

Wantoe Liberia Youth Delegate Plenary statement

Chair, Excellences, Youth, Participant.

There are 125 million people in need of humanitarian assistance worldwide. It is essential these people, affected by conflict and disease, receive health care. In March 2014, Liberia was faced with the spread of a cross-border Ebola virus infection, which infected 372 health workers that led to the death of 180.

The Ebola virus was able to spread due to pre-existing structural vulnerabilities of Liberia's health system, including inadequate and poorly motivated staff, limited infrastructure and equipment, and poor quality of care.

The impact of the EVD on the health system included health facility closures, community distrust and fear of local health services. Unprotected health workers refused to provide routine health services. This in turn led to the 10,200 cases of Ebola and the death of 4,800 Liberians.

Around the world, patients, nurses, doctors or any other health professional injured and killed in attacks on health facilities. This restricts people's access to health services when they require medical attention and is therefore a violation of their human rights.

Globally, young people have demonstrated that we are the first to respond and last to vacate humanitarian crises. In the midst of the staggering spread of Ebola I organized my youth group to spread prevention messages. We risked our lives to visit areas under quarantine, influencing local leader to change the behaviour of people in their communities. We also conducted radio and media talk shows and I wrote blogs to explain the situation we faced to the world.

Amazingly we conducted the first assessments of Ebola orphans to estimate the number of orphans and Semi-orphans during the Ebola outbreak and what they needed. We asked for support from NGOs and the government and advocated for support for clothing, food, shelter and education for the Ebola orphans. This was later provided. Liberia's young people helped to distribute those items and provide the orphans with psychosocial support.

We also carried out a national petition to increase budgetary support for our education and Ebola orphans, after all schools were closed and education stopped for a whole year. Our president highlighted this petition during a donor conference in Brussels and we have subsequently seen a new strategy to support young people to return to schools as well as commitments to increase in the education budget by 5%.

As a local youth group, we could not access NGO funds. We had to use our own money, to carry-out our activities, without the necessary protection equipment.

As youth we call for reform within international humanitarian funding mechanisms, loosening restrictions, utilising new payment methods, and enabling finances to be distributed effectively to the community organisations, especially youth groups and directly to the people who need it most.

More funding must be provided to build local capacities and support institutions, health care and education services. This will strengthen social system and counter aid dependency.

The Ebola outbreak has left over 4000 orphans and semi-orphans that are in desperate need of longer-term support. I hope the World Humanitarian Summit will remember them.

Chair, Excellences, Youth, and, Participant,

There are more young people in the world than ever before, creating unprecedented potential for economic and social progress.

There are about 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 and the largest youth population ever. Many of them are concentrated in developing countries.

In fact, in the world's 48 least developed countries, children or adolescents make up a majority of the population.

Youth between the age of 13 to 24 approximate 17 percent of the world population whereas youth and children Estimate 40 percent of the world population

There is no Humanitarian Action and response without Youth been at the center of its implementation

As we consider the world's new humanitarian agenda, youth must be at its center. The Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action is our gateway to make the change humanity needs.

Support it now!