

YOUTH DIPLOMACY STRATEGY THROUGH TIKTOK INFLUENCER AS A NATIONAL DEFENSE EFFORT IN THE DIGITALIZATION ERA

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Article History

Received: 14.01.2024

Accepted: 28.01.2024

Published: 07.02.2024

Abstract: Digital globalization has had a huge impact on the world's communications and information systems. What becomes problematic then is the misuse of the target, where the result of the wrong target can be good but can bring controversy and disadvantages. The discussion this time will talk about the national defense strategy through the younger generation by leveraging the phenomenon of digitalization through the TikTok app. The findings studied by the author then lead to the conclusion that it is a fairly efficient effort to influence political awareness in a country's society through youth diplomacy and influencers and the use of digitalization in the process. Since the problems discussed have not long occurred, the author uses descriptive methods to explain the phenomena occurring by comparing the possibilities occurring as a result of these phenomena. This paper is intended to serve as a comparative material and study of possible future phenomena related to digitization and the role of youth in the political sphere.

Keywords: TikTok Influencer, National Defense Strategy, Youth Diplomacy.

A. Introduction

The biggest achievement of globalization and digitalization in the world now is the emergence of the TikTok platform after YouTube (Afiah et al., 2022). In line with civilization's shift towards digitalization, the younger generation is more interested in creativity displayed on screens in the form of videos, music and even photos. In contrast to these positive things, the circulation of civilization and socio-cultural exchange through social media occurs without any filter (Arenda et al., 2022), so there are a lot of fraud on social media. One of the biggest social media platforms used by today's young generation is TikTok. The concept of youth diplomacy is needed in the era of digitalization, as a form of diplomacy carried out by the younger generation.

Psychological and socio-cultural factors make today's younger generation less respectful of those who are older than themselves (Tamba, 2017). So, the concept of inviting for good here can reach more of today's young generation if it is conveyed by others, using the language and attitudes they also use towards each other. However, how this youth diplomacy was then developed by America to overcome the human defense crisis from a cultural perspective is the biggest question mark. Because you also need to remember that everything comes back to the quality of the human resources who utilize this concept.

The TikTok influencer phenomenon adds a lot of intrigue to the hypothesis underlying the existence of young diplomacy itself (Novitasari & Setyawati, 2023). Especially the use of youth diplomacy, which can be a tool for President Joe Biden in conducting American politics, because, as he said, youth involves youth. Joe Biden's approach to increasing political power in America is through socializing American politics to young people, most of whom use social media platforms such as TikTok.

The study of digital politics is currently something new and is still not widely known by the general public, but many world political figures, such as US President Joe Biden, have started to use the 'tiktok influencer' strategy in their political system (Jati, 2016). According to Biden, this strategy is the best way to increase the political awareness of today's young generation who cannot be separated from gadgets, due to the impact of digitalization in many scientific disciplines. The role of youth is quite significant in the country's defense system, because the future of the country depends on the strength and resilience of youth in various fields.

America as a large and leading country must convey the idea that it is capable and worthy of the title of developed country, therefore digital politics is utilized by America. As a democratic society, it is important to increase citizens' political awareness in everyday life through social media. America has used online voting to achieve democracy through digital politics (Karim et al., 2020). When conducting online elections, Joe Biden's campaign team also made extensive use of social media as a form of political communication to reach the younger generation in the United States.

Based on this goal, it can be seen that the TikTok application has succeeded in winning the hearts of many young people almost all over the world, so Biden is carrying out digital political outreach in America through the TikTok influencer strategy. How are America's efforts to implement the TikTok influencer strategy as a national defense concept among the younger generation? This research seeks to analyze the implementation of youth diplomacy in America through TikTok Influencers, as an effort to defend the country in the fields of social, cultural and human security.

B. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Researchers will use descriptive analytical research methods to examine the concept of youth diplomacy initiated by America, through the TikTok platform. The descriptive research approach focuses on people, objects, situations, and the thoughts that occur. The goal is to create a methodical, factual and accurate picture of the nature, facts and relationships between the phenomena being investigated. The researcher's point of view in research using a descriptive approach is a current event or event that has just been discussed and is still fresh in the researcher's memory (Setiyaningsih et al., 2020). The idea of digital influencers explains the phenomenon of events, which is closely related to the phrase "youth diplomacy" used by governments and organizations. This understanding explains the world today which has used digitalization of media, so that all types of information can be accessed via the internet using communication tools.

The author examines this research using the concept of Youth Diplomacy which is based on the founding of the United Nations (UN). This research is based on changes in global political thinking, especially the United Nations, which gave birth to the concept of Youth Diplomacy based on 8 factors that are taken into consideration in the use of this concept, one of which is the factor towards Sustainable Development 2030 (2019-2020, 2020). The author uses the idea of United Nations Youth Diplomacy as a basis for finding solutions for this research study. An idea that emphasizes that currently, it is the role of the young generation in each country that will determine the future of their country.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

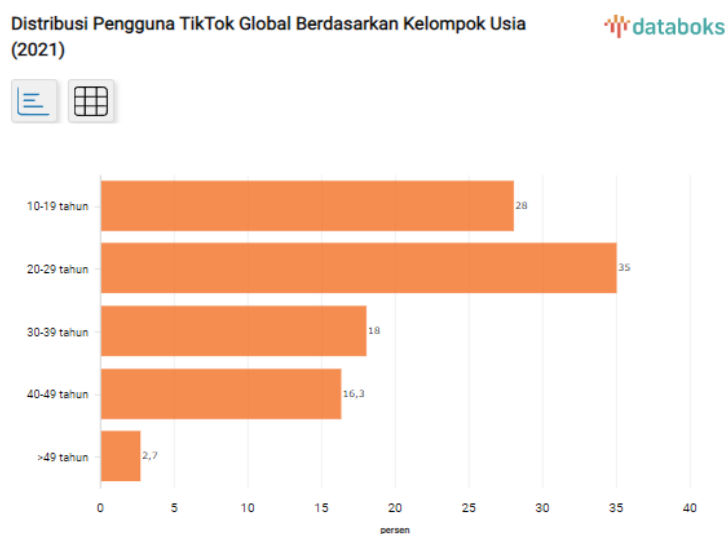
1. Gen-Z and TikTok's Existence Inside International Politics in the Digital Era

As time goes by, political movements around the world also experience changes. Information can be obtained in seconds thanks to digitalization in almost all disciplines and lines of human life. The process continues to develop along with technological developments, starting with the creation of the transit system, followed by the existence of the steam engine, until the internet era like today (Shahreza, 2017).

The emergence of TikTok amidst globalization has been studied from various aspects. Several points need to be studied regarding the emergence of TikTok in the era of globalization, namely: (1) The emergence of TikTok has been analyzed in relation to globalization strategies, data and content policies, as well as geopolitical implications; (2) TikTok is seen as a platform business that is gradually diversifying its business model and platform affordability to serve multilateral markets; (3) The governance of the TikTok platform has been analyzed by systematically comparing its data and content policies for various regions; (4) TikTok has faced regulatory investigations by various national governments, and has engaged in lobbying efforts to maintain relations with governments and the company's response; (5) TikTok is also seen as a facilitator of globalization and cultural exchange, but there are also concerns about the possibility of continued cultural imperialism (Polanco et al., 2022).

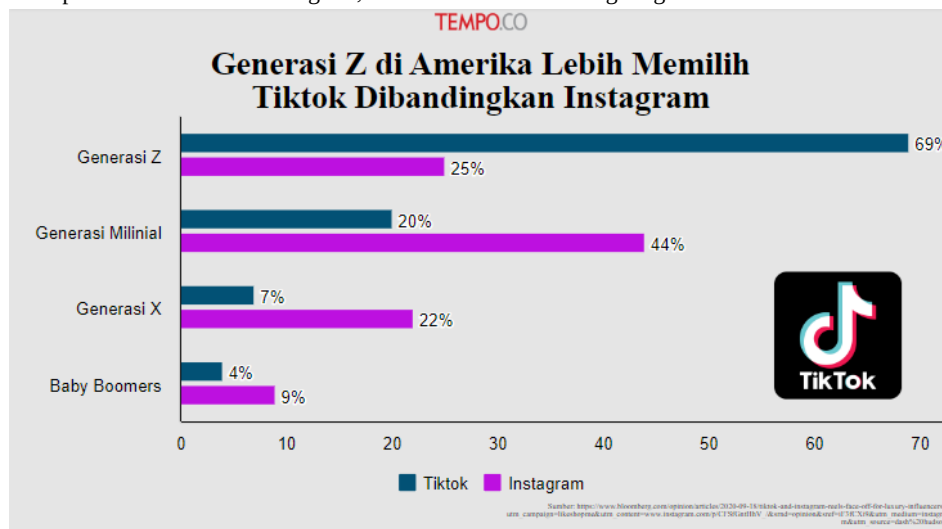
The international community is required to be able to keep up with changes in digital technology, so that it can follow daily developments, including developments in international politics. Relations that develop between countries can take the form of collaboration that occurs through digital media. China, for example, is expanding education, culture and politics through digital media through an application called TikTok. China's influence is starting to be felt and America doesn't want this to affect their country. Therefore, America wants to boycott TikTok, but on the other hand America can redefine its population digitally through this application.

TikTok was created by China through startup ByteDance. The TikTok application was introduced at the end of 2016 under the name Douyin. Users of this application continue to grow to 100 million a year and 100 billion video views every day. Due to the increasing number of fans, the company decided to change the name of the TikTok program to make it more attractive, easy to remember and pronounce (Perdianti & Valiant, 2022). Aplikasi TikTok populer di antara banyak kelompok berbeda di seluruh dunia, termasuk Indonesia. TikTok allows users to create short 10 to 15 second films that can be enhanced with music, filters or other creative features. The majority of users come from Gen-Z because its development is the fastest in the world. This is as shown in the following diagram:



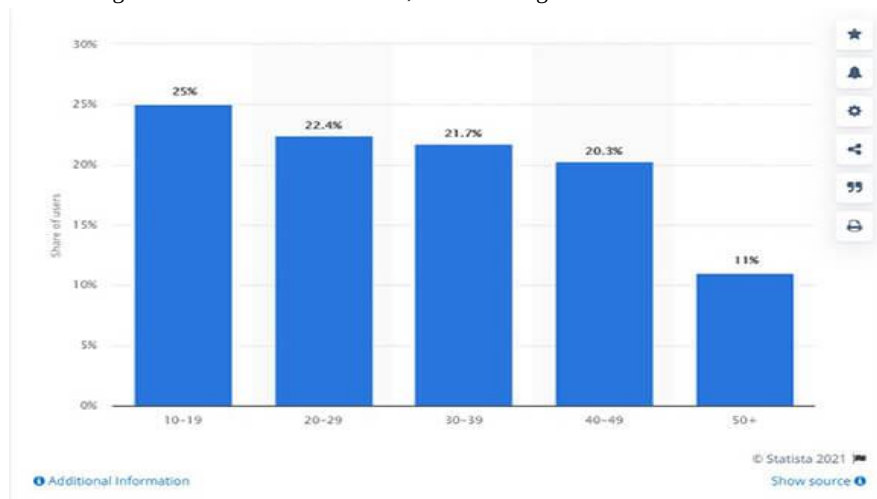
Picture 1. Age Comparison of People Around the World Who Use TikTok (taken from databoks.katadata.co.id) (Dihni, 2022)

American Generation Z also prefers TikTok over Instagram, as shown in the following diagram:



Picture 2. Comparative Statistics of the TikTok Fan Generation with the Instagram Fan Generation (taken from tempo.co, 2021)

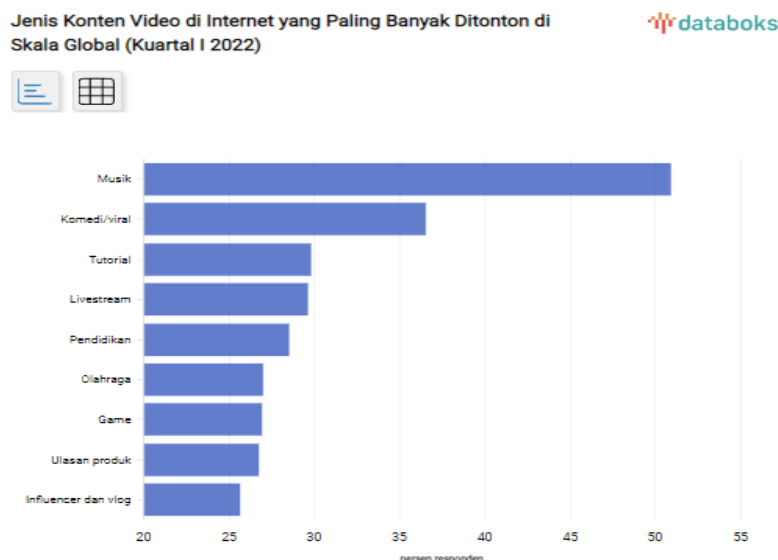
The ease of use and diversity of material such as fashion, cooking methods, education, the latest trends, and others make this application popular with the public, especially generation Z who likes practicality. TikTok is the top choice for popularizing something or promoting a product. If categorized based on the age of TikTok users in America, the following results are obtained:



Picture 3. Statistics of TikTok Users in the USA by Age (Connell, 2023)

In the digital era, Generation Z has a big role in international politics. The following are some of the roles of Generation Z in international politics in the digital era: (1) As internet users, Generation Z may use social media and other online platforms to advocate democratic ideas and influence public opinion (Alchatib et al., 2021); (2) Generation Z can utilize digital technology to gain access to political information and gain a better understanding of global political issues; (3) Through social media and other internet channels, Generation Z can play a more active role in international politics; (4) Generation Z has the ability to use digital technology to advocate for global issues such as climate change, human rights and international peace (Watra, 2023).

To strengthen Gen Z's involvement in international politics in the digital era, efforts must be made to increase their understanding of constructive political education. In addition, political elites and political parties must reach out to the younger generation and show support for their causes. Data shows that active TikTok users have exceeded 500 million people worldwide four years later, at the end of 2019 (Eryc, 2022). Even though it was banned in several countries, TikTok became the most popular non-game application with the most downloads in 2020 (Perdianti & Valiant, 2022). As shown by the following statistical data:



Picture 4. Comparison Chart of Use of the Most Popular Applications (taken from databoks.katadata.co.id, 2022) (Rahman, 2022)

The initial aim of creating the TikTok application was to increase the creativity of Chinese people. When people around the world were forced to stay at home due to COVID-19, TikTok became popular. Over time, the use of TikTok developed into a space for self-expression and gave rise to TikTok Influencers and gave birth to followers who then became victims of the trend (Bulele & Wibowo, 2020). An influencer is someone who has a large number of followers and is known by the platform in question, so that what they communicate through that platform has an impact on what people see. (Wilis & Augustina, 2022). Typically, this recognition appears on the account as a star or tick symbol, indicating that the account has been recognized by the digital platform and community.

There are several things that can improve self-branding by becoming an influencer, including having unique (authentic) values, having integrity, consistency, specialization, and relevance of the content created to the content that the audience wants (Ishihara & Oktavianti, 2021; Putri & Azeharie, 2021). In the internet world, creative influencers can be bought if they have reached a certain point and must be consistent with what they do (Zuhri, 2020). The impact and influence of influencers is quite significant on generation Z as followers, initiating Joy Biden to utilize TikTok Influencers in an effort to influence the political understanding of the young generation of Gen-Z in America.

2. The TikTok Influencer Phenomenon around Governmental Politics in the Digital Era

TikTok has become a cultural phenomenon in the United States, including through: (1) Influencer culture has been strengthened by TikTok, with people becoming famous for their expertise in certain interests. TikTok has even spawned mega stars who reportedly earn five-figure incomes per post and are worth millions of dollars; (2) TikTok has accelerated the trend cycle, changing the way people consume and distribute content; (3) Companies and marketers follow trends, changing the way they market products (Willingham et al., 2023); (4) TikTok has influenced popular culture and advertising strategies (Blogs, n.d.); (5) TikTok has become a cultural force, driving influence and impact far beyond the platform (Tiktok, 2021).

However, TikTok's influence is not without controversy. The app's origins in China have raised concerns about data privacy and government influence. Despite this, many TikTok creators argue that the app's explosive growth has led to more fundamental problems, such as the ability to make anyone go viral overnight. (Harwell, n.d.). So, some argue that the TikTok application only has a bad impact on the general public, especially the Gen-Z generation (Ferniansyah et al., 2021). However, there are also those who think that this application has a good impact on the general public.

The differences in the influence of using TikTok depend on the intensity, frequency and duration of using this application. The duration and frequency of use of TikTok does not have a significant effect on the creative thinking of its users, the majority of whom are Gen-Z, but it is the attention and appreciation of its users that has a significant influence on their creative thinking (Ferniansyah et al., 2021). As a generation that grows along with technology, Generation Z will grow along with technological advances.

Recently, the White House invited TikTok influencers to a special briefing to convey their message to a wide audience on TikTok. The White House sees this as part of its strategy to reach a younger generation that frequently uses digital devices. More than 20 influencers, content creators with loyal followings on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram and YouTube, received special invitations (Sprunt, 2022). The invitations are distributed to a select group consisting of the most influential names on the platform. The White House briefed TikTok stars on the war in Ukraine and other important issues (Harwell, n.d.). The Biden administration enlisted the help of hundreds of influencers on TikTok and other social media platforms to help improve its standing among young voters. The White House is trying to reach young people, but also mothers who use different platforms to get information and climate activists and people whose main way of getting information is digital. TikTok influencers hope to stay in touch with the White House and continue to pressure officials there on key issues (Harwell, n.d.).

Trends and ripple effects are related concepts where trends can create ripple effects. A trend is the general direction in which something develops or changes, while a ripple effect occurs when an initial disturbance in a system spread outward to disrupt larger and larger parts of the system. For example, when people choose to shop with locally owned businesses, this will create a ripple effect that benefits the local economy (Tesfay & Mathaba, 2018). In sociology, ripple effects can be observed in how social interactions can influence situations that are not directly related to the initial interaction. Meanwhile in politics, the ripple effect can be seen in how a political movement or idea can spread from one person to another and ultimately impact a larger group of people. Overall, trends can create a ripple effect that impacts a larger group of people, beyond the initial trendsetter (Alchatib et al., 2021).

The Ripple Effect also occurs in TikTok users. TikTok has had a significant impact on American culture and has been a driving force behind many trends that have spread beyond the platform. The platform's impact on culture and music has been measured, and it was found that TikTok drives influence and impact far beyond the platform (TikTok, 2021). The White House has turned to TikTok influencers to reach younger audiences and convey its message to a wider audience on TikTok. While TikTok's influence is significant, it cannot exist without controversy, as concerns about data privacy and government influence grow. Overall, TikTok's impact on American culture has been significant, and the ripple effect has spread far beyond the platform itself.

In Indonesia, the distribution of content on social media is quite controversial, especially for early users. Examples of cases include: (1) the spread of online gambling content in Indonesia and the government's efforts to eradicate it (Informatika, 2023); (2) the role of identity politics on political participation on social media among Generation Z in Malang, Indonesia (Harsono, 2023); (3) the issue of negative content in Indonesia, with a focus on pornography (Finaka et al., 2020); (4) the role of Gen Z in Indonesia in promoting democratic values through online media; (5) the role of Gen Z in politics and the use of digital media to access information and participate in the democratic process (Anggelina, 2024); (6) the spread of ISIS propaganda in Indonesia via the internet (Putra et al., 2021).

TikTok has also had a significant impact on American culture and has become a platform for creativity and trends, influencing what people eat, watch and buy (Willingham et al., 2023). TikTok trends, such as music and sound, have played an integral role in the community's creativity, liveliness, and cultural impact. This has created a trend that resonates far beyond the app and has become part of American culture (TikTok, 2021) and has become a platform for creativity and the explosion of new trends (Jennings, 2023; *TikTok Trends Right Now (Updated September 2023)*, 2023).

Meanwhile in China, TikTok is used for various purposes, including entertainment, education and e-commerce. The platform is also used to promote Chinese culture and showcase the country's natural beauty. Of course, this is a bit contradictory to what is being spread in Indonesia and America. Trends spreading in China tend to be educational and encourage users and viewers to be better. TikTok has democratized fashion trends, allowing its users to create and follow trends that suit Chinese tastes (Humas, 2020); become a platform for content creators to popularize various

fashion styles, such as OOTD, tutorial style, and others (Islami, 2022); created a new type of trend, the "For You Page" or FYP, which allows everyone to participate in content creation without having to have a large following; influencing the way people dress in China, with many young people in its big cities showcasing their fashion sense through short videos on TikTok (Miyano, 2020); and also becomes a platform for promoting fashion brands and products, so marketers and vloggers can earn profits through advertising on TikTok (Mumtaz & Saino, 2021).

The role of the government and state greatly influences the impact of using TikTok, so there is a need for local government intervention in using TikTok. Including the use of TikTok as a means of socialization and political education and limiting its use in consumer matters.

3. Implementing Youth Diplomacy in the Digital Era Through TikTok Influencers

Youth Diplomacy is becoming increasingly urgent in today's world. There are several reasons why youth diplomacy is becoming increasingly urgent to implement, namely: because (1) the world is changing rapidly, and young people are often at the forefront of this change. Youth diplomacy can help ensure that young people have a voice in shaping the future (Bradbury, 2021); (2) youth diplomacy can help bridge the gap between different cultures and increase understanding and cooperation (*Youth Diplomats in the Global Ties Network: Eden Davenport (Florida)*, 2019); (3) Young people are often those most impacted by global challenges such as climate change, poverty and conflict. Youth diplomacy can help ensure that their voices are heard and their needs are met in policy decisions (Childfund, 2020); (4) youth diplomacy can help promote democratic values and civic engagement among young people, which is important for the future of democracy.

Indonesia Youth Diplomacy (IYD), Diplomatic Youth International Model United Nations (DIYMUN), UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) with its newest program, namely the Global Diplomacy Initiative (GDI), UNESCO, Chevening, Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Ministry of The United Nations Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), and UN Youth Australia are institutions that support the concept of Youth Diplomacy (Indonesia, 2019). All of this institution's programs prioritize the creation of influential voices at the national and international levels, which means creating the voices of the younger generation who are able to advance both at the national and international levels.

The application of youth diplomacy in the era of digital technology can provide new opportunities for young people to connect, exchange ideas, and encourage cross-cultural understanding and cooperation (Listyowati et al., 2022). This also proves that social media platforms can be used to connect young people from different countries and facilitate dialogue and exchange of ideas. Digital technology can also be used to empower the younger generation to participate in decision-making processes and promote democratic values and community involvement which leads to the use of technology to increase education and awareness about global issues among the younger generation, such as climate change, poverty, and conflict.

The urgency of youth diplomacy can be seen as an effort to strengthen national defense by involving the younger generation in diplomatic efforts. Here are some ways youth diplomacy can

contribute to national defense: (1) youth diplomacy can help increase cross-cultural understanding and cooperation, which can help prevent conflict and promote peace (*PROMOTING YOUTH , PEACE AND SECURITY*, 2015); (2) involving young people in citizen diplomacy can help promote democratic values and civic engagement, which are important for the future of democracy and can help prevent extremism and radicalization (*How Does the U . S . Department of State Engage American Youth ?*, n.d.); (3) youth diplomacy can help increase education and awareness about global issues among the younger generation, so that it can help prevent the spread of misinformation and disinformation; (4) youth diplomacy can help encourage international cooperation and partnerships, which can help overcome global challenges such as climate change, poverty and conflict (*PROMOTING YOUTH , PEACE AND SECURITY*, 2015); and youth diplomacy can help empower young people to participate in decision-making processes and have a voice in shaping the future, which can help ensure that their needs are met in policy-making (*How Does the U . S . Department of State Engage American Youth ?*, n.d.).

This research provides some insight into the use of social media influencers, including TikTok influencers, as a diplomatic tool. One of the findings discusses the use of social media influencers as a diplomatic tool, arguing that democracies should equip their diplomatic corps to embrace informal influencer diplomacy. The article suggests that formal diplomats should cultivate relationships with influential and high-profile informal diplomats, as they can reach new audiences who are not necessarily involved in diplomatic affairs. In addition, it also discusses the benefits and risks of digital diplomacy, which can include the use of social media and other digital platforms to interact with audiences and promote diplomatic goals.

D. CONCLUSION

Overall, the search results suggest that the use of social media influencers, including TikTok influencers, can be a diplomatic tool and help engage new audiences and promote diplomatic goals.

Youth diplomacy can also be an important tool for national defense by advancing cross-cultural understanding and cooperation, advancing democratic values and civic engagement, advancing education and awareness of global issues, advancing international cooperation and partnerships, and empowering young people to participate in decision making.

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