



**ECOSOC
YOUTH
FORUM**

#YOUTH2030

Economic and Social Council Youth Forum *10th Anniversary*

CONCEPT NOTE

A PEOPLE-CENTRIC RESPONSE

IDENTIFICATION	
Session title as per programme	A people-centric response (SDG2 and 3)
Session co-lead UN	<i>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)</i> Francesca Dalla Valle, FAO
Session co-lead Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>SDG2 Youth Constituency - Major Group for Children and Youth</i> Pramisha Thapaliya• <i>SDG 3 Youth Constituency - Major Group for Children and Youth</i> Lucy Fagan
Session co-organizers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>UNESCO</i>: Maria Kypriotou, Sue Vize and Zengmei Wang• <i>UN-Habitat</i>: Ahmet Soguktas• <i>UNEP Major Group for Children and Youth</i>: Yugratna Srivastava• <i>International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation</i>: Hera Ali• <i>International Federation of Medical Students' Associations</i>: Eglė Janušonytė• <i>WHO</i>: Eva Kiegele• <i>Global Youth Health Caucus</i>: Lucy Fagan

Session moderator(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pramisha Thapaliya</i> Major Group for Children and Youth – SDG2 Youth Constituency • <i>Lucy Fagan</i> Major Group for Children and Youth – SDG 3 Youth Constituency
Session note-taker(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Francesca Dalla Valle, FAO</i> • <i>Eva Kiegele, WHO</i>

BACKGROUND & KEY ISSUES

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting all parts of society and livelihoods around the globe. It is though worth recognizing that segments of populations, like young women and men, will be impacted harder.

Nearly 1 billion of the world's 1.2 billion youth aged 15-24 reside in developing countries and their numbers are growing more rapidly in lower-income countries than in higher-income countries and 88 percent live in rural areas of developing countries and 75 million of them are unemployed (IFAD, 2019).

The closure of education and learning facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, may also leave behind millions of youth, in particular, vulnerable ones and with difficulties accessing technologies for distance learning, further resulting in inhibiting their school to work transition.

Other specific groups of youth, such as indigenous peoples, adolescents, youth in humanitarian or crises contexts, young migrants, young refugees, young people with disabilities and other minorities who are potentially marginalized and in fragile situations, may be exposed to further vulnerabilities. These youth may experience the highest degree of socio-economic marginalization owing to factors such as their lack of access to effective surveillance and early-warning systems and health services, furthermore, they can be further socially isolated if they don't access the communities regularly through education or employment for example.

Additionally, the impact of COVID-19 is not gender neutral. Disease outbreaks increase women's and particularly young women's duties in caring for elderly and ill family members, as well as for their children and siblings who are out of school and therefore may be further hit by secondary impacts of the outbreak. Globally, 60 percent of women, including young women, are in the informal economy and therefore many of them, will have difficulties accessing social safety nets as there are often linked to formal participation in the labour force. Thus, the subsequent economic stress on families and the inability to access food due to the outbreak is extremely high, while also putting adolescent girls and young women at greater risk of exploitation, child labour and gender-based violence. Furthermore, economic condition,

income, working position, education and culture are all strong determinants of health and well-being.

Further, policies, strategies and processes, often fail to account for the heterogeneity of youth, and so do not provide them with effective support with the risk that the pandemic may limit even further their inclusion and potential contribution to COVID-19 related processes and the design of instruments to support them during the time of outbreak and thereafter.

Yet, not all is bleak and young people are not only “victims” of this crisis – they are also this crisis’ big hope for better, innovative and more effective solutions. Every day young people prove their resilience and inventiveness in the face of adversity. They help themselves and their communities to rise, and to recover stronger and better from crises. For example, UNESCO’s youth storytelling campaign “My COVID-19 Story” has gathered 300+ inspiring stories showcasing how young people across the world have been engaging to respond to problems arising from the pandemic, notably by developing new forms of solidarity. Along the same lines, the FAO, collected numerous examples of how young people are adapting their agrobusinesses to the pandemic with technology and entrepreneurial spirit.

It is therefore key to support and facilitate youth participation in all decision-making discourses, including ones related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on them and the SDGs.

“A *people-centric response*” thematic session will bring together youth leaders, UN representatives, and youth experts to discuss the effects of COVID-19 on young people, and also their surroundings, in respect of SDG 2 and SDG 3.

The session, and the inputs collected via the pre-session survey (Survey link: <https://forms.gle/u9GneJVKAYMBZqt19>), will also showcase how youth have taken a critical role in the emergency response towards the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide and will include experiences and recommendations also from marginalized and disadvantaged youth groups.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

The session aims at:

- Exploring how young people are taking action on COVID-19 challenges related to SDG 2 and 3 while highlighting examples of good practices including their critical role in localizing the mentioned SDGs.
- Discussing and identifying young peoples’ role in the implementation of SDG 2 and 3 and their inclusion in related COVID-19 support instruments.

- Serving as an input to the ECOSOC's High-level Segment, including the High-level Political Forum (HLPF), the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, the FAO Youth World Food Forum, the World Health Assembly and other global processes related to SDG 2 and 3.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The session and its connected pre-session survey will:

- Identify specific challenges and needs related to the pandemic while featuring current innovation solutions and best practices for a people-centred and youth-led response to COVID-19 for both SDG 2 and 3.
- Provide a space for young people to express the biggest barriers to realizing the right to health and the right to food - especially in light of the pandemic.
- Identify recommendations for building back stronger and more resilient food and health systems, as well as areas of joint advocacy and action.
- Develop concrete recommendations from young people for member states to be amplified at further avenues in 2021.

APPROACH USED TO GENERATE CONCRETE CONTRIBUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A pre-ECOSOC summit online survey, designed in collaboration with the session's co-leads and co-organizers, will be disseminated via numerous channels and shared among youth and youth networks. The survey is intended to gather a wide collection of recommendations and repository of experiences in respect of SDG 2 and 3 (Survey link: <https://forms.gle/u9GneJVKAYMBZqt19>).

The findings of the survey, as well as results from other recent related initiatives, like the UNESCO's *"Youth As Researchers on COVID-19"*, the FAO's *"Youth in agrifood systems in the context of COVID-19"*, and else, will form the final report of contributions and recommendations that will be provided to the ECOSOC.

OVERALL STRUCTURE AND FLOW

The session is led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY), and co-organized by UNESCO, UN-Habitat, WHO, UNEP MGCY youth constituency, International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation and the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations.

The opening of the session by the FAO will introduce the objectives while presenting the co-organizers.

The SDG2 and SDG3 youth representatives from the MGCY will moderate the session, introducing a number of youth participants featuring their experiences, best practices and recommendations in relation to SDG 2 and 3. During the session, the outcomes of the pre-event dedicated survey will be shared with the participants.

The session will be closed by the co-organizers on behalf of all the group.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How youth mobilized to address the health, social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for the most marginalized?
- How can young people be meaningfully engaged as partners in the COVID-19 responses related to SDG 2 and 3, including the recovery mechanisms?

The above overall discussion questions are to be seen as broad overarching ones. Complementary and more detailed questions are included in the pre-summit online survey and will guide the discussions within the session.

PREPARATORY EVENTS

Besides the activities organized to collect contributions from a wide audience of youth with the specifically designed pre-summit online survey, and the various entities involved in the session's earlier initiatives, UN-Habitat will be organizing two pre- and side events that will be able to further the discourse of the thematic session.

SUGGESTED READING

- FAO 2020 - Rural youth and the COVID-19 pandemic
- FAO 2020 - Meet the young agripreneurs who won't let COVID-19 get them down
- FAO 2020 - COVID-19 and the role of local food production in building more resilient local food systems
- Committee on World Food Security – High Level Panel of Experts 2020 - Impacts of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition: developing effective policy responses to address the hunger and malnutrition pandemic

- UNESCO 2020 - Youth As Researchers: exploring the impact of COVID-19
- UNESCO 2020 - COVID-19 Pandemic: Youth Engaged in the #NextNormal
- Reliefweb 2020 - Youth lead the way in preventing COVID-19 spread in Kenya's informal settlements
- UN-Habitat's COVID-19 Response Plan
- MGCY Youth action on COVID-19
- Food Systems Summit 2021
- Food Systems Summit 2021 Youth Community
- World Food Forum
- World Health Assembly
- WHO Youth Council