



1) *What are the principles that should ground our commitments in the Declaration on Future Generations?*

The Summit of the Future is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to enhance cooperation on critical challenges and address gaps in global governance, reaffirm existing commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the United Nations Charter, and move towards a reinvigorated multilateral system that is better positioned to positively impact people's lives.

Any Declaration on Future Generations must be grounded in principles of [human rights](#)¹, equity, and inclusion. It must also be guided by the principle of policy coherence, recognizing the complexity of modern challenges by addressing interconnected issues collaboratively. In our input, we would like to particularly stress how policy coherence is a driver of health equity and climate justice and the only way member states can fully promote the [One Health](#)² approach.

To align with the 2030 Agenda, the Pact for the Future must take practical steps to inclusively involve future generations, especially marginalized groups, in decision-making. All people - regardless of their age, life choices or health status - deserve to have their basic rights respected and safeguarded – and that includes the rights of young key populations.

The World Bank and the World Health Organization's [data](#)³ highlights that at least half of the world's population lacks full coverage of essential health services. Among them, young people, particularly those marginalized (such as young people who use drugs) or living in low and middle-income countries, face greater challenges in accessing healthcare. A [survey](#)⁴ conducted by Youth RISE in 2021 showed that 33%

¹ United Nations General Assembly. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). New York: United Nations General Assembly, 1948.

² World Health Organization, "Strengthening WHO's global emergency preparedness and response" (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2022), https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA75/A75_19-en.pdf.

³ World Health Organization, "World Bank and WHO: Half the World Lacks Access to Essential Health Services; 100 Million Still Pushed into Extreme Poverty Because of Health Expenses," World Health Organization, December 13, 2017, <https://www.who.int/news/item/13-12-2017-world-bank-and-who-half-the-world-lacks-access-to-essential-health-services-100-million-still-pushed-into-extreme-poverty-because-of-health-expenses>.

⁴ Oluseyi Kehinde and Ekanem Ito Effiong. Uhc Issues For Young People Who Use Drugs And Other Young Inadequately Served Populations. April 2021. Youth RISE. <https://youthrise.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/UHC-Issues-for-YPWUD-and-other-Young-ISPs-1.pdf>.

of respondents accessed healthcare services through out-of-pocket expenses, and many had been denied healthcare due to financial constraints.

Young people still [lack access](#)⁵ to mental health care, comprehensive Sexual & Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), harm reduction programs and non-coerced non-forced drug disorder treatment. Obstacles to accessing these essential health services are the result of laws and policies that promote stigma, discrimination, and criminalization based on age, identity, or other status. For instance, criminalization of sex work, same-sex sexual activity, being transgender, and drug use and possession continue to pose barriers to young key populations accessing HIV services, as well as acting as methods of excluding them from enjoying other rights such as education. This also has knock-on effects on life development due to criminal records being a barrier to employment, housing, education, and mobility.

The latest UNAIDS [data](#)⁶ highlights that many countries still have restrictive laws and policies surrounding the "age of consent" laws prohibiting access to SRHR services, harm reduction and related services. Such limitations unleash harmful outcomes in various aspects of young people's lives. For instance, an estimated 250,000 Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) were newly infected with HIV in 2021, with 82% of them from Sub-Saharan Africa. Such numbers might indicate the reason why adolescent girl schooling completion rates remain low, with only 44% completing lower secondary school and 26% completing higher secondary school.

As highlighted during a multi-stakeholder consultation organized by [UNODC](#), [UNICEF](#), [WHO](#), [INPUD](#) and [Youth RISE](#), in November 2023, young people who use drugs are systematically and negatively impacted by the consequences of punitive and criminalising drug policies. A robust body of international evidence shows us that [current policies are failing](#)⁷ to address drug-related matters, and the most impacted are the future generations. Young people are using [more drugs](#)⁸ compared with previous generations. At the same time, they are the most harmed by the negative results of punitive policies.

They face discrimination and barriers in accessing essential health services, which violates their right to health. They also deal with criminalization, which brings life-long consequences that curb their development opportunities. For instance, the [OHCHR's report](#)⁹ on human rights challenges in addressing and countering all aspects of the

⁵ UNAIDS, "UNAIDS urges countries to ensure adolescents can access sexual and reproductive health services without parental consent," UNAIDS, February 14, 2022, https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2022/february/20220214_parental-consent.

⁶ UNAIDS. The path that ends AIDS: UNAIDS Global AIDS Update 2023. Geneva: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; 2023. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. https://thepath.unaids.org/wp-content/themes/unaid2023/assets/files/2023_report.pdf.

⁷ International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC), Off Track: December 2023 Shadow Report For The Mid-Term Review Of The 2019 Ministerial Declaration On Drugs. (IDPC. December, 2023), <https://idpc.net/publications/2023/12/idpc-shadow-report-2024>.

⁸ UNODC, World Drug Report 2023 (United Nations publication, 2023).

https://www.unodc.org/res/WDR-2023/Special_Points_WDR2023_web_DP.pdf.

⁹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. A/HRC/54/53: Human rights challenges in addressing and countering all aspects of the world drug problem. OHCHR. 15 August

world drug problem, published in September 2023, showed how random mandatory drug testing in school settings and expulsion from education for drug use violates young people's rights to accessing education.

The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated existing challenges for young people, underscoring the need for their representation in public institutions. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union's [report](#)¹⁰ on Youth Participation in National Parliaments (2021), the global proportion of Members of Parliament aged under 30 has increased to 2.6% in recent years. While this represents a positive trend, it remains insufficient given that 50% of the world's population falls under this age group. Youth quotas have proven effective in increasing youth representation, similar to gender parity quotas. Evidence indicates that well-designed youth quotas, similar to gender parity quotas, and that also include marginalised youth, can further enhance youth representation.

2) What practical steps are needed at the global level to take future generations systematically into account?

To abide by the [2030 Agenda](#)¹¹'s core principle of leaving no one behind, the text of the Pact for the Future must include practical steps to systematically include future generations, especially marginalized groups, in our decision-making. It must put into practice measures that acknowledge and respond to the 'wicked problems' of our times. That means recognizing the interconnections of diverse issues and the need for collaboration across different sectors in the crafting of policy solutions.

It is essential to address policy coherence for sustainable development. Advancing sustainable development requires a focus on synergies through systemic approaches that consider interlinkages of human-planetary systems and subsystems. Policymaking should integrate economic, social, and environmental dimensions, considering cross-boundary spillover effects. [Policy coherence](#)¹² for sustainable development goes beyond "doing no harm" and aims at "doing good" by maximizing synergies and mitigating trade-offs. It emphasizes multi-sectoral linkages, multi-actor partnerships, and institutional and governance mechanisms to achieve sustainable development goals.

2023.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G23/156/03/PDF/G2315603.pdf?OpenElement>.

¹⁰ Inter-Parliamentary Union. Youth participation in national parliaments. Geneva: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2021. <https://www.ipu.org/youth2021>.

¹¹United Nations, "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (Geneva: United Nations, 2015),

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/291/89/PDF/N1529189.pdf?OpenElement>.

¹² Rafaella Ferraz Ziegert. "Doing No Harm, Doing Good: Why Policy Coherence and Systems Thinking Matter," United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC), [11 April, 2023], <https://www.unssc.org/news-and-insights/blog/doing-no-harm-doing-good-why-policy-coherence-and-systems-thinking-matter>.

Here, we highlight, for example, the case of drug policy and the vast international evidence that exposes [its links to achieving the SDG goals](#)¹³. Drug control [intersects](#)¹⁴ with [much](#)¹⁵ of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Data has shown us that the current [war on drugs](#)¹⁶ approach is a war on people and a key driver of violence, organised crime, corruption and state capture in ecologically fragile regions. It leads to harmful environmental impacts, particularly in countries where illegal drug production is carried out. Reforming the international approach to drugs is not only relevant to the cause of climate justice but an [essential part](#)¹⁷ of the solution.

In 2019, UN Member States, WHO, UNAIDS, UNDP and leading human rights and drug policy experts developed the [International Guidelines on Human Rights and Drug Policy](#)¹⁸ - a comprehensive set of international legal standards for placing human dignity and sustainable development at the centre of Member State responses to illicit drug economies. The Guidelines are an example of the support that UNDP provides to integrate international human rights commitments into national, regional, and global policy and programmes practically. It is also the result of agreements adopted in 2018, with the [UN Common Position](#)¹⁹ on drug policy, to support collaboration within the United Nations system on implementing international drug control policy.

3) *What should the Summit of the Future aim to achieve so that we live up to our obligations to future generations?*

¹³ Health Poverty Action, "SDGs and Drugs: A Policy Briefing". Health Poverty Action, [November 2015]), https://www.unodc.org/documents/ungass2016/Contributions/Civil/Health_Poverty_Action/HPA_SDGs_drugs_policy_briefing_WEB.pdf.

¹⁴ Tinasti, K., Bém, P., Grover, A., Kazatchkine, M. D., & Dreifuss, R. (2015). SDGs will not be achieved without drug policy reform. *The Lancet*, 386(9999), 1132. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736\(15\)00198-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736(15)00198-1)

¹⁵ Global Commission on Drug Policy. Drug Policy And The Sustainable Development Agenda: Position Paper. Geneva: Global Commission on Drug Policy, 2018.

https://www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2018SDG_ENG_web.pdf.

¹⁶ Global Commission on Drug Policy. War on Drugs. Geneva: Global Commission on Drug Policy, June, 2011.

https://www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/GCDP_WaronDrugs_EN.pdf.

¹⁷ Health Poverty Action, "Revealing the Missing Link to Climate Justice: Drug Policy" (Health Poverty Action, 2023),

<https://www.healthpovertyaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/REPORT-Revealing-the-Missing-Link-to-Climate-Justice-Drug-Policy.pdf>.

¹⁸ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "International Guidelines on Human Rights and Drug Policy". UNDP, [March, 2019],

<https://www.undp.org/publications/international-guidelines-human-rights-and-drug-policy>.

¹⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), "UN Common Position on Drugs" (Vienna: UNODC, March 2023),

https://www.unodc.org/res/un-common-position-drugs/index_html/2315371E-eBook.pdf.

As [highlighted](#)²⁰ in the preparatory briefing for the [Summit of the Future](#), the UN System can better support Member States in achieving the SDGs by adopting cultural and skills transformation in the UN System entities. Multilateral, long-term focused and inclusive decision-making at the global level consciously avoids foreseeable harms and safeguards the interests of future generations.

That is why the Summit of the Future must aim to reform counterproductive policies and international approaches. The Pact for the Future must acknowledge and foresee actions towards the [UN 2.0](#)²¹, which upgrades expertise in innovation, data, digital, foresight, and behavioural science to enhance UN System results and help build similar Member State expertise to accelerate shared progress towards the SDGs.

Based on the aforementioned points, we urge member states to:

1. Recognise Young People's Right to Health: Member states should recognise that laws and policies preventing young people from accessing healthcare and other services based on age, identity, or other status act as barriers to their right to health and must be removed. This includes removing punitive laws that criminalise sex work, drug use, LGBTQ+ identities, and gender-affirming care and engaging communities in inclusive processes for decriminalisation, legalisation, and regulation.
2. Empower Young People as Leaders and Partners: The political declaration should acknowledge and support young people as leaders and partners of Agenda 2030. Member states should back this recognition with adequate funding for youth-led interventions to achieve SDG 3.3 and other sustainable development goals.
3. Include Language and Support for Adolescents in all their Diversity: It is crucial to ensure that the political declaration includes specific language addressing the unique issues faced by adolescents and young people in all their diversity. Member states must commit to providing adequate holistic support during their critical life changes.
4. Promote Youth Representation and Participation: Member states should place a strong emphasis on civil society and youth engagement. This includes encouraging the inclusion of youth in their delegations, providing opportunities for young people to speak in national and international fora, and allocating specific slots for civil society to address the assembly alongside member states. We urge governments to mainstream the perspectives of organisations representing young key populations (i.e. young people living with HIV and young people who use drugs).
5. Encourage and support data collection in collaboration with academia and civil society: National data collection must also be improved to yield an accurate picture of challenges on the ground and utilise the research conducted by the scientific community and civil society actors.

²⁰ United Nations, "Our Common Agenda: Summit of the Future, What Would It Deliver?" (Geneva: United Nations. 2023), <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/our-common-agenda-summit-of-the-future-what-would-it-deliver.pdf>.

²¹ United Nations, "UN 2.0 Policy Brief" (United Nations, September, 2023), https://www.un.org/two-zero/sites/default/files/2023-09/UN-2.0_Policy-Brief_EN.pdf.

6. Use evidence to inform sustainable and effective funding allocation: Funding must be equitably allocated to evidence-based services accessible to all people - particularly young key populations.

In closing, may this Summit serve as a turning point - one where we live up to our solemn pledge of protecting the well-being of future generations and ensuring the rights and participation of all citizens, regardless of their age or health status. That should be the guiding principle for building a just and sustainable future for the generations to come.