



7th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

CONCEPT NOTE

Plenary Session

Interactive Roundtable on “Means of Implementation (finance, technology, capacity building, trade, and systemic issues)”, featuring Ministers and other High-Level speakers

31 January 2018

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.; 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Trusteeship Council Chamber

United Nations Headquarters, New York

1. Background:

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers an integrated and transformative vision for a better world. Youth-specific and youth-related targets have been secured in several of the SDGs. In fact; youth development issues are cross-cutting and run through the entire agenda, including several mentions of Youth-related topics in the opening declaration. Further, paragraph 89 of the 2030 Agenda calls upon Major Groups and Other Stakeholders, including the UN Major Group for Children and Youth, to formally contribute and report the implementation, follow-up, and review of the entire Agenda. The means of implementation targets under each SDG and Goal 17, in addition to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda are key to realizing the Agenda and are of equal importance with the other Goals and targets. The success of the Agenda and achievement of the SDGs necessitates continued and inclusive review and engagement on the means of implementation, including adequate financing.

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), adopted by Member States in July 2015, which is an integral part of the Means of Implementation of the 2030 Agenda, recognizes that investing in youth is critical to achieving inclusive, equitable and sustainable development for present and future generations (reference: para 7) and calls on Member States to promote national youth strategies as a key instrument for meeting the needs and aspirations of young people (reference: para 16). Member States furthermore committed to develop and operationalize, by 2020, a global strategy for youth employment (reference: para 16 in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda), which is also reflected in target 8.b of the SDGs.

The 2030 Agenda underscores the need for multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in all countries, in particular developing countries.



However, the need for strong partnerships is not limited to the implementation of sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda, it is also necessary in the follow-up and review process as well. As we move into the third year of implementation of the SDGs, there is a growing global recognition of the critical role young people can play. Youth inclusion in the formal SDGs follow-up and review processes, including but not limited to the Voluntary National Reviews, is of critical importance. At the High-Level Political Forum in 2017, 43 countries volunteered to present national reviews on their implementation of the 2030 Agenda, almost twice the number that volunteered in 2016. An increased number of these reports mentioned young people as important stakeholders. Young people in several instances were also able to directly contribute to the national reports and to youth and/or civil society-led shadow reports of their countries. In fact, some Member States also included youth delegates in their official presentations of national progress. Including young people in formulating, implementing, monitoring and reviewing sustainable development will ultimately be key to achieving an inclusive, equitable, prosperous future for all. This was also clearly elaborated in the HLPF summary by the president of ECOSOC. Based on such experiences, good practices and lessons learned, the Interagency Working Group on Youth and the 2030 Agenda¹ are in the process of developing a guidance note on youth engagement in the follow-up and review of the SDGs, with a particular focus on the VNR processes. The aim is to have this guidance note available by the time of the 2018 ECOSOC Youth Forum.

At a time when policy and investment decisions are meant to be increasingly evidence informed and data driven, information on youth development and well-being unfortunately often remains fragmented and inconsistent. This limits our understanding of how young people are doing vis-à-vis other population groups and peers in other countries, and it helps to explain why the needs of young people often remain under served. Quality data and evidence base is crucial for monitoring progress and for ensuring continued commitment around key AAAA and SDG priorities for youth along with other components of the 2030 Agenda. To address some of these needs, efforts² are underway to establish a global instrument to measure the state of youth in the 2030 Agenda, by regularly reviewing youth-related data that is reported against the indicators contained in the global framework of SDG indicators.

Strong coordination between ministries of finance, planning and relevant line ministries and agencies is required. A country's budget particularly reflects how well political commitments are being translated into direct actions to benefit the most marginalized youth. Regrettably, Ministries of Youth often tend to be under-funded and their portfolios isolated. Moreover, global funding for youth entities and youth movements is inadequate to facilitate their contributions to youth development and sustainable development

Mindful of the importance of national allocation as well as development assistance to address the immediate financing needs of youth, there is also a strong case for increasing external support for youth-specific purposes in countries most in need. The size of investment required to reap the full

¹ The Interagency Working Group on Youth and the 2030 Agenda co-chaired by UNDP and the Office of the SG's Envoy on Youth, and includes UN System entities as well as youth organizations and networks amongst its members. It is a Working Group of the Interagency Network on Youth Development and convenes to exchange information and discuss areas of collaboration and partnership related to youth development and engagement in the 2030 Agenda.

² These efforts are led by the Office of the SG's Envoy on Youth in collaboration with UNFPA and UNDP and with support of the relevant agencies that are members of the Interagency Network on Youth Development.



benefits from ongoing demographic changes are clearly beyond the financing capacities of most low and lower middle income countries. Prioritizing assistance for youth-focused services in these contexts can strengthen the catalytic role of development assistance, the private sector and philanthropies, and contribute to the SDGs in the long run. In the allocation of available funds earmarked for youth-related activities and development, institutional mechanisms should be established for young people to be first and foremost engaged in participatory processes aimed at identifying priorities, ensuring transparency, and monitoring action and impact.

The 2017 ECOSOC Youth Forum, for the first time included a dedicated plenary session to focus on the Means of Implementation and Financing for Youth Development and engagement in the 2030 Agenda. The session offered an important opportunity to take stock of investments made and mechanisms put in place by diverse stakeholders at various levels to secure such means of implementation, while also identifying gaps and challenges that need to be addressed. It will be important to ensure these discussions continue on a regular basis in order to keep track of developments and trends, while also offering an opportunity to correct course in case progress is lagging behind.

2. Objectives of the interactive discussions:

The purpose of the session will be to address the financial as well as other means that are needed to implement the 2030 Agenda, under the Forum's overarching theme "The role of youth in building sustainable and resilient urban and rural communities". The session will focus on good practices and lessons learned on effective partnerships with young people to implement and review the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that could benefit other government and non-government stakeholders present.

Ministers and other Government representatives as well as representatives of peer-selected youth-led and youth-focused organizations and networks, civil society and social and economic partners will contribute to this plenary session by sharing their views on the state and trends of the means of implementation for youth development and engagement in the 2030 Agenda.

This session will be the final plenary session of the Forum and should seek to set a forward looking and proactive tone for participants. At a time when many will be reflecting on the progress made in the first years of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the final plenary session at the 7th ECOSOC Youth Forum will seek to:

- Provide the opportunity for candid and robust discussion on the opportunities and challenges facing the successful delivery of the means of implementation of the Agenda as it pertains to youth development, with a special focus on financing for youth development whilst highlighting potential solutions and promising practices, to overcome them.
- Share best practices and facilitate exchange of information on how financing for youth development has been facilitated by Member States in the implementation of the national plans designed to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



- Reflect on progress made in implementing multi-stakeholder partnerships and initiatives at global and other levels to advance progress in addressing specific youth needs and to assist Member States in delivering on youth development related matters within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Provide an opportunity to discuss emerging initiatives for improving data quality and availability and measuring progress with regards to youth development and well-being by tracking data over time against relevant indicators, at national, regional and global levels.
- Provide an opportunity to assess emerging trends and underutilized mechanisms for financing youth development, with a particular focus on some of the time-sensitive opportunities in the third year of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This may include initiatives around citizen participation such as participatory budgeting and the role of young people in ensuring adequate means of implementation.
- Provide a platform for a diverse set of stakeholders, including Governments, as well as Youth entities and Networks, Civil Society Organizations, UN entities, and others to share their perspectives on where we stand, as the international community has transitioned to the active implementation phase of the SDGs.
- Share critical and reflective analysis and experiences of young people engaging in formal and informal mechanisms associated with the UN at national regional and global levels.
- Create more awareness about MOI and Financing for Youth Development.
- Inform the deliberations of the member states and UN entities on topic of financing/MOI for youth development.
- Seek renewed commitment from partners and member states on financing/MOI for youth development;

3. Session Format

The session is designed as a High-Level Dialogue on the Means of Implementation and Financing for Development of the 2030 Agenda.

The focus of this session will be on discussing the establishment of a conducive policy and programming environment for this engagement to succeed and for youth needs and rights to be addressed. This session will be addressed by the Ministers in-charge of Youth, Development and Cooperation portfolios and other highest level authorities on youth, as well as other high level officials in attendance of the Forum representing the United Nations, development agencies, civil society, multilateral development banks, representatives from youth entities and networks and other appropriate multilateral or regional organizations.

The session intends to enable the Member States to use the platform offered by the ECOSOC Youth Forum to inform different stakeholders on progress made and challenges faced in mainstreaming youth rights and priorities into the national SDG implementation programs, share best practices and facilitate exchange of information on actual youth participation in the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national level. A brief guidance note will be communicated to the participating Member States to structure their inputs geared towards the overall objective of the Forum.



This final plenary session will include an interactive discussion with a variety of presenters/speakers to cover multitude of issues and perspectives, spanning from global to local levels, and allow – at select intervals - for participants from the floor to share insights, raise questions, make comments and engage in a constructive dialogue on the overall theme and with relation to specific interventions and contributions made.

4. Questions for the audience

- What progress, if any, can be recorded with regards to Means of Implementation of the 2030 Agenda as it relates to advancing youth development and engagement in comparison to what was presented during the 2017 ECOSOC Youth Forum?
- What are the barriers that exist to adequate financing for youth development and effective means of implementation?
- What are the challenges in securing financing for national youth policies and ministries of youth, as well as for youth-led organizations?
- How are member states, development agencies, legislators, multilateral development banks, civil society and the UN system responding to the specific needs of young people?
- What new initiatives and/or partnerships have been formed to accelerate youth development within the SDG framework?
- What progress has been made on the means of implementation and financing for youth development which can be replicated elsewhere? What are the key areas for action?
- What efforts are underway to improve youth-related data collection, quality and availability, and how can these efforts strengthen accountability with regards to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda?
- How can the different areas of the MOIs be more aligned to the youth development agenda?