Youth, Peace & Security

Summary Report

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Consultation
For the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security
Panama City, Panama
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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

In December of 2015, the Security Council adopted ground-breaking Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS). For the first time, the UN Security Council dedicated a full resolution to the positive role young people can and do play in conflict prevention, the prevention of violent extremism and peacebuilding. The Resolution was championed by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and adopted unanimously.

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 will provide evidence of young people's contribution to sustaining peace, through an independent and participatory research process. An independent Lead Author, as well as an Advisory Group of 21 experts, were appointed by the Secretary-General to undertake the Study. Consultations with young people and youth-led civil society organizations offer an essential contribution to the Study, in order to gather the views, aspirations and demands from young people for peace and security issues. For more information about the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security, please click here.

The Latin America and Caribbean regional consultation, held in Panama City, Panama from 29 to 31 May 2017, was the fourth in a series of national and regional consultations for the Progress Study. It was organized by UN Volunteers, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women, UNHCR, UNESCO, OIJ and the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). A total of sixty-one participants took part in the 3-day consultation, and were selected through an open call for applications that was posted online and disseminated to and through youth networks (over 1000 young people from across the region applied to participate).

The selection process guaranteed equal opportunities to participants regardless of their status or origin, and assured the balanced representation of all countries in the region. An equitable and inclusive presence of young people was promoted, ensuring adequate participation of young women, as well as young people from rural and urban environments, from different socioeconomic backgrounds, youth of African descent, indigenous youth, youth living with HIV, youth with disabilities, members of the LGBTI community, as well as refugees, displaced persons and stateless persons.

Prior to the consultation, a youth advisory committee including young peacebuilders from the region was formed to provide inputs and guidance on the consultation methodology.

Participants came from: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela. The precise number of participants from each country is listed in

Annex A. Participants were selected on the basis of their engagement in peace and security issues, their involvement with youth-led organizations, youth-focused organizations and/or their affiliation with peacebuilding networks. Consideration was given to ensure a diverse age range and gender balance.

The consultation was organized into three parts: the first day was dedicated to young people's discussions on youth, peace and security as concepts, as well as to a conversation on the relevance of UNSCR 2250 in their context; the second day involved participants describing their peacebuilding work and highlighting some of the challenges they face and their priorities going forward; and the third, and final day was set aside for participants to develop and put forward recommendations to support their work and priorities. These consultations were facilitated by 1 lead facilitator and 6 youth facilitators, from civil society and the UN, through a series of parallel interactive break-out discussions. The list of organizations that attended are included in Annex B.

This report provides an analytical summary of the main issues discussed by the young people who attended the meeting, as well as their recommendations for peace and security in Latin America and the Caribbean. In order to ensure objectivity and accuracy in the reflection of participants' views, this report is being shared with the participants for their inputs and comments. The consultation was held under Chatham House rules, hence no comments or views expressed will be attributed.

Caribbean

1. Defining youth, peace and security

Youth

Describing the concept of 'youth' was challenging for participants as it varies considerably based on context. The commonly agreed upon conceptual understandings focused on the value and mindset that young people bring to their discussions, the inherent assets and potential of young people and their power and ability to push for social change. Participants highlighted the heterogeneity of youth identities and the way they intersect with other forms of identity as an important reminder not to silo youth into a single category. The difficulty of defining 'youth' based on a chronological age was discussed, and while most participants agreed that this was a problematic way of defining youth as it is highly context-specific, some participants felt it was important for policymaking to have a clear and concise definition[1].

Lastly, participants described the way in which expectations of youth shift and change or fail to change over time. For example, young people are expected to stay in education longer and therefore tend to enter the labour market later in life. However, this expectation acts as a double-edged sword as young people are then unable to fulfill the responsibilities expected of them by older generations, who were able to fulfill those responsibilities at a younger age.

Peace

Inclusion: Participants highlighted the importance of promoting tolerance[2] and appreciation for difference, whether in the form of cultural differences, gender differences, differences based on sexuality, class differences, racial and/or ethnic differences, ability (people living with a disability) etc. Supporting inclusion is required to address stigma and discrimination, and is important for people (i.e. LGBTQI, ethnic minorities, religious minorities) to freely express themselves, to feel a part of the broader community, to make their voices heard and ensure that issues which are important to them are addressed and acted upon.

Inner Peace: There was a strong focus on the need for individual, inner peace in order to be able to achieve peace on a larger scale. Participants described the need to focus first on inner peace in order to feel comfortable enough with oneself to demonstrate empathy for others. Once individuals have developed a sense of inner peace they will then be able to work towards community-level, collective peace. The other aspect of this discussion focused on the need to destigmatize mental health and related services, as well as the importance of collectively and individually healing from past traumas in order to support reconciliation.

[1] The suggestion that a definition of youth based on chronological age was important for youth was not uncontroversial among participants, and it is important to reiterate that most participants did not appear to agree with this suggestion.

[2] Although some participants used the world 'tolerance' when discussing inclusion, others described it as a negative word that suggests the need to tolerate but not embrace difference.

Community-level Peace: Following on from their discussions on internal peace, participants described the importance of looking at peace at the community-level. Peace at this level means it is representative of the needs of the community, that the community actively works to promote peace, community members know their rights and freedoms and are accountable for maintaining peace. More concretely, participants described how peace in the community means women and members of the LGBTQI community are not subject to gender-based violence, and corporal punishment is not used on young children within the home. Once peace at the community-level has been achieved, people can begin to work towards the broader peace goals within their country.

Security

Personal Safety: Participants described the need for personal safety as a key component of security and feeling secure in their communities. The ability to live without fear, to have freedom of expression, to live free from violence, to be protected from violence and to live without fear of retaliation were described as central to feeling secure.

Hard Security vs. Human Security: Participants described the way in which some of their governments have responded to crime and violence by investing in hard security approaches, i.e. enhanced law enforcement. However, communities have limited trust in the police due to prevalent corruption, impunity and violence, and highlighted a need for an increased focus in supporting human security as a prevention approach, i.e. providing people with access to education, employment, healthcare, justice and addressing food insecurity.

Governance: Participants highlighted the way in which government-sponsored violence, impunity and corruption, and a lack of transparency in governance processes more broadly, leads to their reduced trust in the state to provide security and protection from violence.

*Participants described the way in which understandings of 'security' as a concept are relative, and how security can be viewed as a privilege and not necessarily a right in lower socioeconomic communities.

2. Young People's Work

Young people's work in the Caribbean fell into 5 broad categories, including: (1) Education and Labour; (2) Arts, and Sport; (3) Gender; (4) Participation; and (5) Justice.[3]

Education and Labour

- Raising awareness amongst government officials of the peacebuilding work being done by young people.

[3] It is important to note that the demarcation of youth work into categories is imperfect and there is significant overlap between and across categories.

- Youth-led mentorship programmes with 'at-risk' and out of school young men and boys to support their continued learning.
- Teaching methods of non-violence, and conflict resolution and management to 'at-risk' communities, families and young people.
- Creating and delivering social programming for 'at-risk', out of school youth.
- Partnering with Ministries of Education to deliver leadership training to school-aged youth as part of the formal curriculum.
- Working with school-aged youth to address the growing issue of cyberbullying.
- Utilising radio broadcasts to inform young people of their rights.
- Providing 'at-risk' youth with basic literacy skills and work-readiness training.
- Teaching young male prisoners business management and basic literacy.
- Awareness-raising around mental health issues.
- Teaching incoming refugees cultural fluency and English.
- Educating communities on how ongoing youth projects will benefit the broader community.

Arts and Sport

- Using sports to bring communities together and bridge division.
- Teaching and using dance to address taboo topics of conversation, including child abuse, sexual health, etc.

Gender

- Providing education, often extra-curricular, to children and youth on sexual and reproductive health and rights, rape response, and sexual- and gender-based violence.
- Providing young women and girls with leadership training and self-esteem workshops.
- Running afterschool clubs with young women and girls to teach basic literacy and math.
- Working with and educating families on the importance of supporting the education of young female family members.
- Literacy programmes for out-of-school girls.
- Raising awareness around LGBTQI issues.
- Working with young men to promote positive concepts of masculinity and reduce violence against women.

Participation

- Lobbying governments to involve young people in decision-making processes.
- Building the capacity of young people to support their enhanced political participation.

Justice

- Providing training to judges and law enforcement to enhance their understanding and use of restorative justice practices, as a means to change the overall narrative around youth who have committed minor offences.

3. Challenges

In participant discussions on the challenges they face in their peacebuilding work, participant's responses fell into 4 main categories, including: (1) Resources; (2) Education and Vocational Opportunities; (3) Social Structures and Norms; and (4) Governance and the State.

Resources

- Resources and funding for youth peacebuilding work are limited, particularly for creative arts and sports-based programming.
- Potential resources and funding for youth peacebuilding work that do exist are often earmarked for specific projects and difficult for young people and grassroots organizations to access.

> "They give us a place at the table, but does that place come with any power?"

Education and Vocational Opportunities

- Education for young people often focuses solely on the need to improve literacy rates, which despite its importance fails to address the need for a more comprehensive pedagogical approach that encompasses civic, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and comprehensive and inclusive human rights education.
- Training programmes for young people do not take into consideration the need to continue to invest in young people's long-term development and as a result are unsustainable.
- Low literacy rates among young people makes it challenging to actively engage them in peacebuilding work.
- Educational and vocational opportunities are difficult for many youth, based on socioeconomic factors, to access.

Social Structures and Norms

- Conservative, gerontocratic societies make it difficult for young people to participate and engage in decision-making processes.
- An engrained culture of misogyny makes it particularly challenging for young women to enter into and participate in peacebuilding discussions, and garner support for gender equality.
- Conservative values and strict social norms sustain adversity to change, and support and promote ongoing stigma and discrimination against young people and marginalized communities.

Government

- There is an overall lack of political will and concomitant government support for the meaningful inclusion of young people in decision-making.

- There are limited or no youth focal points within the government and existing government youth offices are poorly trained and under-resourced.
- The mechanisms and structures needed to support greater participation of young people are not in place and there is no existing legislation to mandate their inclusion.
- Where young people are consulted or included in some capacity it is often in a tokenistic manner and their voices are not generally valued or heard.
- When young people are given space to participate, they often do not represent the multiple and intersecting identities and lived realities of youth, which reproduces feelings of exclusion and marginalization.
- Youth bodies that do exist are often highly politicized and used as proxies for political parties to push partisan agendas.
- There is an overall reciprocal sense of mistrust between young people and the State.

> "Youth cannot trust a government that has no youth in it."

4. Priorities

Participant's priorities for youth peacebuilding work fell under 6 different categories: (1) Participation; (2) Partnerships; (3) Capacity; (4) Education; (5) Personal Safety; and (6) Funding.

Participation

- Youth bodies (i.e. councils, parliaments, etc.) should not be subject to government influence and should be able to operate with autonomy.
- Involve diverse young people in the design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of policies.
- Legislate youth quotas that embrace diversity for young people's political participation.
- Increase young people's political participation and diverse representation.

Partnerships

- Support clear and open channels of communication between young people, the government and CSOs.
- Enhance collaboration, and information and resource sharing amongst youth peacebuilding organizations and networks to build sustainable partnerships.

Capacity

- Support capacity-building and succession planning within youth peacebuilding organizations and networks to strengthen youth structures.

Education

- Support educational practices that promote diversity and inclusion to address stigma and discrimination.
- Ensure young people have free and equal access to quality education.

- Expand educational curricula to include comprehensive and inclusive education on human rights, civic duties, sexual and reproductive health, etc.

Personal Safety

- Support youth peacebuilders (including young human rights defenders), who often work in dangerous and precarious settings, by ensuring they have a safe and secure environment.

Funding

- Increase flexible and accessible funding for youth peacebuilding work.

Mexico and Central America

1. Defining peace and security

Peace

Personal Safety: Participants described the way in which the concept of peace related to their sense of personal safety, including being able to live without fear of violence, receiving State protection from violence, being able to express themselves freely without fear of retaliation and having guaranteed human rights.

"[Peace is] the freedom to be one's self without being judged…"

Social cohesion: Contributing to their discussions on peace, participants highlighted some factors needed to promote social cohesion within their communities, including the need to foster respect for diversity and difference in order to create an environment free from stigma and discrimination.

"[Peace is] a hug from my mother, when I come home and I'm still alive…"

Inner Peace: Participants described the need to focus on inner peace before attempting to promote peace within their communities and beyond. In particular, some participants stressed how negative personal experiences could provide an opportunity for learning and self-realisation, therefore leading to inner peace.

Services: Participants emphasised the importance of having access to basic services (including housing, education, health, etc.) in order to feel at peace.

Security[4]

Personal Safety: Similar to participant discussions on 'peace', personal safety emerged as a theme among their discussions on 'security', including freedom of expression without fear of retaliation, respect for and guarantees of human rights and the ability to live free from violence. Linked to the need for personal safety was the challenge of impunity and mistrust in government institutions and the way this compounds feelings of insecurity.

"[Security is] the freedom to speak without fear of being silenced…"

Services: Participants described the importance of having access to basic services and economic and social resources in order to feel secure in their communities. This discussion also encompassed the concepts of human security (i.e. a more holistic

[4] The obvious overlap between youth conceptions of 'peace' and 'security' highlights the way these concepts are perceived as 'two sides of the same coin' and perhaps hints at the lens through which participants approach peacebuilding issues within their communities.

understanding of what contributes to feeling secure) and food security (building on the need for the provision of basic services).

Social Cohesion: Participants stressed the importance of respect for women's rights and inclusion of marginalized communities in decision-making processes, in order to create a sense of security and foster social cohesion.

2. Young People's Work

Young people's work in Mexico and Central America fell into 5 broad categories: (1) Education and Labour; (2) Rights and Justice; (3) Arts and Sport; (4) Health; (5) Gender; and (6) Social Cohesion.

Education and Labour

- Teaching English to marginalised youth to increase their ability to compete in the labour market.
- Educating members of the public, including young people, on human rights, including child rights.
- Providing leadership training to University students.
- Promoting and utilising non-formal education as a means to engage a wider constituency.
- Conducting violence prevention work in schools and Universities.

Rights

- Promoting and advocating for the rights of marginalised members of society, including Indigenous Peoples, afro-descendants, members of the LGBTI community, people with disabilities, women, and refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons.
- Working with stateless members of society to obtain formal status and gain citizenship rights.
- Promoting LGBTI issues and calling for renewed legislation that is inclusive of a diverse array of gender identities.
- Conducting awareness-raising and providing training on child rights.

Arts and Sport

The following examples of young people's work demonstrate the creative ways participants engage young people or promote youth-related issues, and draw on the other categories listed in this section.

- Promoting the use of sports to work with vulnerable communities and promote peaceful coexistence.
- Advocating for children and youth, with a particular focus on sexual violence prevention utilising creative forms of expression.
- Using the arts to promote the social inclusion of afro-descendants.
- Using sports to address and normalise taboo topics of conversation.

- Promoting the use of music to teach young people values and advocate for social change.
- Providing training to young people on human rights, gender identity and sex education using creative forms of expression (i.e. hip hop) as a tool for social transformation and to provide young people with an alternative to joining gangs.

Health

- Providing psychosocial support to migrants.
- Running workshops on sexual health with children and young people in schools.

Gender

- Promoting and advocating for women's rights, including the rights of migrant women, and the rights of the LGBTI community.
- Promoting human rights and gender equality by educating communities and young people on gender-based violence and issues related to access to justice.

Social Cohesion

- Promoting and supporting the social reintegration of young people that have previously engaged in violence.

3. Challenges

Sustainability and Partnerships

- Youth projects implemented by the State and INGOs are often short-term and superficial, lacking a view to the long-term, sustainability required for significant change.
- The work of young peacebuilders and youth peacebuilding organisations is not well coordinated impacting the sustainability of their peacebuilding work.
- Young people are wary of developing partnerships with the State due to their feelings of mistrust in the government.

> "The stigmatisation of youth, certain prejudices and deep-rooted religious ideas make certain topics difficult to address…"

Stigma and Discrimination

- Young people experience stigma and discrimination, which makes it challenging for their peacebuilding work to be viewed legitimately.
- Young people living in rural communities and vulnerable urban neighbourhoods experience more discrimination, and feel more marginalised and disconnected from the State and urban centres. This is exacerbated by the fact that youth-related programming that does occur is often focused in urban centres.

Social Norms

- Conservative religious values are seen to limit young people's ability to address taboo topics of conversation, i.e. sexual and reproductive health.

Resources and Support

- There is an overall lack of financial and political support from the State when it comes to youth work.
- Financial resources, beyond solely through the State, for youth work are limited.

Personal Safety

- Young peacebuilders face insecurity and threats to their personal safety for carrying out their work.[5]

Judicial

- State corruption and a weak judicial system result in high levels of impunity, which makes it challenging for young people to address and prevent violence.

Economic Opportunities

- There are limited economic opportunities for young people (i.e. employment, vocational training, etc.).

4. Priorities

Education and Labor

- Secular education that integrates and allows for the discussion of taboo topics of conversation, i.e. sexual and reproductive health.
- Enhanced economic opportunities for young people.
- Youth entrepreneurship.

Judicial

- Strengthen judicial systems in order to address high levels of impunity, and support young people's ability to conduct their work and live in a more secure and safe environment.

Resources

- Increase the resources available to young people for their peacebuilding work.

Legislation

- Develop and implement youth-specific legislation to increase support for and lend credibility to youth peacebuilding work.

[5] Participants often described how organized crime and gangs are the main actors to produce insecurity in their communities, and that violence and a lack of opportunities is contributing to increased displacement throughout the region.

Sustainability and Partnerships

- Support collaboration between youth peacebuilding organizations to strengthen youth networks.

> "The rights of young people must be recognized."

Basic Rights and Services

- Address the needs for basic rights and services for young people in all communities, including those most marginalized (i.e. Indigenous, young people with disabilities, members of the LGBTI community, young women, IDPs, stateless persons and refugees, etc.).

Participation

- Create opportunities for young people to be able to meaningfully influence and contribute to decision-making processes.

Government

- Decentralize government agencies so that they are better connected to the lives of young people beyond urban centres, in an effort to help increase trust in government and enhance the credibility of government among youth.

Technology

- Use technology in innovative ways to help support youth work that aims to promote peace and prevent violence.

South America

1. Defining Youth, Peace and Security

Youth

At the outset, the group unanimously highlighted the importance of referring to youth in a plural form ("juventudes"), emphasizing their diversity and multiple identities and refusing a biological definition of youth. Some common characteristics of the reality of youth included negative assumptions and stigma (including by the State itself), a lack of opportunities in social, political and economic spheres, precarity, and a systemic marginalization from institutions and political processes. However, participants also highlighted young people's potential and active role as torchbearers, change makers, democracy defenders, leaders. For their potential to be unleashed, young people raised the need to strengthen youth agency and to address the violence perpetrated by the State.

"Peace is more than the absence of conflict..."

Peace

Overall, participants supported the idea that Peace did not only mean "the absence of conflict" or the antonym to "war", but could be expanded to include the following areas: inclusion, equality, democracy, inner peace, context and mobility and space.

"Peace has to be defined in a specific context; it is dynamic."

Inclusion: Inclusion was presented by participants as a requirement to achieve peace, while exclusion was described as a trigger to violence. The "leaving no-on behind" approach, at the core of the 2030 Agenda, and the importance of promoting and protecting human rights were referred to several times.

Equality: Participants described how peace cannot be obtained without recognizing diversity and difference, without equal access to opportunities, true equality and the absence of discrimination.

Development and Democracy: Participants linked the concept of peace to the importance of having democratic institutions and a democratic culture that promotes participation, particularly when it comes to discussions on the need for inclusive and sustainable development.[6]

"From the Indigenous perspective, peace means respecting the territory; space is peace."

Inner Peace: Participants described the importance of inner peace, which manifests as being free to be yourself and living free of fear, violence and hate.

[6] For participants this discussion was contested – development of whom, for what? Does society and do young people really have a say in development?

Context: Peace is contextual and will mean different things to different people at different times.

Mobility and Space: The ability to move freely throughout different territories, across borders, without borders, etc. was described as a key component of peace for some participants.

Security

The first reaction of participants was to refer to security policies implemented by the State, including repressive policy responses. However, participant discussions turned to the way in which security and peace as concepts are closely connected to one another.

Control and Repressive State Policies: The State was often referred to as armed and aggressive, and participants clearly showed some skepticism toward "terrorism" and references to violent extremism in UNSCR 2250. Young people are often victims of the State (violence against young people, including against their own body, femicides, stigma, etc.). So-called security policies, as well as knowledge and power, were described as ways for the State to control populations, in particular young people. Participants described human security as a solution to repressive, hard security approaches from the State.

> "Security, in and of itself, should be humane."

Human Rights: Participants described how a sense of security is not possible if people do not see their human rights respected, particularly for human rights activists which includes many young people doing peacebuilding work. Young people highlighted how the guarantee and protection of their human rights, as well as access to basic services are preconditions for their empowerment.

Personal Safety: The lack of rule of law and of security were identified as a threat to individual freedoms (i.e. targeted violence against afrodescendants in Brazil; this draws on participant's description of peace as encompassing 'equality'). Participants also highlighted the need to address other distinct forms of violence and insecurity, including gender-based violence and insecurity resulting from natural disasters.

Information and Communication Technologies: The different access to ICT afforded to young people living in rural or urban communities affects their ability to access and use information, which ultimately impacts on whether they feel secure in their communities.

Building Bridges with State: Participants described the importance of rebuilding trust with authorities, in particular the police.

2. Young people's work

Young people's work in South America fell into 5 broad categories: (1) Participation; (2) Arts; (3) Education; (4) Basic Services; (5) Legislation; (6) Partnerships; and (7) Capacity-building.

Participation

- Convening and participating in peace dialogues (i.e. Colombia).
- Visibilizing social groups and providing rights training to enhance their ability to participate in political processes and society writ-large, i.e. Indigenous peoples.
- Facilitating dialogue between grassroots/communities and institutions.
- Strengthening youth political participation through creative methods.
- Promoting the participation of young people living with HIV through the creation of new avenues for participation and supporting better informed project design.
- Leading movements of youth living with disabilities to promote their participation and raise awareness.
- Mobilizing young people as volunteers for peace and development activities.
- Supporting national mechanisms for youth volunteerism.
- Providing support to others to assist them in gaining access to resources and basic services.

> "What do we do with the State? Either we confront it, or we incorporate it through groups capable of representing our interests and generating real change."

Arts

- Supporting violence prevention through arts and culture, reclaiming public spaces, urban spaces, etc.
- Disseminating peace agreements creatively, through arts, i.e. hip hop.
- Using art to propose alternative narratives and create new content highlighting intersectionalism, i.e. feminism, gender, sexual and reproductive rights, historical memory, etc.

Education

- Establishing virtual libraries for young people who are visually impaired (i.e. TIFLOLIBROS in Argentina).

Basic Services

- Building housing for people affected by disaster or those from lower socioeconomic communities.
- Supporting vulnerable youth by helping them gain access to basic services.

Legislation

- Influencing and supporting legislative and policy reforms, i.e. youth-inclusive constitution making, youth laws, laws for victims of terrorism, for cyber-bullying, etc.

- Working with Ministries of Justice on policy reforms relating to migrants, IDPs, refugees and stateless people.

Partnerships

- Supporting new partnerships with Universities.
- Using youth networks to develop awareness-raising campaigns and support systems for migrants, IDPs, refugees and stateless people.

Capacity-building

- Supporting youth leadership, training community leaders, and establishing and strengthening youth networks working on specific issues or themes.
- Providing support to vulnerable youth through personal coaching.

3. Challenges

Political participation

- Young people are still absent from formal processes and spaces for meaningful participation remain insufficient.
- More should be done to support youth leadership and capacity development, in order to enhance young people's political participation.
- Young people's access to information remains limited, which restricts their ability to participate and hold the State to account.

Personal Safety

- Fear is very much a reality for many young peacebuilders, including fear of violent retaliation perpetrated against young peacebuilders by the State.
- Violence is a manifestation or consequence of discrimination, racism, inequalities, patriarchal structures, machismo etc.

Perceptions

- Young people are often seen as dangers to society.
- Young people are not recognised or valued for their ability to contribute and provide technical assistance on peace and security issues.

Public Policy

- State policies relating to culture are restrictive and don't encompass the full spectrum of cultures represented.
- Citizen security policies fail to incorporate a focus on youth.
- Youth-targeted/focused policies are often overly simplistic and superficial.

Effective implementation of agreements

- UNSCR 2250 needs to be contextualised and implemented by national governments. For example, the focus on violent extremism/terrorism is seen by participants as less

relevant and potentially detrimental based on the historical use of the discourse throughout the region by past dictatorships.

4. Priorities

Participation

- Enhancing youth empowerment/leadership in existing and new spaces.
- Strengthening youth agency and enhancing capacities of youth organisations, ensuring they have the necessary resources and legal protections to carry out their work.
- Create clear and open channels for communication that support young people's ability to access information freely and easily so they can more easily participate in political processes (i.e. through the use of social media, etc.).
- Promote youth participation that is inclusive and intersectional and visibilizes historically marginalised groups, in order to address different forms of stigma and discrimination that contribute to violence.
- Support innovative youth participation that challenges hegemonic formal participatory structures in order to drive change and social progress.
- Ensure young people are fully included in the implementation of peacebuilding agreements, policy and legislation (i.e. UNSCR 2250), and that information regarding these is shared and disseminated broadly.

Trust Building and Relationships

- The media have the capacity to support and convey positive narratives on youth and should use this to counter prevailing negative portrayals of young people.
- There is a need to build trust between governments and young people, and to end the prevailing and failing hard security approaches directed at young people.
- Support young people's access to information as a means to promote accountability.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were developed by all participants from the Caribbean, South America, Central America and Mexico.

Security

The following recommendations speak primarily to the need for a secure environment in which young people can conduct their peacebuilding work without fear of repercussions and/or retaliation.

- Establish legal frameworks to guarantee young people's human rights.
- Regulate the use of force by law enforcement, particularly as it relates to protests, in order to support young people's ability to protest in a safe environment.
- Implement stricter gun control legislation to address high levels of gun-related violence.
- Continue to support mechanisms that seek to address issues of corruption and impunity. For example, through strengthening judicial systems and ensuring their independence via their separation from the executive branch of government; and through supporting the work and pushing for the protection of human rights defenders.
- Monitor States with high youth incarceration rates and assess the impact of this on young people and the broader community.

Political Participation

- In order to address the stigmatization of young people, establish legislation that creates space for youth political participation.
- Increase the transparency of public institutions so that young people are more easily able to engage in political processes.
- Develop more open and informal spaces for young people's political participation.
- Legislation should be developed and implemented, with the help of young people, that enshrines young people's participation in public policy and decision-making structures and processes.
- Governments should work to ensure greater continuity in their programmatic work on youth.
- Support and encourage opportunities for youth leaders, community leaders and institutions to exchange skills and knowledge.

Legislation

- Legislation should clearly define the category of youth.
- Youth quotas should be implemented to call for adequate youth representation in political processes.
- Regular reporting should be implemented by States to monitor and assess their progress on issues related to youth, peace and security.

Inclusion

- Invest in public policy that promotes diversity and inclusion.
- Provide decision-makers and public officials with diversity training and instill respect for human rights.
- Officially recognize the diversity of languages spoken throughout a given State.
- Recognize the diverse forms of violence and exclusion experienced by young people, particularly by those from marginalized communities, and promote their human rights.
- Raise awareness regarding the ways in which different members of society experience violence to varying degrees.
- Create a regional narrative that highlights the link between discrimination, exclusion, security and peace – and – employment, health, education and access to justice.

Access to Information

- Increase access to and use of information and communication technologies through supporting digital literacy of young people and ensuring rural communities have the necessary infrastructure.
- Create online platforms where youth peacebuilders, members of the public, private sector, NGOs and government actors can communicate and discuss peace and security issues and exchange knowledge.

Education

- Educate communities and families on the importance of young people attending school.
- Formal educational curriculum should include education on respect for diversity and sexual and reproductive health, and should respond to the needs of people living with disabilities.
- Support education practitioners and enhance their understanding of diversity and inclusion by offering them educational opportunities related to diversity and inclusion.
- Increase partnerships between the private sector and higher education institutions to assist young people in obtaining employment once they complete their schooling.
- Improve access to online courses for young people living in rural communities.
- Provide training to young people on the use of ICT.

Capacity-building

- Create mentorship opportunities for young peacebuilders and youth peacebuilding organizations to connect with younger youth, as well as adults within society. Promote mentorship programmes that encourage a two-way exchange between young peacebuilders and adults to demonstrate what each can learn from each other.
- Provide young people with opportunities to develop their interpersonal, communication and negotiation skills so that they can conduct peacebuilding work successfully.
- Provide training to young peacebuilders on conflict transformation, conflict resolution and how to navigate political structures.
- Develop culturally relevant and youth friendly impact assessment toolkits for young peacebuilders to support their ability to monitor and evaluate their work.

Annex A: Participant Information

Countries Present		Age Range	
Country	Number of Participants	Age	Number of participants
Antigua and Barbuda	1	18	1
Argentina	3	19	3
Barbados	2	20	4
Belize	2	21	2
Bolivia	1	22	1
Brazil	4	23	11
Chile	1	24	6
Colombia	4	25	9
Costa Rica	1	26	8
Dominica	1	27	7
Dominican Republic	2	28	8
Ecuador	3	29	4
El Salvador	2	**Gender Balance**	
Grenada	2	Male	26
Guatemala	2	Female	38
Guyana	2		
Haiti	2		
Honduras	2		
Jamaica	2		
Mexico	2		
Nicaragua	2		
Panama	3		
Paraguay	2		
Peru	2		
Saint Kitts and Nevis	2		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	2		
Saint Lucia	2		
Trinidad and Tobago	3		
Uruguay	3		
Venezuela	2		

Annex B: List of Participating Organizations

Organization	
Mapuche ENAMA	Red de Jóvenes Afrodescendientes de Panamá
Red de Jóvenes Positivos de Latinoamérica y el Caribe Hispano	Secretaria de Juventud de la Alcaldía de Colón
Secretaria de Inclusión Social del Municipio del Distrito Metropolitano de Quito	Minority Rights Group International
Jóvenes Iberoamericanos	ACNUR
Organización Juvenil Bañadense “Yvy Guive”	National Office for Economic Partnership Agreements
Gestión Comunitaria de TECHO Paraguay	Caribbean Law Institute
Consorcio Boliviano de Juventudes	21st Century Woman
Sección Juventud de la Secretaria Regional Suramericana / Movimiento Estamos Todxs en Acción	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
Asociación Civil Doncel	Conscious Youth Development Programme
Secretaria de Derechos Humanos de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (la Secretaria de Pueblos Originarios)	“I have a right foundation and youth volunteers network of Dominica”
Univeristy of Brazil	Ministry of Youth, Sports and Religious Affairs
OBJUV and OBVIO	USAID
UNHCR	YWCA
FORMANCIPA	Conseil Consultatif des Jeunes Haiti/Youth Advisory Board Haiti
UNICEF	Positive Org
Personas Activas Responsablemente Cívicas	Commonwealth Student’s Association
Fundacion Cultural y Social 5ta con 5ta Crew	Red Cross
Escuela de Pueblos Indígenas y Derechos Humanos	Leo Club St. Vincent
Juventud del Municipio de Girardota	CARICOM
Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos	CYPAN
SICA Y UNESCO	Humanitarian Association of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Red de Comunidades Educativas por la Paz	Ministry of National Security
Centro de Orientación Femenino	UN MGCY
CEPROSAF	UNDP
FORPAZ	Club – Juvenil Profamilia
Instituto Mexicano de la Juventud	Fundación Danilo Pérez
Fundación Efecto Valores	
IPAS	

Annex C: Concept note and Agenda

Programme Regional Consultation on Youth, Peace and Security
Voices of youth in Latin America and the Caribbean
Panama May 28 - June 1, 2017

Time	Sunday 28.05	Monday 29.05	Tuesday 30.05	Wednesday 31.05	Thursday 01.06
7:30-8:00		Mindfulness/Yoga (optional)	Mindfulness/Yoga (optional)	Mindfulness/Yoga (optional)	
7:30-8:30		Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
8:30-10:15		Opening and official welcome	Youth initiatives in peace and security - subregional perspective	Youth, Peace and Security in the region (visit to Colón)	Departure
10:15-10:30		Coffee Break	Coffee Break		
10:30-12:00		Teambuilding	Identifying opportunities and challenges of youth participation in peace and security		
12:00-13:30	Arrival	Youth Perspectives on Peace and Security	Youth Perspectives on challenges and priorities for peace and security		
13:30 - 14:30		Lunch	Lunch	Networking Lunch	
14:30 - 16:00		UNSCR 2250: presentation and reflection	Recommendations for Youth, Peace and Security agenda	Next steps- Collaboration Plan	
16:00-16:15		Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	
16:15-17:30		Youth initiatives in peace and security - regional perspective	Recommendations for Youth, Peace and Security agenda	Evaluation and closing	
17:30-18:00	Informal Welcome	Reflections	Reflections		
19:00	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	
		Socio-cultural activities		Farewell	

*This agenda was adapted in response to changing conditions.

Concept Note
Regional Consultation on Youth, Peace and Security
Voices of youth in Latin America and the Caribbean, Panamá
28 May - 1 June 2017

On 9 December 2015, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 2250, the first resolution that specifically addresses the role of young people on matters of peace and security. This ground-breaking resolution on Youth, Peace and Security recognizes **the positive role young people can and do play in conflict prevention, the prevention of violence, and the promotion and consolidation of peace**.

This Resolution captures the legacy and contributions made by, for example, the Guiding Principles on Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding and the Amman Youth Declaration, and represents, first and foremost, the success of the joint efforts of youth organizations, the UN, civil society actors and governments working together.
One of the next measures stipulated in the Resolution, requests 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 further requests the Secretary- General to make the results of this study available to the Security Council and all Member States of the United Nations."*
The Progress Study will provide key information regarding youth participation in peace and security issues and highlight their active and positive contribution to maintaining peace in the region.

In keeping with this commitment, regional and national consultations are being conducted worldwide. To date, a Regional Consultation and High-Level Dialogue for the Arab States was held in Jordan bearing in mind the support offered by these states in order to adopt the Resolution on 9 December 2015. A National Consultation in Colombia has also taken place, as a key country for the development of the Progress Study, given the present context of the implementation of the peace agreement with the FARC-EP and the active role and involvement of young people in the peace process, peacebuilding and conflict resolution in the country.
In addition, a series of online consultations will be launched shortly on the Youth4Peace Knowledge Portal in order to broaden the reach of the consultations to the global level.
It is also an important opportunity to encourage young people to play an active role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the region. This road map for achieving peace and sustainable development was adopted unanimously by 193 countries at the UN General Assembly in September 2015. It is today's youth who, in the years remaining until 2030, are taking on the new challenges and commitments that are put forward in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their 169 goals. Hence, young people have become key players in contributing to the success of building the **peaceful and inclusive societies necessary for sustainable development**[1].

Latin America and the Caribbean

It is estimated that there are approximately 160 million young people in the region. On analysing their situation, we find they face complex challenges in terms of security, inequality and governance, all of which are essential in order to progress towards **sustainable peace**.

Regarding **security**, violence has had an enormous impact in this region, which is considered the most violent in the world. It is no accident, therefore, that although there is no war currently declared in the region, the rate of homicide is higher than that recorded in periods of war. Violent operations are linked mainly to the drug trade and the eviction of persons from territories valued for their minerals, forests or subsoil wealth. It should not be forgotten that access to, use and ownership of natural resources is a key factor for these economies. Therefore, generating inclusive and democratic dialogue processes that address territorial security would allow the adoption of medium and long-term consensus and identify opportunities that guarantee the sustainable human development of the affected populations. Global homicide rates are led by countries in this region, especially those in the Northern Triangle, with more than 100,000 homicides a year and very high numbers of violence against women and girls. Poverty, inequality and organized crime are determining factors in explaining this dynamic affecting young men, women and girls.

Bearing in mind that violence affects women and girls differently, the murder of women because of their gender, known as femicide, is reaching alarming levels in the region, and especially affects young women. Of the 25 countries with the highest rates of femicide in the world, 14 are in Latin America and the Caribbean[2].

On the other hand, hate crimes against young people on the basis of their sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, as well as the threat of forced recruitment have become one of the main causes of displacement within the region.

One of the keys to resolving these challenges will be the development of strategies for the prevention of violence (in all its forms) that directly and indirectly affect youth and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Reducing **inequalities** is one of the major priorities of the region, considering that it is the most unequal region in the world. The inequalities that exist in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean result in the exclusion and marginalization of young people. Although there has been an improvement in economic, education and health indicators, these advances remain far from universal and the intergenerational and intragenerational gaps deepen, resulting in situations of exclusion.

Integration of young people in the work force is, in general, quite precarious, with negative consequences on their social protection. Adolescents and young people find serious limitations to their sexual and reproductive rights. An example of this is the high rates of adolescent pregnancy, early marriages and civil unions, HIV infections or sexual violence, which increase

their vulnerability.

In addition, the transition of young people between school and the workforce is complex in the region, resulting in a high percentage of very precarious jobs. In this sense, one of the challenges would be to consolidate the social protection system to boost human capital, reduce the effects of inequality and ensure that no one is left behind.

Democratic, inclusive and effective **governance** is a growing demand in the region, with rights to participation, transparency and access to justice that must be respected and guaranteed by the states. Youth have been proactive in identifying solutions to development challenges and it would therefore be ideal to involve young people in decision-making processes that emphasize equal opportunities, ensuring participation regardless of nationality, migration status, ethnic, racial or cultural origin and/or sexual diversity, gender or any other type of discrimination at the local, national and global levels.

As a result, innovation and critical thinking in all age groups and the capacity to generate transformational change would be encouraged.

General Objectives of the Consultation

- Gather the voices of youth involved in peacebuilding on issues of peace and security in Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to support the implementation of Resolution 2250 in the region and as a contribution to the Progress Study in accordance with the mandated established by the Resolution.
- Identify the challenges that youth face regarding peace and security in Latin America and the Caribbean, and generate alternative mechanisms to address them in order to contribute to peace and security.

Specific Objectives

- Identify the main issues regarding peace and security that are of interest to the youth and that affect them directly in a regional, national or local context.
- Discuss perspectives, challenges and priorities to support the active participation of men and women, taking into account their diversity, conflict prevention, social cohesion, conflict transformation and local and national peacebuilding.
- Identify recommendations for the Progress Study.
- Share work experiences on youth and peacebuilding at the country level that may be relevant for the region.
- Generate a youth network that promotes the active inclusion of young people in peace and security processes at the local, national and regional levels.

Profile of Participants

The selection criteria seek to represent youth in their social, political and cultural diversity, as well as facilitate the access of women and men from different countries. Some of the requirements are listed below:

- Young people between the ages of 18-29.
- Equitable participation of men and women.
- They must be young leaders who are involved in peace and security issues at local, regional, national or global levels.
- Experience in initiatives and areas of work related to some of the following topics:
  - Promotion, awareness-building and defence of human rights.
  - Development cooperation.
  - Humanitarian action.
  - Building and strengthening of peace processes.
  - Social cohesion and social fabric recovery.
  - Local and national governance processes.
  - Activism at the individual or civil society level: advocacy and political impact.
  - Prevention of youth violence: gangs.
  - Reconciliation and access to justice.
  - Citizen security.
  - Gender violence, especially sexual violence.
  - Promotion of gender equality.
  - Promotion, awareness-building and defence of human rights, with emphasis on sexual and reproductive rights.
- Priority will be given to young people from organizations, movements, initiatives and networks led by young people, who will make up the majority of the participants.
- Every effort should be made to ensure the diversity of participants, including young people from diverse socio-economic/ethnic backgrounds, from rural and urban areas, LGBTI persons, migrants, refugees and stateless persons.

Consultation Format

The consultation will take place over a period of 4 days and will address the following topics:

- Youth perspectives on "peace and security".
- Youth-led activities and initiatives for peace and security in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Opportunities, factors and challenges to the participation of young people in the peace and security agendas.
- Youth recommendations for the Youth, Peace and Security agenda.

In addition, the consultation will offer an opportunity for young people to get to know other peace and security processes currently underway in the region.

This event would not be possible without the collaboration and exchange amongst the following organizations: OAS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UN Peacebuilding Support Office, UN Volunteers and UN Women.