

Role of young people and children below 18 years old in achieving SDGs and particularly SDG 6 (Water and Sanitation)

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Greetings, Excellencies and distinguished guests. I'm Rodoshee from Bangladesh representing #CovidUnder19, an initiative to meaningfully involve children in decision-making in the post-pandemic world. As the only child on this panel, I'm here to highlight children's participation in achieving the SDGs generally and SDG 6 specifically. The ultimate goal for each and every nation of this world should be achieving the SDGs by 2030 as promised and uphold children's human rights, including the rights to be heard. Children are future leaders and full of significant ideas. SDG 6 is an important goal to make earth a sustainable planet where people from every corner of earth will live safe, healthy and prosperous lives.

It is a matter of sorrow and shame that, globally, there's still 844 million people who lack access to adequate water supply and 2.3 billion people don't have basic sanitation services. In my country Bangladesh, there's 68 million people who lack access to safely managed and clean water sources and 100 million people lack access to safely managed household sanitation facilities. This is a great problem for children, especially girls, who often miss their school to collect water and because they face obstacles in meeting their hygiene needs with dignity.

Most importantly, leaders of all states and nations must facilitate children and youth to speak up to claim their rights for a healthy environment and take steps against corruption. Every adult must include children in environmental decision-making. Governments must support children's participation by providing child-friendly and accessible versions of all documents and forge a way that connects children, young people and adults intergenerationally and inclusively in policy-making to create better futures.

When adults and youths support children's participation, children can take enormous steps to tackle climate issues and SDG 6 specifically, such as:

- School-going kids and youths can access governmental or non-governmental funding to launch projects to create awareness about using water and clean sanitation facilities, storing rainwater and protecting underground aquifers.
- Children can engage with local governments to reform WASH facilities in their communities.
- Children should have access to environmental education to create and share more effective technologies.
- Children can raise their voices in parliaments and create positive changes with support from leaders and youth parliamentarians.

In conclusion, I'm inviting everyone in this meeting to sincerely realize the importance of children's rights in order to reach the SDGs.

Thank you