

Madam Chair, Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to address this distinguished audience as the first Youth Delegate of Hungary to the United Nations.

Hungary joined the UN Youth Delegate Programme this year, and I wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Government of Hungary for taking this important step, and the Hungarian Representation for their helpful cooperation.

I also wish to congratulate all Member States, which joined the Programme with us this year.

At first glance, little our steps may seem but it is our participation that paves the road towards the global recognition of the voice of the youth in decision-making. The more we get to speak, the higher the chances that we are heard. And it is worth listening to our fresh perspectives.

Let me seize this opportunity to encourage all Member States who have not yet done so, to join us in the Youth Delegate Programme.

In pursuance of global partnership, allow us to offer a helping hand: My colleagues and I are more than happy to share experience concerning the programme. If there is willingness to empower youth and to contribute to the achievement of the goals of Agenda 2030, which can only be reached if the young people can take up their critical role as agents of change, then hesitate no longer to get in touch with us.

Still, it must be recognised that youth delegates alone cannot solve any of the world's problems. We are a part of the solution but we are only the 'tip of the iceberg'.

Our common sustainable future depends on those who still live in poverty, face hunger, get insufficient education and have no immediate prospects for personal development.

One may ask, who are they?

Ladies and Gentlemen, they are the majority. They are the Invisible Youth of Planet Earth.

We are the generation with the greatest potential in the history of mankind. However, Potential means nothing when unfulfilled. Therefore, we must work hard to be able to achieve as much as our natural ability makes possible!

Let me share with you an experience from the UNESCO Youth Forum held a year ago in Paris.

For 16 years, these forums only offered an opportunity for young people to draft documents of recommendations which were then presented to the General Conference. Last October, instead of written recommendations, the event focused on delivering a grand capacity-building exercise, which concluded with all participating youth delegates pledging to launch local initiatives in the fields of sustainability.

With an infrastructure for action, more can be achieved than with words we forget.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Learning from the UNESCO-example, it is my firm belief that the support of the organic development of youth communities, both formal and informal, is of utmost importance.

Lasting change in the environments of those marginalised can only be achieved through local grassroots progress — and such change is much needed.

Let me illustrate this with an example from Hungary. In 2012, the quadrennial Hungarian Youth Study revealed that 72 per cent of our youth never took part in the work of any type of organisation, only 7 per cent of them contributed to a local organisation and just 4 per cent of them signed a petition in their life.

Although shocking, in global comparison these numbers were not among the most critical ones. The low social engagement of young people is a worldwide problem— and if we wish to take effective action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals that engagement must be restored.

As a response, efforts were strengthened in the government, the private sector and the civil society in Hungary and programmes were launched in order to help the facilitation of organic youth development.

One of several outstanding examples is ‘Enterprise Hungary’, an NGO, which offers education and incubation for young Hungarian entrepreneurs. Another is BAGázs, a successful programme encouraging and building social equality through activities and projects in a Roma minority settlement in Hungary.

We must learn from these examples! We need more initiatives that in one way or another cover all of us with opportunities. Since the only way of reaching, engaging and motivating marginalised young people, the Invisible Youth, is by listening to them, opening up new horizons to them and enabling them to act.

We may need to work our way person by person, but in the end, small streams make large rivers, as the proverb says.

This could also help us stop the rise of violent extremism, by which Hungary is deeply concerned. Violent extremist groups increasingly target young people and recruit them as child soldiers, terrorists and even suicide attackers.

Poverty, the lack of education, high levels of youth unemployment, illiteracy and marginalisation all contribute to creating a fertile ground for radicalisation. By involving young people in activities beneficial for society, by giving them personal goals for life we can make progress in accordance with the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism.

In conclusion, I invite all Member States to work together within the framework of the UN and beyond to empower the Youth, and enable them to realise their full potential.

We must reflect together on policies and practices that enable them to set up projects in their community and make their voices be heard.

Let it be us who ask them what we can help.

Let us understand them.

Let us make them realise that they have the ability to influence and make change in the World.

This is the first step towards taking action, locally as well as globally, in order to contribute to the aims we are striving for: the successful implementation of Agenda 2030, fighting inequality, and bringing peace and stability.

We should all act in this manner — and if the Youth is provided to speak:

This is the way the potential of the Youth can be fulfilled.

This is how we can justify our presence in the present.

This is how we can be the guarantee for a sustainable future.

I thank you for your attention.