YouthLEAD

Going Beyond the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS 2026:

Advocacy Roadmap for YOUNG PEOPLE in Asia Pacific



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The "Going Beyond Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS 2026: Advocacy Roadmap for Young People in Asia Pacific" aims to translate the commitments made under the 2026 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS into practical opportunities for youth-led advocacy, engagement and accountability across the Asia Pacific region.

Building on Youth LEAD's efforts to revitalize the Inter-Agency Task Team on Young Key Populations[1] (IATT on YKPs), regional consultations, webinars and advocacy activities, the roadmap consolidates the priorities, perspectives and recommendations identified by young people and youth-led organizations.

The roadmap serves as an engagement and advocacy tool to help youth-led organizations understand the commitments relevant to young people, identify gaps in national implementation, establish advocacy priorities, and engage with their respective governments, UN agencies and other stakeholders.

Besides, this tool seeks to strengthen youth-led accountability and monitoring of government commitments, while providing a framework for continued regional and country-level engagement. It aims to ensure that young people, particularly young key populations and young people living with HIV, are meaningfully involved in shaping, monitoring and advancing the HIV response beyond the adoption of the Political Declaration.

[1] The Inter-Agency Task Team on Young Key Populations (IATT on YKPs) in Asia and the Pacific is a regional coordination platform that brings together UN agencies, youth-led and key-population-led networks, and other partners to advance the health, rights and meaningful participation of young key populations in the HIV response.

CONTEXT

The 2026 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, adopted by Member States at the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on HIV and AIDS on 23 June 2026, reaffirms the global commitment to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. It provides a framework for national policies, financing and accountability, recognizing that an effective and sustainable HIV response requires a comprehensive approach grounded in human rights, community leadership and meaningful participation.

The Declaration includes several commitments relevant to young people. These include ensuring access to integrated, affordable and quality HIV and SRHR services free from stigma and discrimination; addressing legal, policy and social barriers that prevent young people from exercising their rights; protecting safe and enabling civic spaces; and ensuring meaningful youth participation in decision-making. The Declaration also recognizes the importance of predictable and flexible funding for youth-led initiatives, community leadership and accountability in the HIV response.

To explore how these commitments can be translated into action, Youth LEAD, together with UNAIDS and UNDP, convened two regional webinars under the Inter-Agency Task Team on Young Key Populations (IATT on YKPs) in October and November 2026. The first webinar focused on young people's right to access services, exercise their rights and participate meaningfully in the HIV response. The second examined community leadership, sustainable financing for youth-led work and accountability for commitments made under the Declaration.

Beyond documenting the discussions, the roadmap aims to serve as a reference for continued youth-led advocacy and engagement following the 2026 High-Level Meeting. It seeks to connect the commitments made by UN Member States with the realities and priorities raised by young people across Asia and the Pacific, highlighting opportunities for young people and their organisations to engage with governments, UN agencies and other stakeholders in monitoring progress, influencing policies and advocating for meaningful implementation of the Political Declaration.

This document brings together the key discussions, experiences, challenges and recommendations shared by young people and other stakeholders during the two webinars. It is intended primarily for young people, youth-led organisations and networks, particularly those representing young key populations and young people living with HIV.

It also aims to inform government representatives, UN agencies, civil society organisations, donors and other development partners who have a role in advancing the commitments of the Political Declaration at regional and country levels.

METHODOLOGY

This report draws on two main sources: discussions and contributions from two regional webinars convened by Youth LEAD; and a youth-led review of the 2026 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS.

The first source draws on the two regional webinars organised by Youth LEAD, with support from UNAIDS and UNDP. Webinar 1, held on 30 October 2026, addressed access to services, human rights and meaningful participation. Webinar 2, held on 6 November 2026, addressed community leadership, financing and accountability. Approximately 60 participants from countries across the region joined the webinar.

Input was gathered through panel discussions, plenary exchange and breakout room consultations in both sessions and reflects the perspectives of young people, youth led networks, government representatives and United Nations partners from across Asia and the Pacific. The webinars provided a platform for young people, youth-led organisations, government representatives, UN agencies and other stake-holders to discuss the commitments of the Political Declaration, share experiences, identify barriers and propose actions.

The second source involves a review of the Political Declaration, focusing on specific commitments relevant to young people, including access to HIV and SRHR services, human rights, meaningful participation, youth leadership, community-led responses, financing and accountability. Given time constraints, the review focused on a selection of the most relevant paragraphs. These were examined to identify commitments that could be translated into practical advocacy priorities and actions for young people and youth-led organisations. A more comprehensive analysis of the Political Declaration is encouraged as part of ongoing youth-led advocacy and accountability efforts.

Findings from these sources were brought together to identify common priorities, highlight gaps between political commitments and young people's lived experiences, and develop a roadmap for continued youth-led advocacy and engagement.

Findings from Youth Input and Perspectives









THEME 1:

Youth participation and meaningful youth engagement

Participants identified several conditions necessary for meaningful engagement:

- Youth participation must be institutionalized rather than ad hoc, through formal consultation mechanisms within Country Coordinating Mechanisms, national HIV programme structures and funding committees.
- Young people must be involved from the beginning of decision-making processes, rather than being invited after decisions have already been taken, and feedback mechanisms should demonstrate how youth recommendations influenced final outcomes.
- Dedicated seats for young key populations should carry voting power and be accompanied by technical capacity and access to information, including the translation of policy and financing documents into language that is accessible to young people.
- Safe and inclusive spaces are needed in which young people can speak freely without senior organizations or adult counterparts present, which participants noted otherwise discourages honest expression.

Participants cautioned against treating young people as a single, uniform group. Youth are diverse, and young key populations, young women and girls, LGBTQI+ young people, young people living with HIV, intersex young people and young migrants each face distinct barriers that require deliberately differentiated engagement.

Repeated calls were made to avoid tokenism, with young people supported to speak for themselves, including in monitoring and evaluation and in project implementation, rather than being invited only to consultations to fulfil a procedural requirement. Intergenerational and multi community dialogue, including with parents, teachers, healthcare workers and policymakers, was identified as essential to sustaining engagement over time.

THEME 2:

Access to integrated services, and implications for young people's sexual and reproductive health rights and HIV-related rights

Young participants described the conditions they need at three levels. At the individual level, health literacy and education are required so that young people know their rights and the full range of prevention options available to them, including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) beyond condoms. At the community level, young people need safe and supportive networks of peers, family members and allies, peer led support groups and youth friendly community spaces. At the service level, they need non-judgmental, confidential and affordable HIV testing, treatment and mental health support delivered by sensitized healthcare providers, and integrated with sexual and reproductive health, sexual transmitted infections (STI) and mental health services so that young people are not burdened by multiple visits, travel costs and clinic fees.

Breakout discussions stressed that many young people do not know where or how to access services, and that services must reach young people where they are. This includes peer led and community-based outreach, digital platforms, self-testing kits and confidential delivery of prevention commodities for those who cannot safely reach a clinic. Youth participants from different countries highlighted that fear of judgment and the difficulty of remaining anonymous strongly deter service uptake, compounded by weak confidentiality protections. A youth-led model shared through IPPF in East Asia, Southeast Asia and Oceania regions showed services delivered by young people themselves under the guidance of older clinicians, combining accurate information with delivery in a style that young people find approachable.

Stigma, discrimination, family rejection and violence undermine the wellbeing and confidence of young people and their ability to access services or participate in the response. Psychosocial support and mental health services must therefore be integrated into HIV and sexual and reproductive health services rather than treated as an additional component. Participants also identified practical barriers including transport costs, remote geography, difficult terrain and weather, documentation requirements and weak cross border referral systems that disrupt continuity of care for migrant and displaced young people.

THEME 3:

Protection of human rights and removal of punitive laws, policies, and practices that limit access to HIV and sexual and reproductive health services

Age-of-consent laws and parental or spousal consent requirements were identified as major barriers to young people's access to HIV and sexual and reproductive health services. In Myanmar, young people below the applicable age threshold require parental or guardian permission for HIV testing, while Cambodia has initiated legal reform to allow young people to make independent testing decisions. Speakers highlighted the regional scale of the issue, including a three-year average gap between the legal age of consent to sex and independent consent to healthcare.

Participants called for these barriers to be addressed through legal reforms and stronger advocacy in the 2027 plan. They stressed that young people should be able to access essential health services based on their needs and rights, without unnecessary consent requirements.

Participants also called for harmonizing contradictory laws, clearer clinical guidance and stronger non-discrimination protections. Migrant, refugee and displaced young people face additional barriers, including fear of immigration checks, concerns over data sharing, interrupted treatment and exclusion from healthcare due to undocumented status.

Drawing on experiences along the Thailand-Myanmar border and in Sri Lanka, participants stressed the need for safe, confidential and affordable services regardless of legal status, supported by collaboration with local authorities and host communities. They emphasized that legal status should never determine a person's right to access essential healthcare.

Other concerns included treatment interruptions caused by misconceptions about HIV, threats against community outreach workers and the growing influence of anti-gender and anti-rights movements.

Participants emphasized sustained education and community follow-up, alongside greater investment in youth movements and partnerships between youth-led organizations, civil society and governments to protect the rights of all young people, including intersex young people.

THEME 4:

Sustainability of Youth-Led Responses

Sustainability emerged as an overarching concern throughout the webinar series, particularly in the context of shrinking international funding, donor transitions and the shift towards domestic financing. Participants stressed that transition must not mean abandonment, highlighting that it cannot be considered successful if community-led services disappear.

Youth-led organizations face significant barriers to accessing sustainable funding, including complex registration and grant application requirements, limited financial and administrative capacity, short-term project-based funding, and reliance on larger organizations as intermediaries. Funding is often concentrated among established organizations, while youth-led groups, particularly informal and grass-roots initiatives, struggle to access resources directly. Participants also highlighted limited youth representation in Country Coordinating Mechanisms and funding committees, which further restricts their influence over resource allocation and programme priorities.

Participants called for dedicated budget allocations and funding windows for youth-led organizations within national HIV strategies, annual budgets and Global Fund funding requests, alongside multi-year, flexible and predictable financing. They also emphasized simplifying grant procedures, strengthening young people's capacities in financial management and fundraising, and establishing small-grant mechanisms accessible to grassroots groups. Country experiences from Viet Nam, Indonesia, Bhutan and Nepal highlighted opportunities to diversify funding, strengthen domestic resource mobilization and institutionalize community-led monitoring.

Ultimately, participants emphasized that sustainability requires more than financial investment; it demands meaningful youth participation throughout the funding cycle, from planning and budgeting to implementation, monitoring and oversight, and recognition of youth-led organizations as essential partners in health governance rather than merely sub-grantees or service providers.

Youth-Led Engagement and ADVOCACY ROADMAP for 2027



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Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the political declarations on HIV/AIDS

Draft resolution submitted by the President of the General Assembly

Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS: United to End AIDS by 2030

The General Assembly

Adopts the political declaration entitled "Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS: United to End AIDS by 2030" annexed to the present resolution.

Annex
Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS: United to End AIDS by 2030

Introduction

1. We, the Heads of State and Government and high representatives, gathering at the United Nations in New York on 22 and 23 June 2026:

(a) Note this critical juncture in the global HIV response, with 25 years of remarkable progress since the historic special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS held in 2001 threatened by slowing momentum, decreasing financing, growing inequalities, conflict and compounding global crises;

(b) Express deep concern that the world did not meet the global 2025 HIV targets and is not on track to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030, with stigma and discrimination, gender inequality, human rights violations and underinvestment continuing to undermine progress;

(c) Reaffirm our unwavering commitment to end AIDS as a public health threat by the end of 2030 and to sustain progress into the future, ensuring that no one is left behind and that the health, human rights and dignity of all people, including people living with, at risk of or affected by HIV and their families, are respected, protected, promoted and fulfilled.

In this regard we:

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2026 UN Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS: Accelerating progress towards ending AIDS as a public health threat, link to access the document: Document Viewer

This roadmap translates the priorities and recommendations identified by young people and youth-led organisations into practical advocacy, engagement and accountability actions for 2027. It can be adapted to national contexts, with youth-led organisations selecting the actions that are most relevant and feasible.

Timeline:
In the first quarter of 2027, youth-led organisations can map opportunities and agree on national priorities. During quarters two and three, they can engage relevant partners and monitor progress. At the end of 2027, progress, challenges and priorities for 2028 can be reviewed.

Theme 1: Meaningful youth participation and leadership

Goal: Ensure that young people, including young key populations, are meaningfully represented and able to influence HIV decision-making, planning, financing and accountability processes.

Priority actions for 2027:

- Advocate for formal, resourced and meaningful representation of young people, including young key populations, in HIV governance, planning and financing structures, including Country Coordinating Mechanisms and national AIDS councils.
- Promote clear mechanisms for youth engagement, including accessible information, feedback on how youth recommendations are used and support for youth representatives.
- Strengthen youth-led monitoring and advocate for age-, gender- and population-disaggregated data in relevant accountability mechanisms.

Lead actors: Youth-led organisations and networks, governments, national AIDS programmes, Country Coordinating Mechanisms, UN agencies and civil-society partners.

Progress markers: Youth representatives participate in relevant decision-making structures, and youth priorities are reflected in national HIV plans, budgets or monitoring processes.

Theme 2: Access to integrated, youth-friendly HIV and sexual and reproductive health services

Goal: Ensure that young people can access integrated, confidential, affordable and stigma-free HIV, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and mental health services.

Priority actions for 2027:

- Conduct youth-led assessments of barriers to HIV, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and mental health services, including cost, distance, confidentiality, stigma and discrimination.
- Advocate for integrated and youth-friendly services covering HIV prevention, testing, treatment, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, STI and mental health.
- Promote peer-led and community-based outreach, self-testing, digital information and referral approaches that reach young people who cannot safely access facility-based services.

Lead actors: Youth-led organisations, ministries of health, health-care providers, community-led organisations, UN agencies and donors.

Progress markers: Youth priorities are reflected in service guidelines, plans or budgets, and more young people report knowing where to access confidential and non-judgmental services.

Theme 3: Protection of human rights and removal of legal and policy barriers

Goal: Ensure that laws, policies and practices protect young people's rights and do not prevent access to HIV and SRHR services.

Priority actions for 2027:

- Identify and document laws, policies and practices that restrict young people's access to HIV and sexual and reproductive health services, including age-of-consent and parental, spousal or guardian-consent requirements.
- Advocate for policies and clinical guidance that protect young people's autonomy, privacy, confidentiality and access to essential health services.
- Strengthen legal literacy, safe referral mechanisms and alliances between youth-led organisations, key-population networks and human-rights groups.

Lead actors: Youth-led organisations and networks, governments, policymakers, national human-rights institutions, legal-aid providers, civil society and UN agencies.

Progress markers: Priority legal and policy barriers are raised with decision-makers, and young people have improved access to rights information, support and referral services.

Theme 4: Sustainable financing and support for youth-led responses

Goal: Secure sustainable, flexible and accessible financing for youth-led HIV responses and meaningful youth participation in funding decisions.

Priority actions for 2027:

- Advocate for youth-led responses to be included and costed in national HIV strategies, annual budgets and Global Fund processes.
- Promote dedicated, flexible and multi-year funding opportunities, including small grants accessible to grassroots and informal youth-led groups.
- Advocate for simplified grant, registration and reporting requirements, and strengthen young people's capacity in budgeting, financial management and fundraising.
- Ensure that young people are meaningfully involved in discussions on funding priorities, resource allocation and expenditure tracking.

Lead actors: Youth-led organisations and networks, governments, national AIDS programmes, Country Coordinating Mechanisms, donors, Global Fund partners and UN agencies.

Progress markers: Youth-led priorities are included in national plans or funding requests;youth-led organisations access more direct and flexible funding; and young people participate in HIV financing discussions.

Regional support and accountability

Youth LEAD, the IATT on YKPs and regional partners will support peer exchange, documentation of good practices and joint advocacy throughout 2027. An end-of-year review will help assess progress, identify continuing gaps and agree on priorities for 2028.

CONCLUSIONS



The 2026 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS provides a basis for advancing the health, rights and leadership of young people across Asia and the Pacific. The next step is to translate these commitments into concrete actions at country and regional levels.

This roadmap provides a set of priorities that governments, UN agencies, donors, civil-society organisations and youth-led networks can take forward. This includes establishing meaningful mechanisms for youth participation in HIV decision-making, integrating young people's needs into national HIV strategies and programmes, removing legal and structural barriers to accessing services, and allocating sustainable resources to youth-led organisations and community-led responses.

To move these priorities forward, stakeholders should identify specific actions, responsible actors and opportunities for implementation within existing national and regional HIV processes. Progress should also be regularly reviewed with young people and youth-led organisations, ensuring that their recommendations inform decisions and that commitments are followed by measurable results.

Moving forward, Youth LEAD will continue to work with young people, youth-led organisations and regional partners to advance these priorities through advocacy, capacity strengthening and meaningful engagement in HIV policy and decision-making processes. This includes supporting youth-led networks to engage with national HIV responses, strengthening collaboration with governments and development partners, and advocating for sustained investment in youth-led initiatives. Youth LEAD will also continue to monitor progress on the commitments of the 2026 Political Declaration and create opportunities for young people to influence how these commitments are translated into policies, programmes and resources across the region.