

AFI CHANGEMAKERS OFFICIAL STATEMENT

**14th session of the Committee of Experts on
Public Administration**



ECOSOC

United Nations

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“Building trust in government in pursuit of the sustainable development goals, what will it take?”

(1) Redefining relationships and responsibilities to support participatory governance and responsive public service delivery, including through e-solutions;

(2) Strengthening innovation, prioritisation, informed decision-making and integration of policy development processes for enhanced impact;

(3) Promoting accountable institutions, ethical leadership and integrity to enhance confidence in efforts to deliver sustainable development.

Changemakers at the United Nations is a youth-led platform sponsored by Ariel Foundation International (AFI). Our mission is to facilitate international Changemakers aged between 18-35 to connect, collaborate and contribute to the work of the United Nations.

Our work is very closely connected to the sustainable development goals. From 1st-2nd December 2014, Changemakers from around the world met in Geneva at the Palais Des Nations for the Right to Development summit; to tackle the most important issues facing their generations’ future. The youth representatives deliberated on actions and recommendations to be taken forward to the UN Working Group on the Right to Development. A report was compiled by a collective of 34 young people and has now been included in the official documentation for the Working Group. AFI Changemakers representatives will be working to engage and gather support for the recommendations made in the report over the coming months.

As representatives of AFI Changemakers, we strongly believe in youth participation at all levels of the UN, other international decision-making bodies and domestic governments. We are an organisation dedicated to accessing and promoting the voice of young people on development issues, and ensuring that young people from across the world have access to participate in their own futures. We believe that extra time and attention must be used to include different voices in the discourse around the sustainable development goals; specifically the voices of young people.

The criteria of particular concern to our organisation of young people with regards to the Right to Development are discrimination, slavery and trafficking, food security, sustainability and conflict zones. In addition, we believe it is essential that any discussion around development must recognise climate change as the biggest threat to the development of persons around the world. Young people have a unique voice that is often overlooked, and its inclusion within this discussion is vital.

We encourage a redefining of the relationships and responsibilities held between decision making bodies and young people. We seek to create a sustained co-operative relationship that supports participatory governance. We are all too aware that our future is our responsibility, but equally, it is the responsibility of today's decision-making bodies to engage with our voice. We encourage the collaboration with young people to ensure the inclusion of 25% of the world's population, so that those who are frequently the worst affected by development issues, have their stake in the right to development.

Strengthening innovation, prioritisation, informed decision-making and integration of policy development processes means consulting youth voices. Informed decision-making can only be achieved when all stakeholders and affected persons and communities have been heard, when all sides of the debate have been made and full representation has been achieved – otherwise, we risk the danger of overlooking a certain groups' needs and hindering progress towards achieving the sustainable development goals.

Ethical leadership and integrity can only be achieved when all those that leaders are accountable for are fairly represented, consulted and heard. Accountable institutions are ones that are performing to ensure that the rights of those they work for are never succumbed to for profit or other enticing gains. Enhancing confidence in young people around the sustainable development goals makes us hopeful, enthused, trusting and willing to work hard in co-operation to achieve the sustainable development we want for our global communities. Failing to collaborate completely jeopardises those goals.

Trustworthy governance is a necessity when working towards the achievement of the sustainable development goals; in order to gain the trust of young people, governments must begin by trusting in young people first.

Prepared by Emma Robinson