



**ECOSOC
YOUTH FORUM**

YOUTH2030

Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

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

CONCEPT NOTE

**THEMATIC SESSION ON
"GENERATION EQUALITY: BUILDING BACK BETTER WITH
YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS AT THE CENTRE – SDG 5"**

19 April 2022, 3:15 PM – 4:45 PM

IDENTIFICATION	
SDG/theme or Region	SDG 5
Session co-lead UN	UN Women
Session co-lead Youth	World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM)
Session co-organizers (both UN and Youth)	UNAOC, UNFPA, UNODA, UNODC
BACKGROUND & KEY ISSUES	
<p>The COVID-19 pandemic extends way beyond public health. It is a crisis of discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, and class, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and inequalities. The interlinkages between COVID-19, gender inequality, gender-based violence (GBV) and climate change disproportionately affect more young women and girls due to the rising social and economic pressures and lockdown measures triggered by the pandemic.</p>	

The continued rise in violence against women and girls, and in addition, feelings of insecurity, restrict their lives in myriad ways, hampering their health and ability to fulfil bodily autonomy, as well as their civil, political, economic, and social rights. The increased cyber-bullying, harassment, and revenge porn has shown that young women and girls with multiple, intersecting identities (i.e., LGBTQI+ community, Indigenous and ethnic minority) are often targeted online through discrimination and hate speech. The disruption of the education systems globally, affected and continues to affect the most vulnerable learners exacerbating pre-existing gender inequalities. In conflict-affected areas, the COVID-19 pandemic has added an additional layer of threat and insecurity for women and girls. The rise in conflicts, availability of small arms, increase in mental health concerns due to lockdowns, and increase in military spending, has also led to additional risks of violence against women and girls both domestically and nationally.

However, there is strong evidence that ending violence against women and girls is possible; as the UN Secretary-General António Guterres noted, *“Violence against women is not inevitable. The right policies and programmes bring results. That means comprehensive, long-term strategies that tackle the root causes of violence, protect the rights of women and girls, and promote strong and autonomous women’s rights movements. Change is possible, and now is the time to redouble our efforts so that together, we can eliminate violence against women and girls by 2030.”*

Women and girls’ safety is the gateway to basic health, living standards and empowerment, and a necessary condition to achieve gender equality and build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic. Increasing young women and girls’ safety online, as well as in their day-to-day lives, is critical to strengthening the gender equality agenda. Prioritizing education as a public good is a crucial drive and strategy towards a sustainable recovery.

A renewed, strengthened, and coordinated approach is needed amongst agencies, governments, and civil society to fulfil the commitment set out in Our Common Agenda to place women and girls at the centre. To meaningfully combat the exacerbated inequalities that have developed due to COVID-19, policies and programs intended to support youth and adolescents must be co-created with them. Ensuring their participation is an essential step towards a new global deal for the next and future generations as part of the international system, towards gender equality and a just COVID-19 recovery for all.

The session will attempt to highlight the shared objective and potential to build synergies between GBV, climate change, peace and security, and COVID-19 in the context of the sustainable development agenda for a more youthful and adolescent-centred sustainable future.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

- Using an intersectional lens, the session will highlight youth experiences in all their diversity on interlinkages between COVID-19, discrimination, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and the climate crisis with a particular focus on grassroots and community voices.

- Discuss the gendered impacts of COVID-19, GBV and the climate crisis on education, health – including sexual and reproductive health and rights and bodily autonomy –, peace and security.
- Share scalable solutions that take an intersectional approach in rebuilding better by highlighting young women leaders managing projects/initiatives/activities addressing GBV and/or climate crisis in COVID-19 recovery efforts including the role of small arms control and disarmament in preventing GBV.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Scalable, concrete ways and interventions being done by young people in tackling and preventing GBV in their communities as actions for a sustainable future.
- Practical and concrete ways of holding duty bearers accountable for their commitments.
- A call to action that addresses GBV and the climate crisis in the context of COVID-19 recovery.
- Strengthened synergies among young people working on intersecting agendas for a more holistic approach to build back better from COVID-19.

APPROACH USED TO GENERATE CONCRETE CONTRIBUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The outcome of this session will be inclusive through consultations taking place before the session on 19 April 2022.

- 7 regional round table discussions were carried out (30, 31 and 1 April 2022). More than 100 young people took part in the consultations.
- The results of the roundtables informed the messaging of this concept note.
- Following CSW66 and the NGO CSW Forum, events related to the theme of this session were reviewed.
- Round table findings, literature review and top-line messages from CSW66 select events will inform the session. A 2-page recommendations document and calls to action will also be shared during the forum.

OVERALL STRUCTURE AND FLOW

Slide show while participants are being let into the session

Moderator Chamathya Fernando - Sri Lanka

Keynote speakers

- Emmanuela Zandi - Youth Leader - Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Sarah Nibbs - UN Women Asia Pacific Regional Director

First Dialogue - Youth experiences on interlinkages between gender, COVID-19 and GBV

- Irene Kendi - Technical Advisor on Gender and Youth Advisor to the Cabinet Secretary for Public Service, Youth and Gender - Kenya
- Vaibhavi Maske - Red Dot Foundation - India
- Ramisha Ijaz - Global Network of Young Persons with Disabilities - Pakistan
- Bui Y Nhi - YouthLED Integrity Advisory Board Member - Vietnam

Second dialogue - Scalable solutions that take an intersectional approach in rebuilding better

- Stéphane Van de Maele - Senior Advisor to the Ambassador for Women, Peace, and Security, Global Affairs - Canada
- Matheus Valois (Brazil) and Melissa El Feghali (Lebanon) - World Organization of the Scout Movement
- Ixchel María José Lucas Adolfo - Red Las Niñas Lideran - Guatemala
- Naomi Ekpoki - The Senema Love Foundation - Nigeria

Closing

- Summary of the session sharing the outcome document
- Call to action

SESSION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How can youth play an active role in preventing violence against women and girls, as well as protecting survivors, in the context of building back better?
- What are the good practices, strategies and challenges in the mitigation and prevention of GBV and in the protection of women and girls including access to health services, the promotion of access to justice, remedies and redress for survivors?
- What is the role of governments and civil society in ensuring that young people, especially young women and girls, are meaningfully engaged in COVID-19 recovery efforts and climate change discussions?

NAMES OF SESSION SPEAKERS AND MODERATOR(S)

Moderator – Ms. Chamathya Fernando - World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS)

Keynote speakers

Emmanuela Zandi - Democratic Republic of the Congo

Sarah Nibbs - UN Women Representative - Asia Pacific Regional Director

First Dialogue - Youth experiences on interlinkages between gender, COVID-19 and GBV

- Irene Kendi - Technical Advisor on Gender and Youth Advisor to the Cabinet Secretary for Public Service, Youth and Gender - Kenya
- Vaibhavi Maske - Red Dot Foundation - India
- Ramisha Ijaz - Global Network of Young Persons with Disabilities - Pakistan
- Bui Y Nhi - YouthLED Integrity Advisory Board Member - Vietnam

Second dialogue - Scalable solutions that take an intersectional approach in rebuilding better

- Stéphane Van de Maele - Senior Advisor to the Ambassador for Women, Peace and Security, Global Affairs Canada
- Matheus Valois (Brazil) and Melissa El Feghali (Lebanon) - World Organization of the Scout Movement
- Ixchel María José Lucas Adolfo - Red Las Niñas Lideran - Guatemala
- Naomi Ekpoki - The Senema Love Foundation - Nigeria

OVERVIEW OF PREPARATORY EVENT/CONSULTATION

The following documents were reviewed, amongst others:

- Gender-Responsive Policing - UN Women Event (16 March 2022)
- Climate Change and the Impact on Gender-Based Violence against Women and Girls in all their Diversity: Why Climate Action Needs a Gendered Perspective - UN Women (16 March 2022)

7 round table consultations were held on 30, 31 March and 1 April 2022

- Africa (English and French)
- Europe and Central Asia (English)
- The Americas and the Caribbean (Spanish and English)
- Arab States (English)
- Asia and the Pacific (English)

Round table consultation structure

These were 90 minutes of structured discussion, co-created and co-facilitated with youth constituents.

- Recommendations: a brief report highlighting key themes, outcomes, and quotes from participants. These briefs will be collated to develop a high-level set of recommendations, to be reviewed and approved by consultative participants from each UN agency.

SUGGESTED READING

https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Assessment_COVID-19_and_CJS_responses_to_GBVAW_23Mar2021.pdf

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/Gender/Thematic Gender Briefs English/GBVAW and UNODC in COVID19 final 7Apr2020.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/Gender/Thematic%20Gender%20Briefs%20English/GBVAW%20and%20UNODC%20in%20COVID19%20final%207Apr2020.pdf)

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/crime/UN BriefFem 251121.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/crime/UN%20BriefFem%20251121.pdf)

<https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/advancing-disarmament-within-2030-agenda-sustainable-development>

<https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Publications/Measuring-shadow-pandemic.pdf>

<http://unlirec.screativa.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/UNLIREC-Preventing-VAW-through-arms-control-in-LAC-September-2020.pdf>