



**ECOSOC
YOUTH FORUM**

Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

"Youth at the Forefront: Leveraging Science and Social Inclusion for Sustainable Development"

15-17 April 2025

United Nations Headquarters – New York

CONCEPT NOTE

Context

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. With the world facing a series of complex crises, engaging youth in finding solutions to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is more crucial than ever.

The ECOSOC Youth Forum will be held from 15 to 17 April 2025 guided by the 2025 theme of the Council and the 2025 High-level Political Forum on sustainable development (HLPF), *“Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind.”*

It will provide a platform for young people from around the world to engage with Member States and to share their unique expertise, innovative ideas, and concrete solutions to expedite the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development while also contributing to other major UN processes.

Young people are a powerful force for sustainable development, driving innovation and progress at local, national, and global levels. Their unique role is crucial as they bring fresh and bold perspectives and expertise which are needed to address complex challenges. As agents of change,

youth are not just beneficiaries, they also are contributors to sustainable development, social justice and global solidarity.

The active engagement of young people in discussions on issues that will affect their future is essential as a strong foundation for a sustainable, equitable, and inclusive future for generations to come.

The largest UN annual gathering of young people, the Youth Forum is convened by the President of ECOSOC and organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) in close collaboration with the UN Youth Office, the United Nations Inter Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD), the Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY) and the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organizations (ICMYO)¹, with technical inputs from youth constituencies and organizations relevant to the theme of the forum.

Objectives

The 2025 ECOSOC Youth Forum will:

- **Provide a platform** for young people to meaningfully engage in a dialogue with UN Member States and UN system entities on transformative pathways for realizing sustainable development.
- **Offer a space to share knowledge, skills, and lessons learned** in achieving the rights and well-being of youth and ensure the meaningful participation and engagement of young people in policy making and implementation.
- **Present ideas and solutions** as well as showcase innovative initiatives and collective action by youth and others to advance the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs based on national, regional and global experiences.
- **Engage young people in contributing to the review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs** as well as to shape policy recommendations to the 2025 HLPF and intergovernmental events in 2025 such as the Beijing+30 Commemoration, the 2025 UN Ocean Conference, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and the Second World Summit for Social Development.

Thematic Sessions

The ECOSOC Youth Forum will feature thematic sessions on the SDGs that are under review at the 2025 HLPF, including on good health and well-being (SDG 3), gender equality (SDG 5), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), life below water (SDG 14), and partnerships for the goals (SDG 17). By emphasizing science- and evidence-based solutions, the forum will encourage innovative and data-driven approaches to addressing today's most pressing challenges.

¹ MGCY & ICMYO on behalf of the Youth Partners Group of ECOSOC Youth Forum

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

This session seeks to discuss how to accelerate progress toward SDG 3 by prioritizing the health and well-being of adolescents and youth. It will aim to address key challenges, with a focus on the impact of digital and social media on youth health and wellbeing. While digital platforms offer access to information, education, and social connectivity, they also pose risks to mental health, misinformation, privacy, and equitable access. To address these pressing concerns, it is crucial to develop youth-centered policies informed by inclusive and evidence-based deliberations. The discussion will also aim to highlight the importance of youth-led solutions and equitable policies.

SDG 5: Gender Equality

This session intends to explore efforts to advance gender equality and accelerate progress on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2025. It seeks to address challenges like poverty, inequality, and conflict-related violence, emphasizing the need for gender-responsive policies and the vital role of youth-led and community-driven initiatives in empowering women and girls.

SDG 8: Decent Jobs for Youth

This session aims to spotlight more transformative actions by young advocates and youth-led organizations, governments, private sector actors, civil society, and other stakeholders to scale up efforts and create more and better jobs for youth. With a special focus on vulnerable groups — such as young women, people with disabilities, migrants, refugees, and those in informal or rural economies — the session will invite participants to collaborate on building a more inclusive and equitable labor market.

SDG 14: Life Below Water

This session aims to address the urgent need to protect the ocean, highlighting threats like overfishing, rising temperatures, coral bleaching, while focusing on the critical role of youth in driving sustainable solutions, advocating for a healthy blue economy, and contributing to global efforts such as the upcoming 2025 UN Ocean Conference. The discussion seeks to highlight the importance of ocean literacy, youth-led initiatives, and cross-sectoral collaboration to ensure a sustainable future for our ocean.

SDG 17: Partnerships and Financing for Youth: Unlocking the Potential of the Green Economy

This session seeks to explore how fostering cross-sector collaboration and innovative financing mechanisms can bridge existing gaps in education, training, and access to green jobs, while influencing global funding platforms and processes with and for youth.

Featuring actions by the Green Jobs for Youth Pact, the Financing for Development CSO Youth Constituency, and the Global Youth Caucus for Decent Work and Sustainable Economies, the session seeks to highlight successful multi-stakeholder initiatives that empower young people to create innovative solutions and build resilience in their communities. The session will also emphasize how these partnerships can catalyze action, ensuring that young people are not only beneficiaries of but also leaders in shaping a greener, more equitable future.

#YouthLead from Local to Global: Meaningful Youth Participation in Policymaking and Decision-Making

This session aims to explore the core principles of meaningful youth participation in policymaking and decision-making processes, as well as share good practices of youth engagement at various levels as part of the follow up to the Pact for the Future.

Empowering and Engaging Young People: The Evolving Role of Science and Technology

This session seeks to explore the role of science and technology in advancing the SDGs, highlighting opportunities for youth in the digital age and challenges like the digital divide, cybersecurity, and ethical use of AI. It also aims to discuss outcomes from the 2024 Summit of the Future, including the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations, which recognized crucial role of youth participation in the digital agenda.

Social Development: Youth Solutions for an Inclusive Future

This session seeks to provide a platform for youth to share their views regarding social development, including key social challenges such as poverty, employment, education, and social inclusion. Panelists are invited to discuss youth-driven solutions and strategies to advance and leverage social development. Through interactive discussions, young panelists are invited to share priorities, challenges, and recommendations to shape global and national social development policies, as well as preparations for the second World Summit for Social Development to take place in Doha, Qatar in November 2025.

Regional Breakout Sessions

The regional breakout sessions seek to identify the regional challenges and opportunities facing youth and consider how best to articulate and mainstream them in the context of achieving the SDGs at the global level. These sessions may build on the outcomes of youth consultations, fora, and other forms of youth engagement as part of the regional SDG review processes and sustainable development forums hosted by the various UN Regional Commissions.

Format

The ECOSOC Youth Forum is a three-day event with the last day dedicated to young peoples' contributions to the 2025 UN Ocean Conference, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and the Second World Summit for Social Development. The event is being held in person at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The Forum includes opening and closing plenary sessions with the participation of representatives from youth organizations as well as high-level and keynote speakers. Youth speakers are invited to also deliver short presentations between sessions, sharing personal stories and innovative solutions related to the SDGs.

The thematic plenary sessions will address the SDGs under review at the 2025 HLPF, along with more in-depth discussions on various related topics. The regional breakout sessions will bring together young people and Member States to explore challenges, solutions and best practices at the regional level for achieving the SDGs.

Member States are invited to participate throughout the programme, presenting their national views of progress on youth development and engagement within the context of the 2030 Agenda.

The event will be broadcasted live via UN webcast. Highlights and updates will be posted on social media channels, including [Bluesky](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#). The hashtag used during the event will be: [#ECOSOCYouth](#)

Participation

Participants at the Youth Forum will include:

- High-level Government representatives, including Ministers of Youth and other Ministries responsible for the coordination of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and their Youth Strategy at national level;
- Youth-led and youth-focused entities, organizations, and groups from all regions, in particular those representing marginalized and vulnerable young people;

- Official country youth delegates (see [UN Youth Delegate Programme | Division for Inclusive Social Development \(DISD\)](#));
- High-level representatives of national youth institutions and representatives of National Youth Councils;
- Youth organizations and representatives working at the grassroots, national, regional and international levels; and
- Representatives of regional and multilateral organizations.

Side Events

Due to the limited space at UN Headquarters, side events’ organizers are encouraged to organize events virtually during the duration of the Youth Forum or at other independent in-person venues outside the UN Headquarters. They are being organized only during the times that the Youth Forum is not in session.

The main objectives of the side events are to enrich the discussions at the forum, offer dedicated opportunities for exchanges of views and expand networking spaces. Approved side events will be posted on the ECOSOC Youth Forum’s website in advance of the Forum.

Outcomes

The outcomes of the Forum are:

1. An **informal summary** of the proceedings by the President of ECOSOC, capturing key messages and findings of the discussions at different sessions;
2. A **Presidential Statement** as inputs to the 2025 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the ECOSOC High-level Segment, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and the Second World Summit for Social Development;
3. The **“Voices of Youth”**, a document prepared by youth networks and youth entities/organizations as a complement to the formal Major Group on Children and Youth Sectoral Position Paper, to be prepared for the 2025 HLPF and also available as inputs for other major events/conferences held in 2025. It is a direct call to action from young people on the current challenges they are facing and their expectations vis-à-vis the international community.