

General Assembly Third Committee Topic Summaries

Topic A: Promoting the Inclusion of Women and Youth in Governance

The presence of women and youth in governance can be a driving force for achieving peace, development, human rights, and justice.¹ Throughout history, the contributions women and youth have allowed for important changes in political systems, power-sharing dynamics, and economic opportunities.² Women and youth have developed legislation that promote gender equality, eliminate gender-based violence, and improve the social, economic, and political rights of women and children. However, women and youth are still restricted in political participation and are often face barriers as they attempt to promote their ideologies.³ As of 2017, only 16 heads of State and 9 heads of government were women.⁴ The involvement of female parliamentarians is only 10% higher than it was in 2000, but only 18.3% of national government ministries were women as of January 2017.⁵ Youth, while often among the most active and vocal promoters of their ideologies, are often ignored or barred from participating in political processes. The *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* and the *World Programme of Action for Youth* are essential frameworks for the international community. Due to the low and slow involvement of women and youth in governance, the international community has affirmed the need to strengthen political commitments through resolutions, including *A/RES/66/130*, and acting bodies and agencies, including the Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace.⁶

Topic B: The Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Historically, persons with disabilities are among the most marginalized in society. To combat this, the United Nations adopted the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) and its optional protocol in 2007, which signaled the culmination of years of work by the United Nations to change attitudes and approaches to individuals with disabilities.⁷ Building on this work, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* explicitly addresses disabilities and persons with disabilities as a component of the Sustainable Development Goals.⁸ However, full implementation of the CPRD has not yet been realized and persons with disabilities are widely susceptible to discrimination, marginalization, poverty, and lack of access to social, political, and economic goods. When persons with disabilities are part of marginalized groups they especially face difficult challenges in their everyday lives, including lack of access to healthcare, increased violence, exploitation, and abuse. To combat this, the General Assembly made recommendations in *A/RES/72/162*, including inviting the Chair of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities to host an annual dialogue with the General Assembly.⁹ Action to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities is still lacking across the international community and issues such as access to social protection, political participation, and economic independence of persons with disabilities continues to be topics of international concern.

¹ <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-political-participation.pdf>

² <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-political-participation.pdf>

³ <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation>

⁴ <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures>

⁵ <http://undocs.org/E/2017/66>

⁶ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/466/62/PDF/N1146662.pdf?OpenElement>;
<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/democratic-governance-and-peacebuilding/youth-empowerment/youth-global-programme-for-sustainable-development-and-peace/>

⁷ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

⁸ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030.html>

⁹ <http://undocs.org/A/RES/72/162>