



#YOUTH2030

7th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum CONCEPT NOTE

Thematic Breakout Session

“IDEATHON: How to use science, technology and innovation to facilitate youth engagement, development and resilience”

30 January 2018

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Trusteeship Council Chamber
United Nations Headquarters, New York

1. Background and Context

As per the Co-Chairs’ summary of the 2017 multi-stakeholder STI-Forum, science, technology and innovation policies are essential for eradicating poverty and achieving health and well-being, in line with the aspiration contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to “leave no one behind”. Science, technology and innovation policies and processes should strengthen linkages among actors in national innovation ecosystems and support practical educational experiences to inspire interest among future science, technology and innovation practitioners. The summary emphasizes that capacity-building efforts should be focused on youth.

When utilized appropriately, science, technology and innovation can be mobilized to identify barriers to and provide solutions for sustainable development challenges from the local to the global level. The science-policy interface has become an increasingly important element in evidence-based sustainable development policy design, implementation, follow-up and review. It has also been a key tool in identifying emerging issues and overcoming barriers to progress.

Locally-informed and context-specific applications of science and technology can be crucial in ensuring long-term resilience of development efforts. The potential impact of emerging technologies, both intended and unintended, as well as factors influencing access to science, technology and innovation, should be assessed.



While technological change and innovation is often seen as a driver of growth and development, for example, it can also present challenges including with regard to the transformation of existing job profiles and related skill requirements.ⁱ

Ongoing policy processes relating to science, technology and innovation, and their implications, address intellectual property rights, technology transfer, technology banks, statistical capacity and the future of work, among others.

At the 2017 ECOSOC Youth Forum, the UN Major Group for Children and Youth launched the Youth Commission on Science, Engineering, & Technology for the SDGs, which provides a platform for inputs on youth perspectives on the use of science, technology, and innovation for SDGs. It seeks to identify challenges and solutions in implementing the SDGs under review each year and reflect on topics at the intersection of science, technology, policy, ethics, and justice. As a follow-up, the UN MGCY launched a Vision for Youth in Science, Technology, and Innovation at the 2017 STI Forum aimed at enhancing meaningful youth engagement in the STI and SPI architecture of the UN system and related activities, as it relates to sustainable development.

The Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, launched at the ECOSOC Youth Forum in February 2016 under the leadership of ILO, brings together 22 UN entities. Devised around a strategic alliance of multiple partners within and beyond the UN system, the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth is a cooperation platform to maximize the effectiveness of youth employment investments, increase impact at the country level and contribute to the implementation of youth employment related Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Thematic priorities of the Global Initiative include digital skills for youth and youth in fragile situations.

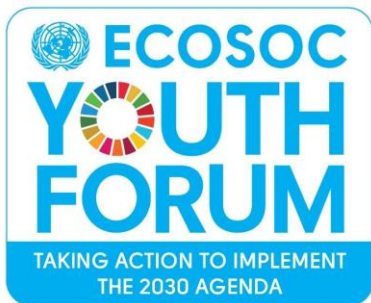
2. Objectives

The IDEATHON will provide a platform for representatives of youth organizations, Member States, civil society and the UN system to come together and develop innovative ideas on how to appropriately use science, technology and innovation to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The IDEATHON will look at the potential of science, technology and innovation to promote:

- a) Youth engagement;
- b) Youth development; and
- c) Resilience.

Youth engagement in policy design, implementation and review



The UN has set up a number of processes and fora on science, technology and innovation including the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM), the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI Forum) and the Commission on Science, Technology and Development (CSTD). This group will discuss youth engagement in science, technology and innovation and related institutional, regulatory and policy environments.

Specific questions to be addressed:

- How can young people better engage in policy processes related to science, technology and innovation?
- What are barriers to youth involvement in science and how can these be overcome?
- How can science, technology and innovation help to leverage youth engagement in sustainable development processes more broadly?

Youth development through digital skills and participation in the digital economy

The world of work is undergoing rapid and profound change. Technological innovation, automation and artificial intelligence, among others, are redefining jobs and the skills needed to perform them. At the same time, the digital transformation holds enormous promise to address the youth employment challenge affecting two out of every five young women and men across the world, who are either unemployed or working but living in poverty.

Specific questions to be addressed:

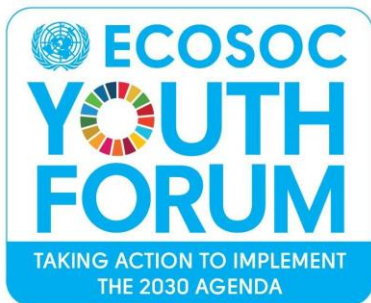
- How can young people be equipped with job-ready, transferable digital skills?
- How can young people best advocate for digital skills training programmes in their own countries?
- How can science, technology and innovation help to improve an enabling environment for youth participation in the labour market?

Resilience (Youth in fragile situations)

Conflict disrupts every aspect of life and creates additional barriers for young people who are already disproportionately affected by unemployment and low quality jobs, and who may be pushed to engage in jobs that are informal, irregular, or even harmful. Investing in youth employment in fragile and conflict situations is therefore a priority for advancing societies towards peaceful and inclusive development.

Specific questions to be addressed:

- How can science, technology and innovation help to address labour market challenges of youth in fragile situations?
- What are innovative approaches to reach young people in fragile situations?
- How can technology help to improve data collection and analysis on youth in fragile situations?



3. Format

Organization: the session will be coordinated by the ILO together with ITU, UN Women, UNV and MGCY.

The IDEATHON will be divided into three thematic groups addressing the questions identified above.

Expected results: each group is expected to develop three concrete recommendations on how to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through leveraging the potential of science, technology and innovation. The compiled list of up to nine recommendations should be annexed to the Presidents summary of the ECOSOC Youth Forum and might also inform discussions at other ECOSOC fora such as the 2018 Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation and the High-level Political Forum.

Possible session structure:

- Brief introduction/moderation (ILO);
- Participants will break up into three groups (rapporteurs to be nominated by MGCY);
- Facilitation of thematic groups on engagement (MGCY), development (ITU/ILO) and resilience (UNV/ILO);
- Rapporteurs present up to three ideas each to the plenary;
- Summary of recommendations.

4. Issues at stake

- Potential of science, technology and innovation for youth engagement, development and resilience;
- Youth engagement in science related policy processes;
- Loss of youth participation in science creating uncertainty in future scientific workforce;
- Strategic initiatives to engage youth in specific fields such as molecular science, computer science, and biotech;
- Impact of long-term trends such as demographic developments, climate change and technological change and innovation;
- Impact of automation and technology development on the labour market;
- Training/skill requirements for youth in the digital economy;
- Promotion of digital skills training programmes;
- Empowering youth with an entrepreneurial spirit to create jobs that do not exist today;
- Empowering youth in fragile situations;

5. Additional questions for the group work

Engagement

- How can educators better facilitate engagement with scientists?



- What policy measures can increase youth participation in science?
- What role can scientific organizations play in increasing youth engagement in science, technology and innovation?
- What can scientists do to increase youth engagement?
- How can international collaborative projects be leveraged to create more opportunities for youth involvement?

Development

- What jobs can youth create to ensure a sustainable future?
- How to focus on developing youth to be job creators of tomorrow?
- How can youth promote sustainable development methods to promote a healthy planet?

Resilience

- How can science, technology and innovation strengthen resilience for youth in fragile situations?
- How can social media networks be used to support resilience?
- What tools can be used to promote resilience?

6. Suggested reading

- The [Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth](#);
- [Digital Skills for Decent Jobs for Youth Campaign](#);
- ILO Recommendation 205: [Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience](#);
- UNDP, UNHCR, ILO: [Case studies on youth employment in fragile situations](#);

ⁱ See: ILO; The Future of Work Centenary Initiative: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/--dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_534201.pdf