

Concept Note

*For a side event at the United Nations Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law
Human Rights Council, Geneva*

Not Too Young to Run

Promoting the rights of young people running for public office and leadership positions

Organisers: Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy and Youth (OSGEY) in partnership with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Brief

Today's generation of young people is the largest the world has ever known. Half of the global population is under the age of 25, and young people between the ages of 15-25 constitute one-fifth of this total. Yet, young people are starkly underrepresented in government and politics at virtually every level. One key factor contributing to low representation of young people in government and politics is an age of candidacy that is significantly higher than the legal voting age. This form of age discrimination is often met with other significant barriers, including social and cultural barriers and discrimination against young candidates.

Efforts have been made around the world to promote the rights of young people running for public office and leadership positions by seeking to lower the legal age of candidacy. In 2007, a campaign entitled "How Old is Old Enough" lowered the age of candidacy requirement in England, Wales, and Scotland from 21 to 18, in line with the voting age. In Turkey, young people lobbied the government to reduce the age of candidacy for Parliament from 30 to 25 years in 2006. In Nigeria, the #NotTooYoungtoRun campaign has embarked on a mission to address age discrimination in candidacy for the legislative and executive branches, and serves as inspiration for the global campaign.

Building off of the #NotTooYoungtoRun campaign in Nigeria, the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth in partnership with IPU and UNDP will launch *Not Too Young To Run* (NTYTR), a global campaign focused on promoting the rights of young people running for public office and leadership positions. The campaign will be officially launched at the United Nations Forum on Human Rights, Democracy, and the Rule of Law held at the Human Rights Council in Geneva from 21-22 November, 2016.

The NTYTR campaign will be as an open source global campaign, designed to draw attention to the rights of young people running for public office. It will provide a platform with resources and content which may be utilized for nationally specific efforts.

Campaign Objectives

In an effort to elevate the issue of young people's rights as candidates for public office, OSGEY and partners seek to elevate and expand the *Not Too Young to Run* movement to the global level. The campaign will not focus on specific laws or regulations at the country level, but rather, it will seek to:

1. **Raise awareness on the state of youth in public office by creating a knowledge platform** of global statistics concerning youth and politics, as well as the barriers to participation by country;
2. **Advocate the rights of young people running for public office and leadership positions** and for increased participation of young people in politics and government;
3. **Gather input and ideas from young people around the world** with regards to their participation in political decision-making processes through an online public consultation.

Campaign Launch Event

Not Too Young to Run will be launched at the first United Nations Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, the theme of which will be “Widening the Democratic Space: the Role of Youth in Public Decision-Making.”

The launch event will be informative and inspiring. It will bring together young people and decision-makers in order to discuss ideas, challenges, best practices and recommendations on promoting the rights of young people running for public office and leadership positions. It will announce the NTYTR campaign, showcase its objectives and present the campaign website, as well as make the case for young people running for office and highlight the various obstacles young people face in running for office.

Event format:

13:15 – 13:30 Welcome and opening remarks

13:30 – 14:20 Event discussion, including presentation of the campaign

14:20 – 14:45 Discussion and Q&A with audience highlighting ways to support the campaign