



ECOSOC FORUM ON YOUTH 2014

"#Youth2015: Realizing the Future They Want"

2-3 June 2014

Background

In July 2014, Member States, policy-makers, civil society organizations, representatives of academia and the private sector will meet in New York during the high-level segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to address the theme of the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) on “Addressing on-going and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining development gains in the future.”

To bring the voice of youth into the discussion, ECOSOC will convene a Youth Forum on 2 June 2014. The Forum will be organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs,¹ in collaboration with the Office of the Youth Envoy of the Secretary-General.

The engagement of young people in shaping the global development agenda is critical in shaping the present and safeguarding the future landscape of their countries. They are already actively engaged in trying to shape the post-2015 development and sustainable development agenda. They have participated actively in the “World We Want 2015” Campaign, the NGLS regional consultations and have presented their views to the Open-Ended Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. The Forum will also build on these consultations as well as youth participation initiatives of UN system partners.

From the consultations undertaken, it is clear that young people generally feel quite positive about MDGs. Yet, concerns were raised about the fact that a majority of young people are unaware of the strong potential they have in the realization of MDGs, hence the need for an improved dialogue between youth and leaders especially in developing countries. In this regard, youth are asking for the right tools to ensure their participation in policy-making and hold governments accountable in the post-2015 era.

Objectives

1. To provide a platform for young people to engage in a dialogue with Member States on how they could be included in shaping the post-2015 and sustainable development agenda;
2. To review the main recommendations coming out various consultations involving young people, namely, the World We Want 2015 Campaign, the regional consultations organized by the Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) and with the Open

¹ DESA Divisions include OESC, DPSD and DSD.

Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG) on SDGs and identify the remaining gaps.

3. To further refine recommendations and identify a list of actions that should be taken to ensure their inclusion in the post-2015 development agenda.
4. To propose a roadmap of how the recommendations made could be implemented during the remaining time left to the 2015 Summit.

Participants

The primary participants will be Ministers of Youth and Sports, youth delegates, representation from the Children and Youth Major Group, youth representatives from Member States, including from National Youth Councils, representatives of regional youth organizations as well as youth-led and youth focused organizations and networks, including those in consultative status with ECOSOC. The meeting will be available through webcast and participants will be able to pose questions via social media through Facebook and Twitter.

Issues

Drawing on the observations that emerged from the various consultations, the ECOSOC Youth Forum will have four working sessions:

1. Promoting Youth Employment – Creating Decent Jobs for a More Sustainable Future

Attacking global poverty requires policy-makers to put youth employment at the centre of the post-2015 development agenda. This moderated conversation will address challenges, good policies, strategies, partnerships and programmes in creating decent jobs for young people, including in dynamic sectors such as jobs that promote sustainable development and new information and communication technologies.

2. Advancing progress in Africa beyond 2015

While many African countries are off-track to achieving the MDGs, an outstanding and sustained effort across the continent has resulted in significant progress towards the MDGs since 2000. At the same time, the continent has witnessed new and recurring conflict during this period, which threatens development gains, the stability of the region and impacts youth disproportionately. This session will aim to generate ideas and solutions to empower young people to promote a renewed commitment to ending violence in the region, and to shaping a comprehensive post-2015 development agenda that addresses the income, gender and rural-urban inequalities that persist in Africa.

3. Youth: The Future They Want Beyond 2015

This session will seek to stimulate dialogue on the immediate priorities of youth moving beyond 2015 and the most appropriate targets and indicators that could be included in the post-2015 Development Agenda that would support young people's vision of the future they want beyond 2015.

4. The "Road Map": Youth and the 2015 Development Summit

This session will seek to identify next steps and the key elements of an advocacy strategy or "Road Map" to the 2015 Development Summit and how youth can partner with the UN system, civil society and the private sector to ensure its implementation. The role of ICTs in the implementation of the Road Map will also be addressed.

Approach

In preparation for the Forum, young people will be consulted through a crowdsourcing exercise on the agenda and format of the meeting as well as to seek their views on targets and indicators that could be included in the post-2015 Development Agenda. The crowdsourcing platform will be created and launched in early February around the 52nd Session of the Commission on Social Development. Initial responses generated will be tested at the High-level Event on Contributions of women, the young and civil society to the Post-2015 Development Agenda convened by the President of the General Assembly on 24-25 March 2014. It is expected that a number of core ideas will gain momentum and by the June ECOSOC Forum, consensus is expected on the key aspects of the Road-Map. The Roadmap will be finalized at the Forum, along with the tools for its implementation in the period leading up to the 2015 Summit.

Format

The meeting will open with formal statements of the President of ECOSOC, the Secretary General and a representative of a youth-led organization. The Forum will feature five working sessions on “*Promoting Youth Employment – Creating Decent Jobs for a More Sustainable Future*”, “*Moving to the Post-2015 Development agenda: Remaining Gaps*”, “*Advancing progress in Africa beyond 2015*”, “*Youth: The Future They Want Beyond 2015*”, and “*The “Road Map”: Youth and the 2015 Development Summit*”.

Youth representatives will also have an opportunity to listen to and engage in an interactive discussion among themselves and with Member States. The outcome of the working sessions will be reported back to the Plenary at the end of the meeting.

Representatives of youth-led organizations will also be invited in small group meetings (classroom sessions) organized around the working sessions, “*Youth: The Future They Want Beyond 2015*”, and “*The “Road Map”: Youth and the 2015 Development Summit*”, to be held on 3 June. These classroom sessions will help facilitate active participation of young people in the discussions. The outcome of the classroom sessions will be reported back to the plenary.

Outcome

The outcome will be an ECOSOC President’s summary highlighting the discussions and also bringing recommendations/next steps on how youth should be included in the post-2015 development agenda. The summary will be presented at the ECOSOC’s high-level segment in July 2014.