



ECOSOC
YOUTH FORUM

YOUTH2030

Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

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

CONCEPT NOTE

OPENING INTERACTIVE SESSION ON "#ECOSOCYF – YOUTH TAKING ACTION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE"

19 April 2022, 9:00 AM – 9:35 AM

Background

Countries around the world are still struggling to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. As the situation rapidly evolves, the pandemic has affected the lives of young people from every region, limiting movement, and severely impacting social and economic activity. This situation has had an unprecedented impact on health, education systems, the labor force and employment, among other challenges.

Young people worldwide are uniquely vulnerable to the long-term socio-economic consequences of the pandemic with major disruptions to education, training and employment. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), approximately 17 per cent of young workers (18-24 years old) stopped working during COVID-19. Many young people also faced food insecurity while social isolation has led to a global mental health crisis.

Despite these challenges, young people continue to demonstrate resilience and agility through voluntary service and community-based interventions. There is a need to employ more community based, youth-led and intergenerational approaches to the response and recovery interventions to the pandemic. Approaches should also prioritize vulnerable youth populations and those left furthest behind, more especially in this decade of action as we get closer to the 2030 target of the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development.

From gender equality to education and skills development to fighting climate change, and protecting our oceans and biodiversity, young people are demonstrating that with their eagerness, determination and

courage, they are ready to tackle any roadblocks to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Decade of Action.

Young people have the potential to bring innovative solutions and new perspectives to address the world's most pressing challenges. Building back better should be an intergenerational effort. Due to the historical marginalization of young people in decision making and leadership there is a need to amplify the voices of young people and better engage them in the implementation of measures that contribute to a better future for both people and the planet. Youth engagement and youth participation should move beyond tokenistic box ticking exercises to more equitable and sustainable youth centered approaches.

Objectives

Young people need to be at the driver's seat in creating a better, equitable and sustainable future. It is important to recognize, promote and support their positive role as engaged citizens, positive agents of change and bold innovators. Yet, after two years into this pandemic and its complex challenges, we still have many lessons left to learn. In this particular session, speakers will:

- Propose solutions to support youth in surmounting the tremendous challenges they are facing, among them: the impacts of the major conflicts around the world; the devastating repercussions of COVID-19 in economic, social, health and educational terms; and the need to build their resilience to future shocks.
- Engage in a dialogue on the various actions that Member States and other actors could take to rebuild from COVID-19 in a way that advances the Sustainable Development Goals at the grassroots, national, regional and global levels.
- Discuss the role that young people can bring to society for implementing a global youth-led and youth-centered climate policies and action.
- Address the prospects for youth development and participation in key domains (decent work, economic security and social inclusion) given the right enabling environment.

Format

The opening session will be moderated by Mr. Sherwin Bryce-Pease, Bureau Chief and Correspondent, South African Broadcasting Corp, United Nations (Moderator). The objective is to generate a discussion to cover a variety of issues on the role of youth today.

Biographies

Ms. Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations

Ms. Amina J. Mohammed is the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. Prior to her appointment, Ms. Mohammed served as Minister of Environment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria where she steered the country's efforts on climate action and efforts to protect the natural environment. Ms. Mohammed first joined the United Nations in 2012 as Special Adviser to former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon with the responsibility for post-2015 development planning. She led the process that resulted in global agreement around the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals. [More...](#)

H.E. Dr. Mokgweetsi E.K. Masisi, President of Botswana

H.E. Dr. Mokgweetsi E.K. Masisi is the current President of Botswana who has held that position since April 2018, taking over from Seretse Khama Ian Khama. Masisi grew up in Gaborone. He served as Minister of Education in Botswana since 2014 and was previously the Minister of Presidential Affairs and Public

Administration from 2011 to 2014. Masisi graduated from Florida State University in the US, where he majored in Social Studies Education and Instructional Systems Design. [More...](#)

Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth

Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake was appointed as the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth in June 2017 at the age of 26. In this role, Jayathma works to expand the UN's youth engagement and advocacy efforts across all four pillars of work – sustainable development, human rights, peace and security and humanitarian action – and serves as a representative of and advisor to the Secretary-General. Originally from Sri Lanka, Ms. Wickramanayake has worked extensively on youth development and participation, and has played a key role in transforming the youth development sector in her home country. [More...](#)

Ms. Chido Mpemba, African Union's Youth Envoy

Ms. Chido Cleopatra Mpemba, a native of Zimbabwe, has been appointed as next African Union's Envoy for Youth in January 2022. She graduated from Midlands State University with a master's in business administration and was a visiting fellow at Dartmouth College in 2016. She has experience in working as global taskforce member at the world economic forum and in various positions at Global Shapers Community. [More...](#)

Ms. Marinel Ubaldo, Climate Justice Activist

Ms. Marinel Ubaldo is an advocate for climate justice and the environment. She is a Registered Social Worker and one of the Founders of the Youth Leaders for Environmental Action Federation, a youth-led organization based in Eastern Visayas that aims to mentor youth individuals and organizations in climate advocacy. She is also the Advocacy Officer for Ecological Justice and Youth Engagement of Living Laudato Si' Philippines. She is currently the Philippine Country Coordinator for UN COY16 Glasgow while co-leading the implementation of one of the most comprehensive youth gatherings this year, the Local Conference of Youth 2021. [More...](#)