

Closing Statement of the Major Group of Children and Youth

2014 ECOSOC High-level segment

Friday, July 11 2014 | 05:30 pm

Thank you Mr. Chair.

This has certainly been a hectic week. A lot has been happening, namely the High Level Political Forum, the Open Working Group informals, and the Development Cooperation Forum. The excitement is building as we inch closer to the start of the Post-2015 negotiations. Now, as exciting as all of this may seem, we must not lose sight of what we are trying to achieve here: A transformative development agenda that rests firmly on the three pillars of sustainable development and truly leaves no one behind.

Now, the lofty phrases that have become standard in our post-2015 and sustainable development lexicon are essentially meaningless if we fail to act now. We need not remind you of what needs to be done in terms of the post-2015 framework. We have had the relevant discussions and have borne witness to global events that remind us of why a paradigm shift in how we carry out development is so critical. The time has come for us to move forward, and the Major Group of Children and Youth remind you that these next steps must be taken together.

The debate concerning the role of civil society continues, notwithstanding resolutions that not only acknowledge us, but also recognize the important role we play in this process. We strongly oppose any form of regression. The Open Working Group remains in conflict over the few truly transformative aspects of their current SDG draft. At this rate, we may eventually come up with an SDG framework that is neither transformative nor worthy of the next 15 years of our lives or the lives of those yet to be born.

Encouraging sustainable consumption and production, tackling climate change, promoting social inclusion, recognizing that our rights are not too controversial to discuss and moving our development model beyond our current obsession with growth are central aspects of achieving the paradigm shift necessary to usher in a transformative post-2015 development agenda. But this is only half the battle. Without a strong institutional framework, our transformative agenda, already at risk of being watered down further in the coming months, continues to remain nothing more than lofty and aspirational phrases. All talk and no action.

We have heard time and again that social groups like children and young people are no longer viewed simply as the beneficiaries of the policies created in halls like this one. We have been told that people like us are drivers of development. Yet even as we share this space, many still believe that the role we play is limited. Nevertheless, besides the policy work we do side by side with you, it must be noted that the work of young people and youth-led organizations helped achieve so many of the MDGs. Unsurprisingly, we are ready to do our part once again, but hope that policymakers take us seriously and provide us with the tools and resources necessary to take up our mantle as drivers of development at all levels.

In a world constrained by planetary boundaries, in a time when human behaviour threatens the very existence of future generations, we would like to repeat that the time to act, to truly accomplish what we set out to do back in Rio, is very much upon us. A transformative agenda requires us all to think outside of the box and to recognize the mistakes that were made in the past in order to rectify them for the future. The Earth can no longer be seen as our exclusive playground, but as a home that requires our care and attention in order to continue standing.