

# Iceland – 2019

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Ms. Hallsdóttir

## UN Youth Delegate Programme

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Youth Delegate Search: <https://youthdelegatesearch.org/iceland-2019/>

1. **Ms. Hallsdóttir** (Iceland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that political will for youth inclusion had increased over the past few years in Iceland, as decision-makers realized the need for youth participation, consultation and expertise. However, progress was still needed in many areas, as there was no national youth policy, and current laws prevented young people under the age of 18 years from standing for election to boards of organizations and participating in democracy. Too often youth involvement was a token gesture, and youth voices were not truly heard, which discouraged young people's further engagement. Their participation should not be just a public relations strategy – young people contributed to society and could drive social progress.

2. For the past year young people had showcased their leadership by addressing the most urgent issues facing the world. In recent months children and young people in Iceland had joined millions across the globe in school strikes every Friday. Such unity was a clear appeal to world leaders that all individuals and nations should accept their responsibility for solving the climate crisis. Member States should commit to international cooperation, choose openness rather than isolation, and act in solidarity while acknowledging the importance of youth involvement. Young people were already a marginalized group, and individuals faced multiple forms of discrimination.

3. Iceland, although frequently ranked as the world's most gender-equal country, had still not managed to achieve full gender equality. In the wake of the #MeToo movement against gender-based violence, Icelandic women had related countless incidents of sexual violence and harassment, shedding light on the magnitude of gender-based violence still present in society.

4. On a global scale, one in three women had experienced sexual or domestic violence, millions of girls were out of school and every minute 23 girl children were married. There had also been a backlash against women's sexual and reproductive health and rights. Rights for which women had fought fiercely were now being threatened by individuals who did not believe that women should be allowed to make their own decisions about their lives and their bodies. Countries that aspired to defend human rights and be the leaders of the free world should be ardent supporters of women's human rights and their sexual and reproductive rights. Young people were pushing back and, tired of waiting for others to listen, were

taking the lead. With the vision of a just and righteous society in a sustainable global community, young people were ready to make changes.

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