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ECOSOC
YOUTH FORUM

YOUTH SECTORAL PAPER TO HLPF

UN MGCY 2024 HLPF Paper: Sectoral Paper & 'ECOSOC to HLPF' Paper



Previous Papers - Reports

UN MGCY 2019 Sectoral paper - [link](#)

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HLPF Paper: Sectoral Paper & 'ECOSOC to HLPF' Paper

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HLPF Sectoral Paper



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Opening Segment

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/290, Major Groups and Other Stakeholders are invited to submit their coordinated sectoral position papers related to the theme of the High-Level Political Forum. The theme of this year's Forum is "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions". This paper details contributions from the Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY). It addresses challenges, obstacles, and opportunities as well as policy recommendations for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other sustainable development frameworks at various levels, highlighting young people's priorities. This report provides specific recommendations around six thematic issues, based on the 2023 GSDR report, as well as on the Our Common Agenda action areas, the ongoing HLPF reforms, regional perspectives, and emerging issues.

General Theme of the HLPF

Halfway to 2023 - Stagnation in face of multiple crisis

2024 is a milestone to celebrate the indispensable role of multilateralism and global governance, it is also a year marked by unprecedented global crises due to wars, conflicts, climate and more.. It has exposed the fragility of global systems under 'business as usual' and points to protracted shocks of human rights injustices, transgression of planetary boundaries, concentration of power, historically-accumulated inequalities, inadequate health systems, and systemic undermining of resilience.

While there has been progress in some areas, we continue to be desperately off track to meet the SDGs and other international frameworks and face the danger of regression. We see this as an intergenerational injustice, and an existential crisis. As we commemorate the Summit of the Future, we need to stop, rethink our systems, realign our values, and enact structural reforms. The recommendations in this paper aim to provide practical recommendations, for the UN, Member States, civil society and other stakeholders to collectively undergo a process of course-correction and following recommendations aligned with the world we want.

As highlighted by the Report of the Secretary General on SDGs in 2023, the current rate of progress towards sustainable development is unacceptable.

Following the second cycle of the HLPF since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda (2019-2023), Heads of State and Government came together at the SDG Summit to renew their determination to implement the SDGs. Yet, aspirations and actions continue to be misaligned. The decade ahead could mark a crucial turning point in the trajectory towards the 2030 Agenda and mobilizing towards it. Age limits and age-based discrimination persist to impose structural barriers against young people, while their participation in decision making is too often a tokenistic exercise rather than a genuine intergenerational effort based on principles of meaningful youth engagement.

Eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions

Poverty and marginalized groups are the products of systemic failures that perpetuate non-inherent conditions of vulnerability; therefore, to deliver innovative solutions, concepts such as "intersectionality" and "vulnerable groups" ought to prevail.

In this sense, proposals that do not address socially-built, complex, and accumulative vulnerabilities among historically sidelined groups cannot be considered a solution.



From the Disaster Risk Reduction perspective, a disaster not only leads to a temporary imbalance in socio-economic systems but often implies a long-term disruption for all exposed societal groups. These conditions frequently mean that communities with scarcer resources will face unavoidable challenges on their road to rehabilitation and resilience establishment. Closely related to this is Global Target C of the Sendai Framework, which focuses on reducing direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030—acknowledging that reduced economic opportunities are a direct impact of the materialization of risk. Considering these conditions, proposals for solutions during multiple crises must effectively include disaster risk-informed policies, perspectives from intersectionality and socially-built vulnerability, and potential scenarios in which climate change will necessitate comprehensive, stakeholder-led strategies. Further, these proposals for solutions should embody a prevention-oriented approach that strives to leave no life behind, and manage current, present and future risks. Importantly, embracing early warnings and anticipatory action to reduce economic and non-economic loss and damage is an innovative solution that is encapsulated in the Early4All initiative launched by the Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, which aims to ensure that all people are covered by early warning systems by 2027.

Substantive Areas

Advancing Human Wellbeing and Ending Poverty

Advancing human wellbeing and eradicating poverty are foundational pillars for achieving sustainable development. Despite progress, the global community remains off-track in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with poverty persisting amid economic shocks, conflicts, and climate change. The interconnected nature of SDGs highlights the need for integrated and multifaceted approaches. Poverty is a multifaceted issue stemming from systemic failures that perpetuate vulnerability. Marginalized communities face long-term socio-economic disruptions from disasters, inadequate health systems, and environmental degradation. Addressing these vulnerabilities requires integrating intersectional perspectives into policy-making.

Quality healthcare and education are critical for lifting individuals out of poverty and fostering sustainable development. Peer-to-peer learning and capacity-building platforms are essential for young people to gain knowledge and best practices in health, nutrition, and sustainable development.



Clean water and sanitation are fundamental for human health and dignity. Ensuring access to these resources is crucial for advancing human wellbeing and eradicating poverty. Policies must prioritize sustainable water management and infrastructure development, particularly in underserved regions. Building inclusive health systems and institutions that promote peace, justice, and the rule of law is necessary to achieve SDG 16. This involves addressing governance gaps, ensuring accountability, and protecting the rights of vulnerable populations. Strengthening youth inclusion in health and peacebuilding processes is vital for sustainable health and development. Effective SDG implementation demands robust global partnerships and innovative financing mechanisms. This includes tackling issues of tax evasion, illicit financial flows, and fostering equitable economic policies. Mobilizing well-directed financing is essential to support sustainable, resilient, and innovative solutions that address the root causes of poverty.

Policy Recommendations:

- **Expand Universal Health Coverage (UHC):** Ensure access to essential health services, including SRHR, mental health, and NCD management, by strengthening primary healthcare systems, especially in underserved areas.

- **Implement Community-Based Health Interventions:** Promote community-based health interventions through education, awareness, and preventative measures.
- **Integrate Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Programs:** Develop integrated WASH programs to ensure access to clean water and sanitation, focusing on sustainable water management.
- **Enhance Youth Engagement in Health and Development:** Strengthen youth roles in health governance and development by creating platforms for active participation in policy-making and program implementation.
- **Develop Innovative Health Financing Mechanisms:** Mobilize resources through innovative financing, such as public-private partnerships and health impact bonds, to reduce healthcare access barriers.
- **Build Climate-Resilient Health Systems:** Develop climate-resilient health systems to address climate change impacts, integrating climate considerations into health planning.
- **Strengthen Global Collaboration on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR):** Enhance global collaboration to combat AMR by implementing national action plans and improving surveillance systems.

By addressing these critical areas with integrated and inclusive approaches, significant strides can be made towards advancing human wellbeing and ending poverty.

Ending Hunger and Achieving Food Security

In the past decades, attempts at food security have focused mainly on producing enough food to feed the world. Today, as the environmental and social costs of food become evident, doing food and farming differently is envisioned. Securing food to meet the demands of a rapidly growing population, and addressing climate change are two pressing and inextricably linked challenges of our time. The 2023 State of Food and Nutrition Security in the World (SOFI) estimated that between 691 and 783 million people faced chronic hunger in 2022, indicating an increase of 1.3% from the figure in 2019. At the same time, the current way of doing food and farming is noted to account for 1.3rd of global greenhouse gas emissions, and the major driver of 24000 of 28000 species currently threatened with extinction.

The projected population of 9.7 billion people by 2050 also adds a layer of complexity. These alarming situations demand urgent action for a just transition towards an equitable, humane and sustainable food system that protects the environment and animal

welfare, while ensuring food sovereignty meets food security needs, prevents maladaptation and maximizes beneficial outcomes - for people, nature, and the planet. Recognizing that the road to addressing the climate and biodiversity crisis must pass through the food and farm gate, COP28 in the UAE provided an entry point for food systems into a major UNFCCC outcome, and the agreement of parties on a roadmap for discussions on agriculture and food security within the UNFCCC indicated a step in the right direction, it is hoped that member states will ensure that the next steps and solutions proposed do not result in maladaptation, but prioritize a pathway that can repair people-nature-food relationships. Central to the 2030 Agenda is the strive to “leave no one behind”. Recognizing that young people are key agents of change and smallholders are the beacons of hope, evidenced by their relentless commitment to building a more resilient and sustainable agrifood systems, It therefore leaves no doubt that the path to securing the future of food cannot be achieved without the engagement and contribution of young people and smallholders. As such, it is important that governments continue to partner with their young and smallholders if existent, or initiate where absent, to co-lead pathways that can repair people-nature relationships and secure the present and future of food security.

Policy Recommendations:

- Provide support for peer-to-peer learning and capacity building platforms that allows young people to gain access to knowledge and best practices on sustainable production, current negotiated global agreement, and food systems in the three 3 Rio conventions and processes.
- The independent livelihoods of those working in the food system, particularly smallholders, young people, pastoralists, small-scale fishers, Indigenous people, people of color and marginalized workers, must be protected through economic and policy support.
- Ensure food sovereignty that fulfills food security: Food and agriculture policy must value the fundamental right to food as nourishment rather than as a commodity, and empower smallholders to decide what to grow and how to grow it. Additionally, it must support local food systems and ecosystem improvement through democratic decision-making by affected communities and through the application of the knowledge and skills of Indigenous peoples, pastoralists, peasant communities, young people and women.
- Prioritize agroecology and diets within planetary and social boundaries: Food and agriculture policies and practices should follow the polluter pays and precautionary principles. They must be inclusive and enhance social justice and climate stability, ensure that there is healthy air and water, pollution mitigation, land restoration, animal welfare and wildlife conservation, and also ensure equitable access to land and to nutritious, sustainably-produced food.
- Subsidies in the form of direct payments, grants, preferential loans, surplus purchases, tax breaks and other financial benefits should shift away from funding multinational corporations, feed crops, crop insurance, and genetically-modified organisms, and redirected towards increasing agroecological and conservation practices; helping farmers create carbon sequestering, biodiverse natural habitats; and supporting smallholders, small-scale fishers, women, historically marginalized producers farmer cooperatives and Micro and Small Enterprises.
- Reject carbon or biodiversity offsetting schemes in domestic and international policy. Offset schemes, including carbon markets, shift the harm caused by industry to marginalized communities — particularly smallholders, pastoralists, peasants, small-scale fishers, women, Indigenous peoples and people of color — while destroying irreplaceable ecosystems and accelerating climate change.
- Engage Stakeholders in an inclusive process to identify and implement policies to protect food sovereignty. Marginalized and underrepresented producers and

communities — smallholders, pastoralists, peasants, small-scale fishers, women, youth, Indigenous peoples and people of color — must be involved in the creation and implementation of local food policies and programmes.

- Establish clear biodiversity metrics for food and agriculture policies and programmes. In addition to emissions-reduction and deforestation-free targets, food and agriculture policies and programmes should include measurable science-based goals for protecting and promoting native plants and animals and ecosystem health.

Protecting the Planet and Building Resilience

In the midst of the climate crisis, the "Building Back Better" approach fails to effectively address the complex dynamics of disasters and the intrinsic hindrances to sustainable development. A nature-centered approach, as opposed to human-focused strategies, is needed to ensure long-term resilience. For instance, including Nature-Based Solutions and Biomimicry as pivotal tools helps to avoid future climate-related risks and ensures that current efforts do not become obsolete when unprecedented phenomena arise due to the altered state of the biosphere. By placing nature and an environmentally conscious culture at the core of decision

making processes - especially those related to adaptation and mitigation—resilient communities are incentivized to stop normalizing the materialization of risk. This shift encourages strategies that move beyond the solely reactive stage of addressing abrupt disruptions in socio-economic systems. Moreover, locally developed countermeasures, such as Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems, ought to integrate the concept of "risk appropriation"—understanding that local stakeholders' needs and perspectives are essential in the development of technological and scientific advances.

The principles of sustainable consumption and Production need to be enforced, encouraged and mainstreamed in all aspects of humanity and or other SDGs. Today there is more funding going into military hardware and equipment which will eventually be used to destroy lives, property and our environment as against funding for food systems, health care, Education and tourism that will not only preserve humanity and Environment but will foster peace, coexistence and boost the economy.

The production of GMO foods should be checked or cross-checked thoroughly and convincingly as the effects of these GMO foods tend to hurt human and animals when consumed, causing various degrees of disease, illnesses, and lethal to our environment, the GMO seeds when planted

can be toxic to the soil, altering the soil pH, soil composition and even structure. The global production and consumption of plastics is such that it isn't sustainable amidst its useful purposes; Therefore, to ensure Zero plastic waste, the need to develop robust mechanisms that will enhance circular and Sustainable use of plastics that enriches our economy with little or no hazard on our Environment.

As we Reinforce the 2030 agenda to eradicate poverty through sustainable, resilient, and innovative solutions in times of multiple crises, we call upon all Member States to urgently-

- Enhance their NDCs and Long-Term Strategies such that it tackles all major aspects of unsustainable production and consumption patterns.
- Prioritize and highlight meaningful youth engagement, designate safe spaces for youth political participation, and support their small-scale green initiatives through inclusive and sustainable financial schemes.
- Protect the rights of environmental activists and communities who are on the front line of protecting the planet.
- Prioritize and mainstream the inclusion of Indigenous

- people and Indigenous knowledge in achieving all locally, nationally, and internationally set goals.
- Formulate tax incentives for production firms that prioritize sustainable production.
- Launch public awareness campaigns to educate consumers on the importance of sustainable consumption.
- Implement policies that incentivize circular economy practices, such as recycling, reusing, and reducing waste.
- Enforce policies (hard laws) that will limit pollution and protect ecosystems, while promoting sustainable industrial and agricultural practices.
- Establish youth advisory councils in environmental policy-making bodies to ensure youth voices are captured.
- Ensure diverse representation of youth voices in international forums and sustainability discussions.



Access to Sustainable Energy

Developing and implementing solutions to address emissions using clean energy solutions is crucial for enhancing energy access worldwide. Renewable energy technologies are important, but alone they are insufficient; we need a comprehensive approach that includes emissions management and removal technologies; Support must be extended to all, especially developing countries, through collaboration between international and local organizations, both governmental and private; Policymakers must ensure a just and inclusive energy transition that considers human rights and equity, fostering technical, social and economic capabilities among youth to engage in public debates and reach consensus on energy policies.

As young people, we must be equipped with the needed skills to build impactful proposals and initiatives, ensuring high social and environmental standards, particularly for vulnerable and indigenous communities. Formalizing resources for local solutions led by youth and women will ensure that the energy transition benefits everyone and strengthens the resilience of energy systems. Transparent and accessible information is key to promoting an informed and just energy transition. By working together, we can

achieve equitable energy access and a sustainable future for all.

Responding to the economic shock, relaunching growth and sharing economic benefits and addressing developing countries' financing challenges

As young people striving for decent work, it is imperative that we address the economic shocks impacting our generation and focus on SDG 8—promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. We believe the current economic landscape demands a paradigm shift towards equitable and resilient recovery strategies we emphasize the critical importance of addressing economic shocks and promoting inclusive growth under SDG 8. Recent crises have underscored the urgency of our mission: to foster sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, achieve full and productive employment, and ensure decent work for all. We need urgent action on innovative financing and international cooperation to create decent jobs for youth and engage them in economic development. Initiatives like blended finance, green bonds, and impact investing are critical for bridging funding gaps for marginalized youth engagements and driving sustainable growth, especially in developing countries facing financial crises.

Our demand is clear: prioritize decent jobs creation with fair wages and safe conditions. Invest in education, vocational training, and infrastructure to prepare us for the future job market. We, the youth, must be empowered through skills development, meaningful employment and decent jobs to contribute actively to economic growth and social equity.

We advocate for policies that prioritize quality job creation for all youth, fair wages, equal opportunities, safe working conditions and most importantly youth participation in economic developments. Investments in education, vocational training, and infrastructure are crucial to preparing young people for the jobs of tomorrow. By empowering youth through skills development and meaningful employment opportunities, it can be ensured young people become active contributors to economic growth and social equity.

Addressing financing challenges in developing countries involves leveraging global partnerships and creating supportive financial environments. Solutions like blended finance, green bonds, youth engagement for economic development and impact investing are key to bridging financing gaps this gives opportunity to create a more equitable and resilient world, where economic growth is

sustainable, inclusive, and leaves no one behind.

In summary, at the 2024 High-Level Political Forum, we urge stakeholders to prioritize youth-centered policies and innovative financing solutions and a renewed commitment to sustainable development aligned with SDG 8. It requires increased investment in youth-focused programs, social protection, education, healthcare, and sustainable infrastructures. Young people face obstacles, from limited representation to resource constraints. Yet, collaborative partnerships, policy advocacy, awareness creation in grassroot levels and capacity building offer us avenues for meaningful change. We urge investments in youth and gender-focused programs, and make inclusive decisions. Let's use technology and innovation to empower marginalized youth.



Preventing wars and conflicts and building a peaceful society for current and future generations

We are recognising a major increase in wars and conflict erupting around the globe, putting strain on the achievement of the SDG16 targets. As we recognise with the 2024 Sustainable Development Report, many of the developed countries are on track to achieve a 100% rate on their goals, however we recognise that the progress towards SDG 16 is slow in many countries affecting the overall development and achievement of SDGs. As the MGCY Global Youth Caucus for SDG16, we are deeply concerned about the violence on children, women and girls, marginalized and vulnerable groups as well as the scarcity of funding and resources for young peacebuilders.

Therefore we call for:

- A renewed commitment to peaceful diplomacy and conflict resolution mechanisms and a responsive multilateral commitment to ensure we uphold the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, YPS Agenda, and New Agenda for Peace.

- Increased investment in education and economic opportunities in conflict-affected regions, as these are key drivers of peace and stability.
- Upholding international law and ensuring accountability for rights violations, particularly those that disproportionately impact children, women and girls, and marginalized groups.
- Strengthening the inclusion of youth in peacebuilding processes and decision-making mechanisms at local, national, regional, and international levels.

Reaching the goals of a peaceful and inclusive society (SDG 16) not only intersects with other issue areas, such as climate change, but also goes hand-in-hand with ensuring no one is left behind (a core principle of the 2030 Agenda). To achieve this, building a strong sense of community (social cohesion) is essential. This means actively including all parts of society, regardless of background. Governments and other stakeholders must guarantee everyone fair access to resources and opportunities, free from discrimination. Policies need to take into account the specific needs of vulnerable groups and minorities, co-produced at every stage in collaboration with young activists. This includes addressing deeply rooted inequalities and the overlapping challenges faced by marginalized populations. If data collection and analysis overlook these groups, it can lead to policies that miss the mark or even make things worse.

Financing Youth Participation

Investing in youth is not just an option but a necessity for sustainable development under SDG 8. We urge the Prioritization of financing for decent jobs, ensuring fair wages and safe working conditions. Empower youth through education and vocational training for better youth engagement on building an inclusive economy that benefits all, fostering a future of prosperity and equality.

Just and Sustainable Use of AI and Countering Misinformation and Disinformation

The development and implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools is rapidly advancing and changing the face of digital communications and the integrity of information being shared. The growth of sophisticated digital mechanisms to generate and disseminate manipulated or fabricated content is increasing overall distrust of information, and eroding human rights. The 2024 World Economic Forum Global Risks Report identifies misinformation and disinformation as the new leading Global Risk due to an 'explosion in falsified information and ... synthetic content' from voice cloning to website counterfeiting and economic manipulation, to AI hallucinated content.

Policies are not matching the pace of AI development and the rapid increase of AI to communicate misleading or falsified information. Strong international cooperation through multilateral and action-oriented solutions are needed to enhance global digital governance challenges that current and future generations are facing. The International Telecommunications Union has shown children and youth are more connected than any other age group, with three-quarters of children and youth aged 15 to 24 years using the internet. The world view of children and youth, as leaders of the future, is shaped by what they view online and via media outlets, and may influence their future decisions in leadership roles.

UN General Assembly Resolution 76/227 states that compromised information integrity has widespread, direct, and acknowledged impacts on the work of the United Nations and the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals. This includes climate actions towards the Paris Agreement goals that are urgently needed to ensure planetary health for future generations. Greenwashing is a major concern for LDCs, marginalized communities, youth, and all that are focused on a just transition and upholding the scientific climate-based recommendations of the IPCC.

Misinformation and disinformation seek to polarize on the basis of age, gender, and other socioeconomic factors. Digital media consumers have little recourse for harms, and content moderation is deficient in resource allocation. The rapid expansion of inaccurate information and hate speech on online platforms must be urgently addressed, and media must implement secured processes to ensure the integrity of information flows alongside transparent disclosures of their content removal protocols. A code of conduct to strengthen information integrity is needed to ensure a safe, equitable and inclusive global digital space for all.

Increased inclusion of children and youth Observers within UN working groups would allow the integration of the knowledge and experience of the most connected generation into evolving information integrity policies and codes of conduct. Establishment of an information integrity board of youth is recommended to inform policy and code of conduct workflows, including an information integrity code of conduct for the creation and ongoing management of digital platforms and internet algorithms, and to raise awareness and build capacity. Well-informed, effective solutions require the inclusion of diverse, intersectional perspectives to safeguard information integrity and the large-scale impacts of misinformation and disinformation driven by AI.

Shifting demographics: Young people on the Move

Since the first UN High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in 2006, the international community has focused on the role that migration may play in development. Promoting and deriving advantages from the contributions of those on the move has had a multidimensional positive impact: it has fostered increased access of the population access to public services and reduced poverty (SDGs 1.2, 1.4), demonstrated the role of bottom-up local food production systems (SDG 2.4), contributed to integrating migration into more and more climate change strategies (SDG 13.2), enhanced participation of migrants in decision-making (SDG 16.7) and created new partnerships for the goals (SDG 17), amongst many others.

With young people under the age of 30 making up 31% of international migrants, migration has become a demonized hot-button political issue with young people actively trying to counter this narrative across its intersections by placing human dignity and the voices of migrants at the forefront. Being 6 years away from achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the system is yet to recognise young people as drivers of change, and in turn, support them from taking the lead in tackling global migration challenges –

from climate change to immigration detention. Policies do not reflect the needs and priorities of young migrants and future generations because of two key reasons. Apart from not being given the space or opportunity to meaningfully contribute to international migration policy processes, young migrants are not empowered to act because of a lack of resources.

Not challenging the status quo of top-down approaches and tokenistic engagement, together with the limited resources, time, capacities and political will, will continue to hinder participatory approaches, compounded by negative narratives around migrants. One of the many examples include practices of harsh border management that impose a significant burden on (young) migrants, hindering their access to essential services like health (SDG 3) and education (SDG 4), increasing the risks of exploitation and quite often putting their own lives in jeopardy due to dangerous routes. Additionally, there is a pressing need to develop mechanisms that decolonize the data collection process and ensure that the privacy and rights of the individual are ensured. Recognizing diverse sources of knowledge is crucial for grounded and effective solutions,

where migrants' skills and local knowledge, along with that of the rest of the local communities, play a valuable role in devising local solutions for sustainable development. By mobilizing coordinated international advocacy on issues that directly affect young migrants, such as child immigration detention, global solidarity to stop such practices can be fostered, and inclusive spaces can be hosted for stakeholders across government, civil society, UN agencies, and youth to come together and create a plan of action to allow for systemic and policy change. Young people, when given the opportunity and resources, are already leading this charge.

Means of Implementation

Mobilizing well directed financing

In our current system, finance, trade and other means of implementation are certainly part of the solution but contribute significantly to the problem as well. There are systemic issues around tax evasion and illicit financial flows that limit contributions to development efforts, while the global economy is unstable and many countries are in debt.

Sustainable development has become an overly politicized agenda, with continued need for the redistribution of power and resources at its core. This will require breaking policy silos, while finding and nurturing new models that are coherent with the overarching aspirations of the 2030 Agenda.

Science, technology, innovation

We urge the United Nations to recognize the crucial role of integrating youth perspectives into decision-making processes related to science, technology, and innovation (STI). The Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY) Science Policy Interface (SPI) Platform provides a space for youth to advocate for youth policy priorities in sustainable development, with particular emphasis on Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI). It is important that we continue to actively engage young scientists, engineers, and practitioners in these critical discussions. Resolution 67/290, which established the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), sought to strengthen the SPI. The Science Policy Interface has evolved into a crucial mechanism for identifying emerging priorities and formulating solutions to accelerate the SDGs. In today's rapidly evolving landscape of STI,

including transformative technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), the SPI plays a pivotal role in shaping policies. Youth must play a stronger role in the consultation process leading up to the HLPF (such as at the STI Forum) and beyond. It is imperative that the UN ECOSOC/HLPF process urgently integrates more youth voices from STEM fields into its deliberations. The current review mechanisms fall short in adequately engaging young people in STEM. The future of global innovation and sustainable development hinges on harnessing the creativity, expertise, and fresh perspectives of youth in STEM. However, the existing frameworks often sideline or superficially engage youth, missing out on our potential to drive transformative change. This exclusion risks perpetuating outdated policies and overlooking innovative solutions crucial for achieving the SDGs by 2030. To rectify this, the UN ECOSOC/HLPF must proactively create avenues for meaningful youth participation in decision-making processes.

- Include youth-led initiatives and projects in the official reporting and review processes of the HLPF. Develop clear guidelines and criteria for how youth contributions in areas like technological innovation, digital literacy, and environmental stewardship can be formally recognized and reported.

- Leverage digital platforms and technology to facilitate remote participation of youth who may not be able to attend physical meetings. This expands access and ensures inclusivity of diverse youth voices globally.
- It is crucial that youth are not just consumers but active participants in shaping policies for emerging technologies such as AI to ensure ethical development and deployment. Youth are particularly impacted by these technologies as they will shape our future economy and societal norms.
- Create stronger mechanisms to formally recognize and integrate indigenous perspectives into policy frameworks related to sustainable development and environmental management. This ensures that policies are not only scientifically sound but also contextually relevant and inclusive, fostering resilience and promoting sustainable development that respects cultural diversity.

By doing so, the UN not only fulfills its commitment to intergenerational equity but also enriches its discussions with diverse, forward-thinking perspectives necessary for addressing complex global challenges effectively. Integrating youth perspectives into STI decision-making processes is not just about equity but a strategic imperative for global progress.



Plenary Sessions/Overall Thematic Sections

Progressing from Poverty to Prosperity-Youth as Agents of Change | Lead Entity SDG1, Decent Work Caucus

The session on "Progressing from Poverty to Prosperity - Youth as Agents of Change," led by SDG1 and the Decent Work Caucus, highlights the pivotal role of youth in achieving sustainable development goals. Youth are not merely beneficiaries but active agents capable of driving transformative change. Key priorities include ensuring access to quality education, sharing vocational training, and decent job opportunities with fair wages and safe working conditions. Empowering youth economically is essential for eradicating poverty and fostering inclusive prosperity worldwide. To invest in youth-focused programs, and make inclusive decisions. To use technology and innovation to empower marginalized youth. Equal opportunities and resources sharing to marginalized youth to create a more equitable and resilient world, where economic growth is sustainable, inclusive, and leaves no one behind. The session aims to galvanize support for youth-centered policies and initiatives that enable young people to contribute meaningfully to economic growth and social progress, bridging the gap between aspiration and achievement.



Youth Voices from ECOSOC to HLPF



Engaging Youth in Building Peacefully and Inclusive Societies | Global Youth Caucus for SDG 16, Global Youth Humanitarian Caucus, Sendai Stakeholders- Youth

The SDG16 thematic plenary, co-lead by the Global Youth Caucus for SDG 16, UNOY, and UNFPA, aimed to address inequalities faced by youth—including discrimination, difficulties in accessing quality education for peace, and insufficient funding for youth-led and youth-focused initiatives—while emphasizing the importance of youth participation and representation in decision-making and peacebuilding processes as well as the need to increase financial support and accelerate the implementation of existing frameworks like the 2030 Agenda, YPS Agenda, and NAFp. Key priorities include: taking advantage of ongoing initiatives and reform efforts to increase meaningful youth participation, mitigate tokenism, and address governance, capacity, and financing gaps; involve youth in all stages of program development at local, national, and international to promote inclusive institutions and youth-responsive services, with comprehensive strategies and funding for the YPS Agenda to protect youth in civic and digital spaces; reaffirm commitments to the New Agenda for Peace and the YPS Agenda, urging an immediate ceasefire and facilitating humanitarian aid in conflict zones. The session underscored

SDG16's significance and young people's commitment to promoting the rule of law, and ensuring equal access to justice for all despite stalled progress. The need for more resources, common support from diverse stakeholders, and the protection of young activists were also highlighted, alongside calls for increased representation of marginalized groups in future discussions. Summary- Session; “Transformation from the ground up: Acting at local level”,

Urban Youth Leading Climate Action, Community Resilience Initiatives and Sustaining Peace | CYCSC, YOUNGO, Global Youth Caucus for Decent Work and Sustainable Economies

Urban youth are increasingly taking a proactive role in shaping the future of sustainable urban development and climate resilience through their innovation ,activism and advocacy efforts. Our activism often stems from first hand experiences of urban environmental, social and economic challenges, such as high cost of living, waste management, air quality, flooding, heatwaves and lack of affordable housing. Many urban youth are involved in grassroots movements, advocacy campaigns and initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable practices and influencing policy. They initiate and participate in protests, organize clean up drives,

advocate for renewable energy adoption and engage in community education about environmental issues. Their role in climate action is amplified by their adeptness and readiness to adopt new technologies and digital communication enabling them to mobilize large-scale movements through social media and online platforms. Urban youth are not only demanding action from governments and businesses, but also innovating solutions themselves, from developing sustainable technologies to creating and reclaiming community gardens and green spaces in urban areas.

Youth play a key role as trend setters, early adopter in social change, consumption patterns through Initiatives like promoting eco-friendly lifestyles, and encouraging sustainable consumption habits which contribute to mitigating climate change impacts. Youth perspectives are vital for creating safe, sustainable and resilient cities that can mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts effectively. Young people are often categorized as a “vulnerable group”; however, it is essential to understand that groups are not inherently vulnerable. Instead, they are subject to continuous disadvantages in a system that decimates their opportunities to develop safely, sustainably, and locally. These sets of unfair conditions are found in urban environments, where the

concept of “intersectionality” becomes a crucial tool to address the needs and perspectives of groups challenged by multidimensional, socially-built disparities.

For instance, within urban dynamics, youth who are part of marginalized groups encounter daily representations of oppression: non-existent access for people with disabilities in public spaces (public transportation, education centers, etc.), discrimination, hate speech, and lack of opportunities. In this sense, the “re-appropriation” of these spaces must lead efforts regarding climate action, community resilience initiatives, and sustaining peace efforts. Young people, as a predominant, heavily populated, and intersectional societal group, must reclaim their Right to the City, emphasizing the importance of their voices in decision-making processes. Self-organized movements, linkages to social media, shared information and knowledge, protection within groups, and context-appropriate lobbying are strategies that must be contemplated, particularly in urban contexts where data and news tend to travel faster than in other environments. Emphasizes empowering youth through education, leadership in community projects, and integration into policy frameworks to ensure sustainable development. By amplifying youth voices and supporting their initiatives, we can build resilient communities and advance global sustainability goals.

Financing our Future: Road to a Robust Climate Finance System for Present and Future Generations | DRR, YOUNGO, Youth NGOs in UNFCCC, SCP.

As children and youth, we recognise the urgency and necessity of a new collective quantified goal (NCQG) on climate finance as a means of implementation for global climate action. Recalling the challenges and lessons learned from the failed US\$100 billion climate finance goal, it is evident that the international financial architecture requires fundamental reforms. In a world where extreme weather events are escalating and their impacts considerably more severe for poorer countries, we demand a financial target that puts justice at its core and addresses the mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage needs of marginalised groups to limit climate change to 1.5 degrees. The NCQG must address debt sustainability, predictability, fair burden sharing, and existing issues of high cost of capital and high transaction costs, as further explained in this position paper. The UNFCCC Children and Youth Constituency (YOUNGO) calls on member states to:

- Meaningfully commit and act on a finance goal that is transparent, genuine, and justice-centred for current and future generations.
- Ensure the NCQG is aligned with processes of the Global Stocktake (GST), Nationally Determined Contributions

(NDCs), and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and long-term low-emission development strategies (LT-LEDS).

- Encourage inclusion of children and youths in the co-creation and implementation of financial mechanisms catering for youth led projects and solutions in marginalised communities amidst escalating climate impacts.

The SCP Youth constituency underscores the critical need for a robust climate finance system to drive the transition towards sustainability, resilience, and equity. The important transversal role of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) as an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been affirmed with the inclusion of a standalone goal (SDG12), but for the achievement of this, it is mandatory and necessary the participation of all interested actors from all countries: governments, youth, indigenous people, private sector, civil society, researchers, UN agencies, financial institutions, and many others. Each actor is important, and support among them is key to the success or failure. Young people envision a society that values the collective well-being of nature and humans over individual gain and competitiveness and is guided by principles such as care, justice, and equity rather than profit maximization and economic growth. We emphasize the role of youth in shaping

shaping and benefiting from climate finance mechanisms that ensure a sustainable future for all. We call upon all Member States to urgently:

- Streamline application and approval processes for climate finance to reduce barriers for vulnerable groups.
- Encourage developed countries to fulfill and exceed their climate finance commitments.
- Support the creation and scaling up of green financial instruments to diversify funding sources.
- Invest in capacity-building initiatives to strengthen local and national institutions' ability to access and manage climate finance.
- Encourage the adoption of innovative financing mechanisms tailored to the unique challenges of climate projects.
- Design climate finance strategies that support long-term resilience and sustainability goals.

Working with Youth as Full-Fledged Partners: Youth and the Future of Work | Decent Work FFD

Invest in quality education and vocational training to prepare youth for the future workforce, promoting inclusive policies that ensure equitable access to job opportunities and fair working conditions, and supporting youth entrepreneurship by fostering initiatives and providing resources for youth-led

businesses and innovation. Additionally, establishing standards for safe, fair, and dignified employment for all youth is essential. By adopting these measures, we can harness the potential of youth to drive economic growth, innovation, and social progress, ensuring a resilient and inclusive future.

AI for an Equitable Future | SPI Youth Platform

We recognize the pivotal role of artificial intelligence (AI) in achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). AI presents unprecedented opportunities to tackle global challenges such as poverty, inequality, and climate change. However, we also acknowledge the ethical dilemmas and risks associated with AI technologies, including biases and disparities in access and implementation. It is imperative that young voices are prominently represented in international dialogues, including those at the United Nations, to ensure that AI development aligns with principles of fairness, transparency, and inclusivity. AI has the potential to revolutionize education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, leveling the playing field for marginalized communities worldwide. However, without adequate representation and diverse perspectives in AI development, there is a risk of deepening existing inequalities. This is more true for children and youth-

who will be greatly impacted by emerging technologies such as AI as it grows and develops alongside us. We must ensure that we create a solid foundation for responsible AI usage. We call upon the United Nations to foster international cooperation that empowers youth from diverse backgrounds to participate in shaping AI policies and practices. By engaging youth in these discussions, we can co-create solutions that harness the transformative power of AI while safeguarding human rights and promoting social justice. It is essential that AI is harnessed for the benefit of all people—regardless of race, age, gender, or socioeconomic status.

Europe and North America | WEOG Youth Caucus

Young people from Europe, North America, and Other States are urging advancing rights-based sustainable development and demand intergenerational justice, especially in solidarity with the most marginalized and affected by escalating geopolitical tensions, climate change impacts, intergenerational poverty, and widening inequalities. They identify food insecurity and poverty, exacerbated by climate change, as critical barriers to the well-being and inclusion of the region's youth and worldwide. They demand equal and inclusive youth access to political institutions through fostering intergenerational dialogue and providing effective, equitable and fair financial support complemented by robust

monitoring mechanisms and evaluation frameworks for accountability and transparency. Young people should be meaningfully engaged in decision-making processes at all levels of governance, including through participatory budgeting and youth-led policy forums. As highlighted in the Report of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the Economic Commission for Europe Region on its eighth session -where the youth's demands were strongly amplified- the contribution of children, adolescents and youth to drive and shape the necessary transformations is essential. Young people are not just the leaders of tomorrow but the voice of change today. This voice of change calls for peace and justice, in the region and worldwide. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, it is crucial that these issues are addressed and incorporated into the Pact for the Future and all subsequent resolutions.

Latin America and Caribbean | LAC Regional Youth Caucus

Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) urgently seeks to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda with Youth, the largest demographic group, playing a pivotal role on the path towards a more equitable, just and peaceful future. While recognizing the strides made by some Member States in addressing inequalities, enhancing education, and creating opportunities for children and youth (C&Y), together with

innovative policies and meaningful C&Y participation mechanisms, there is a call for greater ambition in fostering intergenerational collaboration, regional multi-actor and multi-level alliances, inter-institutional and youth-focused legislation. Financing youth-led initiatives and ensuring inclusion of C&Y across diverse contexts, from urban to rural areas, considering the ethnic and multi - cultural approach which is represented across languages, territories and through ancestral knowledge is paramount. LAC advocates for inclusive, intersectional and equitable policies, for their present and future. As such, LAC urgently needs to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda, and youth, the region's largest demographic group, play a pivotal role in this process. Children and youth of Latin America and the Caribbean, confront intricate and unequal realities, undermining their development and well-being. Beyond economic hardship, they grapple with issues such as the double burden of malnutrition, environmental hazards, and violence, hindering their security and rights. Despite these obstacles, youth actively engage in problem-solving, advocating for the achievement and accountability of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While acknowledging strides made by Member States in addressing inequalities, eradicating poverty, ensuring food security and sustainable agriculture, taking immediate action

against the climate emergency, fostering peaceful and inclusive societies and empowering youth, youth advocates ask governments to invest more in prioritising equal opportunities, basic needs, social protection and environmental safety. Their advocacy emphasises inclusive and intersectional policies to secure a just and equitable future for all, and call for the meaningful participation of youth - across diverse contexts, from urban to rural areas and across languages - in decision-making and action, aiming to empower youth to craft innovative solutions, crucial for eradicating poverty in all its forms comprehensively.

Western Asia | Western Asia Regional Youth Caucus

The West Asia regional youth caucus calls for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, as well as return of all hostages. With the Pact of the Future looming ever nearer, a thorough examination of effective measures in matters of peace and security is a must. The prevalence of impunity in the face of clear violations of international humanitarian and human rights law puts the onus on the international community at large to incorporate stronger and more effective multilateralism. Along with the perpetuation of conflict in the region grows a loss of faith by its people in the potency of international law and reconciliation, not to mention the significant increase in the number of displaced

persons, the majority of whom are vulnerable women and children. The adverse effects of climate change continue to disproportionately impact the region, with increases in extreme weather conditions, water scarcity, and ultimately food insecurity. This, coupled with the pervasiveness of multidimensional poverty in a multitude of areas across the region, urges from us diligent recuperation of 2030 agenda progress in the 6 years remaining till our goal. The youth of West Asia underscore the significance of heightened cross-sectoral collaboration between industry, governments, and civil society. To achieve true sustainable development in a region riddled with conflicts and impediments, resilience strategies must target prevention of upcoming hardships rather than adapting to degeneration; NGO's should be focused on service not relief. The youth of West Asia propose introducing indicators for various degrees of inability to achieve any given SDG, giving us a clearer idea of collective progress. Youth in the region remain sidelined in meaningful decision-making processes, limiting their agency and potential to shape their futures for the better; we emphasize the need for more integrated youth participation on a national level, as well as increased entrepreneurial and vocational training opportunities.



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