

Concept Note – Side Event at ECOSOC Youth Forum

‘Enhancing the inclusiveness of National Voluntary Reviews, bridging the intergenerational gap’

Date: 31 January

Time: 1:15 P.M. - 2:45 P.M.

Location: Conference room 6, UN Headquarters

Who: Member States who are presenting their National Voluntary Reviews (NVRs) in 2017 and national youth delegates to the United Nations.

Aim of the side event: Bridging the gap between youth and policy makers on the issue of the NVRs for Agenda 2030 during the High-level Political Forum at national, regional and global levels. In order to do this, the side-event will focus on sharing best practices and building mutual learning and capacity on the engagement of young people in these reviews through existing mechanisms, like UN Major Group for Children and Youth, Regional Youth Platforms and National Youth Councils. This event will also serve to explore the possibilities of improving/creating new mechanisms to further enhance youth participation. The backdrop for this will be the mandate provided to young people in the agenda itself and the NVR guidelines issued by the UN Secretary General.

Deliverable:

- New partnership on youth and NVRs at all levels
- Renewed commitments from Member States to institutionalize youth engagement in NVR processes
- An outcome document on youth and NVRs

In the 2016 NVR reports at the HLPF we have seen that many countries attach great significance to a participatory approach in both the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the National Strategy as well as in writing their NVR.

There is a strong sense that the involvement of non-governmental actors is invaluable if we want to achieve the SDGs. Including these actors in the review process increases the sense of youths ownership over the agenda. It furthermore provides early insights into the review, which is of key importance in making the 2030 agenda a success.

Although there have been taken significant steps in making the process more and more participatory, some groups are still vulnerable to be left behind in this process, one of them being youth. The ways in which the matters of the 2030 Agenda affect youth are often not recognized, and unfortunately young people are not always considered serious partners in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

However, there has never been a bigger proportion of youth on this planet and we live in challenging times for young and future generations. In light of intergenerational equity and common sense we need to involve young people in all processes related to this transformative agenda, we need to be truly inclusive.

This side event aims at bridging the gap between youth and policy makers on the issue of NVRs. In order to inspire and provide tangible advice to both youth and policy makers on how to work together on these matters. Speakers include those who have knowledge about the state of the art best practices on bridging this gap, both youth and policy makers who found ways to work together on this topic. They engage in a constructive dialogue during a panel discussion in which their best practices are shared. The second part of the event is a facilitated group discussion. The attendees get the opportunity to engage in interactive dialogue with the speakers and ask questions relevant for their own context. The speakers provide advice and insights from their specialist background.

After the event the organizers will distribute a toolkit in which strategies to enhance youth inclusion are outlined, so the participants will have a starting point for this lengthy process. This will be the first step in achieving sustainable and long-term youth involvement with the NVR's.

The outcome of the panel-discussion and the facilitated group discussion will be a raised level of awareness among both policymakers and youth concerning the active role youth can play in the NVR's. The best practices of the speakers provide inspiration for the ways in which this can be done and the attendees have practical examples useful for their own contexts. The facilitated group discussion presents a setting in which countries can commit themselves to meaningfully including young people in all their diversity in the NVR process and a platform to obtain the necessary information and insights to do so.

Speakers:

- The Netherlands deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, H.E. mrs. Lise Gregoire-van Haaren
- Youth Representative to the UN from the Netherlands, Sahar Afzal
- Member of the Major Group for children and youth, Aashish Khullar
- Stakeholder Engagement Program Coordinator from DESA-DSD, Lotta Tähtinen
- Youth Policy Specialist from UNDP, Noëlla Richard Gimenez
- United Nations SG Envoy on Youth office, Saskia Schellekens



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