



CROATIA

Statement by

H.E. Ms. Marija Pejčinović Burić
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs

at the

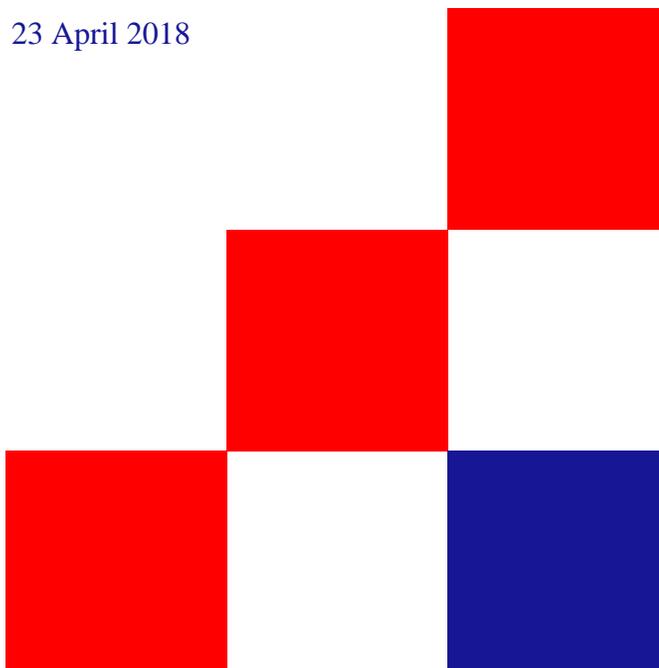
Security Council open debate

on

Youth, Peace and Security

23 April 2018

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Mr. President, Excellencies,

I wish to thank the Peru Presidency of the Security Council for holding this timely debate, and all the distinguished briefers for their statements.

Croatia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the European Union, and here I shall make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

I am pleased to participate in the Security Council open debate on this highly important topic. We see this as complementary to the upcoming discussions at the High-Level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Croatia certainly wishes to see the role of youth addressed more profoundly in various fora and from various perspectives, and particularly as actors in achieving peace and security. For this reason, we would support a higher visibility of the youth, peace and security agenda at the Security Council, both by continuing with the practice of holding open debates and by instituting yearly implementation reports by the Secretary-General.

Allow me also to congratulate all partners that contributed to the Progress Study, for developing a comprehensive and substantial report that certainly provides reasons for concern, but more importantly, insights into the untapped potentials of young peacebuilders in our joint quest for a safer world.

Mr President,

Clearly, too little is done on national, regional and global levels to harness the potential of 1.8 billion young people worldwide. Especially so given the fact that a majority of them live in low-income countries and that they often represent a significant part of the population in those affected by armed conflict.

Youth need to be recognized as partners and agents in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, as they beyond doubt have a strong voice when it comes to addressing their own marginalization, human rights violations and lack of perspective. This means that we have to turn away from the myopic perspective that focuses on youth as a problem to be solved, or pinpoints only the small number of those who are involved in violence.

This becomes particularly pronounced in the response to the global threat of terrorism and violent extremism, which has in turn resulted with often limited and counter-productive policy responses. As the Progress Study also implies, there is no single approach or solution to preventing youth participation in violence or in recruitment into violent extremism. We also know that it is

detrimental to the empowerment of youth to continue with generalizations and stereotypes that identify young men as potential perpetrators and young women as potential victims.

Mr President,

Especially today, when we are challenged with the escalating threats of terrorism and radicalism, we must focus on providing for the needs of the young generation and strengthen their sense of being both safe and included.

Education for all as a human right and a basis for promoting the realization of other rights is essential for peace, human fulfilment and sustainable development. Education is a multi-faceted effort that has multiplying effects. It goes way beyond numeracy, literacy, acquiring relevant skills and enabling decent work. It fosters tolerance, global citizenship, appreciation and acceptance of cultural diversity, interfaith and intercultural understanding.

Youth unemployment is also far more than an economic category. The lack of perspective is among the worst kinds of poverty, it erodes from within the society of peace and tolerance. Today's topic cannot be addressed thoroughly without taking into account the development component.

We are encouraged by the yearning of youth for committed actions against violence, intolerance and all forms of discrimination, as well as for achieving the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development. Young people can serve as positive role models and they are evidently willing to embrace this role. They can influence and inspire their peers, raise public awareness and encourage a broader discussion within a society. Last but not least, let us not forget that they are the leaders of tomorrow.

The young must be provided with the necessary preconditions to fully realize their potential. It is only with a holistic, multidisciplinary approach, that we can achieve sustainable results in empowering youth, and in turn, promote peace. This includes the implementation of adequate development policies and legislative frameworks, education and inclusive cooperation with a number of stakeholders such as the academia, NGOs, the private sector, religious authorities and media.

Mr President,

In closing, to borrow the words of the great Nelson Mandela, whose centenary of birth we are celebrating this year, "Young people are capable of bringing down the towers of oppression and raising the banners of freedom." We hope that by our joint efforts, today and onwards, we will enable them to do so.

I thank you.