



**ECOSOC
YOUTH
FORUM**

#YOUTH2030

8th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

SUMMARY

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

8 April 2019

CR 8, 1.45-3.45 p.m.

United Nations Headquarters, New York

Highlights

- Asia and the Pacific is one of the most diverse, populous, and fast growing region in the world, with more than 60% of world's young people residing in Asia and the Pacific. Therefore, if young people in Asia and the Pacific can show case how youth participation can help achieve SDGs, it will become a great example for young people in the other regions.
- Gender equality, education and employment are three top concerned issues by young people in Asia and the Pacific region. Girls and women are still not having equal developmental opportunities, in particular in rural areas and among marginalized women and girls. Education is disconnected with employment market, and many young people are not receiving proper skills training forcing them to become working poor population.
- Asia and the Pacific is the hub for the world's innovation, new technology and economic growth, young people in the region should take advantage of these opportunities, and governments should offer young people platforms to engage with new innovative technologies.
- Young people should be put at the center during all policy-making, programming and advocacy process. Young people's real needs to be considered.
- The government should ensure that 'empower, equal and inclusive' are the key principles embedded in all development agendas in the region.

Summary of key messages and recommendations

More than 60% of world's young population are residing in Asia and the Pacific. Young people repeatedly told us that Asia and Pacific region has very diverse challenges and emerging opportunities. The region is the beacon for hundreds of different cultures. Countries are at very different social and economic development status. Therefore, it is important to facilitate inter-culture exchange and understanding and SDGs knowledge sharing within the region.

At the session, young people underscore that they are bringing unique value to social and economic development, such as youth perspectives, large labor force, and actions to make a difference. In order for Asia and Pacific region to achieve the SDGs, young people should not be left behind. They should be put at the central, including young people from vulnerable background, such as LGBT youth, young people with disabilities, and young people in conflict areas.

Inequality is one of the most frequent key word that has been highlighted by young people at the session. Youth representatives from small islands (Samoa and Vanuatu) in the Pacific advocated for equal development opportunities for residents of small islands, in order to change the irreversible damages of climate change on small islands. Female youth representatives emphasized that women and girls are not treated the same as men and boys in terms of opportunities to access healthcare, education, employment and they are extremely vulnerable to harmful practices, such as child marriage, FGM, sexual harassment and etc. Education is one of the major arena that shows how resources are unfairly distributed among the rich and the poor, the privileged and the vulnerable.

In order to catalyze young people's power, participants made a strong call for the government, civil societies and private sector to facilitate meaningful youth participation and build youth participatory platforms to engage young people.

Asia and the Pacific is the driving force of innovation and new technology in the world. Young people should take advantage of these opportunities. In some part of the region, young people have already grasped the opportunities and became uprising entrepreneurs. It demonstrates how young people are not simply opportunity seekers, but also opportunity creators.

At the session, the organizer took a creative deep dive into what meaningful youth participation looks like in the five focus SDGs - quality education, decent jobs, reduced inequality, climate change and just, peaceful and inclusive societies. Assuming that young people will have a seat at the table our recommendations are the following:

- Policy-making, programming and advocacy must consider the specific needs and start with the person. It is worthy to note that young people are different- they have different needs, in particular young people from vulnerable backgrounds, such as LGBT youth, young migrants, young people with disabilities, and young people in the conflict and disaster settings.
- Empower, equal and inclusive are the key principles that should be embedded in all development agendas.

- Education must be updated to fit the labour market, and to equip young people with skills that are needed in a changing world. Young people should not only be job-seekers, but also given the space to be job-creators.

At the end of the session, youth participants demanded for change right now, and stressed that they are ready to play their parts, in order to make SDGs a reality in Asia and the Pacific region.