



7th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

CONCEPT NOTE

Plenary Session

Interactive Roundtable on “The role of youth in building sustainable and resilient urban and rural communities”, featuring Ministers and other High-Level speakers

30 January 2018

10:45 am – 1:00 pm

Trusteeship Council Chamber

United Nations Headquarters, New York

1. Background:

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers an integrated and transformative vision for a better world. The goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda are interconnected and must be pursued together since progress in one area often depends on progress in other areas. Youth development is more than a crosscutting issue and should be integrated into the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Promoting youth rights and priorities, and ensuring appropriate and dedicated investments into youth development within the SDG framework is crucial to the achievement of all goals and targets. Moreover, youth engagement in the implementation, as well as the follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda, is essential for the achievement of sustainable development.

The report of the Secretary-General “Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level” (A/70/684), prepared in response to paragraph 90 of the 2030 Agenda, recognizes the important role of the ECOSOC Youth Forum by stating that the High-level Political Forum could be informed by and benefit from several specific Economic and Social Council forums covering cross-cutting issues in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including the existing forum on youth. Furthermore, the ministerial declaration of the HLPF and high-level segment of ECOSOC for the 2016 and 2017 sessions of the Economic and Social Council (E/HLS/2016/1) highlighted the important contribution made by the ECOSOC Youth Forum, to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Since 2012, the annual Youth Forum has become a platform through which Member States and youth entities and other stakeholders can dialogue on issues relevant to youth development and engagement, and through which young people from multiple disciplines can contribute to policy discussions and play a role in monitoring and review of the SDGs at the United Nations through their collective ideas, solutions, innovations.



Addressing youth priorities, needs and rights and their meaningful participation in the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was at the heart of the past two ECOSOC Youth Forums that discussed good practices, lessons learned, challenges and opportunities for building efficient partnerships between Governments, youth entities, United Nations and other key stakeholders for the follow-up and achievement of the 2030 Agenda. They also offered an opportunity to discuss ways in which youth can communicate on the Agenda, bringing on board new and innovative use of various communication and media tools and styles.

The 5th and 6th ECOSOC Youth Forums (2016, 2017) reaffirmed that young women and men are not mere beneficiaries of the SDGs, but key drivers for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The role of young people and their organizations was deemed crucial, as youth take action across all areas critical for the implementation and review of the agenda, including in politics, business, academia and civil society.

The 7th ECOSOC Youth Forum will continue to build on these discussions by focusing on the overarching theme of “The role of youth in building sustainable and resilient urban and rural communities” echoing the main theme of the ECOSOC’s High-Level Political Forum to be held in July 2017. While focusing on the role of youth in building sustainable and resilient communities, participants will also be framing these discussions against the need for ensuring young people’s individual resilience as members of society and the requirements to meet that end. This is particularly relevant as young people everywhere, especially those who live in poverty and those who face barriers in exercising their human rights, particularly girls and young women, have historically been and continue to be left out, or poorly served, by development efforts to date.

Moreover, the Forum will provide an opportunity to review the progress achieved in terms of youth participation in the implementation and review of the SDGs and showcase lessons learned and best practices, analyse gaps, and offer insights on creating innovative avenues and enhancing existing means for youth participation.

2. Roundtable objectives:

The Interactive Roundtable will follow the opening ceremony of the 7th ECOSOC Youth Forum. The purpose of the roundtable will be to highlight national reviews of progress on youth development and youth engagement in the context of the 2030 Agenda as it relates to its regional and country-specific dimensions and building resilience. Representatives of peer-selected youth-led and youth-focused organizations and networks, civil society and social and economic partners will contribute to this plenary session by sharing their views on youth development, the theme of the forum and engagement trends with the Ministers and other Government authorities, in particular those responsible for national development planning and youth policies in various Member States.

This Interactive Roundtable will seek to:

- Offer a platform to the UN Member States to inform different stakeholders on progress made and challenges faced in mainstreaming youth rights and priorities into the national SDGs’ implementation programs, share good practices and lessons learnt, and facilitate exchange of information on how actual and meaningful youth participation has been facilitated by Member



States in the implementation of the national plans designed to achieve 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

- Provide a platform for a diverse set of stakeholders, in particular Governments, as well as youth entities, UN entities, and others to share their perspectives on where we stand, as the international community continues with the active implementation and review phase of the SDGs.
- Set the stage for efficient and effective engagement of the participants in the following sessions of the Forum, which will focus on how young people can be engaged in the implementation of the Agenda, including from a thematic as well as regional perspective, and review means of implementation, including financing, as well as modalities for partnerships and collaboration.
- Provide an opportunity to discuss how young people are engaged in, and leading on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and interrelated agendas, and the kind of support they need and how they can contribute to follow-up and review mechanisms to be established in this context.

3. Session Format

The session is designed as a High-Level Dialogue on the youth issues and their engagement in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and will focus on the key ingredients of an enabling policy and programming environment for this engagement to succeed and for youth rights to be promoted. Ministers and other high-level government officials in charge of youth, development and cooperation portfolios, as well as youth entities, intergovernmental organizations will address the plenary session.

The session intends to enable the Member States to use the platform offered by the ECOSOC Youth Forum to inform different stakeholders on progress made and challenges faced in mainstreaming youth rights and priorities into the national SDGs implementation programs, share lessons learned and facilitate exchange of information on actual youth participation in the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national and local level.

The Interactive Roundtable will include a discussion with a variety of presenters/speakers to cover a multitude of issues and perspectives, spanning from global to local levels, and allow –at select intervals- for participants from the floor to share insights, raise questions, make comments and engage in a constructive dialogue on the overall theme. The speakers will receive a brief guidance note to structure their inputs geared towards the overall objective of the Forum.

4. Questions for the audience

- What are the best practices for mainstreaming youth rights and priorities into the national SDG implementation programs and engaging young people along the *Principles of Meaningful Youth Engagement* in building resilience and the implementation of the national plans designed to achieve 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
- How would you assess the current level of youth engagement in the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda and how they can better contribute to follow-up and review mechanisms?