



**ECOSOC  
YOUTH  
FORUM**

**#YOUTH2030**

## **Economic and Social Council Youth Forum 10th Anniversary**

### **CONCEPT NOTE**

#### **Latin American and the Caribbean Region**

<b>IDENTIFICATION</b>	
<b>Session title as per programme</b>	<b>Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Table: LAC Children, Adolescents and Youth Engagement for a Sustainable Recovery</b>
<b>Session co-lead UN</b>	<b>Daniela Trucco, ECLAC</b>
<b>Session co-lead Youth</b>	<b>Spanish session: Rosario Diaz Garavito, LAC IANYD Regional Caucus represented by The Millennials Movement</b> <b>English session: Franz George, Commonwealth Youth Council</b> <b>Roshanna Trim, Caribbean Regional Youth Council (CRYC)</b>
<b>Session co-organizers</b>	<b>Catarina Camarinhas, ECLAC</b> <b>Maria Ortiz, ECLAC</b> <b>Mareike Eberz, ECLAC</b>
<b>Session co-organizers</b>	<b>Andrea Gisselle Burbano Fuertes, UNESCO San Jose Office,</b>
<b>Session co-organizers</b>	<b>Giuliana Neumann, UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean</b>
<b>Session co-organizers</b>	<b>Allán Sánchez Osorio, UNFPA Latin America &amp; the Caribbean Regional Office</b>
<b>Session moderator(s)</b>	<b>Spanish session: Max Trejo, OIJ</b> <b>English session: Dominique Noralez</b>
<b>Session note-taker(s)</b>	<b>Spanish session: Andrés Cabanzo, MGCY</b> <b>English session: Anya Edwin, CYC/CRYC</b>
<b>BACKGROUND &amp; KEY ISSUES</b>	
<p>After almost a year of multidimensional impacts (health, economic and social) of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region faces the most severe crisis in</p>	

recent decades. With the decline in regional gross domestic product (GDP) (-7.7% in 2020), an increase in poverty is estimated to affect 231 million people in LAC, with an increase of 28.5 million persons living in extreme poverty. In this context more than 168 million people between 15 and 29 years old in the region, face the intensification of different challenges in the most unequal region of the world. The increase in youth unemployment, violence against children and youth (especially young women and girls and vulnerable groups), gaps in access to education, information and technologies, political instability, as well as extended periods of confinement, considerable threats for youth activists, among other challenges, put current and future children and youth at risk, generations that have a critical role in the success of the 2030 Agenda in the region and in the recovery process.

During the past months, and since the outbreak of the pandemic, different processes took place in the region, run by children and youth platforms and UN entities, to gather children and youth voices regarding their challenges and priorities during the pandemic and their recommendations. The information collected was used to contextualize each of the thematic areas proposed for ECOSOC Youth Forum this year, as follows:

### **Key Issues**

#### **A PEOPLE-CENTRIC RESPONSE-SDG 2 (Zero Hunger); SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being)**

Adequate nutrition and a good state of health is essential to fully exercise the right to education throughout life, and thus achieve the appropriate skills and learning achievements to develop a dignified life, ensuring participation in the labour market, in the construction and strengthening of cohesive social relations, and in the processes of democratic transformation of communities and countries.

The region is challenged to address the double burden of malnutrition by preventing both food insecurity and malnutrition, as well as overweight and obesity. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the closure of schools impacting school feeding programs, the significant decrease in household income, particularly of those who were already in a vulnerable situation, and the restrictions on mobility imposed to prevent the spread of COVID-19, are all factors that may lead to less nutritious diets among youth. These risks are confirmed by youth perceptions: according to a regional youth survey (UNSDG-LAC, 2020) 31% of the young people surveyed expressed that there is a shortage of food in their community and 16% that they do not have the resources to buy food. The perception of food shortages in their communities is especially high among indigenous youth (45%).

The 2030 Agenda embraces a broad conception of health, as a comprehensive phenomenon that encompasses physical, mental and social aspects. The context of the pandemic has shed light on the importance of mental health for the overall well-being of people. The social impacts of the pandemic put additional pressure and stress on youth in the region that can increase depression and anxiety. According to the UNSDG-LAC online survey, 52% of young people mention having experienced greater stress, and 47% having had moments of anxiety or panic attacks during their quarantine. Also, the survey indicated that a large percentage of young people stopped accessing free contraceptive methods and more than 50% of young people living with HIV stopped accessing antiretroviral treatment. Policies should focus and

invest in programs for the promotion of health in all its dimensions, including mental, school health, and sexual and reproductive health, as well as the promotion of physical activity, sports and adequate nutrition, risk reduction associated with mortality, reduction of unwanted pregnancy, reduction of unintentional injuries, violence and use of psychotropic substances, in order to attend youth wellbeing.

**ACCELERATING ACTION FOR THE PLANET-SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production patterns); SDG 13 (Climate Action)**

According to youth perceptions (UNSDG-LAC, 2020), the vast majority of young people have changed their consumption perspective due to the crisis, and one in two mentions that now they recognize which purchases are most important for their well-being. Among the actions that young people state they will change after the pandemic, is to avoid motorized transport when it is not necessary, increase outings to parks and recreation areas, and travel by bicycle and on foot more than before.

The urgency of addressing climate change is an imperative for all generations. Actions taken today - or not taken - will impact future generations to come. With the COVID-19 crisis, the need to rethink our relationship with nature has become evident. Humans and nature are part of a connected system, showing a clear relationship between healthy ecosystems and human health. Caribbean Small Island Developing States are particularly vulnerable to climate change and increasingly frequent natural hazards.

The devastating consequences of climate change in the region are not only explained by the different levels of resilience or vulnerability of each ecosystem, but also by their interaction with the institutional, political, social and economic dynamics of each national and subnational context. In the face of an epochal crisis, it is necessary not only to protect young people through universal and inclusive public policies, but also to count on them to change the current development model and its unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. Young people are called to prioritize green, low-carbon and people-centered solutions, as well as to advocate to achieve intergenerational and environmental justice in the region through their engagement on the territories as well as regional processes such as the Escazú Agreement ratification and implementation.

**PROSPERING AND THRIVING- SDG 1 (No poverty); SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)**

Experiencing poverty in childhood, adolescence and youth is long and lasting, and constitutes a key link in the intergenerational reproduction of poverty and inequality. After sustained improvements during the 1990s and at the beginning of the 21st century, as of 2015 the rate of reduction in poverty slows down in the region and by 2018 there are already increases in poverty among young people, a year in which almost one in three persons 15 to 24 years old, lived in a situation of monetary poverty. This rate is probably going to increase significantly with the current crisis.

Decent work is one of the keys to inclusion of young people by facilitating access to stable income for basic needs, access to social protection, and allow autonomy and the construction

of upward social mobility trajectories. Work is also associated with the construction of identities and can be a source of self-esteem and a space to develop socio-emotional skills. 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. These will probably increase significantly given the crisis. 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.

**INCLUSIVE PEACE: THE WAY FORWARD - SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities); SDG 16 (Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies)**

This region is the most unequal and violent region in the world, including very high incidence of violence against women and girls. The inequality that affects youth is multidimensional and limits their access to opportunities and the full enjoyment of their rights. In addition, the region is marked by various manifestations of violence that alter young persons' possibilities of inclusion, development and collective construction of the transformation of their realities, especially young women and girls and vulnerable youth groups. This violence is the legacy of historical processes such as colonization, the trafficking of enslaved persons, wars and civil conflicts, authoritarian governments and cultural traits, that have naturalized violence as a mechanism to dominate and resolve differences. Violence is a complex, multidimensional and multi-causal phenomenon, associated with power dynamics and hierarchy. 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 the SDGs by 2030.

**HARNESSING PARTNERSHIPS, RESOURCES AND SCIENCE: WORKING TOGETHER TO GET THINGS DONE - SDG 17 (Partnerships)**

Efforts to mitigate the short- and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic require an unprecedented level of collaboration. During the pandemic we have seen many positive contributions and actions led by young people, which need to be made visible. Young people help save lives: even in the face of a shortage of protective equipment, young health professionals risk their lives on the front lines of the pandemic. They also support the most vulnerable people in their communities. Young people must also be key actors in a social pact focused on well-being and rights, which allows facing the present and future impacts of the crisis, proposing a logic of collective protection and equality.

The pandemic has also served as a global accelerator in terms of the role of the new technologies in education and work, bringing dramatic innovation in communication and learning. In this new digital context, improving access to technology for all visibly became a means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda which requires greater investment. According to UNESCO, almost 165 million learners in the region have been affected by COVID-19. The pandemic also revealed a large digital divide, where many children and young people have been left behind as they were not able to access online education. Therefore, we should build

an inclusive digital society, for which it is essential to address the affordability of internet connection and devices and enhance the skills to use these technologies. ECLAC has estimated an average annual cost of 1% of GDP for a basic digital basket made up of a laptop, a smartphone, a tablet and a connection plan.

#### **SESSION OBJECTIVES**

1. Collect youth recommendations on the frame of the 5 areas prioritized for the 2030 Agenda review process.
2. Include the perspective of regional youth and reflect on formal and informal mechanisms of innovative youth participation in decision-making around the COVID-19 recovery process.
3. Follow up on regional youth consultation efforts towards the implementation and review processes of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
4. Reflect on the role of National Youth Policies as potential SDGs accelerators.

#### **EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

1. Two simultaneous online sessions to consult regional youth.
2. Identify critical challenges and opportunities for regional youth for the success of the 2030 Agenda in a context of COVID-19.
3. Elaborate a set of recommendations for UN member states within the framework of the HLPF process.

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

1. The approach used for the purpose of the session will be interactive, providing 80% of the time allocated for the session for the collection of the participants inputs.
2. The session will follow-up on the 2020 consultative process, recommendations and priorities identified by youth in the region.

#### **OVERALL STRUCTURE AND FLOW**

The process will consider two simultaneous sessions, one in Spanish and another in English and will be organized along the following structure:

1. Introductions: Brief introductions of facilitators, co-leaders and session participants.
2. Presentation of the session guidelines: provide participants with session guidelines and goals.

3. Facilitation of the consultative process:
  - Thematic introduction 15% of time allocated (during this segment the outcomes from the previous consultative processes and youth recommendations will be presented during the session)
  - Collection of participants recommendations and inputs
4. Review of the session outcomes with the plenary session.

Each session will encompass the participation of facilitators, IT support and the note-taker.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What were the most pressing challenges for children and youth in your community before the COVID-19 pandemic in the frame of the selected themes?
2. How has COVID-19 impacted or further exacerbated the challenges identified?
3. How have children and young people been involved and how can they be meaningfully engaged to respond to the challenges identified and in the recovery process of the COVID-19 pandemic?
4. What are the recommendations member states should follow to address these challenges especially during the post-pandemic recovery and reconstruction process, and for achievement of the SDGs?

### **PREPARATORY EVENTS**

The session will be preceded by some activities conducted at the regional level, engaging wide networks and building over previous consultations efforts that will include:

1. The dissemination of relevant youth consultations facilitated through the year 2020 including:
  - The outcomes report, facilitated by the UN Regional Inter Agency Network for Youth Development.
  - The MGCY Position Paper including the recommendations delivered for the UN HLPF 2020.
  - The ECLAC Regional Mechanism for CSOs Participation - Children, Adolescent and Youths COVID19 Statement.
2. A regional preparatory consultation process to gather regional youth contributions and recommendations.
3. Online introductions webinars towards the ECOSOC Youth Forum and the topics prioritized for the 2030 Agenda review process 2021.

### **SUGGESTED READING**

1. The United Nations Outcome Report on the Survey on Latin American and Caribbean Youth in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic, facilitated by the UN Sustainable Development Group – Latin America and the Caribbean (UNSDG-LAC) Youth Task Force.
2. [The MGCY Position Paper including the recommendations delivered for the UN HLPF 2020.](#)
3. [The ECLAC Regional Mechanism for CSOs Participation - Children, Adolescent and Youths COVID19 Statement.](#)
4. [Latin American and the Caribbean Families with Children and Youth: An Imperative towards COVID 19](#)
5. [Violence against Children and Youth during COVID 19](#)
6. [Education, youth and work: Needed Skills and Competences in a Changing Context](#)
7. [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in a new regional and global contest: Current Crisis Scenarios and Projections](#)
8. [The COVID-19 Pandemic can Increase Child Labor in the Latin American and Caribbean Region.](#)
9. [Caribbean synthesis report on the implementation of the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes](#)
10. [Policy Brief: Implementation strategies for youth mainstreaming in sustainable development processes](#)
11. [Mainstreaming youth in sustainable development](#)
12. [Youth: realities and challenges for achieving development with equality](#)
13. [The digital transformation of education: connecting schools, empowering learners](#)

#### **ADDITIONAL DETAILS**

The concept note refers to two simultaneous online sessions (English and Spanish).