

Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2019

24-31 October 2019

Youth Agenda Forum

26 September 2019, Gothenburg, Sweden

Youth Open Letter to Heads of International Development Organizations and States

Dear Heads of International Development Organizations and States,

We, the participants of UNESCO's Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2019 Youth Agenda Forum, operating as a collaborative initiative of youth, and guided by the principles of **Media and Information Literate Citizens: Informed, Engaged, Empowered**, present this letter to you as leaders.

Thanks to UNESCO, this fourth Global Media and Information Literacy Week Youth Agenda Forum has been achieved and hosted by Region Västra Götaland, in co-operation with the University of Gothenburg, the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO, and other partners.

In today's current political and cultural climate, we, as youth, face unprecedented development issues such as xenophobia, racism, disinformation, hate speech, and gender inequality, among other challenges.

However, by putting emphasis on media and information literacy, we recognize that this can empower us with good practices, knowledge, and skills to engage meaningfully in advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We are convinced that media and information literacy can help us to contribute to good governance, peacebuilding, equality, diversity, and to addressing the above-mentioned challenges, in particular hate speech, as stressed by the UN Secretary-General in the *UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech*. Most significantly, we have highlighted the commitment of global digital citizens to use media and information literacy as a tool for active civic engagement in democratic and social activities, and the vital role of youth as actors and partners in achieving this goal.

We are committed [MIL CLICKers](#). These are our calls to action in relation to key opportunities and needs:

Commitment to media and information literacy for Global Digital Citizenship

Through the ideas illuminated today by professors, journalists, information and library experts, social media actors, gamers, cartoonists, and other stakeholders, it is evident that individual and collective actions of youth shape global media and information literacy practices. **We therefore call upon you to 1) support the development of national and international media and information literacy policies and programmes to increase access to media and information literacy learning, 2) introduce media and information literacy as a**

mandatory component of curricula into national education systems at all levels, and 3) educate all citizens, especially youth, on contemporary information, technological and media practices, so that we become informed, engaged, and empowered stewards of communications.

Media and Information Literacy as a Tool to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

The ideas and issues highlighted today clearly demonstrate that, by encouraging and fostering media and information literacy education, the UN and governments can make strides towards achieving the SDGs. For example, media and information literate citizens can work collaboratively to improve global partnerships (SDG 17). Equipped with the analytical skills to critically and effectively consume and disseminate information with respect for human rights, they can work toward advancing gender equality (SDG 5). Through these processes, citizens can also greater build strong institutions and work towards peace and justice (SDG 16). ***Acknowledging the UN's firm commitment to the SDGs, we call upon you to recognize the role of media and information literacy in furtherance of the SDGs, and to commit to incorporating media and information literacy in your strategies.***

Media and Information Literacy Countering Hate Speech

In online and print media, voices are too frequently politicised and used to support hate speech, inciting racism, hostility, and violence. ***We request that you address these issues by advancing media and information literacy, and promote respect for non-discrimination, tolerance, and gender equality, particularly in the digital era.***

The Vital Role of Youth in the Sustainable Development Process

Educating young citizens on accountable, ethical and intelligent use of information as well as engagement with technology and media can contribute to tackling issues of intolerance, hate and conflict. By equipping youth with key skills and knowledge and enabling all youth to assess our attitudes in terms of human rights values, we can take the lead to be peer educators. ***As this Youth Agenda Forum has affirmed the vital role of youth, we accordingly recommend that governments around the world support youth initiatives related to media and information literacy and allocate resources to further global media and information literacy development.***

This letter has been endorsed by over 900 MIL CLICKers from more than 110 countries.

We will distribute this letter online, find avenues to transmit it directly to Heads of International Development Organizations and Heads of Governments, and call for more youth to sign this letter.

Participants of the Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2019 Youth Agenda Forum
and other MIL CLICKers