

Opening Statement of the Youth (Major Group of Children and Youth)

Regional Forum on Sustainable Development 2025

Hello all, good afternoon,

young people are pros in adjusting to harsh realities, so I'll try to manage the timing, but first of all, I want to thank all those young people walking in and out, around and supporting us here. You're amazing, and I hope you'll be equal, included partners in all the processes happening here in RFSD. Today I want to present the highlights of our youth report, on behalf of young people from majority of the Member States who have prepared it by sharing their personal experiences.

For SDG3, still affected by the trauma of lockdown, and facing economic struggles, young people insist on free and accessible health services and information, respectfully supporting our well-being, which cannot be compromised for commercial drivers of disease and misinformation spread online, for example by fake news. We request further careful research on development of young people's health, considering different factors, including impact of omnipresent chemicals.

When it comes to SDG5, it is never the easiest one to talk about. Still, we have to ensure through policies and design of social spaces and narratives that everyone can develop their careers and lifestyles freely, having sufficient material and system resources, such as menstrual hygiene products, favorable parental leaves and age-appropriate sexuality education.

Regarding SDG8, where many young people enter the job market completely different from what they've been prepared for by their academic education, statistically working longer than older generations and yet being more likely to be found in low-paid jobs, we need: funding, mutual learning and policies protecting those entering the job market. We must support the development of strong relationships across all sectors, strengthening young people in taking initiative for the market's future.

SDG14 itself feels ever so distant, considering economic demands and disconnection between the society and ecosystems. We call on balancing out the strive for energy sources, fishing and recreational needs with adequate education on water ecosystems, inclusion of local communities' voices as well as policies regulating all sorts of pollution that jeopardize well-being of other species.

In Partnerships for the Goals, we cannot stress enough the truth that one cannot go far alone. We as young people, know all too well how exclusion of voices eventually harms. We call on the Member States to actively collaborate together for the good of civil society, contributing to the SDGs and involving young people as active peacebuilding leaders.

In the end, young people are not someone to be controlled and decided upon, ignoring their voices and values. It is support and community through which we thrive altogether. Hopefully this will be

a good parallel to how reality looks like for the United Nations. And hopefully you, honorable Excellencies, can also learn from our example and successfully talk with each other during this RFSD.