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Young people push policymakers for action at worldâ??s largest forum for adolescents

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In addition to governments, many private sector and non-state organisations have also made pledges to Adolescent well-being



The world's largest online meeting of adolescents and young people, the Global Forum for Adolescents, closed recently with a sweeping set of new commitments from governments and other stakeholders.

The Global Forum, 11-12 October 2023, was organised by PMNCH – the world's largest alliance for women's, children's and adolescents' health – to galvanise attention to the needs and priorities of adolescents and young people around the world.

The Forum closed with the launch of the "Agenda for Action for Adolescents", based on the opinions of 1.2 million young people ages 16-24, collected in more than 80 countries through the What Young People Want (WYPW) initiative, the world's largest survey of young people.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 1.5 million adolescents and youth died in 2021, averaging 4,500 deaths every day from preventable causes. Leading causes include road traffic accidents and interpersonal violence, while mental health disorders represent a rising concern for well-being. Many young people struggle to access sexual health and family planning services, risking unplanned pregnancies. Substance use, child marriage, nutritional status (under and over nutrition) and injuries are other major concerns.

The Agenda for Action for Adolescents seeks to highlight the need for far-greater action. It is based on seven main advocacy asks, including more and higher quality education and skills training; more adolescent-friendly health services; greater support for mental well-being; and more prevention of stigma and discrimination, including greater provision of comprehensive sexuality education.

The Global Forum also served as a launching pad for a new health and education strategy developed by the African Union, recognising the key role that young people play in shaping the economic and social future of the continent. The Forum also saw the launch of advocacy tools, research products, innovation materials and key data to support advocacy for greater investment and commitment.