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Concept Note



Youth, Peace, and Security in the Arab States Region: A Consultation and High-level Dialogue *Under the Patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II*

*Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
4 – 6 December 2016*

Background

Globally

On 9 December of 2015, the United Nations Security Council adopted the groundbreaking Resolution 2250, on Youth, Peace and Security. For the first time, the Security Council recognized the **positive role young people can and do play in conflict prevention, the prevention of violent extremism, and peacebuilding**. This historic Resolution, adopted unanimously, was shepherded by the Kingdom of Jordan, during its Presidency of the Security Council. In April 2015, HRH Crown Prince Hussein became the youngest person ever to chair a meeting at the Security Council, leading an open debate on how youth can combat violent extremism. In August 2015, HRH Crown Prince Hussein hosted under his patronage, in partnership with UN entities and civil society organizations, the first Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security in Amman, Jordan.

Security Council Resolution (SCR) 2250 is premised on the fact that governments and the multilateral system have been challenged in effectively accessing, working with and fully including young people in peacebuilding, prevention efforts and decision-making at all levels.

UN SCR 2250 mandates the Secretary-General *“to carry out a progress study on the youth’s positive contribution to peace processes and conflict resolution, in order to recommend effective responses at local, national, regional and international levels”*, and to present the results of the Study to Member States of the United Nations. The Study is being undertaken as an independent, evidence-based and participatory research process, and will produce an operational report proposing a forward-looking agenda for the international community. It will provide the evidence of young women and young men’s engagement on peace and security issues and help overturn the negative stereotypes surrounding youth in conflict by highlighting and promoting young people’s active and positive contributions to sustaining peace.

The Arab States Consultation will be the first of a series of regional consultations for the Progress Study. It will also be an important opportunity to support a strategic dialogue between young people working on peace and security issues, civil society organizations, and regional partners and institutions on SCR 2250 to support concrete change on the ground.

Arab Region

More than 60 percent of the region's population is under the age of 30, and the current youth generation is historically the largest youth cohort this region has witnessed in the past 50 years, making up 30 percent of its population of 370 million. Given their vast numbers, youth are often exposed to the detrimental impacts of poverty and labour markets (dramatically reflected in 10 million unemployed Arab youths, between the ages of 18 and 25). Violence and overall crisis further exacerbating the struggling development situation in the region. The State of Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Libya, Somalia and Iraq are all facing varying degrees of conflict. In addition, and to further complicate matters, feelings of fear, resentment, and anger have driven individuals and communities to arm themselves. In addition, countries in conflicts are grappling significantly deteriorated economies marked by inflated food prices and a lack of gas, electricity, and fuel. The protracted nature of these conflicts is likely to lead to further deterioration of the social fabric and overall cohesion.

Mending and protecting the social fabric within a given country will require a multi-faceted and integrated approach, with linkages between political and economic development, humanitarian assistance, strengthening of civil society and peacebuilding. Focusing in on the peacebuilding dimension, it will **be critical to engage youth at the community, national and regional levels as effective agents of peace** supporting conflict resolution and mitigating tension where it may arise. Many young peacebuilders across the region have taken on this difficult task, and continuing to support their efforts will help consolidate a path for non-violence.

In this context, the Regional United Nations Development Group Interagency Technical Task Team on Young People (r/UNDG IATTTYP) developed a *Regional Framework of Joint Strategic Actions for Young People in the Arab States and MENA (2016-2017)*. The framework includes a set of four thematic priorities (Employment, Civic Engagement, Participation and Inclusion, Health and Education) together with strategic actions responding to the needs of young people both at the regional and country levels for a greater impact.

Under the Civic Engagement pillar, an activity **to empower peacebuilders** has been included as a priority and is the *basis for this concept note*.¹

Creating sustainable peace cannot be achieved through engaging young peacebuilders alone. This initiative is not meant to replace or be the single answer to peace in any of the countries across the region, as a common national peace-building strategy will be essential for any long lasting reconciliation. However, this initiative is meant to support an important part of the process and provide an opportunity to engage a large part of society- youth- who have a clear stake in their countries' development.

¹ Activity 3.4: Support workshop with youth peacebuilders outlining challenges and opportunities to inform policy and support and buy-in for youth peacebuilders regional network.

Youth, Peace & Security in the Arab States Region: A Consultation and High-level Dialogue

Following both the Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security held in Amman in 2015 and the newly passed UN SCR 2250, under the **Patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II**, we aim to organize a regional ***Consultation and High-Level Dialogue on “Youth, Peace & Security in the Arab States Region”*** in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan from 4 to 6 December 2016.

The aim of this consultation is to **mobilize young peacebuilders in the Arab region to explore their potential and assess the bottlenecks facing youth-led peacebuilding initiatives**. By analyzing the systematic and structural barriers, and local mechanisms and capacities, a **regional roadmap with clear policy and programming recommendations for a broad range of stakeholders will be defined**. The aim is to create opportunities to promote the role of youth in sustaining peace in national peace processes but also at the community level. It is hoped that the regional level discussions will promote an enabling environment at the national level, through the media and other stakeholders, for shifting the discourse and opening up opportunities for youth to effectively participate in peacebuilding processes.

The overall goals of the meeting will be:

- 1) To consult young peacebuilders from the Arab region on peace and security issues, in order to support the implementation of SCR 2250 in the region and as input for the Progress Study mandated by the Resolution.**
- 2) To provide a platform to facilitate dialogue between young people and decision and policy makers; mobilize partnerships and leverage support for inclusive, comprehensive and integrated programmes to be implemented in Arab States as part of a road map, where needed.**

UNDP and UNESCO are co-leading, on behalf of the *Regional United Nations Development Group-Interagency Technical Task Team on Young People*, **The Youth, Peace and Security Consultation and High-Level Dialogue** in partnership with the **Peacebuilding Support Office** and **UNFPA**.

The workshop will both work to chart a way forward with young peacebuilders in the Arab region, as well as broadcast their voices at the highest level through engagement on the Progress Study. This will be an opportunity to decide with young peacebuilders the best way forward to address the challenges they face and introduce the proposed roadmap to practitioners and decision-makers, creating a space for fruitful regional dialogue on young people’s positive contributions to peace and security.

Specific Objectives

- 1. Identify the main peace and security-related issues that matter to and affect young people in their region, country or local context;*
- 2. Discuss gaps, challenges and priorities to promote and support young women and men’s active involvement in conflict prevention, social cohesion, conflict transformation and peacebuilding in the region/country;*
- 3. Collect in-depth information on young people’s activities and initiatives to build peace and prevent violence;*

4. *Identify recommendations for the Progress Study and for follow-up at the local/national/regional levels from policy and programming angles;*
5. *Establish a group of youth, peace and security spokespersons/advocates to be involved in a UN media campaign in 2017 calling for inclusion and aimed at further supporting an enabling environment for youth in peacebuilding locally, nationally and regionally;*
6. *Engage a broad range of regional and international actors and partners around the importance of youth-inclusive and youth-led peacebuilding programmes and initiatives and leverage their support around key identifiable areas of interventions;*
7. *Form a regional youth-peacebuilding network for knowledge exchange, joint work, advocacy and coordination;*

It will also be an opportunity to promote the global youth4peace.info platform (launched October 2016), the one-stop shop supporting UNSCR 2250 implementation, available for young peacebuilders, UN system, civil society and all stakeholders (hosting online consultations as well in the context of the Progress Study).

Participants

Participants will include youth peacebuilders from the Arab region. 2 - 4 participants per country will be selected.

Selection Criteria for Youth Participants

- Must be between 15 to 35 years of age
- Gender and age balance
- Must be engaged on peace and security issues locally, regionally, nationally or globally
- At least 70% of participants should come from youth-led organizations that work on peacebuilding, understood in a broad sense: peace process, social cohesion, reconciliation, transitional justice, PVE, SSR, DDR, humanitarian work.

Format

The Consultation will last for three days and will be sequenced in two, interconnected segments:

(1) A consultation for and with young peacebuilders, dedicated to the exchange of experiences and programmatic practices (Day 1 & 2);

(2) A high-level policy segment during which participants will present and discuss key recommendations to partners (government officials, donors, and other stakeholders) (Day 3).

The driving principle for the full duration of this event will be to create the space for meaningful **dialogue with young peacebuilders from the Arab region.**

Agenda and Thematic Discussions

DAY ONE

8:30 - 8:55: *Registration*

9:00 - 10:30: SESSION 1 - WELCOME & OPENING

10:30 - 10:50: *Coffee Break*

10:50 - 12:20: SESSION 2 - WHAT IS YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY?

12:20 - 13:20: *Lunch*

13:30 - 14:45: SESSION 3 - PRESENTING AND DISCUSSING UN SCR 2250

14:45 - 15:05: *Coffee Break*

15:05 - 16:30: SESSION 4 - EXPLORING AND IDENTIFYING THE PEACE AND SECURITY ISSUES THAT MATTER MOST TO YOUTH

16:30 - 16:50: *Coffee Break*

16:50 - 17:40: SESSION 5 - EVALUATION AND PREPARATION FOR THE FOLLOWING DAY

DAY TWO

8:50 - 9:05: WELCOME AND ENERGIZER

9:05 - 10:05: SESSION 6 - YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES TO BUILD PEACE AND PREVENT VIOLENCE

10:05 - 10:20: *Coffee Break*

10:20 - 11:35: SESSION 7 - YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON THE CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

11:35 - 11:45: *Coffee Break*

11:45 - 13:00: SESSION 8 - YOUNG PEOPLE'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE YPS AGENDA

13:00 - 14:10: *Lunch*

14:10 - 15:30: SESSION 9: DEVELOPING CONTEXT-SPECIFIC YOUTH PLANS OF ACTION BASED ON RECOMMENDATIONS

15:30 - 15:50: *Coffee Break*

15:50 - 16:50: SESSION 10: CREATIVE METHODS FOR SUPPORTING YOUTH IN PEACEBUILDING

16:50 - 17:10: *Coffee Break*

17:10 - 18:20: SESSION 11: Plenary Wrap-up

DAY THREE

8:00 - 8:45: *Registration (new participants)*

9:00 - 9:10: WELCOMING

9:10 - 9:30: *Identified Priorities, Opportunities and Recommendations from Days 1 & 2; Youth Presentations*

9:30 - 11:00: HIGH-LEVEL PANEL WITH KEY POLICY AND DECISION MAKERS

11:00 - 11:30: *Coffee Break*

11:30 - 12:30: FACILITATED ROUNDTABLE DIALOGUE

12:30 - 13:30: *Lunch*

14:00 - 15:30: PANEL ON PARTNERSHIP AND NEXT STEPS

16:00 - 16:30: CONCLUDING SESSION