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H. RES. 715

Calling on the United States and international donors to prioritize investments in children and youth in development and humanitarian assistance policies, programs, and activities.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

Ms. MACE submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Calling on the United States and international donors to prioritize investments in children and youth in development and humanitarian assistance policies, programs, and activities.

Whereas globally, 90 percent of the world’s young people live in the developing world;

Whereas children and youth bear the disproportionate burdens of poverty, which have been exacerbated by the COVID–19 pandemic and the resulting economic crisis;

Whereas half of the world’s population is under the age of 30 today, and thus engaging youth and emerging leaders is essential to achieving the United States most important foreign policy objectives;

Whereas the perspectives of children and youth are frequently not prioritized in foreign assistance responses;

Whereas the world's countries with the greatest population of young people are vulnerable to the influence of donors whose funding does not align with American values;

Whereas research has demonstrated when countries invest in their young people, substantial benefits can result, including reduced reliance on foreign assistance from governments like the United States, and boost national economic growth and global economic stability;

Whereas, according to the National Security Strategy, the United States should not “leave our future vulnerable to the whims of those who do not share our vision for a world that is free, open, prosperous, and secure.”;

Whereas harnessing the potential of children and youth can create prosperous, safe, educated, stable, and resilient families, communities, and countries as well as reduce dependency on donor assistance;

Whereas in contrast, inaction has the potential to cost the global economy \$21,000,000,000,000 in lost lifetime earnings of today's student generation as a result of pandemic school closures, compounding inequality and shortfalls leading to skills mismatches, and persistently high levels of young people not in employment, education, or training (the youth NEET rate) that threaten gross domestic product and economic growth;

Whereas United States foreign assistance approaches have already yielded strong returns for young people, as well as the American taxpayers;

Whereas, since the year 2000 alone, United States foreign assistance has, for example, contributed to cutting global

maternal, infant, and child mortality rates in half and to cutting the number of children in child labor by one-third;

Whereas, in fiscal year 2020 alone, United States development programs reached over 25,400,000 learners in 57 countries, according to the United States Agency for International Development;

Whereas because interventions for children and youth are spread across programs, agencies, and bureaus, tracking the return on United States investments is difficult;

Whereas greater coordination within and across agencies is necessary to ensure that young people are supported, and United States taxpayer dollars are maximized;

Whereas for example, the McGovern-Dole school feeding program coordinates across global food security, international education, and the water and sanitation sectors; and

Whereas the program, which American farmers are at the heart of, has provided 5,500,000,000 school meals, supported more than 31,000,000 children and families in 48 countries, and donated more than 1,300,000 tons of United States agricultural commodities: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) urges the Secretary of State to coordinate
3 with all government agencies managing foreign as-
4 sistance to develop a strategy that directly addresses
5 youth needs and youth engagement as was required
6 in the bipartisan fiscal year 2022 State, Foreign Op-

1 erations, and Related Programs (SFOPs) appropria-
2 tions bill;

3 (2) calls upon the Department of State, the
4 United States Agency for International Develop-
5 ment, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the
6 United States Development Finance Corporation,
7 and all other relevant agencies who support children
8 and youth abroad to improve tracking and
9 disaggregation of funding benefiting children and
10 youth by—

11 (A) compiling data that should be collected
12 against dedicated indicators on an annual basis,
13 and reported to the Office of United States
14 Foreign Assistance Resources; and

15 (B) ensuring that these indicators should
16 include a common understanding of what con-
17 stitutes a “child” and a “youth” and develop
18 more consistent approaches to track
19 disaggregated data ongoing and disaggregating
20 by age, sex, disability, etc.;

21 (3) urges all agencies working abroad to im-
22 prove outcomes for children and youth to engage di-
23 rectly with young people as key stakeholders, and
24 United States foreign assistance that targets, en-
25 gages, or otherwise reaches and impacts young peo-

1 ple, especially those most marginalized, should
2 strengthen mechanisms and platforms, such as
3 youth advisory councils, to facilitate the direct par-
4 ticipation of young people on issues affecting them
5 most intimately;

6 (4) urges relevant agencies to increase inter-
7 and intra-agency coordination mechanisms and fund-
8 ing responses to reimagine development and humani-
9 tarian assistance diplomacy, policies, programs, and
10 activities, in order to ensure that the United States
11 foreign assistance integrates multiple issues facing
12 young people and is flexible for local needs, such ac-
13 tions would allow for more youth-led organizations
14 to receive funding, and for greater multisectoral
15 interventions that effectively account for the entirety
16 of a young person's life stages to support them and
17 address their safety, education, health, nutrition and
18 food security, economic participation, and civic en-
19 gagement; and

20 (5) calls upon the leadership of relevant agen-
21 cies to review existing positions and structures in
22 order to elevate children and youth in foreign assist-
23 ance across all agencies implementing work that im-
24 pacts them, including ways to better operationalize
25 solutions led in both development and humanitarian

1 work that allows for meeting the needs of children
2 and youth, including those living in crisis, conflict,
3 and disaster-affected settings, which would require
4 increased opportunities for collaboration across bu-
5 reaus, divisions, offices, and missions to address the
6 needs of children and youth, including identifying
7 any authorities or funding needed from Congress to
8 increase the effectiveness of such efforts.

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