

MGCY statement to be read on 25th Feb 2014 (1st Prep Comm Meeting of the UN Conf. on SIDS)

On behalf of Children and Youth, I am here today to ask for a self-sustaining, climate resilient, peaceful, healthy, inclusive, and transparent society where all young people are empowered as equal partners in global efforts for sustainable development.

We can no longer afford to **not** see our planet as an interlinked system with planetary boundaries. The nexus between sustainable development and SIDS is a matter of survival for young people living in these islands. We realise that it is hard to find solutions to the issues that our small islands are facing but they do exist.

To build our climate resilience, emphasis should be placed on technology and best practise sharing, with focus on climate vulnerability and natural resource mapping, climate monitoring as well as climate change adaptation and mitigation plans such as investments and subsidies for renewable energy sources.

However, as SIDS Youth, we are also impacted by the same problems as young people from the global community. In 2013, the ILO noted that young people are three times more likely to be unemployed and almost 73 million youth worldwide are looking for work. This highlights the existing gaps in our global educational systems, which seems more oriented towards training job seekers, rather than job creators.

For example, in the Seychelles a scheme exists whereby at the age of 15 and above during your time in secondary education students have the option of spending three days working or learning a trade and two days for formal education. This gives the young person the opportunity to develop skills and experience that will allow them to more easily transition into the working world. Good practice with regard to access and affordability of tertiary education and adequate economic opportunities for young people need to be shared. National consultative processes to guide the revamping of the school core curriculum should be made such that it targets 100% Education for Sustainable Development, including elements of entrepreneurship and social business. We want to see an educational environment that provides greater opportunities for us by being less limiting and more inclusive of people living with different abilities and interests, as well as those in rural areas and outer islands

Finally, young people are the implementers of decisions and policies made today. We are not mere victims; we have a lot to offer - our energy, passion, creativity, including our traditional and innovative solutions. We need an intergenerational dialogue and an inclusive and active participation of youth in policy making. We therefore urge Governments to include youth within the official governmental delegations to the SIDS 2014 Conference, the processes leading up to it and beyond.

We invite you all to join us as partners in achieving a sustainable future. Today, let us celebrate the beginning of action, ambition and global partnership towards creating a better future. Today, let us agree to do whatever is within our capacity to achieve a future we not only want **but need**.