Bucharest, 24 February 2023

Youth group statement at the EFDRR Roadmap High-Level Roundtable:
Understanding and communicating existing and future risks: Ensuring evidence-based communication

It is a pleasure to find myself in front of you, but also a duty, a duty to my peers and not just the ones in this room, but the ones that can't see us, that don't even know about us. We are the largest generation of young people in the history of the world and we're only growing from here on out. It was mentioned yesterday that actions taken against disaster and its risks without being inclusive are useless. The Sendai Framework, on which you have agreed, clearly states that youth leadership should be promoted and calls on governments to engage with children and youth in the “design and implementation of policies, plans, and standards.”

Youth is not only a demographic, it's not even a tool, it's a valuable resource without which policies will not be carried out to their fullest potential, regardless of how well-written they are. Young people have proven their passion, and their drive to make our world a better place, every day, more and more, youth are marching the streets voicing their concerns about global issues, such as climate inaction. These actions are changing public opinion and putting pressure on policymakers, like yourselves, to commit and take initiative. They have shifted from a vulnerable group to a catalyst of change! We are leaders of a new digital society, in which we are exposed to false or inaccurate information constantly. With this in mind we come towards you with a mutually empowering partnership, urging you to teach us how to identify mis- and disinformation, how to fight it, and adapt the school curriculum to this new digital reality that we're all so engaged in! Allow us to protect ourselves, and our peers, from alarming or distorted information regarding disaster and its risks. Talking about the possibility of disaster one may argue that it only creates panic, but what it truly does is make people aware of the importance of prevention and preparedness. Allow us to be your ambassadors, we must help our communities, and you must include us in your plans, consultations, and even policy drafting. Let us join you in delegations with impact on our future and understand our own risks, let us witness the making of our own future!

If there is one thing you should leave this room with from our message, that youth are known to be the constituency of action, sometimes we like to act first and think later, but we should look at this as our advantage, young people are not scared to help, they just don't know where to start, let's help them find the most effective way to get involved. It's your turn now, what will you do?