



**ECOSOC
YOUTH
FORUM**

#YOUTH2030

8th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

**“Youth: Empowered, Included and Equal”
9 April 2019**

CLOSING STATEMENT

**By H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King
President
Economic and Social Council**

Ministers,
Excellencies,
Youth representatives,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am grateful to all of you for your participation in this unique and inspirational Youth Forum. Your passion, drive, focus and determination are commendable. They represent your strong commitments to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

I heard many important messages from you:

The 2030 Agenda is the agenda of youth. Some still say that 17 SDGs are too many. But the goals echo the richness and complexities of the lives of young people who can recognize themselves in many of the targets agreed by the world in 2015.

However we also heard that still too many people don't know about the SDGs. To accelerate implementation we need to change that.

Youth does not need good intentions and assistance. They need the tools and space they are entitled to in order to live fulfilling lives. It is unacceptable that many societies and politics still treat youth as a silent and marginal spectator.

This is also why policy makers must invest more than ever in young people's education and skills training. We need knowledge in order to contribute to peaceful, inclusive and sustainable societies. In fact, SDG 4 on quality education is the springboard to achieving the other SDGs.

Youth employment is a silent emergency. Huge number of young people are jobless or have low paying insecure jobs. I am happy that you will be represented at the meeting of the President of the General Assembly on the future of work with decent work on Wednesday.

We heard about unacceptable levels of inequality. We must come together to overcome the barriers that keep segments of youth in poverty and insecurity.

It is abundantly clear that young people are exasperated and indeed deeply scared about climate change. We heard again this afternoon that young people believe that ambition related to climate action will be much higher if young people were at the decision-making table. This Forum sends my generation back to the drawing board to reflect on how we can arrest this existential trend. Youth is challenging us to act and transform the way we live, produce wealth, and entertain ourselves. Many countries such as mine, a SIDS, are testimony to the dramatic impact of rising temperature.

We also spoke about the trillions of dollars we need to realize the SDGs and how they can be mobilized.

We heard that young people are eager to participate in policy making and peace building. They have multiple ideas and a drive to build a better world. Their voice must be heard and their vision must be acted on.

Our policy makers reaffirmed here their commitment to give youth the tools they need to exercise their rights and live the kind of life they want. This commitment must translate into actions in all countries.

My younger colleagues,

This year's Forum has been a well-timed opportunity for advancing the global development agenda with youth at its centre.

As we fast approach the Council's High-level Political Forum in July, the General Assembly's Sustainable Development Goals Summit and the UN Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit in September, I urge all of you to keep advocating for the SDGs. It is with your enthusiasm and willingness that we will reach the SDGs.

I also call on you the young people to continue to speak-up.

I encourage you to relentlessly put pressure on your governments to raise ambition for climate action. The momentum has to change. Without you, we will not be able to move forward.

Distinguished Ministers, Excellencies,

I call on your countries to engage young people in a meaningful way to make our world a better place.

Be inclusive; Involve young people in the decisions that you make. And listen.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Before I conclude, I would like to inform you that I will issue a Presidential Statement to highlight the key messages and recommendations of our meeting.

It will inform the milestone SDG Summit in September and the July HLPF.

I also would like to take this opportunity to thank you all – youth representatives and Ministers of Youth and representatives of the UN system - for your active and substantive participation in this event. Special thanks go to our speakers, moderators, and also to the co- organizers of this meeting, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Secretary- General’s Envoy on Youth, and the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth. I am also grateful for the very close collaboration with the Major Group on Children and Youth and the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organizations. Also special thanks to the Department of Global Communications, especially for the SDG Media Zone, which is an essential part of the Youth Forum, and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.

Thank you all for your participation and we look forward to seeing you again next year.