

## **terre des hommes Germany e. V.**

### **INTERNATIONAL YOUTH NETWORK DELEGATES CONFERENCE MOTION**

**Guided** by the Decision of General Assembly 2011, through SS 13 (1) of the statutes hereinafter referred to as Delegates Order terre des hommes Germany e.V., which establishes the composition of the delegates conference in SS 1 read together with SS8 which establishes the composition of the youth delegates, and the aspirations of the Daring transformation – for an earth of humanity, The position of tdh Germany e.V.

**Pursuant** to the values of tdh,

**Motivated** by the urgent need to foster meaningful partnerships and the desire for the full and equal realization of child and Youth participation across all levels of decision making.

The delegates conference hereby puts this motion as a proposal to the general Assembly to amend the Delegates Order tdh Germany to increase the number of youth delegates attending the Delegates Conference with voting rights and to further enforce a balance between delegates from the Global North and Global South, amongst other proposals contained herein.

#### **Current status**

The basic purpose of the delegates' conference is to promote the idea of real cooperation instead of a mere North-South transfer of resources. The imbalance of power in the donor-recipient relationship should be balanced, paternalism avoided and the work of terre des hommes legitimized through the democratic process and representative participation.<sup>1</sup> The position paper "Daring transformation - for an earth of humanity" also proposes the realization and application of an equal partnership between the Global North and the Global South.<sup>2</sup>

The current delegates' conference, which will take place in June 2023, is composed of 40 delegates and currently 6 young people from the International Youth Network, with one youth person being delegated from each region. The 2023 Delegates conference has a total of 18 delegates from the regions of the Global South and 22 people from Germany.<sup>3</sup> We note that having 6 youth delegates out of the 40 delegates gives the International Youth network a 14.3 % vote at the conference, whereas fundamental to the work of tdh are children and youth who are its largest beneficiary population, thus this level of

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<sup>1</sup> tdh 2023: Summarized: Delegates' Conference: <<https://www.tdh.de/wer-wir-sind/delegates-conference-2023/knowledge/>>

<sup>2</sup> tdh 2022: Discussion paper: Daring Transformation – for an Earth of Humanity, [https://www.tdh.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/inhalte/02\\_wir\\_ueber\\_uns/Delegates\\_Conference\\_2023/Proposals/Fuer\\_eine\\_Erde\\_der\\_Menschlichkeit\\_Input\\_DK\\_Prozess\\_ENGLISCH.pdf](https://www.tdh.de/fileadmin/user_upload/inhalte/02_wir_ueber_uns/Delegates_Conference_2023/Proposals/Fuer_eine_Erde_der_Menschlichkeit_Input_DK_Prozess_ENGLISCH.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> See table in the appendix with the elected delegates to the Delegates Conference 2023, <[https://www.tdh.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/inhalte/02\\_wir\\_ueber\\_uns/Delegates\\_Conference\\_2023/Elected\\_Delegates\\_2023.pdf](https://www.tdh.de/fileadmin/user_upload/inhalte/02_wir_ueber_uns/Delegates_Conference_2023/Elected_Delegates_2023.pdf)>.

disproportionate representation limits the extent to which youths can raise their voices and influence decisions. To this instance the IYN Delegates votes become a mere tiebreaker.

Children's participation is a right and one of the four fundamental principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC<sup>4</sup>), along with non-discrimination, the best interests of the child and the right to life, survival, and development. The CRC states that it must be ensured that children and youth are free to express their views on matters that affect them and that these voices are taken into account (Article 12 of the CRC). Globally, 2.3 billion people are under the age of 18. This means that around one in three people in the world is a child (under 18). In many tdh-partner countries, children and young people make up the majority of the population.<sup>5</sup>

The current composition further fails to establish balanced gender representation of youth at the delegates conference. The 5<sup>th</sup> bullet under the delegates criteria emphasizes the need to have a gender balance, concerning partner delegates, this section refers to respective project regions. For the Youth delegates this position of gender balance is only maintained at regional election level where every region has one delegate and sub delegate guided by the need to balance gender, however every region is at liberty to either have a male or female delegate representing at the conference, thus at any given point during the DC only one gender of youths is represented from each region. According to the composition of the DC, the approach of the DC is somehow adult focused in terms of methodology and regulations.

We further note, that (1) of the current 40 delegates, a total of 22 delegates are coming from Germany, giving Germany the deciding authority against the other regions. (2) As prescribed by the Delegates Order, The German Volunteer delegates are elected by the General Assembly of tdh Germany (SS 4), there however is no guiding criteria for the selection in terms of age and gender as well as a clear outline of the composition of volunteer delegates. This has resulted in under-representation of the Youths taking note that the majority of members who are elected as volunteer delegates are senior members.

The composition of volunteer delegates and the representation of German at the delegates conference facilitates the defining of "development activities by external actors, i.e., states, international institutions and international NGOs from the Global North, often overlooking actual local needs and problems"<sup>6</sup>and defeats the call made through the Daring transformation paper to rethink international cooperation and change perceptions on international cooperation.

## **Proposals**

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<sup>4</sup> UN 1989, <<https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>>.

<sup>5</sup> Note: 89.3% of all children and young people worldwide live in countries of the Global South. Unicef 2021, <<https://www.unicef.org/media/114636/file/SOWC-2021-full-report-English.pdf>>, 191.Regional Classification: <https://data.unicef.org/regionalclassifications/>

<sup>6</sup> tdh 2022, Daring transformation for an earth of humanity, <[https://www.tdh.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/inhalte/02\\_wir\\_ueber\\_uns/Delegates\\_Conference\\_2023/Proposals/Fuer\\_eine\\_Erde\\_der\\_Menschlichkeit\\_Input\\_DK\\_Prozess\\_ENGLISCH.pdf](https://www.tdh.de/fileadmin/user_upload/inhalte/02_wir_ueber_uns/Delegates_Conference_2023/Proposals/Fuer_eine_Erde_der_Menschlichkeit_Input_DK_Prozess_ENGLISCH.pdf)>, 151.

We propose to the general assembly that

1. there will be an increase in the number of youth delegates from the current 6 to 12 delegates of the international Youth Network. We will further propose to decrease the number of volunteer member Delegates in order to not extend the current number of 42 delegates and to keep the DC decision-making effective and to avoid increasing costs.
2. the age of the youth delegates is between 15-25 years upon the Delegates Conference, with 50 % of the 12 delegates being under the age of 18 years to ensure the participation of children at the conference.
3. Additionally, the representation of children and youth should be ensured at the Standing Committee (StanCom) by having at least a total of three children and youth delegates. To ensure full participation, the structures and the way of working should be revised.
4. there be balanced representation of delegates and number of votes to be cast from the Global North and the Global South.
5. there will be a gender balance in each region attending the delegates conference.
6. there be a clear guideline on the election criteria for the composition of delegates especially of the volunteer member, to fairly represent diverse population.

**Summary and prospects for terre des hommes**

<u>Why</u>	<u>How</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of participation of children and youths in Decision-Making Processes (OHCHR, UNHR) for a child rights organization.</li> <li>• UNCRC Article 12: Children have the right to participate in decision making processes</li> <li>• Participation in decision-making processes strengthens the self-determination of children and youth (promotion of empowerment and self-confidence).</li> <li>• Increased involvement of children and youth can lead to more effective and sustainable decisions</li> <li>• Participation by children and young people promotes the legitimacy and transparency of tdh and thus the trust of the public and the dependent beneficiaries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intergenerational dialogue is important for child participation and consideration of their needs</li> <li>• Balancing representation of gender diversity</li> <li>• Balanced representation of Global North and South at delegates conference can set a precedence for implementing decisions</li> <li>• Inclusive decision-making structures that enable the active participation of underrepresented groups</li> <li>• Continuous and overlapping participation through mentoring programmes and various involvement</li> </ul>

The above recommendations are based on the rationale that, in order for tdh to effectively understand and address the root causes of challenges faced by children and young, the children and young people should be at the center of the decisions made. As asserted by article 12 of the UNCRC<sup>7</sup>, children have the right to participate in decision making processes that may be relevant in their lives and to influence decisions taken in their regard. Meaningful and full participation with equal representation is fundamental to the attainment of any other right established by international, regional and local policies.

The participation of children and youth increase quality and accuracy of service delivery and policies, while promoting an efficient youth-friendly approach to the work of tdh. Because children and young people have in-depth knowledge of their challenges and experience, their increased involvement can help create more effective, relevant and sustainable decisions\ solutions to the problems that affect them. Children's participation in decision-making processes that affect them is a fundamental right under the UN CRC. In this regard, intergenerational dialogue is an important tool to enable child participation and to ensure that their opinions and needs are taken into account. In the DC context, intergenerational dialogue will strengthen the understanding and consideration of the needs and interests of children and youth, which is the main issue at stake.

Children and youth are not a homogenous group, as such there is a need to strike a balance and ensure that diverse gender, as well as different regions, are equally represented at the decision-making tables.

The vision of the position paper "Daring Transformation - for an Earth of Humanity" aims to reach equal partnership between the Global North and South. This can primarily be better and more impactfully realized into a practical concept starting from the DC. The equal representation of the global north and south at the conference sets an excellent precedence through a top-down approach in implementing decisions.

## **Definitions**

### **Children and Youth**

taking into account the UN definition, we define children and adolescents as children up to the age of 18 years and youth up to 24 years.

### **Youth Delegates**

we refer to a Youth delegate as any member , volunteer or staff elected only by members of a youth network to represent the interests of such a group during the delegates conference. The age limit of such a member is up to 25 years old, considering the tdh regulation on the Delegates Conference.

### **Gender Diversity**

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<sup>7</sup> UN Commission on Human Rights. Convention on the Rights of Children, <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>>.

with reference to the Charter of the United Nations (Art. 8), the SDGs (Goal 5) and the CEDAW, we refer to gender balance as the representation and participation of different gender identities (cultural gender) with a focus on the empowerment of underrepresented gender groups.

## **Staff**

The tdh staff members from regions of the Global South are to be identified as delegates from the Global South despite their role on the donor side, while a partner of a European project counts as a delegate from the Global North.

## **Global South / North**

We define delegates from the Global South and North not according to their donor or recipient role in international cooperation but refer to the socio-political and economic dimension. Delegates from the Global South thus hold politically and economically disadvantaged positions, while delegates from the Global North hold privileged positions with advantages. This definition refers from postcolonial theory<sup>8</sup> to the colonial continuities after the formal end of colonial domination and emphasizes the persistence of domination structures, economic dependencies, but also cultural dispositions of structurally racism.

Global north represents the economically, politically and socially dominant regions of Europe, North America, Australia, amongst others, while the Global South represents countries in Africa, South America and Asia.

## **Abbreviations**

\*tdh Germany – terre des hommes Germany e. V.

\* IYN – International Youth Network

\* UN-CRC – United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children

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<sup>8</sup> E. g. Ziai, Aram (2020): *Dekolonisierung der Entwicklungspolitik und Post-Development Alternativen*. Baden-Baden: Nomos (together with Julia Schöneberg).

see also:

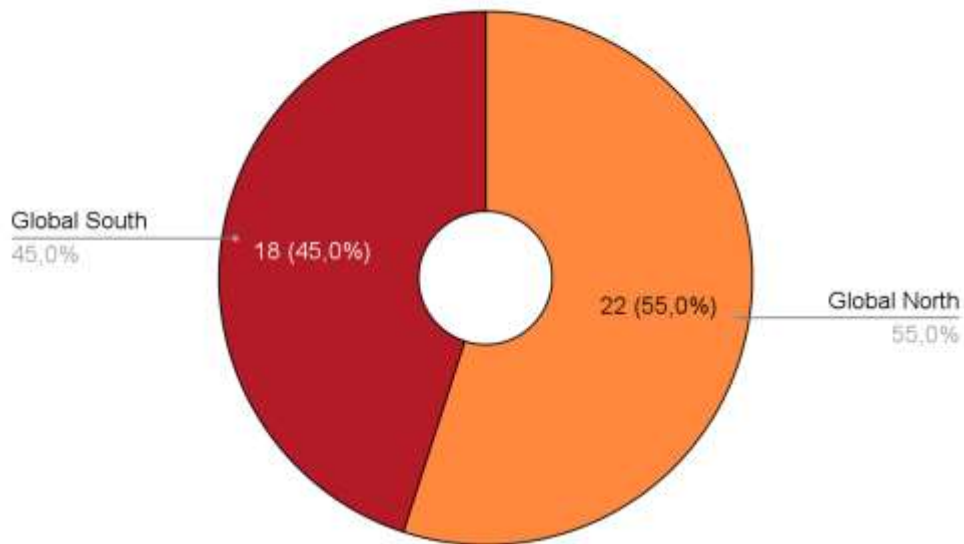
Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty / Williams, Patrick & Chrisman, Laura (1988): Can the subaltern speak? Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory. A Reader 1994 (1988) 66 111 New York Columbia University Press

Ziai, Aram (2016): *Development Discourse and Global History. From colonialism to the sustainable development goals*, London: Routledge.

Hall, Stuart (2004) When was 'The Post-Colonial'?, in: Diana Brydon (ed.): *Postcolonism: Critical Concepts*, Routledge.

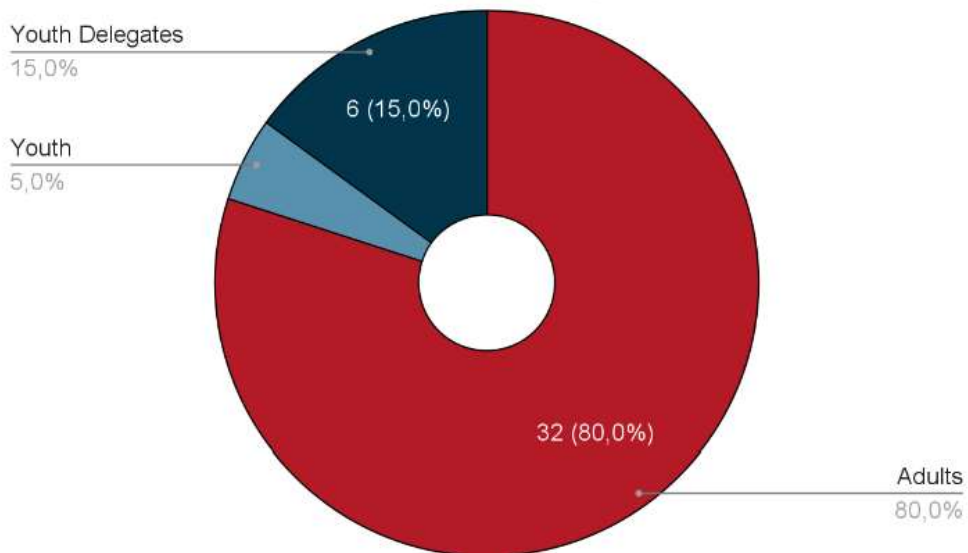
**Annex**

**Sociopolitical dimension of the regions**



*Graphic 1*

**Distribution of ages**



*Graphic 2*