

#YOUTH2030

# 7<sup>th</sup> Economic and Social Council Youth Forum CONCEPT NOTE

## Regional Breakout Session “Latin America and the Caribbean”

31 January 2018  
10:00 am – 11:30 am  
Trusteeship Council Chamber  
United Nations Headquarters, New York

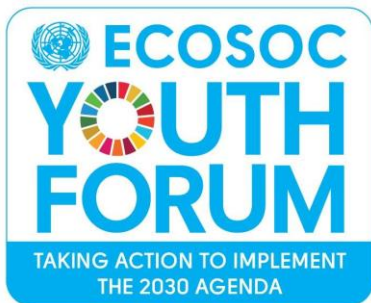
### 1. Background and context

Latin America and the Caribbean is the most urbanized region in the world, with over 80 percent of its population living in cities<sup>1</sup>. Yet, 30 million youth between the ages of 15 and 29 live in rural areas. At the same time, stark inequalities exist, not only between youth who reside in urban versus rural areas, but also within urban contexts.

For example, the percentage of young people (both male and female) completing secondary education has risen in most of the region’s countries. This growth has been particularly striking in percentage terms in rural areas of certain countries. In rural parts of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, for example, the percentage of men aged between 20 and 24 who had completed secondary education rose from 16.9% in 2002 to 58.1% in 2014, while the proportion of women was up from 9.8% to 45.5%. In Brazil, increases for young people in rural areas were also remarkable, with the rate rising from 9.6% to 35.8% for men and from 13.3% to 44.5% for women. Despite the scale of this progress in secondary education completion in rural areas, there are still large disparities, and close to 60% of both young men and women in rural areas do not complete secondary school (ECLAC, 2017). Those who fail to complete this crucial stage of education tend to experience multiple forms of exclusion in later stages of the life course. It is also true that there are important disparities in the quality of education between rural and urban areas, and within urban areas, which may leave some youth ill-prepared to enter the labour market and initiate trajectories of decent work.

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<sup>1</sup><http://mirror.unhabitat.org/pmss/listItemDetails.aspx?publicationID=3386&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>



A major challenge for young people in the region is the transition from school to the labour market. A group of special concern, not just in Latin America and the Caribbean but worldwide, are young people who are neither studying nor employed in the labour market. Educational opportunities, the characteristics of the local labour market, patterns of fertility and other cultural features of rural areas relative to urban ones increase the risk of young people being in a situation where they are neither studying nor employed in the labour market. This is particularly true for young women (ECLAC, 2017).

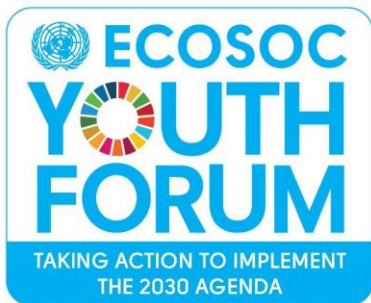
The quality of employment for youth is also highly variable depending on place of residence. Close to 70% of young male workers between the ages of 15 and 24 in rural areas earn below the national minimum wage, and this figure is 75% for young women workers in rural areas. The corresponding figures for urban youth is 44% and 52%.

Differences between rural and urban youth exist in other key indicators of youth well-being. For example, young women living in rural areas are systematically more likely to be adolescent mothers than their urban counterparts and, in rural and urban areas alike, young women in the lowest income quintiles report the highest rates of adolescent motherhood (ECLAC, 2016).

While noting the stark contrasts between rural and urban youth in many development indicators, it is also important to underscore the marked disparities experienced by youth within cities. In the Latin America and Caribbean contexts, internal migration, from the countryside to the cities, combined with a scarcity of affordable, quality housing and limited access to formal employment, among other factors, has resulted in the establishment of peri-urban settlements, that tend to concentrate poverty and lack basic services and infrastructure.

These inequalities by place of residence are compounded by inequalities in socio-economic situation, sex, racial/ethnic background, migration status, disability, sexual orientation, and HIV status. These dimensions shape the prospects and opportunities for young people in the region.

Governments in the region have taken positive steps to advance the situation of young people by enacting national youth policies and youth-specific legislation, and other positive steps, such as the adoption of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development and its implementation guide, which has a strong focus on youth. The adoption in 2016 of the Iberoamerican Youth Pact during the XXV Iberoamerican Summit is also an important development. Finally, in October of 2017, rural youth of the region defined a regional



agenda<sup>2</sup>. However, challenges remain, including the effective implementation and follow up of these policies, and in particular how these policies are applied at the territorial level.

Most countries of the region still stand to reap the benefits of the demographic dividend due to their young age structure. Nonetheless, in order for this to happen greater investments need to be made in youth and the positive potential of youth as strategic actors in development needs to be recognized, taking advantage of their higher levels of education, their mastery of technological tools, their more globalized worldview, and the innovative ways they find to make their voices heard. Progress must also be made to address the intersecting inequalities that affect youth, including socioeconomic, gender-based, racial/ethnic and territorial inequalities.

## 2. Objectives

This breakout session will bring together diverse participants interested in various aspects pertaining to youth development in urban and rural settings in Latin America and the Caribbean. In a moderated discussion, breakout session participants will exchange views and engage in an open and dynamic discussion. In particular, the session will aim to:

- Consider the existing challenges as they relate to youth in urban and rural contexts;
- Reflect on the role young people can play in addressing these challenges and in the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America in urban and rural settings;
- Share innovative approaches and initiatives for advancing the youth development agenda at the national and regional levels.

## 3. Format

The event will be structured as an interactive session. It is expected that the moderators will guide the discussions and create an interactive dialogue with the participants focused on the session objectives and to address the session questions (below). From this discussion, key messages and recommendations on how to continue to advance youth development in Latin America and the Caribbean and how to further promote the involvement of youth in urban and rural development will be distilled.

## 4. Guiding Questions

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.fao.org/americas/noticias/ver/en/c/1043402/>.



In order to maximise the contribution of all participants in the Regional Breakout Session on Latin America and the Caribbean during the 2018 ECOSOC Youth Forum, participants are encouraged to reflect on the following guiding discussion questions:

- What specific policy measures can be put in place to harness the potential of rural youth in Latin America and the Caribbean?
- What specific policy measures can be put in place to harness the potential of marginalized urban youth in Latin America and the Caribbean?
- How can youth engagement in governance and societal reform be strengthened in rural and urban contexts?
- How can the quality of educational systems in rural and marginalized urban areas be improved to ensure that youth acquire the skills that will be needed in the labour market of the future?
- What measures can be taken to promote decent work opportunities for youth in rural contexts?
- What concrete opportunities exist for youth in Latin America and the Caribbean to contribute to building more sustainable rural communities?
- What concrete opportunities exist for youth in Latin America and the Caribbean to contribute to building more sustainable urban communities?
- How can information and communication technologies contribute to promoting youth involvement in rural and urban development in Latin America and the Caribbean?

## 5. Suggested reading materials

### Frameworks

- Montevideo Consensus  
[https://www.cepal.org/celade/noticias/documentosdetrabajo/8/50708/2013-595-consenso\\_montevideo\\_pyd.pdf](https://www.cepal.org/celade/noticias/documentosdetrabajo/8/50708/2013-595-consenso_montevideo_pyd.pdf)
- Iberoamerican Youth Pact  
<http://segib.org/documento/pacto-iberoamericano-de-juventud/>
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development  
[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

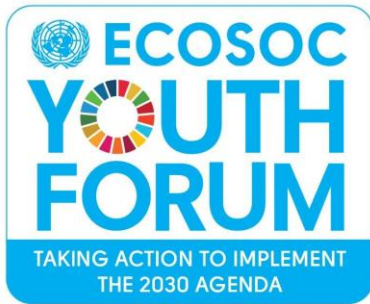
### Reports

ECLAC (2016), The social inequality matrix.

<http://repositorio.cepal.org/handle/11362/40710>

ECLAC (2017), Social Panorama of Latin America 2016.

<https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/41599-social-panorama-latin-america-2016>



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FAO (2016), Juventud rural y empleo decente en América Latina.

<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5570s.pdf>

RIMISP (2014): Pobreza y desigualdad – Empleo de calidad y territorio, Informe Latinoamericano 2013, Santiago de Chile