



ECOSOC
YOUTH FORUM

YOUTH2030

Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

"COVID-19 recovery: Youth taking action for a sustainable future"

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

Special Event: Financing Our Future – SDG 17

20 April 2022, 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

1. Background

The COVID-19 crisis has exposed and exacerbated vulnerabilities and inequalities between and within economies and societies. It also provides once-in-a-generation strategic opportunities to create more resilient and sustainable societies that effectively address issues like climate change, inequality, limited access to education and decent work that especially impact youth and their lifelong trajectories. Building back better and fairer from the COVID-19 pandemic will require a strengthened global partnership for sustainable development with youth participation to reduce risk, enable recovery and build resilience. Such a partnership needs to sharpen its focus on the priorities of youth, including more socially responsible and sustainable investment; increasing youth employment and enhancing skills training in key sectors for youth; overcoming the digital divide; and generating and utilizing actionable data that helps design youth-oriented social and economic policies.

- **Promoting socially responsible and sustainable investing that accounts for the needs of younger generations and changing business models to adequately prepare for future shocks.** This includes strategic investment in the green transition and digital transformation and aligning markets with sustainability objectives. Investments that prioritise sustainability already amounted to [3.2 trillion in 2020](#) and are expected to increase even more in the future. This will require reversing the negative impacts on

investments caused by the pandemic, including decreases in key productive investments by as much as [69 per cent in natural capital](#) (e.g., agriculture, natural resources) and 66 percent in human capital (education, health, water and sanitation) between 2019 and 2020. It will also require targeted, high-impact financing and investment, both domestic and international, in future generations.

- **Investment and capacity development to strengthen skills and training in key sectors, like healthcare, technology, service sectors for both wage and self-employment, will empower and equip youth toward achieving sustainable development.** 38 percent of young people globally express uncertainty about their future prospects, including in education and employment. The COVID-19 pandemic reduced global youth employment by [8.7 per cent in 2020](#) compared with 3.7 per cent among adults. Young women experienced greater employment losses, particularly in Latin America. Most of those losses translated into inactivity, raising the number of young people not in employment, education or training. Economic recovery needs to strengthen youth employment and youth employability, which will require youth to have the skills and training that responds to emerging needs and risks.
- **Investing in digital infrastructure and literacy, especially in rural areas and LDCs, will ensure that young people can benefit from the increasingly digitalized and globalized economy.** In the LDCs, just [34 per cent of youth](#) aged 15-24 are connected to the internet, whereas the global average for youth connectivity is 71%. The digital divide for young people has underscored how limited access to technology impacts youth education, employment and training opportunities.
- **Strengthening and considering youth-generated data, knowledge, perspectives and research.** As the pandemic showed, policy responses cannot yield sustained benefits without being founded on up-to-date evidence. Youth-led research opens the space for youth to voice their perspectives, engage in action and inform policymaking. Research efforts with, by and for youth provide novel approaches to generating intergenerational and multistakeholder partnerships to address development challenges and contribute to addressing the significant decrease in youth engagement in public affairs during the pandemic (33 per cent globally; 40 per cent for low-income countries; and 28 per cent for high-income countries per ILO data of 2020). This is compounded by ongoing structural challenges to youth civic engagement, such as age-based limitations in legislation, restrictions of civic space, and perceptions about the role of youth in society.

2. Objectives

This multi-stakeholder dialogue will have two objectives, building on the lessons from the pandemic. It will explore:

- how means of implementation at the national and international levels can have a greater impact on youth;

- how expanded and novel opportunities to engage youth in policy formulation and implementation can enhance the implementation of the financing for sustainable development agenda.

Discussions will arrive at concrete policy recommendations to be taken forward by all stakeholders, which will also serve as inputs to the FfD Forum and HLPF. Key messages and recommendations from this session will also advance concrete proposals for action on the youth elements of “Our Common Agenda”.

3. Session Format

The session will take place virtually on 20 April 2022 from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.

It will follow an interactive dialogue format, led by a moderator and structured according to guiding questions. Youth perspectives and speakers will be prioritised, and a short, interactive, intergenerational dialogue will follow. Questions and opportunities for engagement through social media will invite various voices and reflections from young people.

4. Speakers

Moderator: Mr. Vladislav Kaim, Economist and Member, Secretary-General’s Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change

- **Mr. Kristian Kampmann**, Young leader of Generation17 and UNLEASH;
- **Ms. Mmabatho Motsamai**, Founder, The Afrolutionist
- **Ms. Aurelia E. Bruce**, UNCTAD Youth Network member on partnerships and Agenda 2030 implementation
- **Ms. Nora Altwaijri**, Generation17 leader, Sustainable University Initiative
- **Ms. Moneera Yassien**, Economist, Scholar, Advocate, and Member, Steering Committee of UNESCO’s Youth As Researchers Initiative
- **Ms. Lei Motilla**, Co-founder, AI4Gov