



ICAPP/1SYW/003

**Statement of the ICAPP Youth Wing on Education and
Social Protection Mechanisms for Youth During and After COVID-19**

1. We, the representatives of 33 political parties from 24 Countries, gathered virtually for the Special Video Conference of the ICAPP Youth Wing. The meeting was co-hosted by the ICAPP Youth Wing and the ICAPP Secretariat and held on 3 February 2021. The meeting was organized over an online platform due to physical constraints as a result of COVID-19. The main theme of the conference was “Education and Social Protection Mechanisms for Youth During and After COVID-19.” The conference was structured into two sessions: the first session focused on the topic of enabling continuity in learning for youth, and the second session on expanding social protection mechanisms for young people who have lost their jobs or experienced income reductions.
2. We recalled takeaways from our five previous meetings of the ICAPP Youth Wing in Kuala Lumpur (2012), Baku (2013), Colombo (2014), Moscow (2018), and Baku (2019), which reiterated the ICAPP’s commitment to youth development in Asia and beyond. We revisited key points in the 2019 “Baku Statement for the 5th Meeting of the ICAPP Youth Wing,” which called upon political parties and governments to increase international cooperation to promote the participation of youth in socio-economic activities, to provide structural guidelines for vocational training and employment of youth, and to protect youth rights and equal opportunities.
3. We acknowledged the difficult situation youth are facing in the area of education due to COVID-19. In particular, we took note of how one in eight young people (13%) who were studying or combining work and study before the pandemic were left without access to any form of education. We recognized that the situation is especially acute in low-income countries, where many do not have access to remote learning tools and the internet. We noted that young people’s nutrition and well-being were also being affected as schools are often a source of free meals and health needs.
4. We acknowledged the difficult situation youth are facing in the area of employment due to COVID-19. In particular, we took note of how one in six young people (17%) who were employed before the pandemic became unemployed and two out of five young people (42%) saw reductions in their incomes. We further recognized that young people are more likely to be the subject of precarious job contracts and working arrangements and therefore, more likely to lack adequate social protection than others.

5. In response to the current challenges faced by youth, we underlined the importance of raising awareness and promoting appropriate policy responses that incorporate the whole-of-society and intergenerational approaches to prevent a long-lasting and damaging impact on youth, taking into account the significant disruptions across education and employment as a result of COVID-19. In the sphere of education, we emphasized the responsibility of governments, political parties, private sector and all other stakeholders in enabling continuity in learning. We encouraged ICAPP members to join the international community in taking actions to expand internet access, digital infrastructure and connectivity as well as to arrange remote learning solutions through high-tech, low-tech and no-tech solutions depending on young people's access to digital connectivity. We also highlighted the importance of caring for young people of low-income backgrounds that rely on schools to meet their nutrition and health needs.
6. In the sphere of employment, we called upon governments and political parties to devise social protection measures such as unemployment support and access to healthcare that can reach young people. We also drew attention to measures that could improve the working conditions of young people, especially those engaged in precarious work in the informal economy.
7. We expressed our strong support for the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development's (UN IANYD) 2020 "Statement on COVID-19 & Youth," which endorsed partnering with young people, recognizing young people's own actions and their potential to advance the fight against the pandemic; understanding the specific impacts the pandemic will have on young people; and ensuring COVID-19 related responses will uphold young people's human rights and incorporate their needs.
8. We emphasized concerted action to not only develop and examine youth policies, but also recognize the important role young people can play in sustainable development efforts, including climate change, unemployment, poverty, gender equality, conflict and migration. We concurred with the UN Secretary-General's 2017 report on youth development, which asserted that the "pledges made in the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind first, as well as its affirmation to be people-centred, ensure that youth are included in all aspects of the Agenda." As such, we called upon governments and political parties to design and implement policy frameworks that can improve the situation of young people at both the national and international levels. Also, we agreed to share updates on the progress made on these policy measures at the upcoming 6th Youth Wing Meeting, which will be held in Mongolia later this year.

9. We considered it critical to establish active partnerships among all stakeholders to implement effective policy measures for young people who are affected by COVID-19. In this regard, we highly appreciated the participation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) in the conference, and the insights and expertise shared by their representatives.
10. We emphasized a strong and urgent need for international partnership and solidarity among the ICAPP members in the fight against COVID-19. We called on responsible governments and political parties to share best practices, experiences, and low-cost educational tools and methods with the ICAPP global family to help weather the global challenges caused by COVID-19; and thereby, advance the spirit of building a community and improve the shared future of humanity through the assurance of youth education, health security, adequate employment opportunities, and enhanced quality of life.
11. We expressed our appreciation to the ICAPP Youth Wing and the ICAPP Secretariat for the successful organization of the event. We also shared our excitement and anticipation for the next meeting of the ICAPP Youth Wing, which will be hosted by the Mongolian People's Party in the latter half of this year.

Adopted on 3 February 2021