

Item 6(b) Public participation in decision-making

Intervention by Pegah Maysa Moulana, Youth and Environment Europe at the 7th Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention

Madam Chair, dear delegates, on behalf of Youth and Environment Europe we are delighted to be able to be here with you and we would like to take this space to stress the importance of including the youth dimension in promoting effective public participation in decision-making.

Today's youth tend to be associated with a negative connotation, specifically that they are organised in protests and strikes, please do not get me wrong, these are essential components of young people exercising their rights enshrined under International Human Right frameworks, but the role of youth is so much more than that.

Young people are instead solution providers, the early awoken generation who want to have an environment to inherit to future generations after them. But to this day, there are power hierarchies and imbalances which are particular to young people and limit youth participation in spaces of climate governance.

To bridge this gap, in order to implement effective youth participation, first, it must be acknowledged that young people play a fundamental role but are also vulnerable to the lack of policy protections. Second, young people must be provided a regular space to voice their views not only at national level but also at an international scale. Third, young people must be given the practical ability to influence decision making processes.

As a recommendation, we strongly encourage and call upon the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision [if its mandate is extended] to examine the capacity and opportunities for young people to be better mainstreamed throughout the Aarhus Convention.

Last but not least, one fundamental barrier to the young people's effective participation in decision making processes is the lack of access to sufficient funding and if there is one message I can leave you all with is the hope that parties to the Aarhus Convention not only continue but increase their support in providing financial assistance for NGOs.

Thank you.