



CONCEPT NOTE ECOSOC YOUTH FORUM 1-2 FEBRUARY 2016

“Youth Taking Action to Implement the 2030 Agenda”

“I call on young people across the world to lead and act with courage”
Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General, United Nations

Background

The 2016 Economic and Social Council session will have as its overall theme: "Implementing the post-2015 development agenda: moving from commitments to results". To bring the voice of youth into the intergovernmental debate on how to make the post-2015 development agenda a reality, ECOSOC will convene a Youth Forum on 1-2 February 2016. The Forum will be organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs,¹ and the Office of the Youth Envoy of the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the United Nations Inter-agency Network on Youth Development.

Over the past several years, the momentum for youth engagement at the United Nations has grown. Young people have been involved in various UN discussions and processes on the post-2015 Development Agenda. The UNDG Consultations; The Open Working Group Process of the Rio+20; My World Survey; The Crowdsourcing exercise which concluded with a Global Youth Call on Youth Priorities in Post-2015, have proven to be successful in UN processes involving youth as a whole. The Global Youth Call was presented at the 2014 Youth Forum. It identified concrete proposals for target areas under five thematic priority areas: education; employment; health; peace; and, governance and participation for inclusion in the post-2015 development agenda. The 2015 Youth Forum called for strong engagement at the national level to ensure implementation of the future Agenda while remaining connected to global-level dialogue. Young people also underscored the need for new, dynamic methods for communicating the SDGs to young people, both globally and within national contexts. They proposed to work closely with the UN and other development partners to strategize on ways of bridging the everyday concerns of young people with the emerging framework for the proposed 17 SDGs.

¹ DESA Divisions include OESC and DPSD.



Objectives

The 2016 ECOSOC Youth Forum will:

- 1. Provide a platform for young people to engage in a dialogue with Member States and other actors on concrete commitments and actions to realize the SDGs at the national, regional and global levels.** Young people will identify the roles youth and youth-led organizations will play in the steps at the policy, legislative levels to ensure implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Examples and projects where youth are already making a difference will be showcased.
- 2. Identify possible avenues for young people to contribute to the intergovernmental review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including identifying ways that youth can partner with the UN system, civil society and Governments to ensure implementation.** The Forum will also identify possible youth technology tools to monitor and track implementation.

Focus

In moving from commitments to results, the Forum will focus on the following thematic issues:

- **Youth playing an active role in the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.** Young people are key partners in the new agenda. They are therefore eager to ensure its realization by playing an active role in the implementation. The forum will provide a platform for young people to discuss youth-led monitoring and accountability mechanisms for the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the measurement of youth participation throughout the SDGs.
- **Communicating the new agenda.** Communicating the agenda will be critical for successful implementation. While the primary responsibility lies with national governments, a role for young people will be indispensable for the success of the agenda. The Forum will discuss various communication strategies that could be used by young people in their own communities, while leveraging young people's ease and familiarity with and innovative use of social and other media and communication tools.

Format and Participants

The 2016 ECOSOC Youth Forum will feature opening and closing plenary sessions with representatives from youth organizations, high-level and other keynote speakers. The other sessions will be highly interactive, including through breakout sessions. During these interactive sessions, the moderators will have a primary role to actively engage the audience with pertinent questions related to the various themes to be addressed.



The breakout sessions will provide a platform for youth to express themselves among other groups of young people on a more hands-on approach to implementation. Office hours with selected speakers on the interactive sessions will be available for young people who would like to have a one-on-one with some of the policy experts.

Participants will include ministers, including ministers of youth, representatives from the Permanent Missions of Member States to the UN in New York, youth delegates from Member States delegations, representatives from the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth, youth representatives from CSOs or youth-led/youth-organizations and movements and from National Youth Councils, representatives of regional youth organizations, multilateral organizations. Other participants will include academia, media and NGOs with consultative status with ECOSOC. Virtual participation will also be possible as youth representatives will also be invited to participate through video-link. The meeting will be available through webcast and participants will be able to pose questions via social media through Facebook and Twitter. A selected number of youth participants will be invited to share with the Forum the concrete actions they have taken or will take to implement the 2030 Agenda and how these actions will be tracked.

Outcome

The outcome will be an ECOSOC Presidential Statement presenting elements for a youth-led contribution to the review of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The summary will be presented at the ECOSOC's high-level segment in July 2016.