



लोक सभा सचिवालय  
प्रेस एवं जन सम्पर्क स्कंध  
संसद भवन, नई दिल्ली  
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### **“YOUTH ARE ENGINE TO TAKE THE VEHICLE OF FAMILY, SOCIETY OR NATION FORWARD”: SAYS LOK SABHA SPEAKER**

Speaking at the Workshop on *Giving Voice to the Youth: Mechanisms for Ensuring Effective Participation of Youth in the Governance Process*, during the 63<sup>rd</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Dhaka today, Lok Sabha Speaker Smt. Sumitra Mahajan said that **youth are engine to take the vehicle of family, society or nation forward**. She said that youth are a great promise to each nation and additional efforts need be made to expose them to their immediate surroundings and realities – reality around them, reality within the country and, of course, beyond borders, around their immediate neighbourhood. Smt. Mahajan opined that surroundings and realities bring in greater appreciation for different cultures, different ways of life, expose to the idea of pluralities and beauty of different colours. She said that this exposure would bring in the value of ‘One World’ in their minds and thoughts.

Smt. Mahajan mentioned that India is one of the youngest nations in the world, with about 65 per cent of the population under 35 years of age. Besides, the youth in the age group of 15-29 years comprise 27.5 per cent of our population. Keeping this context in view, India formulated National Youth Policy, which was re-launched in 2014. Highlighting the key priority areas of this Policy, she said that emphasis is being laid on the need to ensure that the youth participate in politics at all levels, from the grassroots to the national stage. She added that this philosophy stems from the firm belief that through young people's motivation and engagement alone, citizens could become a more energetic and organised voice.

Observing that economic empowerment of youth is a prerequisite for any policy to ensure their effective participation in the governance process, Smt. Mahajan referred to Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi's ambitious initiative, *i.e. Skill India* to train the youth in different skills and *Start-up India* to boost youth entrepreneurship and encourage job creation. She said that India envisions that the leaders of tomorrow would emerge higher from the skilled workforce of our villages where India lives and flourishes.

Smt. Mahajan said that besides having enacted legislations that have touched and transformed the lives of the Indian youth, Parliament of India itself has evolved to attract youth to its democratic traditions and practices. In this regard, she referred to her initiatives such as Speaker's Research Initiative (SRI), Speaker's Fellowship Programme and Speaker's Internship Programme. She further informed that the present House of People, Lok Sabha had the largest ever young Parliamentarians.

She called upon policy makers to give way to Youth to express, to develop skills, to build competency, and to acquire confidence, **because investment in youth is insurance for future**. As such, all stakeholders must share their views, experience and best practices to give them voice and make them part of good governance.

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