



Until we are all equal

UN Summit of the Future CanYouth Pact

Recommendations to the
Government of Canada



Table of Contents



- Introduction
- Alignment with The Girls' Pact for the Future
- The Future of the UN System – Transforming Global Governance
- Meaningful Youth Engagement
- Future Generations
- Conclusion



Suggested citation:

Plan International Canada (2024).
UN Summit of the Future. CanYouth Pact.
Recommendations to the Government
of Canada.
Toronto, Ontario: Plan International Canada.

Contact:

Plan International Canada
245 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 300
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M4P 0B3
Youth@plancanada.ca

Learn more and get involved
at plancanada.ca.





Introduction

In preparation for the United Nations (UN) Summit of the Future, Plan International Canada's [Youth Council](#) met with youth ages 14-24 who are based in Canada to gather their recommendations for the Government of Canada (GoC). The discussions focused on three key policy area themes identified in the Our Common Agenda report: (1) the future of the UN system, (2) meaningful youth engagement, and (3) future generations. These consultations led to the creation of this CanYouth Pact.

Alignment with The Girls' Pact for the Future

In May 2024, Plan International launched [The Girls' Pact for the Future](#). It was created by 35 young people ages 15-24 from around the world. The goal was to share their recommendations on how to create a world where gender-based discrimination and inequalities are eradicated, and girls can thrive. The Girls' Pact provides recommendations on (1) education and technology, (2) violence against women and girls, (3) adolescent girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights, (4) climate change, and (5) meaningful participation in political processes.

The CanYouth Pact is a set of complementary recommendations geared toward the GoC. While the CanYouth Pact refers to all youth, special consideration should be given to adolescent girls and young women. Plan International [prioritizes girls and a gender-transformative approach](#) in response to the disproportionate barriers they face. Safeguarding the future means protecting the futures of girls and young women, and they must be meaningfully included in the Pact for the Future.



The Future of the UN System – Transforming Global Governance

The UN is a key mechanism for addressing global issues. However, many young people fear that the Pact for the Future will not lead to any meaningful change unless the UN is restructured. These are the four key changes we urge the GoC to advocate for:

1 | Diversify Participants

Many groups who are affected by global issues are not given a seat at the table. Observer states, NGOs, grassroots organizations, diverse regions, and other groups have a wealth of knowledge and lived experience and must be meaningfully included in decision making.

2 | Reform the Peacekeeping Approach

Peacekeeping has created a culture that facilitates violence, including gender-based violence. The UN must restructure its approach through consultation with youth, especially girls, from affected countries to restore public trust while holding countries providing peacekeepers accountable.

3 | Improve the Accessibility of the UN

The UN should be accessible to all participants, regardless of age, socioeconomic status, language, or disability, including mobility concerns, visual impairments, and hearing loss. Ensuring the accessibility of relevant documents and resources and evaluating opportunities for online engagement in UN forums and events is essential for inclusive, meaningful engagement.

4 | Reform the Security Council

The Security Council is heavily criticized due to the unequitable power of its members. To reflect the powers of today's world, the UN should more meaningfully integrate Member States and non-state actors into decision making related to security matters.



Meaningful Youth Engagement

The GoC should engage youth as co-creators, rather than as token participants. It's time to move beyond buzzwords and platitudes on paper to real, concrete actions. During our consultation sessions, participants highlighted that they are continuously sharing the same feedback in different fora without seeing any progress. These recommendations outline what meaningful youth engagement looks like:

1 | Financially Compensate Youth

Youth from varying socioeconomic statuses face financial barriers to participation, including transportation, accommodation, and the cost of obtaining a visa. Youth must be considered as an asset to decision making and paid in accordance with expectations for adult participation, including streamlining processes for youth to obtain compensation.

2 | Diversify Youth Voices

To meaningfully involve diverse youth in decision-making spaces, there is a need to address the barriers some youth face when it comes to participating in UN forums and events, including obtaining a visa. Additionally, youth should be valued equally based on their formal or informal expertise.

3 | Support the Creation of Global Standards of Youth Engagement

The UN should promote global standards that outline qualitative and quantitative metrics and guidelines for meaningful youth engagement. This work can be championed by a global entity such as the UN Youth Office but must be supported by the GoC.

4 | Include Youth at All Stages

Youth must be included proactively in all stages of decision making. Creating spaces and leveraging existing spaces for youth to connect and engage is an important step. The GoC must continue engaging young leaders in the domestic implementation of the Pact for the Future.





Future Generations

Youth co-creators emphasized the importance of safeguarding the future, while also sharing concerns around the difficulty in measuring success and the lack of implementation timelines for the proposed recommendations. These four recommendations improve accountability measures to ensure young people are engaged in the safeguarding of future generations:

1 | Set Achievable and Measurable Goals

Vague and underdeveloped promises are likely to be ignored by world leaders and abandoned when convenient. Goals must be monitored and reassessed based on changes across the world to ensure the Pact for the Future is future-proof.

2 | Engage Current Youth Generations

Youth generations should be viewed as representatives for future generations and engaged in global decision making. By establishing youth engagement hubs among countries, youth should be mobilized to engage in issues that affect them and future generations.

3 | Find Balance Between Present and Future Needs

The Summit of the Future aims to reaffirm faith in existing agreements, not discard them altogether. The Pact for the Future must be accompanied by revived efforts to address the present needs of the world through existing agreements.

4 | Safeguard a Future for Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous communities across the world have been stripped of their cultures, including languages, oral histories, family ties, and ways of being and knowing through a long history of colonialism, which continues to this day. It is essential to recognize these barriers and ensure that resources such as water, equitable space, and engagement opportunities are safeguarded. Additionally, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples must be implemented to strengthen trust with Indigenous communities.





Conclusion

Our action or inaction will affect current and future generations. That's why our voice is so crucial. We must take this opportunity to learn from past failings to better respond to global challenges. In doing so, the UN system will be built on a stronger foundation than ever. Plan International Canada recognizes that taking a future-focused perspective means no one is left behind, including youth, women and girls, refugees, and other marginalized individuals. A brighter and more promising future isn't possible unless action is taken now.

