



**ECOSOC  
YOUTH  
FORUM**

**#YOUTH2030**

## 8<sup>th</sup> Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

### DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change  
and its impacts

**8 April 2019**

**Trusteeship Council Chamber, 4-6 p.m.  
United Nations Headquarters, New York**

IDENTIFICATION	
<b>Session focus</b>	SDG 13 “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”
<b>Session title</b>	“Taking urgent action to combat climate change: from mobilization to action”
<b>Session lead</b>	Marine Collignon, UN Environment
<b>Session co-organizers</b>	Yugratna Srivastava, YOUNGO Noella Richard, UNDP Adriana Valenzuela Jimenez, UNFCCC Melissa Martin and Mira Kleist, UNDESA/DISD Indigenous Peoples and Development Branch/SPFII Wanlu ZHANG, UNESCO
<b>Session moderator</b>	Lead moderator: John Sutter, CNN Environment Journalist Young moderator: Fatou Jeng, University of the Gambia / Plant-for-the-Planet and YOUNGO Gender Working Group
<b>Rapporteur</b>	Valery del Carmen Salas Flores, Latin American and Caribbean Youth Climate Movement

<b>Session note-taker 1</b>	TBD
<b>Session note-taker 2</b>	TBD

**BACKGROUND & KEY ISSUES**

Climate change is “the defining threat of our time” and 2019 will be a decisive year to act and make the transformative changes happen.

The recent 1.5°C report of the International Panel on Climate Change is very clear: there only remains some eleven years to minimize existential damages to the planet, and its life forms as they are currently known. The urgency to shift to low-emission pathways to keep global average temperature increase below 1.5°C degrees, and to mobilize 40 trillion USD climate finance by 2030, requires stepping up the political will combined with a multi-stakeholder implementation approach. Only through an ambitious and integrated approach, will the international community be able to fully implement SDG13 “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts” and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Climate change already has unprecedented implications on where people can settle, grow food, build cities, and rely on functioning ecosystems for the services they provide. In many places, temperature changes and sea-level rise are already putting ecosystems under stress and affecting human well-being. Vulnerable and marginalized populations are always the most impacted. Indeed, indigenous peoples, women and girls and minority groups are disproportionately vulnerable to these impacts and often lack access, resources and capacities to influence climate policy, and this gap needs to be addressed, to leave no-one behind. Yet, they also have an important part to play in the solution. Indigenous peoples can contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation through traditional knowledge, and conservation of traditional territories.

Children, youth and future generations are at the epicenter of these issues. They have a major role to play in climate action, not only because they need to have a say at the table and will have to bear the impacts of climate change, but because their mobilization is a powerful motivating factor to promote the urgency and importance of climate change action within the global public. They have a crucial role to pressure governments and the United Nations to be more ambitious in pace, scale and commitment to action. With 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 24, the world faces the largest young generation in history.

The ECOSOC Youth Forum, and this session on SDG13 in particular, is one vital opportunity to include their voices in the decision-making that will determine their future so that their views can be channeled to those in power.

While significant steps have been taken to include more youth, and raise the voices of young advocates, there are still challenges in representation and meaningful engagement of young

people in these processes. While people under 18 are one of the most significant stakeholders in climate change, they do not have voting representation in government. We must rise beyond tokenism which can often frustrate more than it supports, while taking into account the challenges and knowledge of specific groups such as indigenous youth, minority groups and girls.

As an institutionalized youth space in the United Nations, the ECOSOC Youth Forum and, this session on SDG13 in particular will provide an opportunity for a constructive and outcome-oriented discussion on these key issues outlined. It will bring together young people, youth organizations, movements and networks, UN agencies, Member States and key stakeholders and experts, to discuss critical and overarching elements around SDG 13, its implementation and interlinkages with other SDG and processes (biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, oceans, etc.). The session will also be the opportunity to call for and gather announcements that could be then be transmitted to the HLPF, through the Presidential Statement, High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development and the United Nations Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit.

#### SESSION OBJECTIVES

The discussion will enable participants to:

- **Share and create:** Hear how young people are acting around climate change and to crowdsource this wisdom into a toolkit for others to consider, gather and leverage best practices and experiences of matters relating to adaptation, mitigation and climate resilience. These best practices should also highlight the interlinkages of climate change with other SDGs (ocean, biodiversity, etc.). Identify the challenges and potential solution to ensure youth participation, including indigenous youth, young people from developing countries, women and girls.
- **Define the requests and recommendations:** Explore the shared asks and demands from young people involved in the climate movements and how these can be developed into ambitious strategies to help these youth-focused and youth-led actions be integrated into action plans, education and political systems so that their call for action can be taken on board by leaders.
- **How should governments respond:** As a result, explore how countries can best respond to these actions and integrate youth into their National Determined Contributions, National Action Plans and Strategies, education plans and political systems so that their call for action can be taken on board by leaders.
- **Develop ambitious and concrete outputs for the HLPF and Secretary-General Climate Action Summit.**

#### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The outcomes of the session could be structured around -

- Collection of contributions from the youth on the priority actions that they want to put forward and where they will call for change (such as commitments from youth organizations, schools and universities, and institutions, including those from members states such as in curricula) commit to renewable energy by 2020 and neutrality by 2040). These and further priority actions can be identified during the online consultation held before the session.
- Compilation of strategies and actions which have been successfully used by young people on climate change, for easy adaptation to local and global situations;
- Submission of ambitious and meaningful announcements/commitments to the HLPF, High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development and the SG Climate Action Summit.
- Recommendations from governments and regional bodies about how they can best respond to the rise of the youth climate movement in a meaningful way

#### **APPROACH USED TO GENERATE CONCRETE CONTRIBUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **Prior to the session -**

- Conduction of online and on-ground consultations in lead up to the ECOSOC Youth Forum - such consultations would derive their foundation from “Discussion Questions”; and should aim to engage both youth and non-youth actors.
- A synthesis report generated from these consultations would inform the overall discussion and outcome of the session (by both feeding in directly, and as an Annex to the outcomes

##### **In the periphery of, and during the session -**

- Online: Run the event online via live tweets or Periscope with participation and social media streams being pushed into this space
- High-level introduction with keynote statements
- Moderated discussion Guiding questions will be used by the moderator to steer the discussion. The moderator will have an important role to ensure that discussions are focused and result-oriented. Specific speakers/contributors representing different groupings, including indigenous youth, women and girls and different regions could be identified prior to the session to help highlight specific messages or help generate a debate around specific issues.
- Collection of minutes/notes by designated notetaker(s), both to inform the outcome documents; and to report back to the plenary

- Dissemination of recommendations to global networks of youth and practitioners and partners with a summary of several key points/outcomes from the discussion, while also indicating how these elements from the Youth Forum would feed into the larger process.

## OVERALL STRUCTURE AND FLOW

- Opening/High-level segment (30 mins):
  - One young rep - tbc
  - Jayathma Wickramanayake, Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth - tbc
  - Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator
  - Gabriel Attal, Minister of State, attached to the Minister of National Education and Youth, France
- Moderated discussion:
  - There would be two moderators and identified respondents;
  - The moderator will briefly introduce the purpose and format of the discussion, as well as the modalities of reporting back and intended outcomes;
  - Discussion on how youth can best make their voices heard and agree on joint effort (e.g., social media campaign) according to the guiding questions: the moderator will organize 3 sessions of 30 minutes on different groups of questions so that outcomes and conclusions can already emerge during the discussion.
  - The moderators should keep a very strict time limit on the participants’ intervention (5 minutes at most) to allow maximum dialogue among participants. There will be no statements. Specific speakers/contributors (‘respondents’) could be identified prior to the session to help highlight specific messages or help generate a debate around specific issues. These speakers could be Member States, representative from COP Presidency, indigenous youth, etc. They who would provide their perspectives and responses to views expressed and “critical” questions captured during the session.
  - Virtual participation should be arranged, such as Facebook-live/Periscope with the possibility to send live comments.

### Flow

30 minutes	Opening / High level segment
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40 minutes	The moderator will introduce and present the guiding questions for challenges and opportunities; followed then by discussions which would take place on these thematic focused questions-
15 minutes of "Open floor"	The moderators will briefly summarize the preceding segments and give floor by inviting participants for any overarching thoughts and perspectives.
A 25 minutes discussion segment	Focus on mobilization and action
7 minutes	Conclusion and takeaways

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### **Challenges: where are we with the implementation of SDG 13?**

1. What are the current barriers to political commitment leading to concrete action and implementation of SDG13? How can young people address these challenges?
2. How can young people influence leaders to raise the ambition of their commitments on climate action, and how to hold them accountable for their actions? What are some examples of projects/initiatives that have been successful, in particular those that are youth-led?
3. What voices are not being heard and how can they be elevated to the center of the discussion? i.e. indigenous peoples, women and girls? How can indigenous and local knowledge be adapted to a larger scale?
4. How can we make our schools and universities actors of change and engage them further in climate action?
5. How can we make climate change education and information accessible to young people - from also an angle of SDG 4 and SDG 13?

### **Opportunities for youth engagement and how countries can support:**

6. How can countries and regions increase investment and foster innovation among young people? How can young people promote each other?
7. What additional sources and mechanisms for financial and capacity support, at all levels, could expand the possibilities for youth-led actions on climate change? How

can these initiatives specifically target those in poverty? In what unique ways can young people strengthen the global community to mobilize for collective action?

8. What strategies should be used to foster grassroots level behavioral changes in consumption among young people? How can we be the actor of change?
9. What further action should member states and young people do so as to enhance implementation of Paris Agreement, while balancing mitigation and adaptation actions?

**Leading the path towards the HLPF, High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development and the SG Climate action Summit, from mobilization to action:**

10. How can governments and key stakeholders support meaningful youth engagement in multilateral processes related to climate?
11. What are the key messages, recommendations and concrete call for action young people want to convey to the UN Climate Summit convened by the Secretary General in September 2019 and the High-Level Political Forum?

#### **PREPARATORY EVENTS**

- Conduction of an online consultation in lead up to the ECOSOC Youth Forum using the networks of the different entities to ensure the widest participation as possible.
- Conduction of on the ground consultations in the margin of events on the lead up to the ECOSOC Youth Forum such as the United Nations Environment Assembly (4-11 March 2019, Nairobi), the YOUNGO consultations in the context of the project “Adapt for our Future” (20 February – 5 March 2019), the High-level event on climate change organized by the President of the General Assembly (28 March 2019, New York) and the preparatory session to the ECOSOC Youth Forum (7 April, 2019, New York).
- Both consultations (online and on the ground) would derive their foundation from “Discussion Questions”; and should aim to engage both youth and non-youth actors.

#### **SUGGESTED READING**

- ECOSOC Youth Forum concept note; <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/2019doc/ConceptNoteDraft%20-%20ECOSOCYouthFroum2019.pdf>
- IPCC SR 1.5 Summary for Policymakers: [https://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15\\_spm\\_final.pdf](https://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15_spm_final.pdf)
- Emission Gap Report 2018: <https://www.unenvironment.org/interactive/emissions-gap-report/>
- YOUNGO Policy Paper from COP24: [tinyurl.com/youngo-cop24cpp](http://tinyurl.com/youngo-cop24cpp)

- Summary of Katowice Outcomes (“Katowice Package”): <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/katowice-climate-package>
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>
- Informe perspectiva de jóvenes indígenas a los 10 años de la adopción de la declaración de naciones unidas sobre los derechos de los pueblos indígenas
- The Traditional Knowledge Advantage: Indigenous peoples’ knowledge in climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies