation in society.

In the past few years, the Human Rights Council addressed the topic of youth and human rights by adopting HRC resolutions 32/1 (2016) and 35/14 (2017), establishing a Panel Discussion and requesting a report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights¹ on the issue.

We also note with satisfaction the commitment by the United Nations system to promote and protect youth rights, through the UN Youth Strategy “Youth 2030: Working With and For Young People”.²

However, as stated in the Report of the High Commissioner presented at the 39th HRC session, discrimination and multiple challenges continue to be encountered by youth in gaining access to their rights.

Therefore, while addressing the needs of young people in all their diversity and complexity, it is of pivotal importance for **the Human Rights Council to prioritize the matter**, in order to **ensure a rights-based approach for youth** in all national and international initiatives.

In particular, this NGO coalition calls upon Member States to:

- Establish a mandate for a Special Procedure on youth issues.
- Systematically mainstream the implementation of the human rights of youth into the Universal Periodic Review and the Treaty Bodies system.
- Strengthen youth participation in decision-making processes, thus empowering them to be the voice of their fellow youth and the promoters of their rights.

Thank you, Mr. President.

¹ See UN Document, A/HRC/39/33.

² https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/18-00080_UN-Youth-Strategy_Web.pdf