Yemeni Youth Peacebuilding Conference

6-8 December 2020

Final Statement and Recommendations

The War Must Be Stopped and Its Effects Addressed

Enhancing the role of young women and men in the peacebuilding process, as decision-making is vital to sustainable and comprehensive peace.

The Youth Leadership Development Foundation in cooperation with the Group of Nine Coalition, the Youth Without Borders Organization, and hundreds of young Yemeni women and men in Yemen and in diaspora including Jordan, Egypt, and Turkey, held a virtual youth conference of 3 days (6 - 8 December 2020) with the support and technical assistance of UN Women and UNFPA. Nearly 400 Yemeni young men and women attended the conference. Also, representatives from the international community were present to support the youth and the implementation of UNSCR 2250, including Mr. Martin Griffiths, the UN Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Ms. Susanne Mikhail Eldhagen, UN Women Regional Director for the Arab States, Ms. Dina Zorba, UN Women Representative for Iraq and Yemen, and H.E. Mr. Michael Aaron, British Ambassador to Yemen, H.E. Mr. Hans Grundberg, Ambassador of the European Union Delegation to Yemen, Mr. Nestor Owomuhangi, UNFPA’s Representative and Mr. Graeme Simpson, Youth, Peace and Security Expert and other experts.

During the conference sessions, a highlight was UN Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths, who said that the work carried out by his office seeks to bring peace to Yemen, and that efforts have redoubled as the struggle continues. Griffiths added: “This conference is among the efforts, as youth engagement is important and central to the comprehensive peace process. We have begun to lay out a map for engaging youth. The conflict in Yemen is different and difficult, but local peace can be achieved with the help of young women and men, and this is a big and great opportunity.” The UN Special Envoy also raised concerns about women’s participation: “All parties must further engage female and male youth, and women. We support the focus on gender. We have also begun to draw up a map for engaging youth. The international community must
hear the voices of Yemeni female/male youth, and to make peace for them. We are working on that.”

In addition, young peace agents from all over the world, including Palestine, Liberia, Kashmir, Venezuela, and Sudan provided recommendations and exchanged their experiences with Yemeni youth in regard to participating in the peacebuilding process in their countries, about the challenges they encountered for being young or female as a result of gender-based discrimination, in addition to the lessons learned from these experiences.

Finally, during the nine sessions, conference participants reviewed the results of widely organized consultative meetings discussing the views of 990 young women and men from ten Yemeni governorates, in phase one, and from all Yemeni governorates in phase two. The conference approved a solid consensus of conclusions and recommendations, which were called for by the young women and men in the aforementioned quorums to all actors from parties engaged in conflict, the international community, (local) civil society and local authority, and the UN Special Envoy.

The following recommendations were agreed upon by the great majority of young participants:

**Recommendations to the UN Special Envoy:**

- Demand to stop the war, addressing its effects, providing security, stability and a safe environment for young men and women, and promoting peaceful coexistence and sustainable peace.
- Enhance the role of young women and men in the peacebuilding process, political process, and decision-making, as it is vital to sustainable and comprehensive peace.
- Engage young women and men in the UN Special Envoy’s advisory team.
- Develop effective mechanisms to implement Resolution 2250 and Resolution 2419
- Demand the release of all detainees and forcibly disappeared persons.
- Increase pressure to end foreign interference and foreign military support in order to prevent the escalation of conflict.
- Strengthen coordination among the main actors involved in the implementation of Resolution No. 2250, as it is implemented through a comprehensive framework, and ensure the availability and tracking of funds,
taking into account the priorities of young women, young men, women, peace, and security at the local level.

- Seek ways to activate dialogue between Yemenis in accordance with national rules that are not linked to foreign aid.
- Put pressure to open Sana’a International Airport and other Yemeni airports to commercial flights.
- Put pressure on all parties to open transportation corridors and roads between Yemeni cities and regions, such as Taiz, Al-Dhale’e, Marib, Hodeidah and Lahj.

**Recommendations to the parties to the conflict:**

- Stop the war, addressing its effects, providing security, stability, and a safe environment for young men and women, and promoting peaceful coexistence and sustainable peace.
- Enhance the role of young women and men in the peacebuilding process, political process, and decision-making, as this is vital to sustainable and comprehensive peace.
- Sign the Joint Declaration, stop the war, address its effects, and start a political process.
- Enhance the role of young women and men in the peacebuilding and decision-making process, in its various stages and levels.
- Stop recruiting children and enforcing recruitment.
- End all restrictions and obstacles imposed on the activities of young women and men and on civil society in general in all regions.
- Neutralize education, health, and salaries from the conflict and vacate all schools and educational institutions occupied by military forces and militants.
- Ensure equal opportunities in education and employment.
- Open Sana’a International Airport and other Yemeni airports to commercial flights.
- Ensure the opening of transportation corridors and roads between Yemeni cities and regions, such as Taiz, Al-Dhale’e, Marib, Hodeidah and Lahj.

**Recommendations to UN agencies and the international community:**

- Support the stop of the war, addressing its effects, providing security, stability, and a safe environment for young men and women, promoting peaceful coexistence and sustainable peace.
- Support the enhancement of young women and men’s roles in the peacebuilding process, political process, and decision-making process, as this is vital to sustainable and comprehensive peace.
• Increase pressure on parties to engage young women and men in their delegations to negotiate and participate in the peacebuilding process.

• Promote human security and long-term approaches to addressing and preventing the root causes of conflict, by urging Member States to invest more resources in peace organizations and initiatives, including reducing military spending, regulating the ability to carry firearms, gender-sensitive social development, and mainstreaming gender in Security Sector Reform programs and Transitional Justice Mechanisms.

• Call for accountability for human rights violations and end the policy of impunity.

• Urge parties to neutralize education, health, and salaries from the conflict. Vacate all schools and educational institutions occupied by the military forces and militants.

• Put pressures to open Sana’a International Airport and other Yemeni airports to commercial flights.

• Promote media sensitivity to youth, peace, coexistence, and gender issues.

Recommendations to the civil society:

• Support stopping the war, addressing its effects, providing security, stability, and a safe environment for young men and women, and promote peaceful coexistence and sustainable peace.

• Support youth programs and initiatives.

• Implement economic empowerment programs and projects.

• Support youth capacity building programs and projects in various fields, and enrich youth’s knowledge of political and human rights issues through advisory platforms, workshops, training, and other means, to build youth capacity to lead change in society.

• Strengthen trust between local communities and civil society organizations, apply the principles of good governance and community participation, integrate youth and gender perspectives into all levels of programs and administrative structures, and enhance coordination and integration between organizations at all levels.