



UNGA87

Discours d'Elise Verlinden et Femke Dreezen lors de la 3ème Commission

5 octobre 2026

Honorable Chairs, colleagues, fellow youth delegates

We are grateful for the opportunity to bring youth perspectives into this discussion.

In Belgium, our generation is directly impacted by the choices made today: from extreme heatwaves and devastating fires affecting our environment, to the rising cost of living and the negative polarization fuelled by global armed conflicts and disinformation. As we stand here today, our goal is not only to reflect on the challenges that we face. We want to shed light on the power and resilience of young people in this fast-changing world.

Throughout history, young people have always been at the forefront of social and political change, challenging injustice in diverse and creative ways. Yet we continue to face significant barriers in doing so. Civic spaces are shrinking, freedom of expression and other civil liberties are increasingly under pressure, and young people remain underrepresented or excluded from formal and informal decision-making processes. No country is free from challenges in this regard, with young people often finding their views dismissed as too idealistic or inexperienced to be taken seriously.

We want to be involved, not merely consulted after decisions have been made. We want to participate meaningfully and equally in decision-making processes that impact our lives. Therefore, youth participation should be made possible in every setting, in person or online, and on all levels.

Global citizenship education is essential to this effort. It fosters civic awareness, civic participation and a culture of peace, while equipping young people with critical skills to navigate disinformation and rapidly changing technologies, like AI. Youth organizations play a crucial role in this regard. They create spaces where young people can express themselves and contribute to their communities. They therefore need recognition and protection.

Education and youth participation are also central to the Youth, Peace and Security agenda, empowering young people to build social cohesion, restore trust and prevent conflict. The commitments made through the Youth 2030 Strategy and the Pact for the Future must therefore lead to meaningful opportunities for young people to do so. Let's translate these into action.

If we are to build a United Nations that truly delivers for all, young people must not only be heard. We must have our rights upheld and our civic spaces protected to shape our future, together.

Thank you.



Elise Verlinden,
Déléguee ONU Jeunesse et Société du Forum des Jeunes.

Contact : youth.UN@forumdesjeunes.be

Femke Dreezen,
Déléguee ONU Jeunesse du Vlaamse Jeugdraad.



Forum des Jeunes



@forum.jeunes



02/413.29.30



forum.jeunes@cfwb.be