



**ECOSOC
YOUTH
FORUM**

#YOUTH2030

8th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

Interactive Roundtable on “Youth 2030: Working with and for Young People”, featuring Ministers, other high-level speakers, and youth organization representatives

**8 April 2019, 11.00 am – 1:00 pm
United Nations Headquarters, New York**

1. Background:

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers an integrated and transformative vision for a better world. The goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda are interconnected and must be pursued together since progress in one area often depends on progress in other areas. Youth development is more than a crosscutting issue - it is integral for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Hence, promoting youth rights and priorities, and ensuring appropriate and dedicated investments into youth development within the SDG framework is crucial to the achievement of all goals and targets. Moreover, youth engagement in the implementation, the follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda, is essential for the achievement of sustainable development.

The report of the Secretary-General “Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level” (A/70/684), prepared in response to paragraph 90 of the 2030 Agenda, recognizes the important role of the ECOSOC Youth Forum by stating that the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) could be informed by and benefit from several economic and social council forums covering cross-cutting issues in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including the existing forum on youth. Furthermore, the Ministerial declaration of the HLPF and high-level segment of the 2016 and 2017 sessions of

the Economic and Social Council (E/HLS/2016/1 and E/2017/L.29-E/HLPF/2017/L.2) highlighted the important contribution made by the ECOSOC Youth Forum to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

More recently, in July 2018 the General Assembly adopted Resolution A/72/L.64 on the review of the implementation of General Assembly Resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council. The resolution calls on ECOSOC to strengthen its leadership and policy guidance role, and promote a coordinated follow-up to the 2030 Agenda. It states the Council should be a platform for discussion and exchange of national experiences; aim at creating synergy and coherence at global level, as well as avoiding duplication and overlap in its work; and ensure that the principles, critical aspects and implementation gaps of the 2030 Agenda are addressed. The resolution furthermore mandates the UN General Assembly to adopt one main theme for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and ECOSOC, whereas for the segments and subsidiary bodies, the themes should focus on a particular aspect of the main theme, bearing in mind their respective functions. In fact, since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the ECOSOC Youth Forum has already been aligned with the theme of the annual HLPF and this good practice, now mandated by the resolution, will be continued with the 2019 Forum and going forward.

The annual Youth Forum of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has become a platform through which Member States, youth entities and other stakeholders can discuss issues relevant to youth development and engagement. At the Forum, young people from multiple disciplines can contribute to policy discussions, showcase their collective ideas, solutions and innovations, and also participate in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Addressing youth priorities, needs, rights and their meaningful participation in the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was at the heart of the past three ECOSOC Youth Forums. The forums also discussed good practices, lessons learnt, challenges and opportunities for building efficient partnerships between Governments, youth entities, United Nations and other key stakeholders for the monitoring and achievement of the 2030 Agenda. It was an opportunity to discuss ways in which youth can communicate about the Agenda and monitor its implementation, bringing onboard new and innovative use of various communication and media tools and styles.

The 5th, 6th and 7th ECOSOC Youth Forums reaffirmed that young women and men are key drivers for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The role of young people and their organizations was deemed crucial, as they take action across all areas critical for the implementation and review of the agenda, including in politics, business, academia and civil society. The proper implementation of the agenda is therefore more likely to happen with a strong partnership between young people and policy makers.

The 8th ECOSOC Youth Forum will continue to build on these discussions by focusing on the overarching theme of “Youth: Empowered, Included and Equal” echoing the main theme of the

ECOSOC's High-Level Political Forum to be held in July 2019 and pointing towards the SDG Summit to be held in September 2019. It will also be a space to highlight and reflect on the [UN Youth Strategy: Youth 2030](#), which was launched by the UN Secretary-General during the High Level Segment of the UN General Assembly in September 2018 and sets the vision for the United Nations' work with and for young people.

As such, participants in the Interactive Roundtable session will discuss the active role of youth in building inclusive societies where young people have equal access to opportunities and are empowered to contribute as agents of change. This is particularly relevant as young people everywhere, especially those who live in poverty and those who still face barriers in exercising their human rights - often girls and young women - have historically been and continue to be left out, or poorly served.

Moreover, the session will provide an opportunity to monitor the implementation and review of the SDGs from a youth perspective, and showcase lessons learnt and best practices, analyze gaps, offer insights on creating innovative avenues and enhance existing means for youth participation.

2. Roundtable objectives:

The first Interactive Roundtable will follow the opening ceremony of the 8th ECOSOC Youth Forum. The purpose of this roundtable will be to highlight national reviews on youth development and youth engagement in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the recently launched UN Youth Strategy: Youth 2030. Representatives of youth-led and youth-focused organizations and networks, civil society and other key stakeholders will contribute to this plenary session by sharing their views on youth development, empowerment and inclusion in dialogue with Ministers and other Government authorities.

This Interactive Roundtable at the 8th ECOSOC Youth Forum will seek to:

- Provide an opportunity for different stakeholders to discuss how young people are participating and leading on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, what kind of support they need, and how they can meaningfully contribute to follow-up and review mechanisms established.
- Offer a platform to the UN Member States to inform and discuss with different stakeholders on progress made and challenges faced in mainstreaming youth rights and priorities into the national SDG implementation programs, share good practices and lessons learnt, and facilitate an exchange of information on how meaningful youth participation has been facilitated by Member States in the implementation of their national plans to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Highlight the recently launched UN Youth Strategy: Youth 2030 as part of the UN System wide effort to facilitate increased impact and expanded global, regional and country-level

action to address the needs, build the agency and advance the rights of young people, while reflecting on its core components and engaging in discussion on how various stakeholders can contribute to the implementation of the Strategy's vision.

- Set the stage for efficient and effective engagement of the participants in the subsequent sessions of the Youth Forum, which will (i) focus on how young people can be engaged in the implementation of Agenda 2030 from a thematic as well as regional perspective; (ii) review means of implementation, including financing, as well as modalities for partnerships and collaboration; and (iii) assess the progress and identify the gaps to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 2030 in preparation for the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) and the SDG Summit.

3. Session Format

The session is designed as a high-level dialogue on the current challenges with youth development and young people's meaningful engagement in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The session will focus on the requirements for an enabling policy and programming environment for this engagement to succeed and for youth rights to be protected.

Ministers and other high-level government officials in charge of youth, development and cooperation portfolios, as well as youth entities and intergovernmental organizations will address the plenary session. The aim is to generate a discussion with diverse speakers to cover variety of issues and perspectives, spanning from global, regional to local levels, and allow 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. The speakers will receive a brief guidance note to structure their inputs and gear them towards the overall objective of the Forum.

4. Questions for the audience

- What are the best practices for mainstreaming youth rights and priorities into the national SDG implementation programmes, and for empowering and including young people in the implementation of the national plans designed to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
- How would you assess the current level of youth engagement in the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and how can youth contribute with greater impact?