



#YOUTH2030

## 6<sup>th</sup> Economic and Social Council Youth Forum CONCEPT NOTE

### “Youth engagement in eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity: Voices from the field”

**31 January 2017**  
**Trusteeship Council Chamber**  
*11:30 am – 1:00 pm*  
**United Nations Headquarters, New York**

#### 1. Background:

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by United Nations Member States in September 2015, is the international community’s ambitious response to today’s most pressing and complex global problems. Its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) constitute a transformative, integrated and universal vision for a sustainable future. Young people played a key part in shaping the Agenda’s priorities and now as agents of change they are indispensable partners to its achievement in the coming 15 years.

Inclusion is a foundational principle of the 2030 Agenda, with its commitment to “leave no one behind” and its call to promote inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels. The Agenda explicitly names young people as “critical agents of change,” and young people’s needs and priorities are woven throughout the fabric of the 17 SDGs. More than 60 out of the 169 SDG targets reference young people explicitly or implicitly, with a focus on their empowerment, participation and well-being. With this the Agenda acknowledges an important demographic reality: there are 1.8 billion young people worldwide, the majority live in developing countries, where in many cases they represent the overwhelming majority of the population.

Young people’s skills, ingenuity, capacity for mobilization and motivation are powerful assets in making progress on all aspects of sustainable development in their national and local contexts, and addressing their needs, especially by fostering enabling environments for their empowerment, can have a multiplier effect in making advances across the goals. This fact was also recognized when in July 2016 the UN Secretary-General issued his first report on progress on the SDGs ahead of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. He noted the “enormous challenges” young people are facing terms of poverty, education,



#YOUTH2030

employment and violence, while re-emphasizing young people’s role as agents of change and partners in the implementation of the Agenda. It was also echoed by the Ministerial Declaration issued by the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July 2016, which pledged to “strive for a world where young women and young men are key agents of change, supported by a culture of innovation, sustainability and inclusiveness, to enable a better future for themselves and their communities; a just, equitable, tolerant, open, creative and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met...”

The 2030 Agenda’s implementation officially began on January 2016, and the UN System has already been actively partnering with Member States, civil society and other stakeholders in making early progress. UNCTs are now in the initial stages of supporting governments, civil society and other stakeholders in implementing the SDGs in an inclusive manner. To assist them in this process, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) has developed the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) as a common approach for all UNDG members to tackle the Agenda, and has been compiling a list of tools to guide UNCTs in the process of implementation. Additionally, a new generation of UNDAFs are being rolled out in order to align UN action and national priorities with the commitments of the 2030 Agenda.

Engaging young people early, systematically and effectively in the process is also important because has the potential to be both catalytic for building early progress and momentum, and will be influential in setting the pattern and expectations for engagement over the next 15 years. Adopting best practices for youth engagement early on can also create the space for experimentation and learning that could set the stage for the discovery of innovative actions that could promise further gains.

This session will enable young people to share their experiences and discuss challenges and opportunities.

## **2. Session objectives:**

This plenary session will take place on Day 2 of the ECOSOC Youth Forum from 11:30AM to 1PM.

This plenary session will focus on articulating concretely how youth participation has already made a difference and how it could be further enhanced for an effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Priorities will be considered in a broad range of contexts. The session will



#YOUTH2030

also open up a dialogue about civil society and government priorities and other stakeholders' commitments.

More specifically, the session will:

- Recognize the variety of ways in which young women and young men are already involved with/contributing to SDG implementation, and what type of support by partners has been provided so far.
- Share promising and innovative practices and facilitate an exchange on how young people drive social change, support poverty eradication and promote prosperity, bringing concrete evidence on the positive role young women and young men play as partners in the implementation of the SDGs, in their different capacities (UN youth delegates, youth members of national mechanisms, youth representatives from civil society, MGCY in the formal process...) and at different stages (SDG mainstreaming, national and local planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting, accountability);
  - Discuss guiding principles for youth engagement in SDG implementation;
  - Provide an opportunity to assess emerging trends and untapped mechanisms for youth participation at the heart of the 2030 Agenda implementation, and formulate recommendations to all relevant stakeholders.

### **3. Session Format:**

The session, moderated by Ms. Noella Richard (UNDP), will consist of a panel discussion on the role of young people in the SDG implementation, with an emphasis on youth-led actions at local and national levels. The session will benefit from a curated discussion which will feature a broad range of youth participation models. This session will also start institutionalizing meaningful deliberations on 'youth engagement' as part of the SDG monitoring and review at global level (ECOSOC Youth Forum / HLPF). It will include speakers and discussants from a variety of backgrounds, such as youth-led organizations, Government, civil society, and other international organisations, in order to address the topic at hand from a diverse range of perspectives. The latter segment of the session will consist of an interactive discussion during which participants from the floor can, 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.



#YOUTH2030

**4. Proposed Participants:**

- **H.E. Ms. Horne Solveig**, Minister of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, Norway
- **Ms. Amira Khallouf**, Founder, Syrian Social Innovators, UN Major Group for Children and Youth
- **Mr. Juan Carlos Reyes**, Colombia Joven Director
- **Ms. Sadhani Rajapakse**, Young leader from Sri Lanka (*UNCT Youth mechanism*)
- **Mr. Christopher Eigeland**, UN Youth Delegate from Australia
- **Mr. Ma-umba Mabiala**, Director, Education and Youth, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie

**5. Recommended reading:**

- Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>
- Secretary-General's Report on Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals - [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=E/2016/75](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2016/75)
- UNDP Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace (Youth-GPS, 2016-2020) <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/Youth-GPS.html>
- [UNDP Fast Facts, Youth as Partners for the Implementation of the SDGs](#) (2017)