

The Unlock the Future Coalition

Hosted by the UN Foundation, the [Unlock the Future coalition](#) gathers the world's largest organizations working with and for young people and children. United under a single banner, aims to advance shared goals at the UN system, create opportunities for joint action for impact, amplify young voices to influence the global agenda, and boost funding for the young people and children who will shape our tomorrow.

Guided by its [five-year strategy](#), the coalition actively collaborates across a range of sectors to unlock better future for nearly one billion people across its collective global reach.



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Chapeau

- **Prioritize Intergenerational Cooperation:** Intergenerational cooperation is vital for revitalizing the multilateral system to address current and future challenges. The UN should serve as an inclusive global platform for safeguarding the interests of all 21st-century people and planning for our shared future.
- **Recognize Young People and Children as Stewards of the Future:** Recognizing that young people and children constitute half of the world's population is essential. They hold a substantial stake in the consequences of today's decisions, and their diverse backgrounds encompass various interest groups, each offering unique perspectives that are indispensable for shaping a future characterized by equity, peace, and resilience.
- **Focus on Future Demographics:** It is imperative to direct our focus towards regions where the majority of young people and children will inhabit in the future. Present demographic trends strongly indicate the emergence of "young countries" in Asia and Africa, where over 50% of the population is currently under 30 years old. By 2100, [50% of young people](#) worldwide will call Africa home.

Chapter I. Sustainable Development and Financing for Development

- **Invest in Young People and Children for SDG Acceleration:** Young people and children are key to accelerating SDG progress. Currently, with [only 15% of the SDGs achieved](#), the consequences of inaction are significant. Targeted investments are essential in areas such as child-sensitive and gender-responsive social protection, education, universal health coverage, and responsible digitalization. [Recent polls](#) indicate that failing to invest in young people and children could result in societal instability, eroded democratic values, and political unrest.

- **Decolonize the International Financial System for Future Legitimacy:** A well-funded Future Commission, involving young people and children, should guide the decolonization process to propose an inclusive international financial system. The focus should be on the 2025 4th International Conference on Financing for Development in Spain, aiming to shape global financial governance as the Bretton Woods Conference once did.
- **Incorporate SDGs in Global Financial Decision-Making:** To meaningfully engage young people and children in decision-making processes, it's crucial to allocate resources in alignment with the SDGs. Adopting a human rights-based approach to development is essential, leveraging international financial institutions and national budgets to fulfill global human rights obligations. This is particularly vital for young countries, where SDG achievement can significantly improve the quality of life and future prospects.
- **Global Debt Restructuring:** Due to current global debt burdens, young countries allocate [five times](#) more funds to debt repayment than SDG investments, delaying progress for their young populations. Addressing this financial burden requires a one-time correction of the global debt landscape involving debt relief and restructuring to free up financial resources for SDG initiatives. This should include more favorable repayment terms and recognizing historical context in considering debt reduction, as excessive debt limits opportunities for future generations.
- **Rewiring Multilateral Development Banks:** The focus of multilateral development banks needs to shift toward serving the global public good. These institutions are uniquely positioned to provide financial aid and expertise to young countries for projects promoting global benefits like environmental preservation, poverty reduction, education, and public health. Introduce novel financial products and services tailored to these countries' unique needs.
- **Strengthen the Global Financial Safety Net:** Reinforce the financial safety net, particularly for low-income countries prone to economic fluctuations due to factors like commodity price changes, humanitarian emergencies, and global economic downturns. The strategy should prioritize the establishment of emergency funding provisions, the encouragement of proactive measures, and the provision of risk insurance to cushion the impact of these shocks. Ensuring economic resilience in these countries is critical for safeguarding the future of young people and children.
- **Governance Changes at World Bank and IMF:** Governance reform is needed to allow better representation from Asia and Africa, home to most of the world's young people and children. Make these institutions more responsive to the unique challenges of the least developed young countries by improving decision-making processes and aligning policies and programs to their needs.
- **Strengthen Regulatory Frameworks:** Regulate financial flows better and push global tax reforms to facilitate sustainable development, especially in young countries. Implement a UN framework convention on international tax cooperation for progressive taxation systems. Fair and effective international tax cooperation can promote economic growth and help fund the SDGs. These reforms will play a crucial role in addressing global inequalities and supporting the advancement of young people and children worldwide.

Chapter II. International Peace and Security

- **Enhance Preventive Diplomacy and Trust Building:** Conflict prevention, especially in young countries, is paramount for global peace and security. Preventive diplomacy and trust-building efforts must proactively engage international bodies to mediate disputes and facilitate dialogue before conflicts escalate into violence. These efforts should employ experienced diplomats, mediation and conflict resolution services, and local conflict resolution methods. Addressing the root causes of conflict, such as economic disparity and political instability, is essential for creating sustainable peace. Adequate funding and coordination are crucial to ensure the effectiveness of these initiatives.
- **Strengthen Intergenerational Engagement:** Recognizing young people and children as critical stakeholders in peacebuilding is essential for international peace and security. Their unique perspectives and potential as agents of change should be actively harnessed through safe, meaningful engagement. This includes involving them in peace negotiations, creating spaces for intergenerational dialogue, and including them in community-based peace initiatives. Additionally, providing education and training in peace and conflict resolution equips them to contribute to a culture of peace and tolerance. Supporting their economic and social development and offering mentoring and coaching can help prevent young people and children from being drawn into conflicts.
- **Promote Gender Equality in Peace Processes:** Gender equality is central to peace and security discussions, as young women and girls often experience conflicts differently. Ensuring inclusive and accessible participation in peace processes is vital. This includes addressing their specific needs in conflict zones, advocating against discrimination and gender-based violence, and ensuring that policies and mechanisms protect all segments of society. Inclusive peace agreements and post-conflict reconstruction efforts are essential to building sustainable peace.
- **Strengthen Formal and Non-Formal Education:** Access to safe, quality education encompassing life skills, peace education, human rights, and sustainable development, is foundational for peaceful societies. Collaboration with child and youth-driven organizations can play a key role in breaking cycles of violence and prejudice. Empowering young people and children through education equips them with the tools to build a more peaceful future and offers opportunities to make a difference through volunteering.
- **Address Climate Change and Security:** Climate change poses significant security risks, particularly across young countries. To mitigate these risks, promoting sustainable resource management, enhancing anticipatory action, child protection, education support, disaster preparedness, and integrating climate action into broader peacebuilding efforts is crucial. International collaboration is essential to support countries most affected by climate change in adapting to its impacts.
- **Invest in Mental Health and Psychosocial Services (MHPSS):** Conflict often leaves deep psychological scars, especially among young people and children. Providing mental health and psychosocial support services is critical for healing and reconciliation. This involves

establishing support systems, creating safe spaces, training local counselors, and integrating mental health services into broader development and peacebuilding programs. Innovative programs that combine MHPSS with sports and non-formal education have proven effective in addressing these challenges.

Chapter III. Science, Technology and Innovation and Digital Cooperation

- **Invest Responsibly in Technology for Peace:** [Over a billion children](#) lack internet access, deepening societal and economic disparities and educational gaps. To address this, expand tech access in developing nations, promote digital literacy, and integrate human-rights-based approaches, especially where young people and children are tech-savvy. Regulate tech monopolies to prevent wealth and power concentration. Consider the broader societal impacts of tech on mental health and social connectivity, especially for marginalized populations. Implement comprehensive measures to protect human rights, including children's rights, both online and offline, in the digital landscape.
- **Deliver Affordable Connectivity and Digital Literacy Education:** Ensure affordable connectivity in remote areas and promote digital literacy, focusing on intergenerational collaboration and lifelong learning for young workers.
- **Protect Human Rights in the Digital Environment:** Enhance digital governance to safeguard human rights, including child rights, and address online exploitation, privacy, and misinformation. Reference the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Rights of the Child Resolution.
- **Focus on Action-Oriented Digital Governance Assessment:** Establish a forum for assessing digital governance, addressing technological challenges, and building a global network of digital regulators to develop robust digital policies.

Chapter IV. Youth and future generations

- **Include Children in the Chapter Title and Recommendations:** Amend the chapter title to 'Youth, Children, and Future Generations.' Ensure recommendations reaffirm commitments to the rights of children as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Emphasize children's role alongside young people as critical agents in 2030 Agenda implementation, ensuring they are equipped with life skills, opportunities, and a voice in decision-making processes to achieve their full potential.
- **Address Demographic Shifts:** Recognize the significant demographic shifts, with [half of the global population under 30, primarily in Asia and Africa](#). [By 2100, this trend will intensify](#), requiring policies that address the needs and potentials of these young populations. This demographic consideration is key to achieving a balanced and sustainable global future.
- **Meaningfully engage young people and children to reimagine the Multilateral System:** A New Deal for a New Generation should be central to the international system. Implement proposals from Our Common Agenda and the Secretary-General's Guidance Note on Child Rights Mainstreaming. Member States should commit to meaningful child and youth engagement at all levels, and in all their diversity, establish national child parliaments and

youth consultative bodies, and implement effective monitoring frameworks to track progress in child and youth participation. This will support the development of a comprehensive program facilitating more meaningful youth and child participation at all levels, including capacity development, training, and information sharing.

- **Deliver platforms for intergenerational action and dialogue:** key proposals include scheduling an Intergenerational Town Hall to coincide with the UNGA's high-profile General Debate week as a platform for young people and children to take part in important global governance conversations, promote commitments and propose solutions, fostering a greater inclusion and agency in global governance; strengthening the ECOSOC Youth Forum by granting it formal status and a more powerful mandate throughout the Economic and Social Council cycle; creating comparable mechanisms that validate and encourage children's right to participate in UN Processes; and refining the operational methods of the Security Council and its associated bodies to substantially bolster meaningful child and youth engagement and participation in its work.
- **Elevate Youth Leadership and Implement Child Rights Mainstreaming:** Invest in youth programs harnessing the potential of young people and children worldwide. Ensure children's rights and meaningful participation are integral dimensions of UN policies and programs. All UN entities have a role to play in supporting the implementation of the CRC as specified in its Article 45 and should work towards full implementation of the SG's Guidance Note on Child Rights Mainstreaming to ensure that children's rights for assessing policy and programming implications for children of any action taken by the UN.
- **Hold an Annual Interactive Dialogue between Young Staff and the Secretary-General:** A dialogue with leaders from other international organizations and Permanent Representatives to the UN would encourage direct communication and understanding between young staff and top-level leadership.
- **Adopt a Declaration for Future Generations:** As part of the Pact, Member States should agree on a declaration that defines and concretizes duties to future generations. This includes managing global existential risks, focusing on long-term sustainable development across and beyond the SDGs, and committing to the continued existence of humanity.
- **Appoint a Special Envoy for Future Generations:** Propose the appointment of a global representative within the UN system who will serve as an advocate for the interests of future generations. This Envoy would facilitate collaboration and aid member states in incorporating long-term perspectives into their policy development process. This Envoy would also support the delivery of the Pact for the Future and help implement common principles related to future generations across the multilateral system. The appointment of this envoy should account for demographic trends that are expected to influence our future and assure that young nations have substantial representation in this agenda. Provisions should be made to create opportunities and allocate resources for young people and children to support the successful execution of the Envoy's mandate.
- **Establish a Futures Lab in Nairobi:** Set up the Futures Lab within the UN Office in Nairobi, fostering innovation and diversity. Collaborate with international organizations within and beyond the UN to amplify inclusive governance and leadership roles for countries with young populations. Harness current international agreements that address the interests of future

generations into analysis and initiatives, such as the Paris Agreement, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and various conventions on environmental protection and sustainable development, as well as all relevant international human rights treaties and agreements.

- **Establish a Futures Lab within the UN Office in Nairobi:** a platform that functions as an epicenter for innovation and diversity. It will forge synergies with international organizations, both within the United Nations ambit and externally, to reinforce inclusive governance and leadership for nations with youthful demographics. It will leverage existing international agreements into its analytical processes and initiatives to represent the concerns of future generation, like the Paris Agreement, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and various agreements focusing on environmental protection and sustainable development. It will ensure the implementation of all relevant international human rights treaties and agreements across its operations.
- **Leverage Foresight Science and Data:** Enhance the use of scientific knowledge and data to understand the future impact of current actions. This includes integrating strategic foresight capacities and tools, conducting future impact assessments, and building a strong evidence base on future impacts.
- **Create a Standing Intergovernmental Forum for Future Generations:** Establish a forum under the General Assembly's auspices to deliberate and guide on implementing the principles agreed upon in the declaration for future generations. This would involve exchanging best practices and mainstreaming futureproofing, enhancing the capacity of institutions and policies to account for future generations' interests.

Chapter V. Transforming global governance

- **Prioritize Digital Transformation:** Adopt a thorough digital approach in all organizational areas. Aim for real-world application to various demographics for inclusivity, focusing on the needs of the young people and children worldwide.
- **Provide Whole-of-Society Blueprints:** Provide detailed digital transformation plans to Member States, aimed at creating equitable, sustainable digital ecosystems that bridge gaps and protect human rights, especially in young countries.
- **Establish Joint Digital Labs and Partnerships:** Foster partnerships across academia, industry, and civil society to expedite digital solutions and stimulate innovation in young countries. Enforce decentralized governance for secure access to shared digital assets.
- **Cultivate Value-Driven Use Cases:** Initiate value-proven use cases starting with initiatives for young women and girls. Apply behavioral sciences, including RCTs and long-term studies, to comprehend behavioral patterns in different contexts, effectively addressing the distinct needs of young people and children.
- **Responsibly Employ Behavioral Science:** Promote ethical use of behavioral science to boost program commitment and efficiency. Integrate behavioral science insights into various sectors while maintaining human rights and gender equality. Provide UN country teams with relevant tools and training to enhance program impact and inclusivity among the young people and children.