



**ECOSOC
YOUTH
FORUM**

#YOUTH2030

8th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

SUMMARY

SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

8 April 2019

CR 12, 4-6 p.m.

United Nations Headquarters, New York

Highlights

- Education is the foundation for the achievement of all other Sustainable Development Goals, and crucial for building peaceful sustainable and resilient societies.
- Governments, civil society and international partners must scale up their investment in young people - ensuring they are educated, empowered and employed.
- In a wake of the fourth industrial revolution, young people should have equitable opportunities to acquire skills for work and life through formal, informal and non-formal education, both hard and soft skills.
- Education should be recognized beyond economic returns to enable learners to be responsible agents of sustainable change and driving forces for social progress.
- Governments should include migrants, refugee and other marginalized groups, in the education systems and facilitate the recognition of their qualifications, skills, and competencies.
- To address cultural and structural barriers between the health and the education sectors to achieve healthy school environment, there is a need to support access to youth-friendly and right- based sexual and reproductive health services and comprehensive sexuality education.

- There should be more opportunities for active and meaningful participation of young people in decision-making processes in their communities, as young leaders, volunteers and educators.

Summary of key messages and recommendations

Education plays a key role in empowering youth to be positive agents of change. Participants made a strong call to prioritize concrete steps to facilitate meaningful participation of youth in decision-making and making a positive change in their communities, schools and universities.

Many young activists underscored a need to scale up support and financing for youth-led initiatives that promote youth development, participation and engagement. In addition, a number of speakers emphasized that private sector and academia could play a role in ensuring active youth engagement in developing solutions for sustainable development, including through innovations and green solutions.

Participants united in a call to ensure the right to inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all learners, regardless of race and ethnicity, gender, disability, and self-identification. Some participants highlighted the need to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to inclusive, quality and free primary and secondary education on an equal basis. Referring to the need to address cultural and structural barriers and improve health, a number of speakers underscored the importance of supporting access to youth-friendly and right-based comprehensive sexuality education.

In the era of the fourth industrial revolution and rapid development of new technologies, several participants emphasized that young people should have equitable opportunities for skills for work and life through formal, informal and non-formal education. Education systems need to provide hard and soft skills, practical and theoretical knowledge to empower young people to be successful and adapt to rapidly changing environment. In this context, one panelist emphasized that education should be recognized beyond economic returns to enable learners to be responsible agents of sustainable change and driving forces for social progress.

Stressing the importance of continuous skills development, speakers continuously underscored that quality and accessible training opportunities, such as internships and volunteering, are important.

To address discrimination, xenophobia, and violence, all learners should acquire skills, values and attitudes for peaceful coexistence, thereby education for human rights and global citizenship education should be mainstreamed.

Young migrants, refugees and representatives of recipient countries joined the session, highlighting the pressing challenges related to ensuring the right to education of migrants and displaced persons, in particular those related to languages, cost of education and recognition of prior qualifications. They called on Governments to include migrants, refugees, stateless, displaced people in the education systems, and in the national development plans to facilitate the recognition

of their qualifications, skills, and competencies. Finally, many outlined that teachers should be provided with training to enable teachers to address diversity and hardship.

Participants emphasized that implementation of the 2030 Agenda is impossible without partnering with young people and ensuring they engaged and empowered in the global efforts and processes. In light of the upcoming the High-level Political Forum under the auspices of the UN General Assembly, the SDG Summit, there were calls to make sure that young people are provided with opportunities to engage not only in the implementation of these global event, but also in planning, coordination and follow-up processes, given the centrality of education for the overall 2030 Agenda.