

IN SUPPORT OF THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE

KEY ASKS TO MEMBER STATES FOR POLITICAL OUTCOME DOCUMENTS

ENSURING THE COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND ADOLESCENTS

AIM

The purpose of this document is to request Member States to support the inclusion of language in the Summit of the Future's outcome documents, emphasizing the importance of investing in the comprehensive health and well-being of women, children, and adolescents, which is crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter.

SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE AND OUTCOME DOCUMENTS

The Summit of the Future, scheduled for September 2024 presents a unique and momentous occasion to foster collaboration on critical issues, bridge gaps in global governance, and reaffirm existing commitments, including those related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the United Nations Charter. This gathering of world leaders seeks to pave the way for a revitalized multilateral system—one that can better address current challenges and anticipate emerging threats. While we already have numerous agreements and commitments in place (such as the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 2030 Agenda, and the Paris Agreement), the Summit of the Future will focus on the “how”—how to enhance cooperation effectively, meet present needs, and prepare for future challenges. It's an opportunity to mend eroded trust and demonstrate that international collaboration can make a positive impact on people's lives and safeguard our shared future.

The Summit's twofold objective is to accelerate efforts in meeting existing international commitments and to take concrete steps in response to new challenges and opportunities. There will be three outcome documents during the Summit of the Future which will be negotiated and endorsed by countries during the Summit: [The Pact for the Future](#) as the key political outcome document, supported by the [Declaration on Future Generations](#), and the [Global Digital Compact](#).

Through these agreed documents, countries aspire to create a world and an international system that is better equipped to manage the complexities of today and tomorrow, benefiting all of humanity and future generations.

The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH) stands united in its commitment to the health and well-being of women, children, and adolescents. As we approach the Summit of the Future, it is imperative that our collective vision and advocacy are reflected in the politically agreed outcome documents.

The forthcoming UN Summit of the Future presents a pivotal moment—a convergence of vision, action, and advocacy. This transformative journey for the post-2030 agenda, lays the foundations to assert the following principles:

- **Inclusivity and Equity:** The Pact must embody inclusivity, ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities for all, particularly marginalized communities.
- **Holistic Approach:** A holistic approach is essential, recognizing the intersectionality of health with education, economic empowerment, and environmental sustainability.
- **Gender Equality:** The Pact should advocate for the dismantling of barriers and the promotion of equal opportunities for all, leaving no one behind, in particular women and girls.

- **Meaningful Adolescent and Youth Engagement:** Recognizing adolescents and youth as agents of change, the Pact should foster their leadership, innovation and action.
- **Accountability and Partnerships:** Through collaboration and monitoring, the Pact must ensure progress through mutual accountability and course correction.

KEY ASKS

[PMNCH](#) welcomes the preparations for the upcoming Summit of the Future. As the world's leading alliance for maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health, we call on governments, and all stakeholders to prioritize these populations in the Summit of the Future deliberations and outcome documents. We ask Member States to endorse the following actions to protect these vulnerable groups in all their diversity, using principles of equity and equality, and to promote the multi-dimensional nature of their well-being through data-driven strengthened political commitment, policies and domestic resource mobilization and financing:

- 1. Strengthen political commitment and financing for health systems supporting maternal, newborn, and child health and well-being, including the prevention of stillbirths:**
 - 1.1. Increase investments in healthcare infrastructure and workforce training to improve service delivery for maternal, newborn, and child health to ensure a healthy start in life for all.
 - 1.2. Commit to integrating these health priorities in resolutions and discussions during the Summit of the Future.
 - 1.3. Leverage digital technology to enhance awareness of and access to health information and services, and to strengthen communication with communities to support their participation and health outcomes.
- 2. Enhance data collection and monitoring for adolescent well-being:**
 - 2.1. Ensure the collection of comprehensive data on adolescents that can be disaggregated by age, gender, disability status, location, and socioeconomic status to guide action.
 - 2.2. Strengthen national strategies through participation in the regular review process and reporting, ensuring an adolescent focus within reporting.
- 3. Implement policies and programs for sexual and reproductive health rights:**
 - 3.1. Establish and support services that respect and promote sexual and reproductive health rights at local levels.
 - 3.2. Advocate for the integration of sexual and reproductive health rights as a major area in national and subnational plans, using a multisectoral approach.
 - 3.3. Review and regularly update policies related to sexual and reproductive health to ensure they are inclusive, rights-based, and supported by evidence.
- 4. Promote empowerment and engagement of women, children, adolescents and youth:**
 - 4.1. Endorse and integrate recommendations for meaningful adolescent and youth engagement in community programs, especially during emergencies.
 - 4.2. Actively engage and empower women, children, adolescents and youth in policy design, implementation, and evaluation.
- 5. Capacity building for partners to respond to the needs of women, children, adolescents and youth:**
 - 5.1. Train professionals and community members to promote well-being and prevent discrimination and violence.
 - 5.2. Train young people to be peer educators to raise awareness of resources and skills required for achieving well-being.

RECOMMENDED LANGUAGE FOR CONSIDERATION

As negotiations on the outcome documents continue, we present the following language for consideration into the upcoming negotiations sessions of the Pact for the Future, Declaration on Future Generations and the Global Digital Compact. We strongly urge the Member States, stakeholders and major groups to support these key asks (highlighted in green) to address the omission of language concerning women, children and adolescents and the well-being needs. Here are key recommendations for integrating this imperative aspect into the zero drafts.

PACT OF THE FUTURE

Chapeau

- We propose that the Chapeau explicitly recognizes health as a human right and an essential need to build a strong foundation for our future.
- We propose that the Chapeau of the Pact for the Future explicitly recognize ‘adolescents and youth’, as distinct groups of rights holders, whose well-being and development are crucial to the fulfillment of our international commitments.
- P 4. ADD “We recognize that challenges such as these can only be addressed through strong and sustained international cooperation. To enhance our cooperation, we need a multilateral system that is fit for the future, ready to address ~~the~~ political, economic, **health and well-being**, environmental and technological changes in the world, and with the agility to adapt to an uncertain future now and beyond 2030 [...]
- P 12. ADD “Environmental crises pose the most pressing and serious threats to the sustainability of our planet and the **health and** well-being of its present and future inhabitants [...]
- P 15. ADD “We recognize that **children, adolescents and youth**, today and in the future, will have to live with the consequences of our action and our inaction. We reiterate our commitment to providing **children, adolescents and** youth with a nurturing environment for the full realization of their rights and capabilities, including through investment in **universal access to health care throughout their life course as well as** quality education and life-long learning. We reaffirm the importance of involving **adolescents**, youth, youth-led and youth-focused organizations meaningfully in the work of the United Nations.”

Sustainable Development and Financing for Development

- The SDGs serve as a framework for global progress, but their impact can be maximized by explicitly ensuring adolescents’ needs are addressed in the implementation efforts. Adolescents are not only beneficiaries but also active agents of change. By recognizing their distinct perspectives and empowering them, we can accelerate progress across all SDGs and beyond.
- In line with the Agenda for Action for Adolescents¹, as expressed by over 1.6 million adolescents and youth from 90 countries, we propose that Chapter I be informed by the demands for their well-being needs, emphasizing the need for sustainable development that includes increased quality education and skills training for adolescents and youth. This chapter should underscore the disproportionate impact of global challenges, including the climate crisis, on young populations and the necessity of their active involvement in creating sustainable solutions.
- Additionally, investing in the first part of life (pregnancy to school-age) is one of the best investments our world can make to boost economic growth, promote peaceful and sustainable societies, and eliminate extreme poverty and inequality. While there have been significant

¹ <https://pmnch.who.int/news-and-events/campaigns/agenda-for-action-for-adolescents>

gains in maternal and child health in recent decades, global progress to reduce related mortality has been largely flat since 2015, bringing the massive gains of the Millennium Development Goal era to a shameful halt. Our future requires attention on the health and well-being of this vulnerable population, specifically during the reproductive period, including before birth and the first three years of life, as it is a time of rapid physical, intellectual, emotional, social and moral development for the human potential of our future generation.

- P 20. ADD “We also reaffirm our commitment to the outcome of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit [...] leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first. **We recognize that women, children, adolescents and youth play a crucial role in this endeavor, and we pledge to ensuring their active participation in decisions concerning their well-being.**”
- P 21. ADD “We further reaffirm the centrality of ensuring the full implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, **which reaffirmed strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,** and which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda, and recommit to providing the means of implementation to support developing countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.”
- P 24. ADD “We reaffirm our commitment to leave no one behind in pursuit of the 2030 Agenda; to respect, protect and fulfil all human rights without discrimination; **to achieve universal health coverage, with attention on care in pregnancy and the early years,** to achieve universal and quality education, **including early childhood development, to ensure all adolescents and youth develop skills aligned with modern labor market demands,** and to take targeted and accelerated action to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, **and protect adolescents and youth from all forms of violence, discrimination, and harm, including sexual, gender-based, and domestic violence** and remove all legal, social and economic barriers to achieve gender equality. We reaffirm that achieving gender equality, empowering all women and **adolescent** girls, and the full realization of their human rights [...].”
- P 26. ADD “We commit to following up on recent high-level meetings of the United Nations related to sustainable development and financing for development, including the United Nations Food Systems Summit (2021), the Transforming Education Summit (2022), the United Nations Water Conference (2023), the Sustainable Development Goals Summit (2023), the high-level meeting on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (2023), the high-level meeting on universal health coverage (2023), and the high-level meeting on the fight against tuberculosis (2023) **with the meaningful engagement of women, adolescents and youth as essential partners in this collective effort.**”
- P 26 bis. ADD “Recall the unprecedented effects of pandemics, **including the severe disruption to societies and economies, as well as to global travel and commerce, and the devastating impact on the livelihood of people. Recognize the fundamental role of equitable, people-centered and community- based primary health care in preventing, preparing for, and responding to pandemics, with the goal of achieving universal health coverage and other Sustainable Development Goals and targets. Recognizing that investments in preparedness further social and economic benefits and advance shared goals, such as strengthening health systems in order to achieve universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals;**”
- P 42: ADD “We welcome the increase in official development assistance devoted to helping developing countries to address climate change. We call upon donors to make this increase additional to existing flows, **ensuring the protection of existing funding to other development issues, such as health.**”

International Peace and Security

- This Chapter should not only recognize adolescents and youth as peacebuilders and human rights defenders but also as key agents of change who are capable of contributing to international peace and security. It is essential to move beyond viewing them as vulnerable groups and instead empower them as influential stakeholders in the peace process. The chapter should also recognize that the most vulnerable citizens, particularly women and children, need special attention and engagement.
- P 54. ADD “We recognize the devastating impact of armed conflict on civilians and civilian infrastructure, **including sustainable health systems, and** we reaffirm our commitment to the full respect of international law, [...]”
- P 60. ADD “We commit to strengthening the youth, peace, and security agenda, including through the meaningful and inclusive participation of **women, adolescents and** youth in conflict prevention, resolution, and humanitarian action, [...]”

Science, Technology, Innovation, and Digital Cooperation

- We recommend that this Chapter reaffirms the principles of the Agenda for Action for Adolescents, advocating for greater support for mental well-being and more adolescent-friendly health services, including digital health initiatives. An adolescents and youth-rights approach should guide the development of science and technology to ensure that such advancements foster the well-being and rights of adolescents.
- P 95. ADD “[...] We pledge to harness the potential of technology and innovation to improve women’s and **adolescent** girls’ lives **including health and well-being,** and to close the development divide and the digital divide, including the gender digital divide, as well as address the risks and challenges [...]”
- P 99. ADD “We support calls for sharing technologies and skills to solve **all health issues, including the basic ~~health~~ issues of water, sanitation and food security, as well as more complex issues, such as addressing preventable maternal and child deaths.**”
- P 101. ADD “We call upon the United Nations system to support the efforts of developing countries to develop and strengthen their national science, technology and innovation ecosystems **to address the comprehensive needs of adolescents and youth** [...]”

Youth and Future Generations

- To ensure that adolescents are not merely an afterthought but central to our vision for the future, we recommend REVISING the **title of the Chapter to “Adolescents, Youth, and Future Generations”.**
- P 104. ADD “We recognize that generating decent work [...] is the most important investment that States can make to ensure the immediate and long-term development of **adolescents and youth.**”
- P 105. ADD “We underline the importance of establishing in the national context robust social security systems as well as social protection floors that respond to the needs and rights of **~~young persons and~~ children, adolescents and youth,** including all **adolescent** girls and young women. We also recognize that the well-being of **children, adolescents and youth** is closely intertwined with the enjoyment of their right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health **and rights.** [...]”
- P 106. ADD “We recognize the importance of meeting the needs and aspirations of all **children, adolescents and youth,** including those in vulnerable situations and those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.”

- P 107. ADD “We underline the importance of the active, meaningful and inclusive participation of **children, adolescents and** youth in decision-making. We commit to strengthening meaningful **adolescents and** youth engagement in policymaking and decision-making processes [...]”
- P 108. ADD “We commit to meaningful **adolescents and** youth engagement in all United Nations intergovernmental bodies, and processes at the global, regional and national levels. We welcome the progress at the United Nations to promote the meaningful engagement of **adolescents and** youth, including through the establishment of the United Nations Youth Office.”
- P 109. ADD “Building on this progress, we request that the Secretary-General lead the development of a global standard for meaningful **adolescent and** youth engagement in processes across the United Nations system, in cooperation with Member States and **adolescents**, youth and youth-led and youth-focused organizations. We also request the Secretary-General to develop an integrated approach to facilitate more meaningful **adolescents and** youth engagement at all levels.”
- P 111. ADD “We also request the Secretary-General to develop a Global Youth Investment platform to attract and direct financing of **adolescents and** youth-related programming to strengthen existing United Nations funds that support youth and key United Nations youth initiatives.”

Transforming Global Governance

- P 116. ADD “We commit to transforming global governance and reinvigorating the multilateral system to allow us to deliver on this Pact for the Future. We will work together to ensure that the multilateral system is better equipped to tackle the challenges, and seize the opportunities, of today and tomorrow **by ensuring that children’s, adolescents’ and youth voices are heard, and their rights are protected.** [...]”
- P 121. ADD “We commit to facilitating more structured and inclusive engagement of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, together with major groups, the private sector, **adolescents**, youth, local governments [...] and a stronger mandate to the Council’s youth forum to enhance **meaningful adolescents and** youth engagement throughout the Council’s cycle.”

DECLARATION ON FUTURE GENERATIONS

- P 6. ADD “Recognizing the need for intergenerational dialogue and engagement, including among the elderly, youth, **adolescents**, and children, in our decision-making in order to safeguard the interests of future generations, [...]”
- P 27. ADD “Guarantee the rights of future generations to the highest standard of health, through universal ~~healthcare~~ **health coverage including comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights**, to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all throughout the life course”

GLOBAL DIGITAL COMPACT

- P 3. ADD “Our goal is an inclusive, open, safe, and secure digital future for all, **in particular our children, adolescents and youth.** We can only achieve this through international cooperation and governance [...]”
- P 7(d) ADD “Gender equal: The full, equal, and meaningful **engagement**, participation and leadership of women and **adolescent** girls in the digital space is essential to close gender digital divides and advance sustainable development. Our cooperation will empower women and **adolescent** girls, [...]”

- P7 (i) ADD “Multi-stakeholder: Governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical community, academia, international and regional organizations, **and adolescents and youth themselves** have roles and responsibilities in advancing an inclusive, open, safe and secure digital future.”
- P 20. ADD "We recognize all human rights to be enablers of sustainable development and closing digital divides. We commit to promote, respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of everyone, **with special attention to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women, children, adolescents and youth**, in the digital space. [...]"

By incorporating these recommendations, the outcome documents will truly resonate with the comprehensive needs of women, children and adolescents and address the aspirations of adolescents and youth in particular, ensuring that their well-being is at the forefront of our efforts to create a more equitable and sustainable world.

KEY ARGUMENTS TO SUPPORT INCLUSION OF LANGUAGE

Adolescents merit special consideration for several reasons:

- They belong to the age group of 10-19 years old, constituting a distinct subset within the broader young population aged 10-24 years old.
- Adolescence represents a unique stage of human development, crucial for establishing the foundations of good health and development.
- Adolescents undergo rapid and unique physical, cognitive, and psychosocial growth, shaping their emotions, thoughts, decisions, and interactions with the world around them.
- Investing in adolescence, given its profound impact and long-term benefits, is essential for addressing their distinctive needs and challenges.
- This investment not only ensures a healthy transition into adulthood but also influences the trajectory of societies and communities as a whole.

Young people's access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

- **Universal health coverage (UHC):** It is fundamentally important for young people to have access to affordable healthcare, including to sexual and reproductive health, as a basic human right. UHC should be implemented within a broader vision for inclusive development, ensuring equitable access to essential health services, including SRH **for all individuals** and promoting societal well-being.
- **Promotion of health and well-being:** Access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education, and services empowers young people to make informed decisions about their bodies and relationships. This knowledge equips them with essential skills to protect their health and well-being, including preventing unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and HIV/AIDS.
- **Reduced unintended pregnancies:** Young people who have access to contraception and family planning services are less likely to experience unintended pregnancies, which can have profound social, economic, and health consequences.
- **Prevention of STIs and HIV/AIDS:** Comprehensive sexual education and access to condoms and other barrier methods help young people protect themselves against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS. Early detection, treatment, and prevention services can significantly reduce the transmission of STIs and HIV/AIDS among young people and prevent long-term health complications.

- **Empowerment and gender Equality:** Providing young people, especially girls, with sexual and reproductive health information and services promotes gender equality by empowering them to make autonomous decisions about their bodies, sexuality, and relationships. It helps challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes and promotes respect, consent, and healthy relationships.
- **Educational Attainment and Economic Opportunities:** Unintended pregnancies and early parenthood can disrupt young people's educational attainment and limit their future economic opportunities. By providing access to sexual and reproductive health services, young people can delay childbearing until they are ready, pursue their education and career goals, and contribute to their communities' socio-economic development.
- **Mental Health and Well-being:** Access to confidential and youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services ensures that young people receive support for their mental health and well-being, including counseling, information on healthy relationships, and referrals to specialized care when needed.
- **Rights-based Approach:** Access to sexual and reproductive health information, education, and services is a fundamental human right recognized by international human rights frameworks, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action. Governments have an obligation to fulfill young people's rights to health, education, and information, regardless of their age, gender, or socio-economic status.

Furthermore, sexual and reproductive health is included in the 2023 United Nations Political Declaration of the United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response². Overall, ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health information, education, and services for young people is essential for promoting their health, well-being, and human rights, and supporting their transition to adulthood.

Investing in the early years of children

- In 2022, the UN estimated that there were 5.7 million deaths of children from birth to 18 years; most of these deaths occurred in children under 5 years of age (87%) with nearly half of those deaths occurring in the first month of life. In addition 2 million stillbirths occur each year, most of these are preventable deaths, as well as 13 million babies born prematurely resulting in nearly one million deaths and millions of disabilities each year. Failure to provide the right care not only results in preventable deaths but also reverberates across the life-course and across generations, with staggering human and economic costs. Ensuring access to quality health care in pregnancy, childbirth and the early years is one of the biggest challenges to be tackled and will have the greatest return on investment. There are inspiring examples of progress across the world and lessons can be learned from these and applied to achieve progress in all regions and all settings, powered by a people-centered movement that engages families and communities to inspire action.

² <https://www.un.org/pga/77/wp-content/uploads/sites/105/2023/09/PPPR-Final-Text.pdf>