

Good afternoon everyone!

It is a great honor to be here amongst you. It is indeed privilege to represent and speak on behalf of millions of incredible young refugees and asylum seekers. At the same time, it is a huge responsibility and I hope that I will do justice.

Before I introduce myself, Can I please make sure that everyone in the room has a pen and a note or something to write on because you might need it later.

My name is Arif Hazara, I am a Hazara refugee from Hazarajat region of Afghanistan. I sought refuge in Australia by taking a perilous boat journey in 2011.

I am an Assistant Accountant by profession and I pursue education, I go to University as well.

I am a volunteer with Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network and Refugee Council of Australia. Being an education seeker myself, I am very passionate about asylum seeker and refugee's rights and their ability to access every form of education wherever they are. I have personally witnessed how young refugees and asylum seekers have made that possible themselves – even in countries like Australia where onshore asylum seekers are not very liked. We have been able to convince Universities to offer scholarships, schools to enroll asylum seekers. That's the power refugees have.

The time has come!

The time has come not to say good bye because most of us will converge here next year as well, perhaps with a different team.

The time has come to start talking straight!

It has been long and laborious journey, days and months have been spent to ensure that young people's contributions are documented. Ten global consultations were held in addition to some in other countries.

The emotion has taken its toll. I have seen volunteers in tears (Ciara, you are noted). I have never been that emotional - even when six years ago I left my

mum and have never been able to see her again. Being part of this whole process was very emotional.

I was in tears when I was doing a speech at the Asia-Pacific session. We have exhausted ourselves to convince the world that there is a way, our way! That just saying we lack resources is not the answer.

We can't do it alone, if we could, we wouldn't come here. Please do not go from here thinking that young people are amazing and they will take care of themselves.

We have done our best to give you answers, to find you solutions at every single session during the whole Consultations. It is upon you and all of us present to start acting on them. Reports of Global Consultations will also be made available online for everyone. Please go and read them.

“We Believe in Youth” It's only youth who I've seen saying we believe in youth. It has got to adults to should say and it mean it. Merely saying 'we believe in youth' is an empty statement, a rhetoric if that belief is not incorporated in policy making, decision making and allocation of funding.

The time has come! The time has come to go beyond young people being paraded around. The time has come to go beyond celebrating achievements.

The time has come that we start taking actions.

Let me ask you this question, was this year's consultation different, more productive, inspiring compared to the previous ones?

Were you inspired by the amazing young refugees?

Well, we do not want you to be only inspired, we do not want you to only applaud us. We want those clapping hands to take actions, actions necessary to achieve the purpose of the GRYC. Actions required to implement the seven core actions formulated by youth delegates during the Global Refugee Youth Consultations.

We want you to be motivated, motivated to take actions!

Before I end,

Can I please Thank everyone of you present in this room. It is you guys in the room and many others who are not present, that we refugees and asylum seekers look upon as our last hope.

I would also like to thank UNHCR and other NGOs who made GRYC possible.

There was a reason that we held GRYC Consultations, there was a reason to have “Youth” as theme of this year’s consultations – and the reason was to acknowledge that specific needs of young refugees have not been properly met.

Can I please end by seeking a commitment from everyone present in this room, UNHCR, NGOs, Governments, Everyone!

Please do not worry, It’s not a written commitment, its a commitment of WILL.

And if you feel that you should do something, please grab your pen and start writing when I pose these open questions. I would like to note that we do need immediate answers, youth do need seek immediate answers. Lets give ourselves a year.

Will you dedicate resources in your own organization to prioritise young people?? What will you do in your organization to make those structural changes, to accommodate and acknowledge the needs of young people, giving them opportunities so that they are able to realize their potential, their aspirations?

Will you come here next year with something real and tangible that you are able to proudly talk about?

It is time you join us and we inspire together!

Thank you very much!