



**ECOSOC
YOUTH
FORUM**

#YOUTH2030

8th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

SUMMARY

SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

8 April 2019

CR 6, 4-6 p.m.

United Nations Headquarters, New York

Youth empowerment in the context of peaceful, just and inclusive societies links to progress on essential elements of the 2030 Agenda as a whole. Participants stressed that young people must be empowered to reach inclusivity, representativity and to leave no one behind. SDG16 was described as an enabler for the entire 2030 Agenda as youth participants linked peace, justice and strong and inclusive institutions to other SDGs on education, reduced inequalities, decent work, sustainable cities and communities and partnerships.

While highlighting the need for reintegration and addressing drivers of youth recruitment to terrorism, organized crime and radical movements, participants agreed that the narrative of young people must shift from perceiving young people as trouble-makers, perpetrators of violence and victims to perceiving young people as agents of change and peacebuilders. Young participants emphasized the link between youth participation and sustaining peace and preventing violent conflict. Thereby, recognizing the potential of young people to foster coexistence in and between societies divided by conflict. It would therefore be important to increase the meaningful participation of young people in formal and informal decision-making and peace processes.

Young participants noted the multiple and interlocked forms of discrimination that creates barriers for young people's access to justice and human rights. To unleash the full potential of young people to accelerate progress on SDG16, it was mentioned that enhanced awareness of and education on

the rights of young people would enable youth to fight corruption, promote access to justice and ensure rule of law.

Stressing the importance of including the most marginalized – such as young people with disabilities – and young people in communities, youth participants highlighted that meaningful inclusion in the review and follow-up on the SDGs must consider the different country contexts and link local and global efforts. It would therefore be important to ensure partnerships, institutions and systems that are conducive for the meaningful participation of all young people.

Youth participants agreed upon the need to invest in young people as critical agents of change and promote youth-led initiatives that already are making a difference in societies. In addition, a participant noted the importance of protection mechanisms for young peacebuilders and rights activist. The session identified several impactful solutions and approaches including engaging in equal partnerships, putting youth at the forefront of innovation for peace and new technology, ensuring access to information and support the potential of youth to foster peaceful coexistence. Participants also recognized that young people play an important role in keeping member states accountable to their commitments to implement the SDGs.