

## 2024 HLPF Side Event

# **“Empowering Youth for Sustainable Development: Voices from the LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS”**

## **Organized by UN-OHRLS**

*Virtual event*

**[9 July 2024, 8:15-9:50am, NY Time/EDT]**

## 1. Background

Organized by the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS), in collaboration with the UN Youth Office, this side event aims to amplify the voices of youth from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in driving sustainable development agendas. In the lead-up to the Youth Declaration of the Summit of the Future, youth speakers from LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS will share their experiences and discuss global challenges, ensuring that their voices are integral to global conversations.

The 45 LDCs, 32 LLDCs, and 39 SIDS face unique challenges in achieving sustainable development and internationally agreed goals. Despite these challenges, these regions possess significant economic, social, and environmental potential. Ensuring that the pressing needs of the young population in LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, home for 1.1 billion people remain high on the international agenda is crucial.

A young population brings numerous opportunities for economic growth and innovation. To realize these opportunities, it is imperative to engage youth, create spaces for their participation, and provide them with meaningful roles in decision-making processes. With the guidance and support of governments, young people can harness their collective power to drive positive change.

## 2. Objectives

The side event, featuring young speakers from LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS alongside global leaders, will underscore the importance of giving youth from these regions a seat at the table and ensuring their voices are heard effectively. By doing so, we can unlock the potential of young people to contribute significantly to sustainable development efforts worldwide.

The following focus topic discussions will highlight LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS youths’ experiences, insights, and innovative ideas :

### 1. Socioeconomic Challenges:

Youth representatives will delve into the impact of socioeconomic challenges on youth development. They will explore how these challenges, including economic challenges such as debt constraints, low literacy rates, unemployment, etc. affect the overall well-being of youth, while also discussing pathways to deal with them heading towards sustainable development. These discussions will emphasize the need for innovative solutions and international support to foster a more prosperous future for young generations.

## **2. ICT and Digital Innovation for Inclusive Growth**

Representatives will highlight the transformative potential of ICT and digital innovation. They will present innovative solutions and initiatives that empower youth, bridge digital divides, and promote inclusive economic growth. These discussions will showcase experiences of youth leveraging technology to overcome geographical and infrastructural challenges, enhancing connectivity and opportunities for a prosperous future.

## **3. Environment and Climate Change**

Youth representatives will address pressing environmental challenges in their communities, such as rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and biodiversity loss. They will highlight youth-led initiatives and solutions aimed at mitigating these impacts and promoting sustainable development. These discussions will emphasize the critical role of youth in climate action and the need for global cooperation to support resilience and adaptation efforts.

# **3. Expected outcomes**

This side event aims to spotlight the achievements and potential of youth in LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS. It brings together young advocates, entrepreneurs, and storytellers with policymakers, and UN representatives to explore how collaborative efforts can amplify the impact of youth-led innovations on the 2030 Agenda, the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action (DPoA), Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS), and of the forthcoming Programme of Action for LLDCs.

The side event will also build momentum towards the Youth Forum of the third United Nations Conference on LLDCs (LLDC3), scheduled to be held in Gaborone, Botswana in the fourth quarter of 2024. This forum will further engage youth voices and ensure that their contributions are integral to the planning and execution of development strategies for LLDCs.

# **4. Programme with names of speakers/panelists**

## **8:15 AM - 8:25 AM: Opening Remarks on Youth in LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS**

*[8:15-8:17] Moderator: **Ms. Yuki Mitsuka**, Programme Management Officer, UN-OHRLLS*

*Welcoming participants.*

*Introduction of speakers delivering opening remarks.*

1. *[8:17-8:21] **Ms. Rabab Fatima**, Under Secretary-General and High Representative, OHRLLS*  
A brief overview of youths' impact on sustainable development in LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, including activities and achievements made at LDC5, SIDS4, and the upcoming LLDC3.
2. *[8:21-8:25] **Mr. Felipe Paullier**, Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, United Nations Youth Office*  
A brief introduction of global youths' pivotal role in sustainable development and youth activities building up to the Summit of the Future Youth Declaration.

**8:25 AM - 9:25 AM: Presentations by LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS Youths' on Focus Topics highlighting their experiences, insights, and innovative ideas**

*[8:25-8:28] Moderator: **Ms. Sithembile Hillary Siziba**, Public Information Officer, UN-OHRLLS*

*Introduction of segment's topic and youth speakers.*

1. **[8:28-8:45] Topic 1: Socioeconomic Challenges**

Sharing reflections and youth perspective on impact of socioeconomic challenges on youth development. Speakers will explore how these challenges, including economic challenges such as debt constraints, low literacy rates, unemployment, among others, affect the overall well-being of youth.

- **Ms. Irina Sthapit - Youth Engineer/Innovator**
- **Ms. Yankho Happiness Juma – Credit Officer** at Mai Finance Ltd, company providing affordable micro-loan for women in SMEs

*[8:45-8:47] Moderator: **Ms. Ellen Taylor**, Youth Programme Officer, ITU*

*Introduction of segment's topic and youth speakers.*

2. **[8:47-9:05] Topic 2: ICT and Digital Innovation for Inclusive Growth**

Sharing highlights on the transformative potential of ICT and digital innovation. The speakers will present innovative solutions and initiatives that empower youth.

- **Mr. Mooketsi Bennedict, Youth Entrepreneur from Botswana**
- **Ms. Zeinabou Bagayoko, Youth Entrepreneur from Mali**
- **Mr. Suraj Neupane, Youth Entrepreneur from Nepal**

*[9:05-9:07] Moderator: **Ms. Amy Wickham**, Programme Specialist in Climate, Energy, Environment, and Disaster Risk Reduction at UNICEF*

*Introduction of segment's topic and youth speakers.*

3. **[9:07-9:25] Topic 3: Environment and Climate Change**

Sharing insights on the pressing environmental challenges vulnerable countries face, such as rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and biodiversity loss. Speakers will highlight youth-led initiatives and solutions aimed at mitigating these impacts and promoting sustainable development.

- **Mr. Skeile Almeida De Sousa Bastos, environmental activist from Sao Tome and Principe**
- **Ms. Naomi Cambridge, Climate Activist from Barbados**
- **Mr. Kwikiriza Benon, Youth Entrepreneur from Uganda**

***(Amy gives the floor back to Yuki to moderate the panel discussion)***

**9:25 AM - 9:45 AM: Panel discussion**

Selected discussants will reflect on the panel discussions, emphasizing the importance of creating inclusive societies, fostering an enabling business environment, and promoting sustainable development in LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS.

Key points of discussion will include:

- **Socioeconomic Challenges:** Highlighting the need for international support and innovative solutions to promote a prosperous future for young generations.
- **ICT and Digital Innovation for Inclusive Growth:** Showcasing the impact of youth who are using technology to overcome geographical and infrastructural challenges, thereby enhancing connectivity and opportunities for future development.
- **Environment and Climate Change:** Emphasizing the critical role of youth in climate action and the necessity of global cooperation to support resilience and adaptation efforts.

Discussants:

- **Mr. Benson Makusha**, Penholder Drafting Youth Declaration, LLDC3 Youth Advisory Group / International Committee Meeting of Youth Organizations (ICMYO)
- **Ms. Mwinji Nachinga**, Penholder Drafting Youth Declaration, LLDC3 Youth Advisory Group / Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY)
- **Mr. Jamie Macleod**, Economic Affairs Officer, OHRLLS
- **Ms. Ellen Taylor**, Youth Programme Officer, ITU
- **Ms. Amy Wickham**, Programme Specialist in Climate, Energy, Environment, and Disaster Risk Reduction at UNICEF

Guiding questions:

- 1. For Discussants on Socioeconomic Challenges:**
  - a. What are the predominant socioeconomic challenges confronting youth?
  - b. How does the current debt burden, literacy rate and loss of employment opportunities impact the development and future prospects of youth?
  - c. What innovative solutions can be implemented to promote sustainable economic growth and social well-being?
  - d. How can international support be effectively mobilized to assist vulnerable countries in managing their socioeconomic difficulties while investing in youth development?
- 2. For Discussants on ICT and Digital Innovation for Inclusive Growth:**
  - a. What are some successful examples of youth-led initiatives that leverage ICT to overcome geographical and infrastructural challenges?
  - b. How can governments and international organizations support the scaling up of these digital innovations to benefit more youth?
  - c. What role can public-private partnerships play in enhancing digital connectivity and fostering inclusive growth?
- 3. For Discussants on Environment and Climate Change:**
  - a. What are the most pressing environmental challenges faced by youth, and how are they addressing these issues?
  - b. Can you share international and regional examples of youth-led climate action initiatives in that have had a significant impact?
  - c. How can global cooperation be strengthened to support the resilience and adaptation efforts, particularly those led by youth?
- 4. For Overarching Discussions on Role of LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS Youth in Achieving the SDGs:**
  - a. How can we ensure that youth from LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS are included in the decision-making processes at local, national, and international levels?
  - b. What measures can be taken to create an enabling business environment that supports youth entrepreneurship and innovation in these regions?
  - c. How can we foster greater collaboration between youth, policymakers, and stakeholders to achieve the SDGs?
  - d. What are the key challenges that youth in LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS face in contributing to the SDGs, and how can these challenges be addressed?
  - e. How can youth from these regions effectively advocate for their needs and solutions in global forums?
  - f. What strategies can be employed to enhance the visibility and impact of youth-led initiatives in advancing the 2030 Agenda?

**9:45 AM - 9:50 AM: Closing**

**Moderator: Ms. Yuki Mitsuka**, Programme Management Officer, UN-OHRLLS

5. *Wrap up the session by summarizing key takeaways and encouraging continued dialogue and collaboration.*
6. *Highlight the next steps for engagement and participation in the LLDC3 conference.*

## 5. Platform to be used for virtual side events including Registration link

**Date & time:** July 9, 2024; 8:15-9:50 am, NY Time/EDT

**Format-MS Teams:** [Join the meeting now](#)

**Registration link:** [Registration for HLPF Virtual Side Event on LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS Youth by UN-OHRLS \(office.com\)](#)