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54th HRC Session

Item 3 – ID with Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order

Speaker: Ms. Gillian Mae CULATA

Oral statement submitted by

IIMA – Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice delle Salesiane di Don Bosco

And co-signed by

VIDES International – International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education and Development

With the support of

VIDES Switzerland

IIMA and VIDES welcome the report of the Independent Expert focusing on youth participation and engagement in intergovernmental bodies.

It is indeed crucial for young people to be involved in decision-making processes as well as in the civic space as human rights defenders.

Best practices carried out by IIMA and VIDES young activists in Brazil, India, Philippines and the USA, have proved that youth participation in policymaking are vital in advancing democracy, equality, and human rights.

However, youth continue to face multiple barriers to their effective engagement. Youth formal participation versus substantial, **transformative participation remains critical**. Their participation can constructively change the existing status quo only if their views are truly taken into account where decisions are made.

IIMA and VIDES recommend Member States to:

1. Actively engage with and empower youth in decision-making processes so that their perspectives are heard and valued;
2. Realize an effective and systematic mainstreaming of youth rights through all the existing UN Human Rights mechanisms, especially the UPR and the Treaty Bodies.

Thank you.