

# UN Issue Based Coalition on Adolescents and Youth

## Terms of Reference

### Background

1. Adolescents and youth are key partners in the national, regional and international development, peace and human rights agenda. They are at the centre of their own development and catalytic to drive change and deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The United Nations Secretary-General has included working for and with young people as one of the five priority areas in his Five-Year Action Agenda. The General Assembly, in paragraph 8 (a) of the World Programme of Action on Youth, as adopted in resolution 50/81 of 14 December 1995, emphasized that “every State should provide young people with opportunities for obtaining education, for acquiring skills and for participating fully in all aspects of society, with a view to, inter alia, acquiring productive employment and leading self-sufficient lives”. Twenty years after its adoption, the World Programme of Action for Youth, remains relevant as Member States reaffirmed their commitment during the High-Level Event of the General Assembly marking the 20th Anniversary.

The Secretary-General's Five-Year Action Agenda also calls for deepening the youth focus of existing programmes on employment, entrepreneurship, political inclusion, citizenship and protection of rights, and education, including on sexual and reproductive health. This generation of young people is the largest in history, and this significantly determines the extent to which countries will be able to harness the demographic dividend and achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

2. Young people’s rights and development in all regions of the world continue to be constrained. Young people face major challenges that are increasing in complexity, with young women and men experiencing them differently and some young people facing exclusion, marginalization and stigma. At the same time, young generations in Europe and Central Asia have much to contribute to building inclusive, sustainable and prosperous societies, provided they are given the opportunity to develop their skills, resilience and strengths through access to education, decent work, adequate health care, protection and social services, and to participate in decision-making processes at all levels.

3. The process of globalization has had a profound impact on the lives of young people, on the one hand, providing opportunities and, on the other hand, causing tension between traditional and modern expectations, values and norms. The support systems that adolescents and youth have relied upon in the past have eroded because of changing family structures and migration stimulated by the search for better education and employment opportunities. The challenges posed by these changes are compounded by inadequate and unequal access to education, employment, and health services including for mental, sexual and reproductive health. In this context, young people are beginning to doubt that their lives will be as good as those of their parents. Despite these constraints, adolescents and youth have emerged as a key partner for development in the region, seizing the opportunities globalization also brings. Young people today are better connected than ever before, and find new ways, including through digital

engagement, to exchange knowledge and views, and to engage in decision-making and build a better society. Young people can contribute to improving the social, political and economic fabric of society.

4. Investment in young people's human capital, including in health, education, protection and decent work opportunities will be one of the most direct determinants of countries' future prosperity. Taking into account the universal and aspirational 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Regional United Nations Development Group Team for Europe and Central Asia (ECA R-UNDG) agreed to facilitate a regional issue based coalition to ensure that young people and their rights, aspirations and needs are adequately positioned and that opportunities for their participation and leadership are maximised. The Issue-based coalition will work towards building the resilience and well-being of adolescents and youth, including the most vulnerable.

### **Objective**

5. The main goal of the Issue-based Coalition on Adolescents and Youth (IBC-A&Y) is to build synergies and ensure a coordinated UN system-wide approach to advancing the UN Youth Strategy and Secretary-General's Five-Year Action Agenda in Europe and Central Asia.

It aims to strengthen regional engagement and system-wide accountability for Adolescents and Youth, provide more coherent and timely policy guidance and technical support and improve coordination, advocacy, communication as well as information sharing.

6. Under the UN facilitated Coalition on Adolescents and Youth for Europe and Central Asia coalition members can opt-in to join forces related to their interest to deliver on the agreed results. The Coalition will collaborate with other regional UN issue-based coalitions around specific topics such as gender, health, nutrition, education, climate etc.

### **Value added**

7. The coalition will bring a stronger voice, more effective and efficient advocacy to benefit adolescents, youth, and societies. It is an opportunity to influence UN work, anchor it more firmly to youth and civil society initiatives in context of UN Member States priorities. It is also an opportunity to share resources (access, technical capacity, knowledge, data etc.) among interested parties and to enhance advocacy and action by employing a networked and coalition-based approach to adolescent and youth rights, peace and development. Value added include:

- A forum for cooperation and support;
- An opportunity for ongoing exchange of information regarding work on adolescents and youth.
- Enhanced cooperation to promote empowerment of young people, through joint advocacy and initiatives and other forms of cooperation;

- Common access to all members' networks and relationships with governments, youth-led and youth-focused organizations, donor agencies, civil society organizations, multilateral organizations and others, to advance youth development;
- Joint facilitation and support to youth engagement and participation in the UN System, regional policy processes and programmes or initiatives at all levels;
- Coordinated support of requests from the UNCT or country level UN youth thematic groups on the implementation of the UN Youth Strategy and support to the development of the CCAs, UNSDCF and Joint Annual Work Plans of the UNCT or UN Joint Programmes or Projects.

### **Areas of collaboration**

#### (a) Support UNCTs

Support requests from the UNCT, or country level UN youth thematic groups on the implementation of the UN Youth Strategy and support to the development of the CCAs, UNSDCF and Joint Annual Work Plans of the UNCT or UN Joint Programmes or Projects.

#### (b) Advocacy

i) Undertake joint advocacy for implementing policies that provide opportunities for young people to build their capacity and contribute to development in the context of the region's social, political, economic and environmental challenges; for removing legal barriers to youth access to education, decent work and adequate health care and their leadership and participation in decision-making and peacemaking processes; for enforcing the laws that intend to eliminate harmful practices with regards to youth such as child, early and forced marriage, gender based violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. This may include key messages and shared communication in relation to ad hoc or specific issues affecting youth in the region

ii) Encouraging engagement, participation and leadership of adolescents and youth in regional and global initiatives.

#### (c) Knowledge generation and analytical work

i) Undertaking joint analytical work and collection of data/information on policy options and on the status of young people in the region, including issues relating to inequality and vulnerability, for evidence-based advocacy, policy and programming.

#### (d) Information sharing, and networking

i) Contributing to a better understanding and development of a common approach related to the specific objectives defined by the coalition by strengthening mechanisms for sharing of good practices;

ii) Establishing and maximizing the use of new and existing virtual platforms for dialogue and information sharing of experiences, tools, practices and evidence among coalition members and other stakeholders

(e) Enhancing cooperation and coordination:

i) Enhancing cooperation among members of the Coalition in order to promote a unified regional voice, enhance synergies and minimize duplication of programmes and initiatives at the regional level;

ii) Support, as appropriate, intergovernmental meetings on adolescent and youth policies and on national progress in meeting international commitments.

The IBC does not engage in operational matters, or in mobilizing resources for programmes or projects, or in implementing them.

All types of support services provided by the IBC to UNCTs are request based.

### **Principles**

The Issues-Based Coalition on Adolescents and Youth for Europe and Central Asia will promote:

- a youth-led approach
- youth agency, participation and engagement
- a human rights-based approach
- a life course approach
- a gender equity-based approach
- inclusion, respect, dignity and non-discrimination
- Leaving no one behind

### **Membership, organization and reporting**

8. The UN facilitated Coalition on Adolescent and Youth for Europe and Central Asia is open to UN and other multilateral organizations, regional civil society organizations and government entities.

9. The coalition will coordinate and collaborate with the relevant regional UN issue based coalitions.

10. The coalition will hold online meetings and *ad hoc* meetings as required.

11. The coalition is co-chaired by two agencies as decided by the RCP

12. Each member shall designate an official representative and an alternate to participate in the meetings of the coalition. In case the designated representative is unavailable for a given meeting, the alternate will attend.

13. A results-based work plan for the coalition will be developed and adopted annually

14. The UN facilitated Coalition on Adolescents and Youth for Europe and Central Asia will report to RCP

**Sunset clause**

The IBC will cease its activity when:

*Internally:*

- There is no longer a need to ensure coordination on adolescent and youth work; support to UNCTs is no longer needed and adolescents' and youth's aspects are fully included in the UN planning processes and strategies.
- It is decided that an Issue-based Coalition is no longer the right forum for advancing adolescents and youth work.

*Externally*

- Other stakeholders and partners have taken up advocacy on youth and adolescents work at regional level