

UNSCR 2250: MOVING BEYOND RECOGNITION

Today's generation of youth is the largest the world has ever known and constitutes the majority of the population in countries affected by armed conflict. Young people's lack of access to opportunities for education, economic empowerment and political participation dramatically impacts on durable peace and reconciliation, and risks undermining the positive contribution youth can make to peace and security. So, what are we doing about it? What does it mean to be a young man or woman in 2017? What do growing inequality and economic stagflation mean for countries with high youth populations? How can we overcome the negative perceptions of youth populations, and the political exclusion youth experience? And how can we leverage the impending findings of the progress study on UNSCR 2250?

This interactive session during the KPSRL's Annual Conference will take stock of what has happened since the adoption of the landmark UNSCR2250. Via brief pitches presenters from both Cordaid and UNOY Peacebuilders will give snapshot of both challenges and opportunities in operationalizing this Security Council Resolution. With the adoption of resolution 2250, the Youth, Peace and Security agenda has been formally established at the global level. Resolution 2250 recognizes the positive role of young people in transforming conflict, building peace and preventing violence. How to now move beyond this recognition and work towards real and meaningful change will be the focus of the discussion.

Panel:

- Ms. Gizem Kiliç, Leading Coordinator @United Network of Young Peacebuilders
- Ms. Sabina Atzei, Program Manager Security & Justice @Cordaid
- Ms. Ludmila Dias Andrade, Coordinator of Horizons & Youth Advocate @UNOY Peacebuilders
- Mr. Peter van Sluijs, Senior Strategist @Cordaid (moderator)

Note taker: Ms. Vera Houwaart, Project & Evaluation Officer @UNOY Peacebuilders

UNSCR 2250: Moving beyond Recognition

The session with the title '**UNSCR 2250: Moving beyond Recognition**' aimed to explore the progress that has been made since the adoption of UNSCR2250. Resolution 2250 was a milestone in recognizing **the positive role that youth can play in the field of peacebuilding, rather than seeing youth as a possible threat**. Through the adoption of this resolution, the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda was formally established at the global level. This session included three short pitches by the leading coordinator of UNOY Peacebuilders, a program manager of Cordaid, and a member of the Advocacy Team of UNOY Peacebuilders.

The resolution required a progress study that focused on youth, peace and security to underline the positive contributions of young people. Moreover, the study aims to include strategies - local, regional, national and international - for the implementation of this resolution.

It is the first time that such a baseline study is conducted, and the results will be presented in the Spring of 2018. Some of the highlights of this study so far are that nearly half of the respondents of this study have an annual budget that is below 5000 USD, and that 97% of the staff does their work on a voluntary basis. Nonetheless, the activities of these organizations are very like other peacebuilding organizations. What is also important to note is that these **youth-led organizations do not solely focus on activities that concern youth, but also on for example dialogue activities and humanitarian assistance**.

What is often ignored, is the concern that once this study becomes published there is the risk that "the study gets shelved", rather than seriously taken into consideration. It is important to develop strategies for the

implementation to make sure that this study becomes a stepping stone for the youth voice in peacebuilding efforts.

Cordaid has been working together with UNOY Peacebuilders since 2010, which is when Cordaid concluded they were “working *on* youth, rather than *with* youth”. Once they became more involved with the activities of UNOY Peacebuilders, **the persistence and professionalism of the involved young peacebuilders was impressive, and this was what made the adoption of UNSCR 2250 possible.**

One of the main challenges remains that it is often difficult to convince decision makers that peacebuilding is the ‘right’ investment rather than investing in violence. Thus, although the adoption of UNSCR 2250 was a big step in the right direction, we must realize that the international community can strive to reduce the number of youth in conflict. **Youth *must* be included at the negotiation table if we truly want to move forward.**

The last pitch consisted of personal experience from a youth advocate, who was involved in the process of the adoptions of UNSCR 2250. Although this progress may indicate that youth is already very much involved in decision-making processes, the reality is that they are often still somewhat overlooked. This is mainly visible through the fact that there are copious projects that focus on youth, but **“not often do youth get the chance to actually *lead* these projects”.**

Although UNSCR 2250 indicates a shift in the way that the international community sees youth, it is not the end solution. At this moment, there is still a strong focus on for example the prevention of radicalization among youth, but this should shift toward the idea that youth want to promote peace and stability. **In the future, there must be “a youth voice at the *grown-ups table*”.**

Once the audience got the floor, some interesting points were brought up. For example, one of the participants, who works with local youth in East Africa, mentioned that **local youth are often unaware of the efforts that are being made on for example the international level.** How should UNSCR be applied *now* on the local level, “rather than waiting for this big global change”. The panelists acknowledged that this is indeed often a difficulty, but that peer-to-peer approaches often work best for tackling this challenge.

The session concluded with the notion that there is now a youth bulge in many developing countries and that the international community has the responsibility to act on this. Not by perceiving these youth as a possible threat for security and stability, but by supporting them with capacity and funding. **After the adoption of UNSCR 2250, the next step is acknowledging, hearing *and* implementing the youth voice.**