Recommendations from Plan International Denmark's Youth Summit

For the Danish delegation to the UN Summit of the Future, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Danish and global decision- and policymakers.

The recommendations have been drafted by 100 young representatives from 40 Danish youth organizations.

August 26, 2024.

1) Sustainable Development and Financing

1) During the Danish EU Presidency in 2025, the Danish government should implement a tax on CO_2 emissions, as well as on environmental and biodiversity damages in food production, through the Eco-Score method. The revenue should be used to promote green transformation in the food sector and reduce prices of sustainable foods. This would help consumers, particularly young people and other economically vulnerable groups, to make sustainable choices and create incentives for actors in the food sector to produce climate friendly and sustainable products.

2) UN member states should commit to dismantling existing hierarchical and geographical groups to build new equitable partnerships that promote global sustainability and emphasize equality and inclusion of marginalized groups such as young people, women and minorities.

3) Companies in the EU should pay a fee, and companies outside the EU a tariff, for the raw materials they use. The revenue should go to the local communities and indigenous peoples affected by production. This should be implemented through EU regulations with the aim of promoting more sustainable and circular production. In this way, we incentivize the reduction of overproduction and overconsumption, and ensure more resources for our future and coming generations.

2) International peace and security

1) The UN should invest further in education in the world's most vulnerable areas. This should include a "Teachers Without Borders" program in collaboration with development organizations as a partnership between countries. Qualified teachers, together with young volunteers, should work to ensure education in parts of the world where barriers to education persist. The curriculum should include subjects with a focus on human rights and democracy to provide students with practical competences.

The initiative is necessary to ensure the stability, security and overall growth of society, as well as to strengthen the education of young people around the world.

2) Denmark should call for the UN to establish a forum where a representative assembly of young people from various countries gathers annually to exchange experiences and develop strategies that can contribute to a common understanding and long-term peace. To ensure that young people's voices lead to action, a clear connection between their input and the UN Security Council must be established.

3) A new structure should be created within the UN with the aim of deploying civil defense/emergency response units to disaster-affected areas. The structure would be based on a "musketeer oath" agreed upon by member states, with deployment decisions made by a simple majority vote.

Contributions could include knowledge-sharing, material and financial assistance, or other forms of support. National contributions would consider regional challenges, geographic locations, and country-specific areas of expertise. It is the youth who will live with the consequences of the climate crisis, hence it is essential to have a structure that can deploy assistance, taking into account the increasingly frequent climate-induced natural disasters.

3) Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation

1) Danish policy-makers should advocate for the establishment of a global knowledge database where everyone has free and equal access to international research findings. Based on the idea that knowledge generates more knowledge, the database would enhance the quality of education, the future of young people, and international collaboration. The first step toward this goal is to initiate bilateral dialogues with universities and businesses, allowing them to participate in the framework of such a database.

2) The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs should support tech companies in developing countries that drive innovation by providing unconditional, stable, and free access to technology under safe production conditions, including prioritizing support for internet and telecommunications providers. This aims ensure growth and technological development in line with human rights.

3) The Danish government should implement a mentoring program for female high school students in technical fields, to create a bridge to younger girls in primary and middle school. This approach would help sustain young women's interest in technology and make it appealing and relatable for younger students choosing a high school education.

4) Youth and Future Generations

1) National governments should, in collaboration with national youth councils or similar bodies, strengthen young people's democratic engagement, confidence, and involvement through school elections. This should be ensured by providing funding to organizations that represent young people. The aim is to promote democratic initiatives within the national context.

2) The Danish government should propose a "Law of the Future" to ensure that the long-term consequences of new legislation and initiatives are taken into account during implementation. The Law of the Future should prevent intergenerational inequality and ensure that short-term solutions are not developed for long-term problems.

This law should be enforced by a Future Commissioner/Ombudsman for Future Generations, inspired by the "Future Generations Commissioner for Wales". The appointment should be made across political parties to ensure that the Ombudsman is not replaced after each election.

3) The Danish government should implement a school subject that prepares students for adult life through financial and civic education, focusing on taxation, volunteerism, and skills development. This would help reduce financial ignorance and inequality while promoting equal opportunities for engagement and citizenship.

5) Transforming global governance

1) National youth councils should be established in all UN member states with the aim of representing young people's interests in all major societal issues. The representative selected young people should be heard by the legislative power at least once a quarter to ensure that young people are given a voice on an equal level with other population groups.

2) UN member states should strengthen education on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and by consequence foster global citizenship. This should be achieved through educational materials developed by the UN, suitable for teaching at all educational levels. The UN should facilitate this in collaboration with national governments. In countries where access to education is limited, it should be done in partnership with relevant NGOs.

3) We call for UN member states to accelerate the reform of the UN Security Council as an executive power capable of imposing economic sanctions on countries. This includes challenging the veto power to ensure transparent global representation and influence.

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