



**ECOSOC
YOUTH
FORUM**

#YOUTH2030

8th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

8 April 2019

CR 5, 4-6 p.m.

United Nations Headquarters, New York

IDENTIFICATION	
Session focus	Sustainable Development Goal 8
Session title	A Present and Future with Decent Work for Youth
Session lead	Matthieu Cognac, ILO
Session co-organizers	Marissa Storozum, UN DESA
	Raymond Landveld, UNCTAD
	Sarjo Sarr, UNV
	Flora Sonkin, IFAD
	Claudia Linke-Heep, UNIDO
	Peter Abraham Fukuda Loewi, MGCY
Session moderator	Winnie Mutevu, Regional Focal Point (Africa), SDG8 WG of UNMGCY
Rapporteur	Winnie Mutevu, Regional Focal Point (Africa), SDG8 WG of UNMGCY
Session note-taker 1	TBD
Session note-taker 2	TBD

BACKGROUND & KEY ISSUES

The meaningful participation of young people is integral to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With dedicated targets for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”¹, the role of decent jobs for youth in a sustainable and equitable economy is clear.

Progress towards SDG 8, however, has been slower than anticipated. Economic growth, which is essential to lift particularly disadvantaged social groups out of poverty, including youth, has not yet translated into enough job creation. This situation is exasperated for certain groups of youth, such as young women and young persons with disabilities, who continue to be much more likely to be unemployed. At the same time, the global youth unemployment rate is expected to remain stable at 12.5 percent, with one in five young people not in employment, education or training (NEET). Young women are much more inclined to fall in the NEET category than men, with global rates at 34.4 percent for women versus 9.8 percent for men. Meanwhile, fatal occupational injuries remain elevated, at a rate of 5.7 per 100,000 workers, with much higher risk rates for men and for migrant workers.

The availability of decent jobs is tied to government interventions, yet educational curriculums around the world have not been sufficiently able to provide the skills and competencies to provide solutions needed to reverse challenges related to youth employment. This is especially the case for the large majority of young people—88 per cent— who live in developing countries, more than half of whom residing in rural areas. Although agriculture remains the largest employer for rural young people, it is often no longer attractive or feasible to many youth.

Youth employment is at the heart of the SDGs, and while we now know more about which interventions and policies are effective, and which are not, much remains to be done to guarantee the scale, depth, and innovation needed to improve labour market outcomes of young people in a sustained manner. This must also be achieved in a world of work that is both constantly changing as well as posing new challenges and opportunities every day.

It is up to us to shape the future of work and young people are central to this effort. Driven by technology, demographic opportunities and by the green economy, labour markets are transforming at an unprecedented pace. The so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution brings many opportunities through digitalization and automation, but it will also have a profound impact on the way the benefits of economic growth are distributed across and within countries. In particular, increasing concerns relate to the digital divide, whereby some countries, especially the Least Developed Countries, are lagging behind in terms of access to technology.

¹A/RES/70/1, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E, p. 14.

The Global Commission on the Future of Work's report, "[Work for a brighter future](#)", launched in January 2019, offers new insights on collective action to boost young people's transitions into decent work. With an average time of 13.8 months for a young person to transition from school into stable or satisfactory employment, the report calls for measures to enhance the inclusion of both urban and rural young people in the labour market. Further investments in institutions, policies, and strategies that serve to balance and link the youth labour supply and demand are paramount to smooth the transition of youth into decent and stable jobs and support their access to social services.

Job quality remains a major concern among young workers. In 2018, 145 million young workers in emerging and developing countries were estimated to live in moderate or extreme poverty, especially in rural areas; that is on less than \$3.10 a day. Furthermore, at 76.7 percent, more than three-quarters of working youth around the world currently have informal jobs. The situation is especially bleak in developing countries, as youth in the informal economy make up 96.8 percent of all working youth.

Moving ahead, the focus needs to be on scaling up action and impact on youth employment and enabling young people to be ahead of the curve in a rapidly changing world of work. This can be done through SDG8, which aims at ensuring that the economic growth process allows for more inclusiveness, higher income equality and sustainability through, among others, decent jobs creation. Achieving the future we want requires investment, collaboration, and innovation, which are all key drivers of the [Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth](#)— the inclusive alliance of multiple partners taking action across a variety of thematic priorities, sharing knowledge and leveraging resources for more, and better, jobs for youth.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

The session will feature a series of conversations on the role of young people in accelerating progress towards sustained economic growth and decent work for all. The following three themes will frame the dialogue for those present, including representatives of youth organizations and networks, UN entities and Member States:

- *Beyond GDP: youth perspectives on well-being, the environment, and inclusive economic growth.*
- *Youth transitions to decent work: education, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in urban and rural areas.*
- *Rebuilding trust: increasing investment in the institutions of work.*

This breakout session of the ECOSOC Youth Forum will (i) address decent work deficits which contribute to the slow progress of SDG 8; (ii) build on the recommendations from the report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work and (iii) leverage the collaborative actions

under the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth to provide a platform for Member States, young leaders and youth organizations to discuss innovative measures that enhance youth access to decent work, and accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

A set of recommendations on collective actions to ensure a world in which young people have greater access to decent work, everywhere. The recommendations will be concrete and inform discussions on the implementation, follow-up, and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a focus on SDG 8 and in preparation for the future of work.

APPROACH USED TO GENERATE CONCRETE CONTRIBUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The organization of this session is led by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and co-organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY).

The session will feature a moderator, six facilitators and a ‘rapporteur’. It also will include a brief presentation, “lightning talks” and a marketplace discussion.

OVERALL STRUCTURE AND FLOW

16:00-16:02 – A moderator opens with a general introduction to the session, expectations, and proceedings.

16:02-16:07 – An ILO representative provides a glance at employment and economic trends and their implication for SDG 8, including reference to the four pillars of decent work and their meaning today and in the future of work.

16:07-16:17 - 3 lightning talks on the three themes under discussion.

16:17-16:22 - Participants split into three groups, and rapporteurs are nominated for the marketplaces. Each group then proceeds to one of the three “marketplaces”.

16:22-17:32 – Market place:

- The organizers facilitate the marketplace conversations that aim to open a dialogue and capture participants' views on actions to advance the three themes and to define the recommendations to be presented to the Forum. There will be two facilitators per theme.
- Young rapporteurs are identified on the spot and asked to remain in the group.
- Young rapporteurs type key messages and recommendations and display them on the screen.
- Each conversation lasts for 20 minutes before participants rotate to the next stand. 3 minutes to rotate.

17:32-17:37 - Marketplace rapporteurs and facilitators compile outputs for key messages (as well as for the inputs to the April 10th event and the HLPF)

17:37-17:55 - Marketplace rapporteurs present the three key messages (6 minutes per person to bring key messages and a flavor of the conversation)

17:55-18:00 - The moderator closes the session stressing the main messages to be brought to the Forum's Plenary.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) *Beyond GDP: youth perspectives on well-being, the environment, and inclusive economic growth.*

- What is "decent work?"
- Does "productive" work always have to be included in GDP?
- What is the role of young people, governments, employers, workers, volunteer groups and educational institutions in establishing an ecologically sustainable economic system?
- What other indicators can we measure that include environmental and quality concerns?
- What makes you happy at work?
- How to ensure the "decency" of unpaid work (outside of the official GDP count)?
- How to speed up the progress on gender equality?

2) *Youth transitions to decent work: education, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in urban and rural areas*

- What role and responsibility do technology platforms have to ensure smooth transitions to decent work as well as core/technical skill learning for young people?
- What can be done to decrease the inactivity levels of young people?
- How about gender equality? How can we eliminate gender-based discrimination and ensure equal access to youth employment solutions?
- How can green jobs meet young people's expectations? Is sustainable tourism a solution for scale? Is the renewable energy industry going to help in solving the gap in unemployment?

- How to ensure that youth can play a role in the digital transformation by promoting creativity and innovation?
- How can young people better prepare to become successful entrepreneurs?
- How to teach people-skills/soft skills needed for success in the workplace?
- How could youth better benefit from the development of the tourism sector?
- Social role valorization: how to valorize different traditionally undervalued job types (e.g. blue collars, rural economy) and groups of people (disabled youth, refugee youth, etc.)?
- What are the implications of rapid technological advancements, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics for future job creation and employment?
- How to support rural youth in finding jobs and/or becoming entrepreneurs in the countryside to maintain sustainable and lively rural economies?

3) ***Rebuilding trust: meaningful youth engagement in the institutions of work***

- How can young people influence multilateralism to enable the creation of more decent jobs?
- How can we elect more youth on Boards or put more youth on decision-making positions?
- How to facilitate the school-to-work transition?
- How to support school-and-work combination?
- How to amplify the voices and representation of young people in the world of work, including through social dialogue?
- Who will ensure minimum wages, social protection, number of working hours and rights at work of digital and freelance workers, and entrepreneurs?
- How can young people contribute to the elimination of child labour, modern slavery, and human trafficking especially sex trafficking for women?
- How can youth work on women empowerment and gender mainstreaming under SDG8.
- What kind of pro-youth economic development policies for those starting businesses or entering the job market can be put in place?

PREPARATORY EVENTS

Preparatory consultations will be held ahead of the session with a view to inform its discussions and outcomes. These preparatory consultations may include webinars, online surveys and social media campaign.

SUGGESTED READING

Reports

- “Work for a brighter future” available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---cabinet/documents/publication/wcms_662410.pdf
- Global Employment Trends for Youth: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_598669.pdf
- [IFAD's engagement with rural youth](#)
- [The Youth Advantage: Engaging young people in green growth](#)
- **World Youth Report:** [Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)

Thematic plans of Decent Jobs for Youth:

- Digital skills
- Green jobs for youth
- Youth in the rural economy
- Youth in fragile situations
- Youth transitioning to the formal economy
- Youth entrepreneurship and self-employment
- Quality apprenticeships
- [Rural Youth Action Plan \(RYAP\)](#) - IFAD
- [Towards inclusive e-commerce](#)
(https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/osg_youth_2017d02_Eweek_en.pdf)