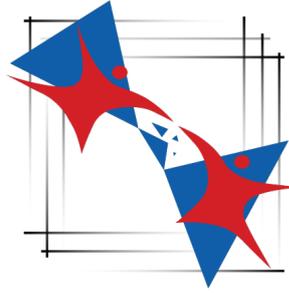


IV Young Americas Forum



Panama City, Panama - April 2015

Youth Declaration

IV Young Americas Forum: Youth Partners for Prosperity

Thursday April 9th, 2015

Panama City, Panama.

Introduction

We are here as spokespersons on behalf of a broad participatory process, in which more than 5,000 young people contributed to the Youth Declaration of Panama adopted today at the IV Young Americas Forum. We present the contributions resulting from 39 national, regional, hemispheric and virtual dialogues organized in our countries within the framework of the themes of this VII Summit of the Americas.

We bring their voice as well as almost 300 young people gathered in Panama City on April 8th and 9th, 2015 focusing on the theme of the VII Summit: Prosperity with Equity: The challenge of cooperation in the Americas. In these two days, the Working Groups addressed the following sub-themes:

- Energy and Environment
- Security and Migration
- Education
- Democratic Governance and Citizen participation

Conclusions

Recognizing the importance of youth in each sub-theme of the VII Summit of the Americas, we the young people, call our governments to understand the interrelation among the thematic axes postulated. We also wish to be allowed, as youth, to have an active role in the policy-making process and a realistic action plan that meets expectations and overcomes the challenges that await us.

Environment and Energy

We, the young people of the Americas, believe that climate change is the greatest challenge to ensure prosperity with equity and the survival of our people; therefore we encourage governments to adopt, ratify and implement existing and future agreements under the UNFCCC (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change), and allocate the necessary resources to mitigate emissions of greenhouse gases and increase the adaptive capacity of the most vulnerable communities, especially in the health sector.

Governments should adopt a State agenda that unifies a sustainable approach to renewable energy. Likewise, they should encourage private investment through economic incentives and promote legitimate, transparent and equitable participation and respect for the rights of populations and the environment.

Also, prioritize the creation of ecological reserves in each country to preserve biodiversity and implement mandatory environmental education in order to promote a sustainable culture as a mean for social inclusion that strengthens the articulation of governmental, private and citizen sectors.

It is vital that our states constitutionally assume the right to water and sanitation as an inalienable human right, acknowledging cultural ties of indigenous peoples and peasants to natural resources.

Migration

We, youth of the Americas, do not perceive migration as a problem but as a right. We understand that it is a multi-issue topic and, therefore, requires comprehensive solutions. Migration should be addressed considering its specific features: situation of the country of origin, the implications on the transit country and the impact on host countries. It is recognized that migration takes place between and within states.

The youth identified as a major cause of migration the lack of opportunities, economic welfare in the country, insecurity and political instability. The problems resulting of this environment are mainly regarding family reunification and the recognition and respect of the rights of migrants.

To our Heads of State, we demand investment in universal quality education to strengthen human development and the elimination of immigration risks. In addition, the promotion of entrepreneurship, cooperativeness and partnership with the private sector to stimulate the creation of decent and safe work for young people.

Decentralize public institutions to generate social welfare with equity. We believe that we can reduce permanent migration to other countries by creating more employment. We understand that employment creation should be the shared responsibility of public and private sector. New companies created by young people are an important source of employment and, therefore, we advocate the generation of accessible funding opportunities for the creation of them.

Governments have the responsibility to ensure public safety of any migrant population in transit or resident. By doing so, they will fight against human trafficking - especially women, children and adolescents. We consider a priority to promote education on the human rights of migrants.

We call for the development of a multilateral treaty on migration in which the regulations of human rights of migrants and public safety are stated, adapting this treaty to the conditions and characteristics of the nations of the Americas.

We as young people are committed to developing an awareness campaign, for a period of three years, for the humanization of migration

Security

Young people understand that one of the key problems of citizen security is social and economic inequality. Also the militarization, the guerrillas and the poor effectiveness of prison systems in the hemisphere.

Therefore, we call on the entire American continent to be a "zone of peace", that ensures respect for the sovereignty, the categorical rejection of any initiative of interference in internal affairs of each country and the existence of foreign military bases. This requires strengthening of police, judicial and correctional institutions. As well as ensuring the autonomy, democracy, transparency and secularism of the public security organs that constitute the State to ensure the credibility of the institutions and their functions.

Regarding prison systems, governments should develop comprehensive public policies towards its restructuration to ensure the social reintegration of prisoners and human rights of the victims.

In terms of prevention, promote a comprehensive education that promotes human values and strengthen families in their diversity through social, cultural, sports, and human development programs, among others. This will contribute to lower dropout rates and family disintegration. At the same time, it should be encouraged to develop policies on social enterprise, focused integral development of young people.

Education

Youth delegates of the IV Young Americas Forum aspire to universal education, from kindergarten to university, of the highest quality, free, multicultural, pluralistic and innovative, to prepare us for the challenges that await us as future leaders of the Western Hemisphere.

To realize our vision, we call on our authorities to set the post-2015 agenda taking into consideration the following priorities:

1) Participation and Incidence.

Implement spaces of continuous participation in the Inter-American Committee on Education in order to present proposals to Ministers of Education in order to establish a methodology to ensure the inclusion of our perspective through the IV Young Americas Forum platform.

2) Free education, resource management and distribution.

Provide free preschool, primary, secondary and higher education as a fundamental human right, and the creation of specialized programs for literacy and vocational education as public policy, strengthening the supply of skills and reducing social gaps in the interests of constructing a continent with equity.

3) Quality in education.

Ensure pedagogical models that aim to develop an integral human being, carrying critical and creative thinking, renewing the teaching-learning process and including the participation of all social sectors. Conduct regular participatory consultations for continuous contextualized improvement of the educational systems and ensure that government authorities generate, monitor, evaluate and adjust action plans to ensure the compliance.

4) Universal public and pluralist education.

Promote, strengthen and universally position public education systems that involve young people in situations of vulnerability¹; respect for sexual diversity, multiculturalism, and gender diversity and claim different identities. Moreover establish a comprehensive sexual and reproductive education.

5) Research, innovation and academic mobility.

Promote education, training and implementation of scientific and technological literacy for social inclusion and educational innovation. Bridging the technology and information gap between urban and rural areas. Strengthen and link education systems, national centers and regional scientific research centers, facilitating mobility processes for academic exchange in preschool, primary, secondary, and university education.

¹ Indigenous youth, Afro-descendants, neurologically disabled, LGBTI, limited mobility and rare diseased human beings

6) Training and working conditions of teachers.

Improve the working environment of the educational communities. Facilitate family involvement in learning processes and their link to their cultural environment. Promote incentives for teachers as well as continuous and quality training.

Citizen Participation

We recognize as the problematic on this issue the low levels of participation in the definition of public policies in the following sectors of the population: women, indigenous people, African descent, people with disabilities, migrants, rural youth, LGBTI, among others. To modify this situation of lack of equality and equity in opportunities for citizen participation there must be a commitment made by the States.

We urge recognition and support to social movements, volunteers and youth organizations, through democratic actions between different social groups and governments, in order to strengthen the management of all levels of government through mutual support, larger budgets and autonomy in their actions.

We propose electoral quotas for young people to ensure our participation and influence, institutionalize mechanisms for ongoing discussion, social TIC's, consultations and participation in the public policy cycle. Additionally, evaluate those that already exist to reform them, providing public education on leadership, public participation, management and political/social control.

Governance

The youth of the Americas recognize as essential the enduring practice of democratic governance, based on the chosen democratic model and we demand the recognition of human rights for all, within the framework of respect for the sovereignty of States without conditioning or interfering.

We urge governments to strengthen and improve their institutions and legal systems, both at national and international levels.

Motivated by these purposes, we request the implementation of a monitoring agenda of the discussions and commitments agreed at the IV Youth Forum of the Americas, adapted to the reality of each country, suggesting preventive strategies against corruption, towards transparency, citizen consciousness and empowerment.

In addition, we propose the measurement of the real impact and control of these commitments, in order to be truly sustainable to the voice of the youth of the Americas.