



**ECOSOC
YOUTH
FORUM**

#YOUTH2030

8th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

SUMMARY

ARAB STATES

8 April 2019

CR 6, 1.45-3.45 p.m.

United Nations Headquarters, New York

Highlights:

- Currently in the Arab States, the number of youth as a proportion of the population is the largest the region has seen in the past 50 years. More than 60% of the population is under the age of 30, according to UNDP's "Arab Human Development Report 2016: Youth and the Prospects for Human Development in a Changing Reality" (AHDR). Our young generation lives in a constant struggle to achieve full economic, political and social integration in their societies. The challenges faced by these diverse young women and men include legal and social discrimination and violence, inadequate livelihoods, and general social, political, and economic exclusion.
- There is a pressing need to create alternative paths for youth to take action and generate social change in the Arab states. This can be accomplished by enabling young people, particularly young women, to help write new narratives for the region's most critical challenges. An investment in these youth also has incredible potential for continued returns. Empowering the youth of today not only changes the lives of those directly involved, but also has the potential to affect generations that follow and the future of the Arab region.
- Arab youth are leading and eager to lead their own future, they understand their realities and the steps that need to be taken to bring about meaningful progress in the region. Young women and men in the Arab states are taking deep action, playing our civic role, and embarking on a path towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development. In this journey, youth should be given the space, tools and be facilitated to work hand in hand with the United Nations system and other international institutions, Governments in the Arab region, civil society organizations at the local and regional level, as well as with the private sector. Successful achievement of the goals by 2030 is dependent upon the concerted efforts and collective action by all stakeholders, including the youth.

- In a region affected by ongoing conflict there is a need for the youth policies to include people living in diasporas, refugees, migrants, asylum-seekers and internally displaced people to maintain the ‘no one left behind’ agenda.
- The youth should be actively included and represented in governments, councils and other policy-making entities as equal partners to assure their voices are heard and needs and aspirations acknowledged. By opening a policy dialogue the youth will part-take in creating the future that will benefit not only them but their communities, countries and region as a whole.
- The youth need to be provided with technological tools, data and mentorship, as well as physical spaces, to develop their ideas and innovations. Equally, youth-serving organizations need to be provided with a platform and tools to support future youth leaders.
- A collective effort of youth, UN agencies and youth-serving organizations has to push for elimination of discriminatory laws in the region to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment. The governments have to be held accountable for implementation of laws promoting gender equality.
- Quality education should be contextualized and localized. Leadership training should be provided for teachers, not just for students, to create role models to support the empowerment and inclusion of young people.