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10th GLOBAL CONFERENCE OF
YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS
ARMENIA 2024



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Tenth IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians

Avoiding lost generations: Preserving education and employment in all circumstances

12–14 September 2024, Yerevan, Armenia

Concept note

Education and employment are the foundations on which young people can build prosperous lives. This is reaffirmed in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in which all countries of the world underlined the importance of *Quality education* (SDG 4), and *Decent work and economic growth* (SDG 8). However, crises such as wars and conflicts, pandemics, climate change, and economic downturns significantly impact young people's ability to attend school, receive training and find decent work.

Today, only one in six countries are on track to meet the goal of universal quality education by 2030.¹ Young people are more than three times more likely to be unemployed compared to older adults.² These gaps are exacerbated in times of crisis: more than 240 million young people's education is being disrupted due to conflict.³ During the COVID-19 pandemic, one in six young people stopped working and over 40% reported reduced income. These situations are even more difficult in groups of young people who are in vulnerable situations or subject to intersecting discriminations, including women, people with disabilities, migrants, displaced people and more.

In 2024, how optimistic are young people about their future? While comprehensive global data is scarce, we often hear of many youth expressing a sense that they have fewer opportunities compared to their parents' generation. Failure to address young people's socio-economic rights at all times jeopardizes the present and future prospects of youth and can lead to a generation lost to hopelessness in many countries.

Research shows that countries with lower rates of education have more conflict.⁴ Disruption in education, employment or training is a key indicator for instability,⁵ and one in four young people are considered not in education, employment or training (NEET), with young women and youth in lower-income countries disproportionately affected.⁶ Education and employment are also interconnected: without access to school and training, young people are more likely to grow up without the skills they need to contribute to their countries. This can lead to a vicious cycle of unemployment, exclusion, grievances and instability, potentially spiralling into further crises.⁷ For young women, such disruptions not only limit economic opportunities but also exacerbate existing gender inequalities.

Initiatives to preserve youth rights for education and employment at all times, including youth-led ones, are essential to breaking this cycle. International collaboration and proactive policy measures must be fortified and expanded so that all youth – especially those in marginalized, overlooked or vulnerable situations – are protected and provided with the opportunity to become productive and engaged citizens. This includes through national implementation of global frameworks like the SDGs and initiatives focused on promoting education and employment for young people.

Young parliamentarians are best positioned to protect and promote the rights, needs and interests of young people. They can channel their voices into politics, promote impactful legislation and policies, ensure adequate budgetary allocations, and oversee government action to ensure that the rights, needs and interests of young people are preserved and promoted at all times.

As a unique platform for young members of parliaments to exchange, learn, and define common solutions, the Tenth IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians will provide an opportunity to turn the tide and place youth education and employment at the centre at a time of multiple global crises. It will focus on exploring how to ensure

¹ sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4#progress_and_info

² www.ilo.org/publications/flagship-reports/world-employment-and-social-outlook-trends-2024

³ world-education-blog.org/2022/09/01/new-measurement-shows-that-244-million-children-and-youth-are-out-of-school/

⁴ www.globalpartnership.org/content/education-path-peaceful-future

⁵ www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/PPR-2024-web.pdf

⁶ www.ilo.org/publications/flagship-reports/world-employment-and-social-outlook-trends-2024

⁷ www.ilo.org/publications/sustaining-peace-through-decent-work-and-employment

that there are no lost generations, and that education and employment are provided at all times and to all young people.

The following topics will be highlighted:

- 1. Countdown to 2030: Where are we with youth education and employment?** Participants will assess progress – or lack thereof – by the global community and their respective countries in achieving quality education and decent work, and identify areas where more concerted actions are needed.
- 2. Young lives disrupted: The impact of crises on youth socio-economic rights and empowerment.** Participants will examine the disruptive effects of global crises, including wars, economic downturns, pandemics and climate change, on youth education and employment. The session will look at the legislative, policy, budgetary and oversight measures young MPs can take to champion youth education and employment, especially in such times of crisis.
- 3. Leaving no one behind: Delivering education and employment to the most vulnerable and marginalized.** Young parliamentarians will zoom in on the situations of young people in particularly vulnerable situations and youth facing intersecting discrimination and marginalization, and will examine how they and their parliaments can deliver more inclusive and responsive policy-making to vulnerable groups of young people.

The Conference will include a combination of panel discussions, where presentations from experts and young parliamentarians will inform the debates, as well as working group discussions where young parliamentarians will be invited to share thoughts and brainstorm together. The Conference will aim to be a platform for interactivity, capacity-building and networking. Young parliamentarians are encouraged to come prepared with experiences and examples of good practices from their home countries to share with colleagues, as well as to have more spontaneous and unscripted exchanges where their own thoughts, reflections and personal experiences will be welcome.

Young parliamentarians will be invited to take the lead of an 'Unconference' session, a free space in the conference agenda where topics will not be determined in advance, but proposed and chosen by the participants. More information can be found in the Annex.

The third day of the Conference will be reserved for a visit programme organized by the Host Parliament to further facilitate networking among the participants and offer them a joint cultural experience.