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Third Standing Committee
Democracy and Human Rights

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YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

Preliminary draft resolution submitted by the co-Rapporteur,
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The 122nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

- (1) *Based* on the principle of non-discrimination enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948),
- (2) *Noting* the UN World Youth Reports 2003, 2005 and 2007,
- (3) *Noting* UN General Assembly Resolutions A/RES/60/2 (2005) on Policies and programmes involving youth and A/RES/62/126 (2008) on Policies and programmes involving youth: youth in the global economy – promoting youth participation in social and economic development,
- (4) *Recognizing* that children and young people are capable of forming their own views and should be assured the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting them, the views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity, as set forth in Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989),
- (5) *Also recognizing* that implementation of the UN World Programme of Action for Youth and achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, require the full and effective participation of young people and youth-led organizations,
- (6) *Declaring* that achieving meaningful democracy requires the full and active participation of young people and youth organizations at the local, national, regional and international levels,
- (7) *Recognizing* that young people are an active part of society and important actors of national development and that active citizenship of young people is key to building democratic and inclusive societies at all levels,
- (8) *Determined* to combat all forms of discrimination against young people, including those based on race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status which can make them vulnerable (migrant, refugee, etc.), and to promote equal opportunities for all,

- (9) *Stressing* young people's awareness of and commitment to human rights and democracy, the promotion of intercultural dialogue and understanding in a spirit that is respectful of diversity, the combating of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, intolerance and all actions aimed at undermining democracy; and *considering* the importance of their contribution to social cohesion, especially by combating exclusion and preventing ills that affect young people in particular,
- (10) *Emphasizing* the need to prevent and counter all forms of discrimination on any grounds, including discrimination based on age,
- (11) *Bearing in mind* that youth participation promotes active citizenship, which should be considered as an opportunity for enhancing democracy and placing new issues on the political agenda,
- (12) *Recognizing* the positive impact that youth participation in the local, regional and global economy and in social and economic development can have on the eradication of poverty and hunger, as well as on socially unacceptable and/or deviant behaviour,
- (13) *Recognizing also* that while youth today are better placed than ever before to participate in and benefit from global development, many young people remain marginalized, disconnected or excluded from the opportunities that globalization offers,
- (14) *Underscoring* that the involvement of children and young people in public decision-making processes offers important opportunities for civic engagement, education and learning about government, thus strengthening children's and young people's social responsibility and developing their communication, negotiation and conflict-resolution skills and critical thinking,
- (15) *Aiming* to maximize young people's contribution to the building of society, especially in all areas which concern them, encourage new forms of youth participation and organization, and train young people to assume responsibilities,
- (16) *Reiterating* the critical role of both formal and non-formal education in the empowerment of young people for democratic citizenship and *recognizing* the importance of the informal education provided by youth organizations,
- (17) *Highlighting* the importance of creating the conditions for genuine dialogue and partnership between young people and local and regional authorities,
- (18) *Recognizing* youth parliaments, national and local youth councils, or their equivalent bodies as effective channels of cooperation and information exchange between young people, their national governments, parliaments, local councils and other decision-making bodies,
- (19) *Mindful* of the importance of intergenerational solidarity and dialogue, and of the significance of family relations to young people,
- (20) *Deeply concerned* at young people's political apathy, lack of interest in politics and disenchantment with politicians and political parties, which is a real threat to the future of participatory democracy,

1. *Calls on* all States to take appropriate steps in accordance with the UN World Programme of Action for Youth, to develop, in consultation with youth organizations, holistic and integrated youth policies;
2. *Urges* parliaments to monitor the fulfilment of their respective government's obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child to ensure children's right to be heard and express their views freely and without discrimination based on gender, age, social background, ethnicity and disability;
3. *Recommends* the development of national cooperative networks between policymakers, researchers, young people and youth organizations;
4. *Invites* States to encourage, promote and make more visible in all fields the initiative, enterprise and creativity of young people;
5. *Calls on* parliaments, governments, IPU bodies and non-governmental organizations to develop strong partnerships to scale up investments in youth and encourage youth-led contributions;
6. *Invites* the IPU and States to include and keep youth participation high on their political agendas, in particular by providing the necessary financial means for its development;
7. *Calls upon* the IPU and its Member Parliaments, youth organizations and other relevant stakeholders to strengthen efforts aimed at achieving appropriate representation and participation of youth in decision-making bodies, bearing in mind that girls, boys, young women and young men are entitled to the same rights;
8. *Invites* the IPU, its Member Parliaments and States and to identify lines of action for youth participation on which they intend to concentrate and to define concrete measures and/or action plans for their implementation and promote these plans with regional and local authorities, youth organizations and young people and closely cooperate with regional and local authorities in order to ensure the fullest possible implementation;
9. *Encourages* the IPU and its Member Parliaments to develop tools to promote youth participation, including, but not limited to, guidelines for participatory mechanisms or interactive policy participation forums on the Internet;
10. *Calls on* parliaments to develop practical measures, including quotas for young people, to increase the participation of young people in parliament and other representative bodies, while respecting the values of human dignity, freedom, democracy and equality;
11. *Recommends* that parliaments align the minimum voting age with the minimum age of eligibility to run for office in order to ensure greater participation by youth in parliaments;
12. *Urges* States to promote greater participation by girls and young women by taking measures to eliminate gender stereotypes, promoting role models and facilitating better reconciliation of work and family life;

13. *Invites* States to open up "adult institutions" and administrative bodies, particularly those with planning responsibilities, to young people's representatives and establish links between these institutions and young people in a spirit of complementarity and joint decision-making;
14. *Calls on* States to ensure through national legislation and/or targeted actions the participation of young people in political parties and elections at the local, national and regional levels;
15. *Draws attention* to the importance of sufficient and sustainable funding of youth organizations and other forms of youth activities and specific youth projects;
16. *Requests* parliaments to provide political and financial support with suitable operating budgets to form strong youth parliaments, youth councils or equivalent bodies and to strengthen existing ones, thus providing further opportunities for more young people to become active in decision-making and in shaping their societies;
17. *Urges* all States to introduce compulsory courses in democracy and civic education in schools;
18. *Encourages* States to ensure adequate funding for formal and non-formal education, including programmes aimed at fostering the acquisition of requisite skills by youth;
19. *Invites* States to promote student participation and their initiative and creativity as valuable resources in teaching, learning and other school activities, and to stimulates active citizenship via the education system;
20. *Also invites* all States to create all the necessary conditions to form student councils in schools through which students can acquire valuable first-hand experience in decision-making;
21. *Encourages* States to ensure special training for teachers and other persons working with children and youth in youth participation and to implement best practices in the field of youth participation;
22. *Urges* States to ensure young women's equal access to education and vocational training at all levels in order to provide them with equal opportunities for full participation in society, especially political participation;
23. *Encourages* States to introduce gender-sensitive compulsory courses for young men as part of the school curriculum in order to nurture their consciousness of gender issues;
24. *Calls on* States to improve the ability of young people, including those who live in poverty, to make a better transition into the world of work, enhance their access to the changing labour market and facilitate their participation in cooperatives and other forms of social, economic or financial enterprises in order to make their transition from dependence to independence faster and more efficient;
25. *Encourages* States to support voluntary work by youth and internship programmes and to recognize and evaluate skills and knowledge gained through these activities;

26. *Recommends* that States support voluntary-sector activities in local municipalities or regions in order to reach those young people who are not involved in activities targeting them or who feel excluded from the participation activities offered, and to develop by every possible means voluntary work at all levels;
27. *Recommends* the development of national information and communication technology (ICT) strategies to overcome the barriers of distance and socio-economic disadvantage and ensure that young people are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to use ICTs appropriately, while also promoting the involvement of young people in public debates, the creation of public opinion and the development of policy through ICTs;
28. *Calls* on parliaments to establish and promote coherent, overarching youth information strategies which, in a youth-friendly way, address all issues relevant to young people, to develop special web-based information and information centres for young people, and facilitate access to information for young people with fewer opportunities;
29. *Further calls* on States to set up contact points for young people in ministries and other government agencies to provide young people with information, listen to their problems, offer advice and encourage them in their quest for services and participation;
30. *Encourages* political parties to increase the number of young people in their membership and enhance young members' participation in party life and decision-making;
31. *Invites* parliaments to facilitate the meaningful participation of children and young people in consultation processes when drafting laws;
32. *Calls on* parliaments to invite children and young people to participate in parliamentary hearings and ensure that they contribute to debates on policy- and law-making, questions regarding resource allocation and parliament's efforts to hold government to account;
33. *Calls upon* the IPU and its Member Parliaments to form caucuses of young parliamentarians for the purpose of promoting youth participation, making young persons in politics more visible and reflecting the youth perspective in the political agenda;
34. *Encourages* all elected parliamentarians and appointed officials at all levels to give maximum support to young and/or newly elected or appointed persons, thus helping to create a youth-friendly and accessible environment;
35. *Requests* the IPU to consult, as appropriate, with youth-led and youth-focused organizations to ensure that various youth inputs are duly shared with IPU bodies during its deliberations;

36. *Welcomes* the participation of young representatives in national parliamentary delegations and *urges* IPU Member Parliaments to consider being represented by young representatives on a continuous basis at IPU Assemblies and other IPU meetings;
37. *Urges* the IPU and its Member Parliaments to collect, on a continuous basis, youth-specific data disaggregated by age and sex in order to create comprehensive databases related to youth and young parliamentarians, and to devise the means of disseminating such data widely so as to ensure that interest in youth development is informed by sound and accurate data and to develop, assess and disseminate best practices in democracy education and youth participation;
38. *Requests* the IPU to incorporate youth participation in its activities along the lines of the measures that have been taken to promote women's participation;
39. *Urges* the IPU to establish mechanisms for the monitoring, analysis, evaluation and exchange of information on parliamentary action in the context of the promotion and implementation of youth participation.