



**ECOSOC
YOUTH FORUM**
10TH ANNIVERSARY

#YOUTH2030

CONCEPT NOTE

“ACHIEVING THE SDGs WITH AND FOR YOUTH”

**Interactive Virtual Roundtable featuring Ministers, other high-level speakers,
and youth organization representatives**

7 April 2021; 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM &

8 April 2021, 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

1. Background

On the occasion of its 10th anniversary, the ECOSOC Youth Forum will gather virtually to address the theme of ECOSOC and the 2021 UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF), focusing primarily on COVID-19 and its impact on the implementation of the Decade of Action for Sustainable Development and the kind of recovery that can put us back on track to build a better world as envisioned in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Young people’s rights and priorities span across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 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, 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 (HLPF) could be informed by and benefit from several 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 the 2016 and 2017 sessions of the Economic and Social Council (E/HLS/2016/1 and E/2017/L.29-E/HLPF/2017/L.2) highlighted the important contribution made by the ECOSOC Youth Forum to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In July 2018, the General Assembly adopted Resolution A/72/L.64 on the review of the implementation of General Assembly Resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council.

The resolution calls on ECOSOC to strengthen its leadership and policy guidance role and promote a coordinated follow-up to the 2030 Agenda. It states that the Council should be a platform for discussion and exchange of national experiences; aim at creating synergy and coherence at the global level, as well as avoid duplication and overlap in its work; and ensure that the principles, critical aspects, and implementation gaps of the 2030 Agenda are addressed.

The resolution furthermore mandates the UN General Assembly to adopt one main theme for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and ECOSOC, whereas, for the segments and subsidiary bodies, the themes should focus on a particular aspect of the main theme, bearing in mind their respective functions. In fact, since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the ECOSOC Youth Forum has already been aligned with the theme of the annual HLPF, and this good practice, now mandated by the resolution, will be continued with the 2019 Forum and going forward.

The annual Youth Forum of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has become a platform through which Member States, youth entities, and other stakeholders can discuss issues relevant to youth development and engagement. At the Forum, young people from multiple disciplines and backgrounds can contribute to policy discussions, showcase their collective ideas, solutions, and innovations, and also participate in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Addressing young people's priorities, needs, rights, and their meaningful participation in the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been at the heart of the past four ECOSOC Youth Forums.

The Forums discussed good practices, lessons learnt, challenges, and opportunities for building efficient partnerships between Governments, youth entities, the United Nations, and other key stakeholders for the monitoring and realization of the 2030 Agenda. Previous Forums discussed ways in which young people can communicate about the Agenda and monitor its implementation, bringing onboard new and innovative use of various communication and media tools and styles.

Previous ECOSOC Youth Forums reaffirmed that young people in all their diversity are key drivers for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The role of young

people and their organizations was deemed crucial, as they take action across all areas critical for the implementation and review of the Agenda, including in politics, business, academia, and civil society. The proper implementation of the Agenda is, therefore, more likely to happen with a strong partnership between young people and policymakers.

The 10th ECOSOC Youth Forum will build on these discussions by focusing on the role, rights, and priorities of young people in COVID-19 recovery efforts, under the overarching theme of “A Decade of Action: Building a Resilient Recovery,” echoing the main theme of the ECOSOC’s High-Level Political Forum to be held in July 2021.

It will be a space to further highlight and reflect on the implementation of UN Youth Strategy: Youth 2030, which sets the vision for the United Nations’ work with and for young people, and its role in positioning the United Nations as a key proponent and supporter of effective youth engagement in COVID-19 recovery efforts and SDGs for youth.

As such, participants in the Interactive Roundtable session will discuss the active role of youth in building back from COVID-19 towards more inclusive societies where young people have equal access to opportunities and are empowered to contribute as agents of change.

This is particularly relevant as young people everywhere, especially those who live in poverty and facing barriers in exercising their human rights - often girls and young women - who have historically been and continue to be left out, are now being hit especially hard by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moreover, the session will provide an opportunity to monitor the implementation and review of the SDGs from a youth perspective, and showcase lessons learnt and best practices, analyze gaps, offer insights on creating innovative avenues and enhance existing means for youth participation.

2. Roundtable objectives

The Interactive Roundtable will take place on both April 7th and 8th.

The purpose of the Roundtable will be to highlight national policies and programmes on youth development and youth engagement in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Youth Strategy: Youth 2030, with a particular focus on the inclusion of young people’s priorities into the design, planning and implementation of recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Representatives of youth-led and youth-focused organizations and networks, civil society and other key stakeholders will contribute to this plenary session by sharing their views on youth development, empowerment and inclusion in dialogue with Ministers and other High-level Government representatives. This Interactive Roundtable at the 10th ECOSOC Youth Forum will seek to:

- Provide an opportunity for different stakeholders to discuss how young people are participating and leading on COVID-19 recovery within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, what kind of support they need, and how they can meaningfully contribute to follow-up and review mechanisms established.
- Offer a platform to the UN Member States to inform and discuss with different stakeholders on progress made and challenges faced in mainstreaming youth rights and priorities, particularly as it relates to COVID-19 recovery efforts, in alignment with national SDG implementation programs; share good practices and lessons learnt; and exchange experiences of how meaningful youth participation has been facilitated by Member States thus far in the implementation of their national plans to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Highlight the role of the UN Youth Strategy: Youth 2030 in supporting and empowering youth as central actors of COVID-19 recovery, as part of the UN System-wide effort to facilitate increased impact and expanded global, regional and country-level action to address the needs, build the agency and advance the rights of young people. Participants in the session will further reflect on the Strategy's core components and engage in discussion on how various stakeholders can contribute to the implementation of the Strategy's vision within the context of COVID-19 recovery.
- Launch the first Youth2030 Progress report, Youth2030 online and Youth2030 toolkit
- Set the stage for efficient and effective engagement of the participants in the subsequent sessions of the Youth Forum.

3. Session format

Ministers and other high-level government officials in charge of youth, development and cooperation portfolios, as well as youth entities and intergovernmental organizations will address the Interactive Roundtable.

The aim is to generate a discussion with diverse speakers to cover a variety of issues and perspectives, spanning from global, regional to local levels, and allow for participants

to 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.

The speakers will be asked to respond to tailored questions developed in advance and will receive a guidance note to structure their inputs and gear them towards the overall objective of the Forum.

4. Questions for the audience

- What are the good practices for mainstreaming youth rights and priorities into national SDG implementation, and for empowering and meaningfully including young people in national plans designed to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
- How would you assess the current level of meaningful youth engagement and youth leadership in the implementation, follow-up and review processes for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development? How can young people contribute with greater impact?
- What opportunities and synergies does Youth2030 present to accelerate implementation of SDGs for youth?
- How have we seen young people leading COVID-19 response and recovery, and what are some of the innovative and intergenerational partnerships that have emerged from the pandemic to build back better?