

# ECPD



**EUROPEAN CENTER FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT (ECPD)**  
UNIVERSITY FOR PEACE ESTABLISHED BY THE UNITED NATIONS

## **ECPD GLOBAL YOUTH FORUM**

**October 25th-26th, 2024, People's Republic of China**

**(venue to be confirmed by the end of March in agreement with Chinese partners)**

### **CONCEPT NOTE**

#### **You(th) are the Future!**

Our world is suffering from a variety of global crises threatening our future in multiple ways. Youth, who are better informed than ever, suffer the consequences as you contemplate your own future, with surveys suggesting that a majority suffer from eco-anxiety, climate anxiety, threats from conflicts and wars, fears about future employment, and even of bringing children into such a world. Yet the future starts now. How can you find hope?

Efforts to avoid or manage these crises have fallen short, and present institutions are clearly not up to the challenges of a globalised world. The UN 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Climate Change Agreement and other ambitious declarations are failing in implementation. The problems are similar for peace and security, human rights, and the promised elimination of extreme poverty, where the gap with extreme wealth is widening. The geopolitical situation is increasingly complex, with new rising powers, countries struggling to maintain their dominance, large gaps between declared principles and actual performance, failures in leadership and governance, widespread organized crime and corruption, the rise of non-state actors, and a general loss of trust. You know about these problems, but like everyone else, you lack the answers.

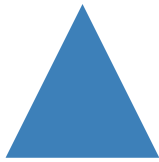
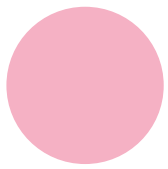
Faced with these threats to the future, 2024 will be a critical year to find better ways forward, and this Global Youth Forum is opportunity for youth like yourselves to learn how to take a lead in the fundamental transformation of human society that is called for, and that you can start building. A two-day Forum can only be the beginning, but youth today are adept at social media and communications, so you can build partnerships and take ideas forward.

Following on from the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, the UN Secretary-General was charged with leading a process to fix the UN system, for which he organized a High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism and called for a Summit of the Future on 22-23 September 2024, a month before this Youth Forum. While we cannot include the results of this Summit in this concept note, we do have access to the zero drafts of the Pact for the Future and its annexes to be adopted at the Summit, and they provide a useful guide to the key issues of today around which to build this Global Youth Forum. The final Pact for the Future should be available at the Forum and will contain many actions which you can discuss as you go forward.

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### **Draft Pact for the Future**

The draft Pact states: "We are at a moment of acute global peril. Across our world, people are suffering from the effects of poverty, hunger, inequality, armed conflicts, violence, displacement, terrorism, climate change, disease, and the adverse impacts of technology. Humanity faces a range of potentially catastrophic and existential risks. We are also at a moment of opportunity, where advances in knowledge and technology, properly managed, could deliver a better future for all." (§2)

"We believe there is a path to a better future for all of humanity. We are committed to meaningful changes to global governance to address new and emerging challenges. We commit to ensure the whole world – especially the most vulnerable – are ready for the vastly more complex challenges to come. We also commit to deliver on our existing commitments. We will re-earn the trust of our people and each other, which is the vital precondition for effective international cooperation." (§5)

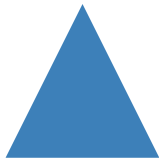
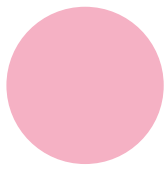
"We will cooperate to manage risks and harness opportunities for the benefit of all, guided by the principles of trust, equity, solidarity, and universality. We will collectively strive for a world that is safer, more peaceful, more just, more equal, more inclusive, more sustainable, and more prosperous." (§6)

"We recognize that young persons will live with the consequences of our actions and our inaction. We welcome the important contributions of young persons and children as critical agents of change in promoting sustainable development, human rights and peace and security." (§103)

"We underline the importance of the active, meaningful and inclusive participation of youth in decision-making. We commit to strengthening meaningful youth engagement in policy-making and decision-making processes at the local, national, regional and global levels. We note with concern the challenges and barriers, including sociocultural, financial, political, legal, digital and physical that prevent meaningful participation of youth in political and public affairs. We commit to meaningful youth engagement in all United Nations intergovernmental bodies, and processes at the global, regional and national levels. We encourage all States to establish national youth consultative bodies with a mandate and the requisite resources to formally engage in national policymaking and decision-making processes." (§107-108, 112)

The Pact sets out five broad areas for action: (1) Sustainable development and financing for development; (2) International peace and security; (3) Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation; (4) Youth and future generations; and (5) Transforming global governance. It includes as annexes a Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations. Discussion groups in the Youth Forum will be organised around each of these areas for action.

You can see that youth and future generations have finally reached the top of global concern, so the door is open for you to have an impact. But it is up to you now to find out together how you can do it most efficiently and effectively. In this Forum you can express yourselves and



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make propositions in each of these areas, and raise all those issues in which you are interested. The following are some questions concerning issues raised in the draft Pact that you may wish to consult on in your discussion groups.

### **Sustainable development and financing for development**

What can you do to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, leaving no one behind?

What will you do to express your acceptance of the responsibility for ensuring the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources, with a fundamental shift to put the world on a better path, addressing the adverse impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution and desertification?

What will you do to achieve a world living in harmony with nature through sustainable lifestyles, halting ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss?

How will you reduce your greenhouse gas emissions, accelerating the transition away from fossil fuels in a just, orderly and equitable manner?

What will you do to act on your commitment to protecting and fulfilling all human rights without discrimination, achieving gender and age equality?

### **International peace and security**

The UN Security Council has failed to promote peace and prevent conflicts, such as in Ukraine and the Middle East, so how can you support diplomacy and dialogue to settle disputes, perhaps starting where you live?

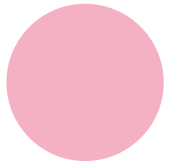
There are new and interrelated threats to international peace and security; how can you support international cooperation to prevent hostilities on land, at sea, in space and in cyberspace?

Given the economic and political power of the military and the arms industry, how might you create pressure to restrict trade in armaments and to shift funding to more constructive ends?

What can you do to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and are based on human rights, gender and age equality, the rule of law and good governance at all levels, and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions?

Since terrorism constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, are there preventive measures you can take, including through international human rights law, to address all drivers and enablers of terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism?

How you will respond to the call to strengthen the youth, peace and security agenda including through the meaningful and inclusive participation of youth in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, peace processes, post-conflict processes and humanitarian action?



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### **Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation**

Since solutions to complex global challenges call for cross- and trans-disciplinary collaboration and a strong science-policy-society interface in order to build trust in science, what can you do to support this?

Can you work to reduce the existing disparities between industrialised and developing countries in their capacities to produce new scientific and technological knowledge and to generate innovation?

As a generation far advanced in adopting new technologies, are there ways you can facilitate access to and sharing accessible and assistive technologies, and help to close the development divide and the digital divide, including the gender and age digital divide?

How might you address the risks and challenges emerging from the use of technologies, such as generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), growing antibiotic resistance, or the spread of fake news on social media?

### **Youth and future generations**

Youth is the best time to adopt the values and ethical principles that will motivate action, so how can you ensure values education for all towards our higher human purpose to contribute to social good and environmental responsibility?

How can you express in action your commitment to climate action, gender equality, social justice, humanitarian action, innovation, intergenerational justice, the promotion of culture and inclusion?

Where you have the possibility to vote in elections, do you use it in support of your values?

Generating decent work and quality employment for young persons is one of the biggest challenges, so how can you contribute to employment creation?

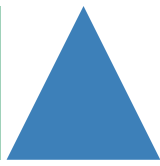
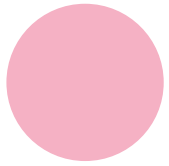
Can you encourage States to invest in universal, accessible, quality and inclusive education, at all levels, and professional training, both formal and non-formal, to ensure your immediate and long-term development?

Are you ready to push for your meaningful engagement in policy and decision-making – being aware that this will not happen without pressure from the young?

### **Transforming global governance**

With the door opening to youth to participate in global governance, how will you organise and prepare yourselves for this responsible service to society?

What can you do to work for a multilateral system that is more effective and capable of delivering on its promises; just and representative; inclusive to allow for a diverse range of actors beyond States; and networked, to ensure that the multilateral system can draw together existing institutional capacities and overcome fragmentation?



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The Pact calls for formal status and a stronger mandate to the UN Economic and Social Council's youth forum to enhance youth engagement, so can you get involved in some way?

How can you ensure the effective enjoyment by all of all human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the right to development?

How can you contribute to the development of measures of progress on sustainable development that complement and thus go beyond gross domestic product to recognize what matters to people, the planet and our common future?

### Your Youth Forum

Intergovernmental action on the Global Pact for the Future will be completed on 22 September 2024, the month before the Youth Forum, which can then consider what was finally decided on these issues at the United Nations in New York. The Pact will include many proposals for action, some of which you may take up in the Forum. You obviously cannot answer all the questions above, so pick a few that most interest you and join the discussion groups where you can share your thinking and learn from others.

Experiences from previous Global Youth Forums have shown that you often know **WHAT**, but do not know **HOW!** Young people are very good at identifying pressing global problems and challenges, and even their root-causes. You are also quite adept at creating solutions to these problems. But where you most need help is to translate your thoughts and ideas into **ACTION**. Together you can discuss actions you may want to take forward.

You are often well prepared, but not ready to respond in your full capacity. You may need to look for help, guidance and encouragement to start implementing your vision in practice - through finding partners, acquiring knowledge and developing new skills. You may already have willingness and know what you want, but the Forum can help to show you how much you actually **CAN** achieve.

This Forum will be an opportunity for you to consult on your actions to take these issues forward, to make your voices louder and to transform your wants into actions, individually and by organising joint activities. It is for you to imagine the future that you want to live in, and to start actively participating in building it. Most of the Forum will consist of discussion groups led by the youth on these issues and others that you feel are important, reporting back at the close of the Forum. **There is no better way to convert fear of the future into hope.**

February 2024