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Chapter IV. Youth and future generations

- x [Restless Development](#) is a women-led and feminist-centred global nonprofit, with over 35 years of experience supporting the collective power of young leaders to create a better world, from the grassroots to the high policy level.
- x Restless Development brings expertise on youth research and advocacy and inclusive co-creation, as well as an extensive network of 4000+ youth civil society organisations as part of the Youth Collective. Our work is guided by our [Youth Power Principles](#) and [Power Shifting Checklist](#)
- x We are in the era of Peak Youth. Half of the world's population is under 30 and over a quarter are under 18 years of age, while the world's poorest countries are seeing their populations become dramatically younger. They are more connected and networked than ever before and already leading the response to some of the biggest challenges we face; it is clear that responding to future opportunities, such as digitalisation in both the work

and national level policy-making communities through to densely populated cities. Their work is consistently underfunded while their expertise can go largely unheard. Restless Development calls on Member States to support the rights of Future Generations.

Restless Development calls on Member States to consider how the involvement of young people is consistently reflected in policy decision-making processes, including by engaging youth civil society at the national and regional levels. By 2025, Restless Development is keen to see a Special Envoy for Future Generations appointed in order to drive innovation at the national level, while working with the newly appointed Assistant Secretary

General for Youth Affairs and Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY) to further advance this progress at the regional and global levels, [including scaling national listening exercises that have been piloted in the UK.](#)

- x **Putting youth at the heart of intergovernmental negotiations of the Declaration on Future Generations** Given that the Declaration will focus on thinking and acting in the interests of Future Generations, Restless Development urges Member States to ensure that young people are central to the intergovernmental negotiations, by:
 - a. Making it a mandatory requirement that Member States have a majority of young people² in their delegations for these negotiations to truly reflect the perspective of young people.

support to understand specific forums including specific processes and UN language and terminology- and support to navigate the practicalities of involvement in UN forums. Member States may want to consider issuing formal guidance on these standards, to ensure that young people in all their diversity have a fair opportunity to participate in key processes rather than just those with the available resources or connections. Formal standards might also dissuade organisations from putting the burden of resourcing participation in UN processes on young people themselves.

c. **Member States might also consider how to ensure the longer engagement of young people in UN processes.** Restless Development's experience of working with young people to engage in multilateral spaces often surfaces the frustrations of young people that once they have been involved in a forum, they receive no further feedback on progress or are offered very - to no -further ways to engage. Building in feedback loops and ways to follow developments and input into later discussions are key to ensuring ongoing youth engagement. In addition, Member States could report annually on how they are engaging young people in policymaking via an existing mechanism, such as the ECOSOC Youth Forum.

d. **Initiatives designed by young people, for young people.** Youth-focused initiatives are very welcome, Restless Development calls on Member States to prioritise the involvement of young people in their design, to ensure that they are youth-led and more likely to result in a high level of engagement. Initiatives such as [Youth at Heart](#) by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs which not only incorporated [youth-led research](#) in order to ensure deep insight into the process but also resulted in a set of [Youth at Heart Principles](#) for use by the international community, are existing examples of how this can be done.