



**ECOSOC
YOUTH
FORUM**

#YOUTH2030

8th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

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

OPENING STATEMENT

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

Dear friends,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last year we met in this room to find solutions to the global challenge of strengthening resilience among the youth. This year our focus is youth empowerment, with an emphasis on inclusiveness and equality.

To create a more sustainable world, young people require skills, values, jobs and livelihoods that empower them to contribute to sustainable development.

Our presence today reflects our concerted efforts and determination to ensure that you are fully vested in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We have over 800 participants and 34 ministers joining us today.

We have 11 years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and we cannot do this without you, the young people. And this is why, last September, the UN Secretary-General launched the United Nations Youth Strategy, to ensure your full engagement in realizing the 2030 Agenda.

We need to urgently address the defining challenges of our time: access to quality education, unemployment, inequality, social exclusion and climate change.

We cannot achieve this at the UN alone. We are all in this together.

Many of today's challenges know no borders, such as climate change or movements of people. These challenges need a global solution which can only be found through multilateral engagement. The United Nations is here to serve the world and to serve you.

Over the next two days, we will focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that will be under review in the July High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). The HLPF is the main global platform for follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It will review SDG4 on quality education, SDG8 on inclusive growth and decent work, SDG10 on inequalities, SDG13 on climate action, SDG16 on peaceful societies and robust institutions and SDG17 on means of implementation. These SDGs are particularly critical for empowerment of young people.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Dear Friends,

There are some encouraging signs of progress on several of the SDGs. But overall there is some emerging evidence that suggests the world is not yet on track to meeting many of the SDGs by 2030.

You are well placed to know whether the SDGs are bringing improvements in your daily lives. I urge you to assess where we stand and mobilize together to move us forward.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is “an Agenda of the people, by the people and for the people”. Therefore, your engagement in its implementation, follow-up and review is critical.

This year is a special year. You will have the opportunity to contribute to the SDG Summit in September. The Summit will bring world leaders and other actors together to look at how far we have come in realizing the vision of the 2030 Agenda and how far we still need to go. There are also many high-level events in 2019 beginning with the High-level Meeting on Decent Work on 10 April and later the July High-level political forum. The High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development and the Secretary-General's Climate Summit are also opportunities for you to have your say.

Over the next two days, I look forward to hearing from you about how you would like to make our world a better place. Let's hear your vision, your creative ideas, your proposed solutions and your plan for realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Einstein told us a long time ago that we cannot solve problems from the same level of consciousness that created them. You are the future and you are our hope.

For your souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which we cannot visit, not even in our dreams. We can strive to be like you, but we seek not to make you like us. For life goes not backward nor carries with yesterday, says Khalil Gibran.

Speak to us. We are listening. Welcome to your platform.