



OPENING REMARKS

**H.E. Mr. Oh Joon, President of
the United Nations Economic and Social Council**

**2016 ECOSOC Youth Forum
“Youth Taking Action to Implement the 2030 Agenda”**

**1-2 February 2016
United Nations Headquarters, New York**

**Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Youth representatives,
Young people here at this forum and globally,**

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you at the Youth Forum of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Let me start by telling you how gratifying for me to address a crowd like this that is buzzing with motivation, dreams and expectations.

Motivation, because you have come here to play your part in turning the vision of a sustainable future into reality.

Dreams, because you all envision a better, fairer and brighter future. And expectations, because you are directly affected by the very issues the UN tackles every day.

Many of the biggest challenges we are facing are especially daunting for young people.

Youth unemployment continues to be on the rise. Young people all over the world face a world where inequalities are high, where destinies too often depend on gender, race, social status or religion.

The young are often those affected the most by poverty, hunger, war and conflict and one of the biggest challenges of our time – climate change.



Dear Friends,

The challenges we face may seem overwhelming and out of reach for us to solve. But that is not true. Each and every one of us can be an agent of change, no matter our age or means.

Many of the world's most famous inventors were of a very young age when their inventions transformed the world. Blaise Pascal for instance was only 19 when he introduced the first mechanical calculator.

And Louis Braille was only 16 when he introduced his system for reading and writing for the visually impaired.

But you don't need to be an inventor to change the destiny of this planet. Many young people have stepped up and changed their communities for the better, engaging in social projects and advocating for the responsible use of our resources, may they be natural, economic or social.

Each and every one of us can be an advocate, ambassador and catalyst for change.

By adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, world leaders have defined a common framework and a series of ambitious objectives, drawing from the success of the Millennium Development Goals. This milestone Agenda can guide each of us to engage in specific sectors and be an agent of change in our own way.

I hope that participating in this Forum will be a step forward in this direction for many of you.

Dear youth representatives,

This event will be shaped by you and by your ideas. You will have the opportunity to discuss the issues closest to your heart, the 17 sustainable development goals and your own priorities for implementation.

Ladies and Gentleman,

This is the fifth time that the UN Economic and Social Council is holding a Youth Forum. This year's forum is even more special as we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Economic and Social Council. At this respectable age, the Council



is at the forefront of global efforts in the development field. From sustainable development policies to financing for development, from science, technology and innovation to global partnerships, the Council addresses the whole spectrum of development policy issues.

This Forum is part of a broader process which will contribute to review by the Council of the global commitments contained in the 2030 Agenda.

The voice of the youth is crucial in this context. Our success in the enormous task ahead will largely depend on the degree to which youth will be a driving force in implementing the agenda.

I therefore encourage you to make your dreams heard, within this building and beyond, in your communities and states. And through social media, which I encourage you to use to publicize this Forum. Our hashtag is #YOUTH2030!

Once again, welcome to ECOSOC and I wish you will find this Forum interesting and useful to your engagement in support of our development goals. Thank you very much for your attention.