



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

**STATEMENT TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL – OPEN DEBATE ON YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY
NEW YORK, 27 APRIL 2020**

Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this open debate, which is only the second since the Council has been forced to switch to remote working mode. We appreciate the progress the Council has made under your leadership to create working methods that can enable the participation of Member States in Council Open Debates. Continued transparency and openness remain key to the Council's effectiveness. Holding the open debate also offers an important opportunity: Negotiation of any Council outcome should take place in light of written inputs provided by non-Council members and thus benefit from the views of the broader membership.

Mr President,

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic creates significant challenges for young people across the world. Many miss crucial months of their education, are deprived of social contacts, quarantined in difficult or even dangerous domestic situations, or lose out on important early career employment opportunities. These challenges will themselves have knock-on effects; the data shows that young people out of school are more prone to forced recruitment in armed forces, radicalization, sexual and gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy, and are more vulnerable to modern slavery and human trafficking. For young people living in situations of armed conflict,

these issues are even more acute; many will have to choose between staying in active conflict zones or fleeing to overpopulated areas with insufficient hygiene facilities. A global ceasefire, as suggested by the Secretary-General, is a vital first step to ameliorating the potential damage caused to young people by the pandemic. It must be followed by sustained humanitarian assistance and committed efforts toward negotiated conflict settlements.

But even in situations where a ceasefire is possible and efforts toward broader agreements can begin, young people are often left on the sidelines of negotiations, even though they make up the majority of the population in most of the situations on the council's agenda. Efforts to integrate youth into peace negotiations should harness their long-term perspective on peace: they will be responsible for the long-term implementation of peace settlements for longer than the adult signatories to peace agreements, and therefore have a far greater interest in forging a long-lasting, sustainable peace settlement. Mechanisms such as youth councils strengthen peace agreements by creating a broader sense of ownership across communities. At the same time, youth inclusion helps to inoculate young people against radicalization themselves at a time when they may be most susceptible, preventing the spread of old hatreds to a new generation. Our assistance to HD Center on inclusive peacemaking has helped teams engage youth in peace processes in the Sahel, Mali, Senegal, and the Philippines in recent years.

Engaging young people is also key to long-term prevention, reconstruction and reconciliation. Many states and territories emerging from conflict have placed education reform at the center of their post-conflict peacebuilding strategies: in particular, attempts to ensure a shared history curriculum have proven important in providing a space for young people to encounter preexisting grievances in a shared setting, in so doing creating the conditions to build bridges between communities, to jointly pursue the right to truth, and to help break the cycle of violence. UN Missions in post-conflict settings have also taken positive steps to engage young people, for example through the UN Verification Mission in Colombia's creation of a specific strategy on Youth, Peace and Security. We hope that this initiative will be mirrored in other situations on the Council's agenda.

Mr President,

The leadership of young people on the critical issue of climate justice illustrates the long-term perspective that they bring to issues of peace and security, as well as an understanding of the need to take immediate action to secure a livable world for future generations. We know that the impacts of climate change are exacerbating existing vulnerabilities in fragile situations, and will lead to increased insecurity and instability for all. We extend our wholehearted support to young people who have been at the front and center of advocacy for climate action, and hope that the council will draw from their examples in its efforts to address global warming as a ongoing threat to peace and security.

I thank you.