

Thursday, 3 July 2014

“The future of the HLPF – agenda setting”

- *What modalities of participation build on the CSD modalities as well as other paras of Resolution 67/290?*
- *What structure could the HLPF have to ensure these modalities meet the UN intergovernmental process rules and procedures?*
- *What HLPF structure and body would ensure a role for Major Groups and other stakeholders in agenda setting?*

Statement 2: Youth participation (Sven Jacobs, Flemish Youth Council/MGCY)

The new development agenda will have a defining impact on the future generations. Young people and their youth organizations are willing to participate intensely in the decision-making process, but only in a effective, structural and sustainable way. Youth concerns should therefore be mainstreamed within the decision-making process in order to meet the specific needs of children and youth. Youth participation should not only be fostered at the level of the UN, but also on national and even regional levels. Therefore, we call for a bottom-up approach for the agenda setting at the HLPF. It is essential to make sure that young people can participate in the implementation and monitoring of this new agenda.

Youth participation should be highlighted and incorporated into the core of the HLPF. In order to guarantee effective youth participation, young people must be given legal tools to do so. Youth concerns should be mentioned in both the input as the output phase of the process. To reach as many young people as possible, we also need to use new kinds of coherent information and communication structures in order to include groups of young people who cannot physically attend international meetings. Social media and *on-line* platforms are suited tools to make their voice heard and include them in the political debate. Shadow reports by young people are complementary to government reports to guarantee accountability in the realisation of the new development agenda.

We welcome the fact that youth has been ensured access to meetings, documents and other information of the HLPF. But in reality we notice that this is not always the case, as more and more negotiations are being conducted behind closed doors. The forum should allow as much as possible for inclusive and genuine engagement of Major Groups of all backgrounds, including constituencies marginalized from the decision-making process. Concrete efforts are needed to include more young people, especially from the global South. Only in that way youth participation can be truly representative. Measures should be taken to include input and interventions of young people and their organizations in the modalities of all high-level meetings. Acknowledge that the needs of children and youth in general require additional recognition within the development framework. Recognizing intergenerational equity as a priority is in that manner an undisputed fundamental principle to increase the empowerment of young people all over the world.