



**ECOSOC
YOUTH FORUM**

YOUTH2030

Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

"COVID-19 recovery: Youth taking action for a sustainable future"

CONCEPT NOTE

PLENARY SESSION ON "WORKING WITH AND FOR YOUTH IN BUILDING BACK BETTER FROM COVID-19 AND ACHIEVING THE 2030 AGENDA"

19 April 2022, 9:35 – 11:00 AM

1. Background

The 2022 Annual Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum takes place at a critical point in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The global failure to share vaccines equitably, work in solidarity for pandemic preparedness, and to work together for COVID19 recovery are taking toll on some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people. The ECOSOC Youth Forum will be an opportunity for young people to share their perspectives on how to transform the world into a fairer and more sustainable place and reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) amidst this continuing crisis. It will address the theme of ECOSOC and the 2022 UN High-level Political Forum on sustainable development (HLPF) on "Building back better from COVID- 19 while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda." It will also review progress in the areas of quality education (SDG4), gender equality (SDG5), life below water (SDG14), life on land (SDG15) and partnerships for the goals (SDG17).

From gender equality to education and skills development to fighting climate change, and protecting our oceans and biodiversity, young people are advocating many initiatives with creativity and commitment in response to our fast-changing world and for future generations. As the UN Secretary-General highlighted in his recent report, "[Our Common Agenda](#)", "it is time to find ways to give more weight to young people's collective interests and to make our systems work to safeguard their futures". This report, which presents

his vision for the future of global cooperation, proposes solutions to address today's challenges and highlight main areas of proposals, among them several on youth. Guided by the UN system-wide youth strategy, ["Youth2030"](#), the United Nations has been strengthening its work for and with young people worldwide. The main objective has been to engage, support and empower young people to put their ideas into action.

As such, participants in the Interactive Roundtable session entitled **"Working With and For Youth In Building Back Better From COVID-19 And Achieving The 2030 Agenda"** will discuss the active leadership of youth in building back from COVID-19 towards more inclusive societies where young people have equal access to opportunities and are empowered to contribute as agents of change.

This is particularly relevant as young people everywhere, especially those who live in poverty and facing barriers in exercising their human rights - often girls and young women - who have historically been and continue to be left out, are now being hit especially hard by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The session will provide an opportunity to monitor the implementation and review of the SDGs from a youth perspective, and showcase lessons learnt, exchange on scalability best practices, analyze gaps, offer insights on creating innovative avenues and enhance existing means for youth participation.

Moreover, the session will bring together Government officials and young people, in aims of featuring national progress, gaps, and next steps in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda with and for youth, with a special emphasis on the SDGs under review (SDG 4, 5, 14, 15, and 17).

2. Objectives

The purpose of the Interactive Roundtable will be to:

- Highlight the interconnectedness of national policies and programmes on youth development and youth engagement in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and particularly the SDGs under review (SDG 4, 5, 14, 15, and 17) and the implementation of UN Youth Strategy: Youth2030 (with a particular focus on the inclusion of young people's priorities into the design, planning and implementation of recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic) as a vehicle to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda by facilitating partnership with youth and leveraging on the Strategy's system-wide implementation.
- Provide a platform for Government officials and representatives from youth-led, youth-serving, and youth-focused organizations to engage in dialogue on what kind of support young people need, how they can meaningfully contribute to follow-up and review mechanisms established, and upcoming opportunities for young people to engage. A particular focus will be given to the meaningful engagement and inclusion of young people from marginalized and vulnerable groups.
- Encourage policy and decision-makers to share best practices on scaling up initiatives and solutions for youth policies and programmes to champion the spirit of multilateral partnerships and solidarity.
- Set the stage for meaningful, as well as efficient and effective engagement of the participants in the subsequent sessions of the Youth Forum.

3. Session Format

The Interactive Roundtable will take place virtually on 19 April, from 9:30 to 11:00 AM.

The session will be divided in three sub-segments around the overall theme **“Working With and For Youth In Building Back Better From COVID-19 And Achieving The 2030 Agenda”**.

Heads of State, Heads of UN Entities, Ministers and other high-level government officials in charge of youth, development and cooperation portfolios, as well as youth entities and intergovernmental organizations will be invited to participate in the Interactive Roundtable, including through pre-recorded video messages and written statements made available online on the ECOSOC Youth Forum’s website.

The aim is to generate a discussion with diverse speakers to cover a variety of issues and perspectives, spanning from global, regional to local levels, and allow for participants to share insights, raise questions, make comments and engage in a constructive dialogue on the overall theme and with relation to specific interventions and contributions made.

The speakers will be asked to respond to tailored questions developed in advance and will receive a guidance note to structure their inputs and gear them towards the overall objective of the Forum.