April 4, 2011

Your Excellency,

Following our letter from February 7, 2011, we wish to address you regarding the drafting process and content of the document looking at the outcomes of the High Level Meeting (HLM) on Youth to be held in July 2011 in New York.

Such a High Level Meeting should have an ambitious, specific, and visionary outcome in order to improve the lives of youth all over the world. However, we have a number of concerns regarding both the consultation process and the content of the document.

As Youth Organizations, represented in the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organizations (ICMYO), we cannot overlook that no reference is made to civil society, to support of Youth Organizations as drivers of change, nor on the necessity to invest in Non Formal Education, as a vital tool to provide comprehensive education and life skills to overcome issues mentioned in the draft outcome document, including youth unemployment, youth autonomy, environmental sustainability and physical and mental health.

As youth led movements, we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Volunteer, but no reference is made to volunteering and its contribution to both development of young people and to society. Some aspects in the context of globalization are tackled in the document, its drawbacks as well, but nothing about the richness of cultural exchanges is mentioned. We note the lack of a strong commitment and vision of governments towards young people. Without a strong commitment and vision we fear there will be no real outcome and no progress in promoting the well-being of youth and participation in decision-making of youth and to develop effective national policies and programmes affecting youth.

While we are grateful for the opportunity to be engaged in a consultation - in the spirit of dialogue and mutual understanding - which would feed into the final outcomes of the HLM, we are shocked to be provided with such a short period of time to conduct it. On Thursday 31st March, the draft was shared with ICMYO, who was asked to conduct the consultation with youth organizations worldwide, and with the expectation of feedback by Monday, 4th April.

As youth and youth-led organizations, it is absolutely important for us to engage our members from all over the world and ensure a wide outreach. We strive for a democratic, transparent process of consultation, which is vital for the legitimacy of our feedback.

We believe that young people, youth organizations and governments, in order to ensure effective implementation, need to feel mutual ownership of the outcomes of the HLM. Therefore we request a feasible timeline in order to allow for a
genuine participation of young people. A sufficient and comprehensive consultation process, which considers the outlined criteria, could be finalized on 25th May - two month before the HLM starts.

Based on the time frame we have outlined above, ICMYO is committed to set up such as consultation process. We will do so through our networks of National Youth Councils, International Youth Organizations from all over the world. Our membership reaches out to millions of young people and we communicate our approach actively. The results will be shared prior to and during the HLM, even if not considered as part of the official consultation. We hope that you will extend the deadline as requested in favor of a single, open, transparent, and inclusive process. We are convinced that this is the only way to legitimize our input which needs to be taken seriously by Member States and will inform the outcome document.

We deeply believe that finding a mutual understanding would allow for a cooperative consultation process. We await your expeditious reply.

Sincerely,

Espacio Iberoamericano de Juventud
European Youth Forum
Fórum de Juventude da Comunidade de Países de Língua Portuguesa
Global Young Greens
International Falcon Movement - Socialist Educational International
Pax Romana
World Alliance of Young Men’s Christian Associations
World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
World Organization of the Scout Movement
World Student Christian Federation