

At Google ‘hangout,’ Ban engages with youth around the world on key issues



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (back to camera) sits for his live chat on the social media platform, Google+. UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

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[Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon today engaged with young people from around the world on issues such as technology, youth unemployment and women’s rights during an online conversation hosted on the Google Plus platform.

“I make it a point not just to listen to ambassadors and presidents. I get so much out of listening to people like you. That is why I want to hear your ideas,” the United Nations chief told the six

young people from Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and the United States, who were selected to take part in consultation with partners in civil society and academia.

Nick D'Aloisio, a young entrepreneur from the United Kingdom, asked Mr. Ban about what the UN is doing to support education systems and technology entrepreneurship across the world.

“Education is critical, but that education has to lead somewhere. Too many people leave school without the skills that the job market needs,” Mr. Ban told him. “We need to make sure education provides young people with 21st century skills.”

Mr. Ban told participants that one of his priorities as Secretary-General is creating opportunities for women and young people and putting them at the centre of development.

“I am gravely concerned about the plight of women around the world. Everywhere I go I insist that governments do more for women,” he stated.

“I also visit health clinics to shine a spotlight on the importance of women’s health. Every minute and a half, a woman dies in pregnancy or childbirth. Every minute, a woman is infected with HIV. We have to protect their health,” Mr. Ban said in response to a question by Miriam Oluoch Otieno from Kenya on how he intends to involve women and youth in decision-making processes.

“I am also committed to bringing youth to the United Nations. Last year, I participated in the first-ever Security Council meeting with youth. I am also going to appoint a Special Advisor on Youth,” Mr. Ban added.

The 45-minute conversation was hosted by Google’s Senior Vice President, David C. Drummond, and was webcast live on the UN’s YouTube channel for the public to watch.

During the conversation, Mr. Ban encouraged young people to become global citizens and engage with the world around them. “Young people are transforming our world here and now. Look at the Arab Spring. Around the world youth are standing up for what they believe. When I was in my twenties, I also participated in political protests to demand democracy. The difference is today, a movement can go global in a matter of seconds,” Mr. Ban said.

The Secretary-General also invited young people to take part in global initiatives such as the UN Conference on Sustainable Development ([Rio+20](#)), which will be held in Brazil in June, and the Youth Employment Forum at the end of May in Geneva, which is organized by the International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)).

The event was a partnership between Google, the UN Department of Public Information ([DPI](#)) and the UN Alliance of Civilizations ([UNAOC](#)).

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