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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement submitted by Nanjing World Youth Development Service Center, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status*

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[6 August 2026]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Empowering Youth through Digital Technologies to Guarantee Development Rights and Foster Global Equality

1. Introduction and contextual framework

1. Nanjing World Youth Development Service Center, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, submits this written statement to the Human Rights Council at its sixty-third regular session under Agenda Item 3. This submission focuses on the imperative of safeguarding youth development rights, advancing social equity, and utilizing digital innovation to bridge global socio-economic divides.

2. Youth represent a vital demographic force capable of driving global progress, innovation, and sustainable development. However, youth worldwide face persistent structural hurdles, including fragmented access to quality education, limited participation in public governance, persistent employment inequalities, and a rapidly expanding digital divide. The right to development—as a comprehensive, inalienable human right—mandates that every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural, and political development. Guaranteeing youth development rights is therefore not only a moral obligation but a fundamental legal and structural prerequisite for realizing human rights universally.

3. In an era marked by rapid technological acceleration, digital tools have emerged as essential determinants of social mobility and human rights enjoyment. While digital technology offers unprecedented platforms for empowerment, equal access to these technologies remains uneven across regions and socio-economic groups. Addressing digital inequality is central to safeguarding the right to development and ensuring that vulnerable and underrepresented youth populations are fully empowered to shape their future.

2. Youth rights safeguards and global engagement capabilities

4. Protecting the right of young people to participate in public affairs requires the creation of institutional channels through which youth perspectives can directly inform decision-making processes. Nanjing World Youth Development Service Center has long prioritized building global capacity and expanding practical avenues for youth engagement on international platforms. By fostering interdisciplinary skills, global competency, and civic responsibility, the organization enables young leaders to contribute meaningfully to global governance and rights protection.

5. In recent years, Nanjing World Youth Development Service Center has proactively sponsored and facilitated the participation of youth delegates at major United Nations conferences, international summits, and regional multilateral forums. These initiatives ensure that diverse youth voices—particularly from developing nations and emerging economies—are included in discussions concerning sustainable development, social justice, and human rights implementation.

6. Through dedicated capacity-building initiatives, leadership training programs, and research mentorship led by global scholars and practitioners, young representatives are equipped to articulate policy solutions, conduct rigorous human rights advocacy, and champion community-level development. Providing youth with direct entry points to international forums reinforces their political and civic participation rights, directly supporting the principles outlined in international human rights instruments.

3. Leveraging digital technologies for inclusive development: HLPF virtual side event

7. To advance actionable strategies for youth inclusion, Nanjing World Youth Development Service Center convened an official virtual side event in July during the High-

level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The event focused on the transformative role of digital technologies in fostering equitable development, guaranteeing education access, and expanding youth economic opportunities.

8. The virtual side event brought together more than 100 participants from across the global community, including international youth delegates, academic experts, technological innovators, and civil society advocates. The discussion provided a dedicated space to examine how digital tools can dismantle traditional barriers to equal development and create decentralized, accessible platforms for vulnerable groups.

9. Key takeaways and operational strategies highlighted during the event include:

- **Digital Literacy as a Fundamental Capacity:** Participants emphasized that digital literacy is no longer merely a professional skill but a foundational capacity required to exercise economic and social rights. Ensuring universal access to digital education programs is crucial for mitigating youth unemployment and marginalization.
- **Technological Empowerment for Equal Opportunity:** The session demonstrated how cloud-based learning platforms, open-source educational repositories, and remote mentorship networks allow young people in geographically remote or socio-economically disadvantaged areas to access high-quality resources and professional development opportunities.
- **Inclusive Governance and Digital Civic Spaces:** Attendees analyzed how secure digital platforms enable young citizens to organize, participate in community decision-making, and monitor human rights implementation, thereby enhancing democratic engagement and institutional accountability.

10. The outcomes of the HLPF virtual side event confirmed that digital technology, when deployed ethically and inclusively, serves as a powerful equalizer. By reducing geographic and financial barriers, digital innovation guarantees that youth from diverse backgrounds can exercise their right to development on an equal footing.

4. Structural challenges in the digital and youth development landscape

11. Despite significant progress, systemic obstacles continue to hinder the full realization of youth development rights in the digital age. Nanjing World Youth Development Service Center identifies the following core challenges requiring immediate international attention:

- **The Broadening Digital Divide:** Substantial disparities persist in internet connectivity, device affordability, and technological infrastructure between urban and rural regions, as well as between developed and developing nations. Millions of youth remain excluded from the benefits of the digital economy.
- **Disproportionate Impact on Marginalized Youth:** Young women, youth with disabilities, rural populations, and displaced persons face compound discrimination in accessing digital tools, further aggravating existing socio-economic inequalities.
- **Algorithmic Bias and Digital Rights Protections:** The unchecked proliferation of digital technologies can perpetuate algorithmic biases, data privacy violations, and online harassment, disproportionately affecting young users and threatening their civil and political liberties.
- **Inadequate Youth Representation in Policy Formulation:** Youth remain significantly underrepresented in the design, governance, and evaluation of digital policies and national development frameworks, leading to interventions that fail to address their lived realities.

5. Recommendations for action

12. To address these structural barriers, safeguard youth development rights, and harness digital technologies for sustainable equity, Nanjing World Youth Development Service

Center urges Member States, United Nations bodies, and civil society entities to adopt the following measures under Agenda Item 3:

- **Ensure Equitable Infrastructure Investment:** Member States should prioritize public investment in affordable broadband infrastructure, digital hardware, and clean energy solutions to guarantee universal, non-discriminatory internet access for all youth, especially in underserved regions.
- **Institutionalize Youth Participation in Multilateral Decision-Making:** United Nations agencies and national governments must establish permanent, formal mechanisms for youth consultation in policy formulation, particularly regarding digital governance, economic strategy, and human rights protection.
- **Enhance Comprehensive Digital Literacy Frameworks:** Educational institutions and civil society partners should integrate comprehensive digital literacy, data privacy awareness, and human rights education into formal and non-formal curricula to prepare young people for the evolving digital landscape.
- **Safeguard Human Rights in the Digital Domain:** Governments and technology stakeholders must enact and enforce robust regulatory frameworks to protect young people from data exploitation, algorithmic discrimination, and digital violence, ensuring that digital spaces remain safe and conducive to development.
- **Foster International Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships:** International organizations, civil society, and the private sector should expand collaborative initiatives—such as cross-border youth exchanges, technology transfer programs, and digital innovation incubators—to accelerate progress toward equal development rights globally.

6. Conclusion

13. Nanjing World Youth Development Service Center remains firmly committed to advancing human rights, promoting international cooperation, and empowering the global youth population. Ensuring the right to development for young people requires continuous, targeted action to bridge the digital divide and build inclusive participation channels. By leveraging digital technology as an engine for equality and justice, the international community can fulfill its pledge to achieve sustainable development and guarantee human rights for generations to come.
