



**SUMMIT '15**  
a G7 presidency event

## Position Paper

Berlin, May 11, 2015

**Preamble**

This position paper is the outcome of the J7 Summit taking place from the 6-14<sup>th</sup> May 2015 in Berlin. Teams of young people from all G7 countries, as well as delegations from the EU and Developing Countries come together to discuss and debate the most pressing issues of our time in the run up to the G7 negotiations in June.

## **Protecting our Planet**

**Protection of the Marine Environment**

**Resource Efficiency**

## **Building a Healthy Future for All**

**Antibiotic Resistance and Fighting Pandemics**

**Neglected and Poverty-related Diseases**

## **Empowerment of Women and Girls**

**Empowering Women in Self-Employment**

**and Vocational Training**

## **Fair Economy**

**Retail and Supply Chain Standards**

## **Act Now**

**Youth Involvement**

# Protecting our Planet

## Protection of the Marine Environment

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### Preamble

We at the J7 Youth Summit have been collaborating and exchanging intuitive ideas in order to achieve a healthier and more equitable future. We are in the new epoch of human dominance and our era has even been named the Anthropocene; where humans are the major force for changing the world around us. We understand the crippling issues that our generation faces and are intent on eradicating these issues. As young people of the J7 2015 Summit, we are determined to not only come up with concrete solutions, but feasible as well as long-term solutions. Global issues are hard to grasp and difficult to approach. When discussing the impending issues of climate change we cannot place the blame on a sole entity.

Due to the **trans-boundary nature** of oceans, protection of the marine environment is not an issue that can be solved by one country or by a single entity. International cooperation is crucial to ensuring a future in which marine ecosystems are thriving and marine resources are not run dry. What all of the problems in the marine environment have in common is that they are the result of irresponsible and unsustainable human activity in our oceans.

### Problem 1: Pollution (Plastic, Toxic, Debris)

Pollution in our oceans has been a consistent problem, both for industrialized nations and developing nations. By pollution we mean plastic pollution, toxic waste pollution, which includes chemical waste and radioactive waste as well as debris. Successful management of the problem at hand requires a comprehensive understanding of over production and its role in pollution. In addition, accountability of pollution is also a critical asset in effectively protecting the marine environment.

### Problem 2: Destruction of Marine Biodiversity

By promoting responsible and ethical fishing, safer underwater resource extraction and regulating and monitoring marine protected areas (MPAs) on a local level, we will be able to efficiently preserve marine biodiversity. As MPAs are regulated on a national level today, we came to the conclusion that it would be most effective if the government supported local initiatives to conserve the oceans. By local initiatives we mean local organizations, local NGOs, and local schools.

**Solution:**

Currently, there are not enough nationally enforced action plans intended to fight against these anthropic and natural environmental issues. That is why we are counting on you to implement the change that is out of our power.

**We ask that you:**

- Reaffirm the “polluter pays” principle which is a general principle of International Environmental Law
- Update and reaffirm the Convention for the Protection of Marine Environment and the United Nations Convention and Laws of The Sea (UNCLOS)
- To open national dialogue on the rights of citizens to resort to the court of law in cases of environmental exploitation and degradation

We propose a new legally-binding policy, the E.E.A “**Environmental Empathy and Accountability**”, that ensures industrialized nations assist developing countries industrialize in a sustainable and eco-friendly matter.

This policy can be implemented through two measures. One is that industrialized nations assist the creation of action plans for implementing infrastructure and innovation that reduces pollution. The second is for research facilities in industrialized nations, especially the G7 states, and multinationals to share their technology with other countries and companies that lack these technologies.

What we the J7 summit participants can do to reaffirm this policy is explained in the Call to Action.

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# Protecting our Planet

## Resource Efficiency

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### Problem Statement

Overproduction and overconsumption cause too much waste, and natural resources cannot support the high demand for energy or food. Fossil fuels cause an excess of CO<sub>2</sub> in the air. These emissions worsen climate change, indirectly causing catastrophes throughout the world. Finally, deforestation and desertification results in the destruction of ecosystems.

### Problem 1: Pollution due to Overuse of Fossil Fuels

We depend on non-renewable sources of energy such as fossil fuels and are responsible for most of the CO<sub>2</sub> emitted. We acknowledge the risks and the benefits of nuclear power and we agree that it is preferable than other energy supplies which produce greenhouse gases on the short term. Green energy is not efficient enough because it is not yet fully developed.

### We ask that you:

- Fund the development of affordable, more efficient, renewable energy technology.
- Put in place programs in schools to educate the youth on sustainable behaviours.
- Use legal means to encourage companies and individuals to use renewable energy.
- Encourage companies to transport materials through shared methods, such as trains and boats.
- Fund research on low emission vehicles (like self-driven cars), as well as on making nuclear power safer.

### Problem 2: Overproduction and Overconsumption

The inefficient production and overconsumption of materials that only become waste massively accelerates the depletion of natural resources.

### We ask that you:

- Build partnerships with relevant organizations to provide financial support to research for biodegradable and/or reusable materials to design new products, in an effort to stop waste.
- Call for more policies from governments aimed at improving the environment, reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and protecting the ozone layer.

- Encourage governments to implement efficient policies to reduce food waste. This effort must be accompanied by awareness campaigns to encourage the population to reduce its footprint.
- Enhance the regulation of public water and sanitation services in an effort to reduce the overconsumption of such resources.
- Promote the implementation of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) policies and the 10YFP at an industrial level, in an effort to regulate the resources efficiency in production and supply chains.
- Call for government investments in research efforts to find more efficient ways of producing sustainable energy.

### **Problem 3: Deforestation and Desertification**

Deforestation is depriving the planet of precious oxygen. Unsustainable agricultural practices are both inefficient and harmful. Moreover, national parks all over the world are being violated by individuals for their personal commercial purposes.

#### **We ask that you:**

- Enforce sustainable agriculture
- Expand the network of national parks
- Subsidize organizations solely dedicated to protecting the environment

#### **Our Call to Action:**

Supported by governments, we would like to create an inter-ministerial commission specialized in climate change that centralises all sustainable projects of the state. This commission should also be decentralized in local areas by creating “climate lab and clubs” that would meet every month to build projects such as planting trees. These would include NGOs, young climate ambassadors, people from organizations and company representatives. Moreover, we suggest to create a national summit once a year to prepare the presentation of the main projects at the COPs. Climate ambassadors will have to educate all generations about the threats which occur due ongoing use of fossil fuels. We want to hold workshops aimed at educating individuals on the benefits of renewable energy. We will have to go to schools, organizations, clubs and all areas where we can have an impact.

The delegates of the J7 Summit will start the initiative “HEART = EARTH” in their respective countries to communicate their ideas and to support young people from developing countries on how industrialized countries solve the problems they face. By utilizing broadcasting platforms and social media as well as credible organizations (i.e. UNICEF, Agents of Change, UNESCO etc...), we will effectively educate and empower children on a local level.

### **Conclusion**

Now is the time to act. As the concerned delegates of the 2015 J7 Summit we know it is true. Now is the time to realize that our economic and ecological concerns can be one in the same. Now is the time to assess the value of the marine and terrestrial biodiversity and protect it; listen to what we have to say!

We have inherited the world that your generation left us, we will become the next stewards of the planet. Do not turn a blind eye to developing nations that are in the process of industrializing, and instead support them in going through industrializing in a sustainable and eco-friendly manner.

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# Building a Healthy Future for All

## Antibiotic Resistance and Fighting Pandemics

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### Preamble

According to World Health Organization (WHO), health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Therefore, the development of the healthcare system has increased and standards have been reformed throughout time. Building a healthier future for all proves to be a challenge not just for developing countries, but for developed countries as well. In this position paper, young people from across the globe have joined to form an idea in providing a better healthcare system not just in their countries but in others too, in the expectation that the G7 countries understand and agree with our views and suggestions to find a common ground.

### Problem Statement

There are many people affected globally by antibiotic resistance and pandemics because of lack of a good universal healthcare system. Antibiotic resistance is becoming more and more prominent and diseases can become widespread enough to become a global issue. Due to the fact that there is no well-fit solution to the prevention to pandemics and antibiotic resistance, countless people die every day; and if no solution is found for this issue, it will continue to be ongoing. We want a world where global health is prioritized, and health within every country is improved and maintained.

After many discussions and brainstorming at the J7 summit, we have come up with suggestions that can help with alleviating these problems. These solutions are further discussed below. Removing stigmas, improving infrastructure, educating health workers as well as people within communities, greater interventions and research for alternative treatments are to name a few.

### Solutions for Antibiotic Resistance Overconsumption

We would like the G7 countries to implement a universal healthcare system, which includes the following points:

- Implement public health programs in order to comprehensively educate patients and doctors and ultimately advance antibiotic resistance prevention.
  - By further educating doctors with an internationally designed program, they can properly diagnose a patient and prescribe the available antibiotic for the correct amount of time when required.
  - The implementation of public awareness programs can make individuals more aware in ways to maximize their protection from sickness, e.g. sanitation programs

- Through international efforts there can be more research, investments (funds, resources), creation of international plans to combat antibiotic resistance, greater regulation, technical assistance
  - Enforce international regulations
  - Provide better distribution of vaccines
  - Use antibiotics as a last resort
- Greater support for nations to implement these plans and other strategies
- Increased regulations on distribution of black market drugs
  - Antibiotics can be easily obtained; many countries don't require prescriptions
  - Increase access to reputable drugs with greater health infrastructure and health systems, more reputable pharmaceutical supply chains
- Achieve universal health coverage (is part of SDG Goal 3)
- Research into new, alternative treatments
  - Companies don't want to develop new antibiotics due to lack of revenue.
  - Pharmaceutical companies can research into more antibiotics in return for an exclusivity period for another drug that they offer; both sides benefit
  - Increase the use of systems such as medical records to monitor the prescription of antibiotics both in hospitals and with general practitioners.
  - Implement SDG (Sustainable development goals)
- Cut down on use of antibiotics in agriculture as through animal feeding antibiotics get into our food supply chain

### **Solutions for Fighting Pandemics**

We would like the G7 countries to organize faster international intervention which would include these points:

- Create an emergency fund for the developing countries in case of a pandemic outbreak.
  - Create institutions that are prepared to deal with pandemics immediately
  - Collaborate between G7 countries and international aid organisations i.e. Red Cross
- Educate local communities, patients and health workers, with the help of their own experts, on hygiene and disease prevention.
  - Educate specific people within a community so that they can teach the rest of their community, with regard to their culture. This project would be long-term with regular meetings, the frequency of the meetings would be decided by the current situation of the community. There would be a co-ordination centre which would register progress, analyse and update the information
- Monitor the outbreak of diseases on a national level.
  - Mass surveys to monitor diseases.
  - International Household Surveys should be carried out and analysed

- Remove stigmas within countries to help prevent panic and making it easier to control.
- Create a fund, with the help of the G7 countries, for research into vaccines and treatments.
  - Improve infrastructure within both developed and developing countries
  - Building modern hospitals and local doctor's surgeries to make it easier for people living in rural areas to access medical help
  - G7 countries must stop recruiting health workers from developing countries because they are desperately needed in their own country. Scholarships should be provided so that specific people can come to the G7 countries to train and after their training they would return to their country and work to help their local people
  - Improved transport systems to get patients to hospital, for example ambulance services.

### **Conclusion**

We, as J7 delegates, would like to ask the G7 countries to be more aware of the problems concerning antibiotic resistance and pandemics. G7 countries must take action by implementing a universal healthcare system as well as organize a faster international intervention for pandemic response.

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# Building a Healthy Future for All

## Neglected and Poverty-related Diseases

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### **Preamble**

Diseases of poverty, also known as neglected diseases, are a collection of roughly seventeen illnesses existing in 149 countries of the world, directly affecting 1.4 billion people—nearly twenty percent of the entire human race. These dangerous sicknesses are prevalent only in low-income, geographically isolated locations. We can credit the widespread prevalence of poverty diseases to a series of preventable factors. The following have directly caused the spread of poverty related diseases: a lack of public awareness; failure of the pharmaceutical industry to produce NTD (neglected tropical disease) targeted drugs; the non-existence of a specific organization focused on poverty-related disease elimination; and the lack of basic education for understanding of medical and care techniques. This paper will outline solutions to these varied problematic factors, and most importantly, encourage members of the G7 to support our proposals in the hope of eradicating poverty diseases worldwide.

### **Problem 1: Lack of Public Awareness**

Public awareness campaigns not only increase public education as well as funding. These donations purchase vaccinations, fund infrastructural solutions, buy care materials and pay employees. Historically, when advocates of health create large public media campaigns, massive amounts of support and funding are generated—Ebola and HIV/AIDS are primary examples of successful public campaigns.

Therefore, we ask the G7 countries to create an NTD specific fundraising and awareness campaign. This proposed campaign would be multifaceted, and primarily run on social media, harnessing the powers of the youth of the world. Partnerships with public figures can easily and efficiently create more support backing our cause. In these ways, a comprehensive and efficient public fundraising campaign is an essential component of the fight against poverty related diseases.

### **Problem 2: Lack of Pharmaceutical NTD-related Research and Development**

In a study conducted by WHO health advocate Patrick Trouiller, of 1393 total new drugs approved between the years 1975 and 1999, only 1% of drugs (13) were specifically targeted towards eliminating poverty diseases. It is clear that pharmaceutical companies will not develop drugs to tackle this issue, as the viability of profit is improbable.

However, subsidization of pharmaceutical companies is not the correct path for saving lives, as this money would simply be used for other purposes.

In a study conducted by DNDI, (Drugs and Neglected Diseases Initiative), the pharmaceutical companies falsified reports are published, for the purpose of corporate greed and gain. The German Government found out that giving a treatment with Hepatitis C pills to all people who need it, will make the system collapse. The main issue is that pharmaceutical companies, creating name brand drugs are incredibly satisfied in their position as monopoly holders for needed, lifesaving drugs.

In order to create a fair and competitive market, which keeps cost low and effectiveness high, we need to overhaul the patent system. Creating accountability and reliability of effective drugs while keeping the market free for multiple versions of each drug. Enabling organizations such as UNICEF and GAVI to purchase drugs at low cost and distribute effectively to those in need.

### **Problem 3: Non-existence of Dedicated NTD-Organization**

The vast importance of NTDs has become increasingly relevant on a global stage, as billions are directly affected. Despite this, there is no current organization, or major sector of a larger organization, dedicated specifically to the topic. We propose the creation of an organization with the explicit goal of eradicating NTDs. This organization would have three main roles. The first would be to act as a common ground between countries in order to improve organization and medical services in developing countries. The second role would be on the ground, training educators to teach nurses midwives and doctors locally, becoming self-sufficient and having minimum intervention, as well as generating local jobs.

The third and final role of this organization would be to fund grants working with developing and G7 countries, backed by pharmaceutical sponsors. Pairing universities in developing and developed nations, this collaboration would foster research and develop cures to these NTDs. These preventatives, collaborative, and communicative aspects presented by the proposed NTD specific organization will systematically eradicate the impact and effects of poverty diseases worldwide.

### **Problem 4: Providing Education for All**

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), "All children have the right to a primary education, which should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this right..." (CRC, A.28). A lack of education is one of the largest challenges facing developing nations today. Despite the goals of the G7 summit, 57 million children still do not attend primary school. This indirectly impacts the spread of poverty diseases. With a primary education, literacy, and even a most basic understanding of modern scientific principles, inhabitants of isolated developing regions can deliver primary medical care. Therefore, a primary education for all is crucial in avoiding the transmission and reducing the death toll of poverty diseases.

The J7 delegates strongly encourage G7 countries to continue supporting the development of primary schools, and improving access to these schools worldwide—in the hopes of eliminating poverty-related disease. We want to suggest a peer-to-peer system with meeting in which teachers may give an education to isolated nations people to make them educators for their fellow citizens.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of the J7 summit was to create an outlet for globally-minded youths around the world to express their ideas to leaders—people with the power to create change. While we cannot ask the G7 nations to follow all of our advice, we encourage them to listen to the recommendations of their youths, as our proposals have been well-researched, thought-out, and approach global issues with a different perspective. We request the G7 nations to create an NTD-focused public awareness and funding campaign, governmentally subsidize pharmaceutical companies in their NTD drug research and development, and establish an organization specifically focused on poverty disease prevention and research partnerships. Thank you.

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# Empowerment of Women and Girls

## Empowering Women in Self-Employment and Vocational Training

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### Preamble

What decides a person's capabilities and opportunities? Is it their acquired skills, social status, or biology? Women are the invisible tethers which hold communities together; subjected to submissiveness to men for centuries, women still strive. The big question is how do we keep their light shining? It has been proven that when women are given education, higher social status, and economic autonomy, their communities thrive. We must support women in all of these endeavours, not only for their individual fulfilment, but for the greater good of all people.

### Problem Statement

What The disenfranchisement of women is a global phenomenon; in almost every country on earth, women make less money than their male counterparts, and in some cases, do not even have control over the funds and assets that they accumulate. Women are more likely to be impoverished and under-educated. In countries such as Bolivia, Chad and Kuwait, a woman cannot even apply for a job without her husband's permission.

However, it is not only women in the developing world who experience sexual discrimination in the workforce: in Japan, 70% of women stop working after having their first child. They are expected to become mothers and housewives, as opposed to career-minded individuals. This is true in many countries. It is time we address this issue globally and immediately. We, as the J7 delegates, are deeply concerned and therefore propose the following solutions.

### 1. EdRespect

We propose to introduce "EdRespect" (Educate Respect). EdRespect is a mandatory kindergarten through secondary school course which will educate boys and girls from a young, perceptible age about breaking down gender roles and women in the workforce. This course will also provide students with the opportunity to express interest in and pursue various career options outside of traditional gender norms. This will make young people aware of sexual discrimination as they are developing their own personalities and opinions. We expect that this will curb sexist ideologies in children, which will carry out a sense of equality into their adulthood and for generations to come.

EdRespect will not only include classes in the curriculum about careers, current issues in sexual discrimination, and responsibilities in the household and in a healthy relationship, but also excursions to explore different career settings and experience different careers hands-on. Teachers should be trained, preferably with degrees in Gender Studies, Sociology, and any other related fields. We expect the content to be approached with an open-minded perspective on gender and breaking social expectations. EdRespect should be implemented in all countries.

## **2. GOPWE**

Self-employed women in developing countries are only recently gaining ground in business, and would benefit from direction and support. We propose instituting government ordained programs for women (Government Ordained Programs for Women Entrepreneurs: GOPWE) interested in beginning their own businesses. GOPWE is intended for women who are self-employed and seeking help with their business or in vocational school with intention to begin their own business. These programs should include conferences that introduce innovative business ideas and technology, including from the developed world as appropriate. As well, a system through which women can apply for government grants to start their businesses should be made available through GOPWE.

The conferences should occur a minimum of once a year. These conferences should be orchestrated by a council of volunteers from the government and women entrepreneurs willing to give advice on running a business as a woman in a developing country. Because the conferences cannot be conducted everywhere they are needed, we propose that there be a LiveStream of the seminars on the government website, or an alternative website set up specifically for GOPWE which would be sponsored by the government. The conference should be conducted in a different developing country every year, such as but not limited to India, Brazil, and Cambodia. As GOPWE gains popularity and prestige, we recommend sending groups of volunteers from the council to selected developing countries for short periods of time (6-12 months) to monitor and assist women in the beginning stages of their business.

## **3. Woman-to-Woman Support**

Finally, we would like to stress the importance of women supporting women in achieving independence. That is why our last proposition is that of a woman-to-woman support network in the form of a government-sponsored website which allows women worldwide to connect with each other and share ideas on business and success in trade careers. For this to work, a small council of government workers with specialty in women's rights will need to be formed. This council will be responsible for regulating the website, posting relevant articles and creating online forums; it will be useful to recruit journalists for this program as there should also be interviews with successful entrepreneur women who can offer advice and motivation. For communities that cannot access the internet, we recommend instituting small committees that can deliver from the information from the website directly to the women and men who need it.

What we need from Chancellor Merkel, the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, and the Ministry of Education is full support of the aforementioned campaigns.



We believe that, as the first female Chancellor of Germany, Chancellor Merkel will be understanding and sensible in dealing with our programs. The programs are open for development, however, it is essential that they maintain the sole purpose of creating fairness and equity for women across developing and developed nations.

As J7 participants, our fight will continue long after the summit ends. Just like the women in Iceland on October 24, 1975 who walked out of their jobs and homes and marched into the streets, successfully paralyzing the entire country, and sparked change and gender equity in their community, we will take initiative and continue awareness campaigns on this issue through other student-run platforms like Act Now.

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# Fair Economy

## Retail and Supply Chain Standards

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### Preamble

This position paper is the outcome of the J7 Summit taking place from the 6-14<sup>th</sup> May 2015 in Berlin. Teams of young people from all G7 countries, as well as delegations from the EU, Africa and Central America come together to discuss and debate the most pressing issues of our time in the run up to the G7 negotiations in June.

### Description of Problem

Currently, how the global economy operates is profoundly unfair. 150 million children aged 5 to 14 around the world are engaged in child labour. Child labour perpetuates a cycle of poverty which prevents children from accessing an education and slows down the development of a country. Millions of people in the developing world work hard for wages too low to meet the cost of living, often under dangerous conditions. For example, a 2011 investigation by the British charity War on Want found that in Bangladesh, some 80 per cent of workers worked longer than the legal limits allowed<sup>2</sup>.

### Solution 1: Increasing Consumer Awareness

The education and awareness of consumers in the developed world, especially in G7 countries is vital in the battle for a fair economy. We would introduce worldwide media campaigns in partnership with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and lobby groups to raise awareness. We also support concepts such as 'FashionRevolution', a movement working to make manufacturing conditions a talking point and thereby trying to achieve fair working conditions and a production without child labour.

### Solution 2: Tackling Child Poverty through Cash Transfers

One of the root causes and effects of child labour is poverty. By empowering families economically, children have an increased chance of gaining an education. Inspired by Brazil's 'Bolsa Família' initiative, we would introduce conditional cash transfer programs (CCTs), which are grants for families in extreme poverty so that their children can attend school. For example, in Brazil if a child on CCT fails to meet a certain attendance quota, payment to their family is suspended. This incentivises families to send their children to school, while simultaneously providing them with a steady income. An additional step would be to establish programs to provide free food in schools in order to promote attendance.

### Solution 3: Holding Corporations Accountable for their Actions

We believe that multinational corporations have a responsibility to combat child labour and thus create a just economy.

We also believe that they should be held accountable for their actions on a global scale. In order to be effective, companies need to comply with legal standards that don't allow child labour.

There also needs to be a sanction protocol in place for companies who do not comply with the law. A fair economy must be a sustainable economy, and environmental aspects need to be included within the legal framework as well.

#### **Solution 4: A Living Wage and Fair Working Standards**

Poor working conditions and safety demonstrated in the 2013 Rana Plaza disaster in Bangladesh are intolerable and an injustice to workers. We encourage developing countries to increase their minimum wage relative to the cost of living. We also endorse introducing a universal workplace standard which would include environmental criteria, the workers' right to organise in trade unions and basic workplace safety standards (e.g. legal limits on working hours and protection measures for workers handling hazardous material).

#### **Solution 5: Putting Children on the Agenda**

You, as heads of the G7, lead the richest and most influential countries in the world. Therefore, it is your responsibility to pursue crucial issues that need to be addressed. Goal 1 of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) mentions that poverty concerning men, women and children must be eradicated in all its forms in the next 15 years. However, we are concerned about how this will be financed in relation to children. The first draft of the outcome document for the International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa does not mention any specific funding for children. As powerful G7 nations represented at the conference, we call on you to make a financial commitment to ensure that the SDG targets relating to children are achieved. In addition to upholding your existing commitments to overseas development aid, we encourage you, as G7 governments, to prioritise tackling child poverty within the SDGs and give every child everywhere an opportunity to live a full and healthy life.

#### **Conclusion**

Today's global economy and trade is unsustainable and unfair. We do have, however, the ability to change this. Through media campaigns, we will raise awareness for the problems in the global economic system and help consumers make informed decisions about what to buy. We will continue pressuring governments, corporations and individuals to behave responsibly and address the issue of the fair economy. Civil society must actively work to ensure the products they buy are sustainably and ethically manufactured. You, the G7 leaders, also need to play a leading role in this struggle - you have the possibility, yet also the responsibility to actively make our world a better place for everyone.

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## Act Now

### Youth Involvement

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#### **Preamble**

The Act Now initiative will provide youth not only with a voice, but with a voice that is powerful and influential. It is of the utmost importance that the young people in any region around the world are able to voice their opinions and concerns and offer solutions to various social and political problems. Youth must be provided with the skills required to fight any injustice they face.

#### **The Challenge**

There are various obstacles that stand in the way of youth all around the world. These obstacles work to silence youth globally. For instance, certain countries do not have established youth councils or ministries; it is apparent that some youth lack the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them. If a youth ministry or council does exist, often it lacks visibility and recognition. As unrest grows within the young population, this inability to provide input can prove disastrous for a nation's future. Without the proper support structures, young people will continue to be disenfranchised. There are limited media resources run by young people for young people. Consequently, young people often feel helpless in the decision-making process, which breeds apathy and perpetuates inaction.

#### **Solution: Act Now**

We propose three distinct actions:

- Measures to enhance the involvement of youth in developing countries
- Measures to enhance the involvement of youth in developed countries
- A worldwide communications initiative

According to many of the J7 delegates from developed and developing countries, in the countries where youth support structures do exist, these typically are run by non-governmental organizations (otherwise known as NGOs).

#### **Approach in Developed Countries**

Our main goal is to reach political figures and powers (such as you and the German Government as a whole) to enter into a partnership with the NGOs. This partnership would aim to enhance the inclusion of the youth in state matters - especially the ones that directly affect the population. We strongly recommend a state/NGO partnership to create youth councils at the local, regional, and national levels, and improve the ones already in place. The result of the deliberations of these youth councils should be shared with government representatives specialized in youth and/or education, such as a ministry of youth.

It is imperative that the local councils are constantly connected with one another and are able to exchange information with their regional and national counterparts. To ensure that these local youth councils are effective and active, on the one hand they would receive support from the state and higher-level youth councils; on the other, they would be accountable to them.

### **Approach in Developing Countries**

The approach in developing countries is slightly different. For instance, governmental support in these countries is not always as strong as in the developed world. This is why support would need to be given by NGOs and other non-governmental organizations that are present in these countries such as UNICEF. UNICEF has a presence in almost all of the developing countries and hence has a very detailed understanding of local issues. UNICEF also educates youth in these countries on how to handle the problems afflicting their countries. Our ultimate aim in these countries is to create the same youth council structure as in developed countries. The young people serving on these councils would be educated by UNICEF and local schools.

All national youth councils can send “ambassadors” to motivate youth in other countries. The youth councils in both developing and developed countries will interact with each other via a **communication initiative**, which we detail below.

### **What we want to do**

As J7 delegates, we will build a communication platform for the youth councils through which we will reach out to other youth in developed and developing countries. We will motivate them to engage politically through various social media, such as Twitter, YouTube and Facebook and also offline where no Internet is available. We want to share examples of empowered youth that have made a difference in their countries, cities or communities.

Our message is that every kid can make a difference by participating. The communication initiative will also be a source of motivation. UNICEF’s support in distributing these videos and media outlets is (particularly crucial in developing countries) so that the spread of this information is rapid and reaches all areas. Through social media, youth will interact with their peers and will be invited to share their stories and ideas online.

### **What we want you to do**

Wherever there are weak participation structures or none at all, we call upon the governments to create youth councils at national, regional and local levels. Where necessary, this should be done in partnership with NGOs. To ensure these youth councils have a real impact, they need genuine recognition and visibility by the state. We also call upon governments to promote the teaching of civic education in schools and to enable schools and local youth councils to collaborate on extracurricular activities.

Finally, we also call upon governments to institutionalize the J7 Summit and make it an annual event. The J7 Summits should automatically become a part of the G7 process wherever it is hosted. The J7 Summits undoubtedly produce a valuable contribution from youth to the political process. Therefore, it is fundamental that the J7 Summit happens annually, without fail, in official recognition of the fact that it is crucial to have the input of youth.

## **Conclusion**

Besides contributing towards Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, these actions are a long-term investment in youth awareness, which will allow young people to grow up to be empowered actors. They will be a generation that is sensitive to worldwide issues and educated enough to initiate substantial and positive change.

**RECOGNISE THAT ALL LIFE MATTERS!  
PROTECT WHAT IS IN THE BROADER PUBLIC INTEREST!  
PROTECT WHAT SUSTAINS US!**

**# ActNow**