

***IAP at the 3rd Annual Global Citizens' dialogue:  
Adolescents as Agents of Change***  
*Geneva, 24 May 2017*

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In giving remarks, I'd like to go back to the two questions which were raised at the beginning of this remarkable event.

- 1) Have we done enough for adolescents and young people to ensure their rights are recognized and their potentials fully realized?
- 2) Are there enough meaningful platforms for adolescents and youth to voice their opinions to policy makers?

A platform like this, what we experienced today, a direct, frank and constructive exchange between governments, civil society and other stakeholders is what we need so much more of, at all levels, and especially in-country and community, local levels.

For the IAP, this has been an extraordinary opportunity. And so very timely, since our report theme this year as you know is about answering one key question: *Where's the World's Accountability to Adolescents?*

Just to get everyone on the same page about what Secretary General's IAP is, since we are a newborn of little more than a year, we have been mandated to serve as the fully autonomous voice on what is and what is not working in terms of accountability for delivery on the Global Strategy commitments. And there are high expectations: everyone seems to be asking us to be 'bold', to 'say what needs to be said', and 'state what no one else will really say'.

Our task is to zero in on equity, on human rights, on transformation. We gather the evidence to inform our reports and recommendations. We aim to follow an inclusive process, by gathering and inviting perspectives from across stakeholders—governments, civil society, UN agencies, young people, women's and human rights organizations, donors, global funds and so forth. This includes our annual Call for Evidence, issued earlier this year—for which we received rich contributions, including from the Ministry of Health of Uruguay among others represented here today.

What so many of you have shared today by way of promising and inspiring practice is most encouraging. Evidence on this topic of accountability and adolescents is not easy to come by. It is not easily found or documented in international scientific journals, or not enough—that is, not *yet!*

Investing in accountability *per se*-- what it takes to get to meaningful accountability processes, to nurture 'virtuous circles' of accountability-- is part of the accountability gap: We need more investments in civil society, in social accountability, in independent evidence-based capacities to effectively engage in decision-making, with ministries of health and of finance, and to impact for change. This takes leadership from government, from the UN system, and from civil society itself, to make this new Global Strategy an even bigger game-changer than the first for the health and human rights of all.

If all of us are committed to this course then by 2030, we could take a look back and a look back and appreciate our collective achievements in making the lives better and healthier for every woman, every child and every adolescent. We could appreciate the fact we have walked the talk, and that we have been accountable.