



**ECOSOC
YOUTH
FORUM**

#YOUTH2030

8th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

8 April 2019

Trusteeship Council Chamber, 1.45-3.45 p.m.
United Nations Headquarters, New York

IDENTIFICATION	
Session focus	Latin America and the Caribbean
Session title	“Empowered, Included and Equal”: the role of youth in Latin America and the Caribbean for an inclusive, peaceful and sustainable future
Session lead	Heidi Ullmann, UNECLAC UNMGCY LAC Caucus
Session co-organizers	Max Trejo, International Organization of Youth for Iberoamerica
	Rosario Diaz Garavito, The Millennials Movement
	Josefina Villegas, FLAJ
	Malena Fama, FLAJ
	Shaquille Knowles, Chairperson Caribbean Youth Council
Session moderators	Max Trejo and Shaquille Knowles
Session reporter (day 2)	Rosario del Pilar Diaz Garavito, Founder and CEO, The Millennials Movement, and Regional Caucus Coordinator MGCY-LAC (Latin America) Christian Tijani, Chairperson, Commonwealth Youth Council (Caribbean) (TBC)
Session note-taker 1	TBD
Session note-taker 2	TBD

BACKGROUND & KEY ISSUES

Latin America and the Caribbean is home to more than 162 million youth between the ages of 15 and 29. These young people have a central role to play in achieving sustainable development in the region. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an opportunity to galvanize action aimed at promoting greater inclusion of youth in all spheres. This roadmap recognizes in several of its goals the centrality of the full incorporation of youth as a necessary condition to move towards more egalitarian societies on a path of sustainable development. However, youth in the region face many challenges that need to be addressed in order to facilitate environments that enables youth to reach their maximum potential to contribute with the achievement of SDGs by 2030 leaving now one behind and a legacy for future youth generations.

Key issues:

SDG4 and SDG 8: Education and decent employment as motors for empowerment, inclusion and equality

In a context of economic growth and widespread reductions in poverty and inequality in recent decades, the situation of youth in Latin America and the Caribbean in areas critical for their social and economic inclusion has improved. For example, between 2002 and 2014, the percent of young men 20 to 24 years of age who completed secondary education in the region rose from 39.9% to 55.6% and from 44.1% to 61.2% for young women. While this is positive, as education is a social right and is vital to build skills and capabilities for the world of paid work and other spheres, such as civic and political participation, there are persistent disparities in secondary school completion rates by socioeconomic status, place of residence and race/ethnicity.

In addition to achieving universal education at all levels, action needs to be taken to address the segmentation in the quality of the education and to reduce inequality in educational outcomes between students. Indeed, there is a strong socioeconomic stratification in academic results in mathematics and reading, and a majority of students belonging to the lower socioeconomic groups have not developed the basic skills to perform in these areas. While the current generation of young people will have higher levels of education than previous generations and a greater proximity to digital technologies, how will that education and those skills adapt to the new realities and demands generated by the accelerated transformations of the fourth industrial revolution?

A major challenge for young people in the region, and an obstacle to their emancipation, is the transition from school to the labour market into quality, decent work opportunities. 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. About 1 in 5 youth in the region are in this situation, and the majority are young women, who are involved in unpaid domestic and care work. Once youth are in the labour market, they also experience challenges. Youth employment in Latin America and the Caribbean is characterized by being unstable and

in the informal market, without access to social protection and for many, their wages are below the national minimum wage (ECLAC, 2017). Youth unemployment rates in the region are between two and three times higher than adult unemployment rates, a trend that has not changed over the past few decades and particularly affects young women. Finally, a lack of employment opportunities is a driver for youth migration, often in precarious circumstances. All of this occurs in a context of rapid technological change in the labour market, which presents specific opportunities and challenges for youth.

SDG 10 and SDG 16: Active participation: Fighting inequalities, unfairness, corruption and violent contexts

Latin America and the Caribbean is the most unequal region in the world. The inequality that affects youth is multidimensional and limits their access to opportunities and the full enjoyment of their rights.

Moreover, youth is a critical stage during which inequalities may either widen or reduce, particularly when it comes to ensuring a proper transition to working life so that a pathway towards greater well-being and lesser inequality is created from the outset. The multiple and simultaneous forms of inequality that affect young people in the region are permeated by deeply ingrained sociocultural patterns, such as a culture of privilege, that normalizes social hierarchies and highly unequal access to the fruits of progress, political deliberation and production assets. Thus, participation is related to equality in that it impacts the decision-making processes that determine the allocation and distribution of social, economic, political and cultural assets. From this perspective, youth participation is not just a fundamental right and a key dimension for social inclusion, but also a highly important mechanism for dismantling the culture of privilege, strengthening democracy and transitioning to more egalitarian societies.

A critical issue in Latin America and the Caribbean, not only for youth, but for our societies as a whole that relates to participation and equality is the many manifestations of violence. The region has the dubious distinction of being the most violent part of the world, with respect to homicide rates, and also to other manifestations of violence, such as assaults and incidents involving sexual violence. Violence threatens people's —especially young people's— current and future lives by restricting their options, eroding the social fabric and weakening trust in institutions and thus, weakening democracy. Accordingly, it is vital to recognize a life free from violence of all forms as a fundamental right and to pursue a cultural change rooted in tolerance and in appreciation of the value of human life in all its diversity and the need of enabling environments for youth participation to promote open and peaceful democracies reducing inequalities is key for an effective youth participatory process to achieve SDGs by 2030.

SDG 13 / SDG 17: Intergenerational justice and alliances for climate action

According to ECLAC, the Latin American and Caribbean region is especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change because of its geographic location, climate, socioeconomic, demographic and institutional profiles and the highly climate-sensitive nature of its natural assets, such as its forests and biodiversity. With only 12 years to take concrete steps to address climate change and limit the temperature increase to 1.5C, the Latin American and

Caribbean region's rich and fragile ecosystems are threatened by carbon emissions and the unsolved emission gap.

In this scenario, youth face diverse and complex challenges since their present and future are affected by climate change and government inaction. Moreover, some groups more exposed to the impacts of climate change, such as indigenous youths, young climate activists, young women, rural youths and others. Thus, it is essential to build alliances with youth to deliver short-, medium- and long-term action plans, which will be critical for meaningful engagement and to achieve intergenerational justice.

However, is the region fully equipped to actively participate in adaptation and mitigation processes with technology, public policies, capacity building programs through action for climate empowerment (ACE)? The recent Escazu Agreement is an opportunity for youth to achieve justice, participation and access to information on regional environmental affairs that will re-enforce Rio Declaration and current processes youths are leading to defend and preserve the planet considering our common but differentiated responsibilities, but among all their present and the future of them and new generations.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

(approx. 100 words)

This breakout session will bring together diverse participants interested in youth development in Latin America and the Caribbean to exchange views and engage in an open and candid discussion. In particular, the session will aim to:

- Consider the existing challenges and opportunities as they relate to the three key areas identified to promote the youth empowerment, inclusion and equality in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Discuss successful approaches, contributions and lessons learned with respect to the three key areas.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

It is expected that this session will generate a rich discussion that will be synthesized into a summary containing: i) opportunities and challenges in each of the three key areas that were identified, ii) successful approaches, contributions and lessons learned that were shared, and iii) recommendations.

The sessions outcomes will be part of the ECOSOC Youth Forum outcomes to be presented to the HLPF 2019 as regional youth contributions and will also be shared at the regional level with the ALC Youth Forum participants (see comments about this Forum below, in Overall Structure box).

APPROACH USED TO GENERATE REGIONAL NEEDS ANALYSIS & CONTRIBUTION

We will explore the possibility of organizing two virtual dialogue sessions (one for Latin America, one for the English-speaking Caribbean) to generate regional needs analysis and contributions to nurture the discussions that will take place during the breakout session. Based on previous experiences and in order to maximize the success of these sessions, the following suggestions will be followed:

- 1) Identify our key audience for the dialogue session.
- 2) Limit the time of the session to two hours and schedule the session during a weekday and in the evening.
- 3) Identify and invite one or two presenters who can present on the main topic.
- 4) Identify guiding questions that speaks to the information we seek to obtain.

OVERALL STRUCTURE AND FLOW

The format of the session is a moderated discussion that will review the discussion questions and foster a dialogue among session participants. The discussions and perspectives from the virtual dialogue sessions will also be shared, as well as the results of the online youth consultation that is being conducted in relation to the Latin American and the Caribbean Youth Forum 2030 to be held on the framework of the III Session of the Latin American and the Caribbean Countries for Sustainable Development Forum.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Key issue #1

- How can education and decent work serve to promote the empowerment, inclusion and equality among youth in Latin America and the Caribbean? What are the opportunities and what are the challenges?
- What positive experiences or lessons learned do you know of in the region that highlight the link between education/decent work and youth empowerment and inclusion?
- What are the recommendations for regional decision makers regarding these topics?

Key issue #2

- How does inequality affect youth empowerment and inclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean? What are the opportunities and what are the challenges?
- What role can youth play in reducing inequalities in the region?
- What are the barriers to effective and meaningful youth participation in Latin America and the Caribbean?
- What are some positive practices in youth participation and lessons learned, particularly with respect to youth participation in the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda?

- What are the recommendations for regional decision makers regarding these topics?

Key issue #3

- What roles have youth played in the transition to low emission and carbon resilient society in Latin America and the Caribbean? What should be their future roles?
- How can governments and other stakeholders increase youth participation in actions to address climate change?
- What are the recommendations for regional decision makers on this topic?

PREPARATORY EVENTS

The coordinators of the session will liaise periodically. For additional activities planned, see APPROACH USED TO GENERATE REGIONAL NEEDS ANALYSIS & CONTRIBUTION section above.

SUGGESTED READING

Frameworks

- Montevideo Consensus
https://www.cepal.org/celade/noticias/documentosdetrabajo/8/50708/2013-595-consenso_montevideo_pyd.pdf
- The CARICOM youth development action plan (CYDAP) 2012–2017
https://caricom.org/documents/13930-cydap_2012-2017_rev.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
- Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean
<https://www.cepal.org/es/acuerdodeescazu>
- YOUNGO Policy Paper for COP24
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1d3T23v6kpB6crlvcEl_fbhCRLvB_KaOk/view?usp=sharing
- COP24: Key outcomes agreed at the UN climate talks in Katowice
<https://www.carbonbrief.org/cop24-key-outcomes-agreed-at-the-un-climate-talks-in-katowice>

Reports

Linkages between the social and production spheres: gaps, pillars and challenges.

http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/42269/1/S1700768_en.pdf

Economics of climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean

https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/43889/1/S1800475_en.pdf

Social Panorama of Latin America 2018

http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/44396/4/S1900050_en.pdf

People and corruption: Latin America and the Caribbean

https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/global_corruption_barometer_people_and_corruption_latin_america_and_the_car

Stopping Crime and Violence in Latin America: A Look at Prevention from Cradle to Adulthood

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2018/05/17/fin-a-la-violencia-en-america-latina-una-mirada-a-la-prevencion-desde-la-infancia-hasta-la-edad-adulta>