



**Third United Nations  
Conference on  
Landlocked Developing  
Countries**

# **Youth Forum**

**4-5 August 2025**

**Awaza, Turkmenistan**

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**CONCEPT NOTE**

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## Background

The Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) have borne the brunt of climate change and external shocks due to their unique geographical and structural challenges, such as the lack of direct access to the sea, transportation obstacles, and inadequate infrastructure. However, within these challenges lie immense opportunities, particularly for the youth of these nations.

With approximately 58% of the population in LLDCs under the age of 25, the youth demographic represents a significant reservoir of potential and innovation. As this population is projected to grow from 110 million in 2022 to over 140 million by the end of the next decade, there's a clear imperative to harness their energy and creativity. Yet high illiteracy rates and entrenched inequality pose obstacles to realizing this potential to the fullest.<sup>1</sup>

UN Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres emphasizes that young people hold the key to the future and possess bold solutions. Empowering them to participate in decision-making processes is not just a matter of inclusivity; it's a strategic necessity for the success of LLDCs and their developmental trajectories.

The upcoming Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs (LLDC3), scheduled for 5-8 August 2025, presents a pivotal moment. It must serve as a platform for meaningful dialogue, not just among LLDCs and development partners, but crucially, with the youth themselves. By actively involving young people in shaping policies and initiatives, LLDC3 can unlock their full potential and ensure their active participation in implementing the new Programme of Action, aligned with the goals of Agenda 2030.

## Forum Objectives

- **Provide a platform for constructive and meaningful dialogue** among young people and UN Member States, UN entities and other stakeholders to provide young people's perspective and find common space for a way forward for the new Programme of Action – including young people.
- **Empower young people** as key stakeholders on transformative pathways in the realization of the new Programme of Action.
- **Share knowledge, skills, and lessons learned** in achieving the rights and well-being of youth through the implementation of Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs (VPoA) and by the accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and ensuring the effective participation and engagement of young people in policymaking and implementation.
- **Present ideas and solutions** – and showcase innovative initiatives and individual and collective action by youth and others – to advance the SDGs and the implementation of new Programme of Action on national, regional, and global experience.
- **Establish a partnership among youth participants**, decision-makers of the UN Member States, UN entities and stakeholders from civil society and private sectors who will leave with a clear common vision.

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<sup>1</sup> In last five years, the average illiteracy rate of LLDCs is 18.7% while the world average is 7.3%.  
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.1524.LT.ZS?end=2022&start=2017>

## Outcome

The outcome of the Youth Forum will be a Youth Declaration titled “*Building Bridges for LLDC Futures*” and a summary report capturing key messages and findings of the different sessions.

The Youth Declaration has been drafted by the International Committee Meeting of Youth Organizations (ICMYO) and the Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY), as the penholders – facilitated by UN-OHRLS and the members of the LLDC3 Youth Advisory Group – with full and thorough consultation with young people from all 32 LLDCs.

This Youth Declaration aims at:

1. Ensuring young people are engaged in the LLDC3 decision-making process,
2. That the new Programme of Action for LLDCs addresses the development needs of young people in LLDCs in the face of emerging challenges, and empowering youth in furthering progress towards targets and goals of the new Programme of Action for LLDCs.

The Youth Declaration depicts young people’s vision for a better future, asserts young people’s commitment to contributing to the new Programme of Action and includes thorough thematic commitments.

The Youth Declaration will be adopted at the intergenerational dialogue. At the closing of the dialogue, youth representatives will hand over the declaration to the President of the General Assembly as a symbol of their commitment to contribute to the implementation of the new Programme of Action.

## Where and when?

The LLDC3 Youth Forum will take place on **4 August 2025** in Turkmenistan and will continue on **5 August 2025** with the Intergenerational Dialogue alongside the third United Nations Conference on the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3) on 5-8 August 2025.

Additional information on the LLDC3 Youth Forum is available on the dedicated Forum webpage: <https://www.un.org/en/landlocked/youth-forum>

## Draft Forum Programme

*Monday, 4 August*

### **10:00 am – 12:00 pm Opening of the Youth Forum**

*Youth Centre of the Awaza Conference Centre*

**Description:** The Introduction to the Youth Forum, led by high-level officials from UN Member States and UN entities, alongside youth representatives, including members of the Youth Advisory Group and other youth advocates. This opening segment underscores the central significance of the Youth Forum within the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3) and highlights the critical role of youth in shaping the future, fostering innovative ideas, and driving growth essential for achieving sustainable development and implementing the next 10-year Programme of Action in LLDCs. Distinguished speakers will share their perspectives and contributions aimed at empowering youth and forging pathways for LLDC futures. The Penholders of the Youth Declaration will deliver a presentation on the Youth Declaration, followed by an interactive discussion, paving the way for the endorsement of the Declaration by all participating youth representatives at the Forum.

<i>10:00 – 10:15</i>	<i>High-level opening remarks</i>
<i>10:15 – 10:25</i>	<i>Youth Family Photo</i>
<i>10:25 – 11:15</i>	<i>Presentation and endorsement of the Youth Declaration</i>
<i>11:15 – 11:30</i>	<i>Closing remarks</i>

### **03:00 pm – 04:45 pm Youth in Focus: Building Bridges for LLDC Futures**

*Youth Centre of the Awaza Conference Centre*

**Description:** The session within the Youth Forum will spotlight youth actors how to build bridges for LLDC futures, with a specific focus on empowering youth for inclusive development. As the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3) unfolds, it presents a unique and pivotal moment to craft innovative, scalable solutions and foster partnerships that will shape the trajectory of LLDCs for years to come. This session stands as a beacon, championing the integration of youth voices at the forefront of LLDC3, aiming to crystallize a vision for youth in LLDCs that unlocks opportunities for a transformative decade of development. Through presentations, youth representatives will share their personal narratives, experiences, and solutions aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the new Programme of Action, illuminating pathways towards inclusive and sustainable progress.

*15:00 – 15:40 Award ceremony of the Landlinked fellows incl. opening of Landlinked exhibition and presentation of the Landlinked fellows*

*15:40 – 16:30 Presentation of think pieces of youth entrepreneurs*

### *Tuesday 5 August 2025*

**03:00 pm – 18:00 pm Intergenerational Dialogue**

#### ***Building III***

**Description:** The intergenerational dialogue will feature world leaders such as Youth Ministers and senior UN officials, discussing strategies for building bridges toward LLDC futures. This includes interactive discussions between youth representatives and global leaders. Thematic discussions on topics that concern young people the most include speakers representing a wide range of stakeholders. Throughout the interactive discussions and thematic sessions, youth representatives will be encouraged to share their actions, ideas, best practices, and concerns regarding the implementation of the new Programme of Action for LLDCs. Other stakeholders will also share how they plan to facilitate the inclusion of young people in the delivery of the new PoA at national, regional, and global levels. The Youth Declaration, serving as the outcome of the LLDC3 Youth Track, is set to be adopted during the dialogue.

*15:00 – 15:05 Welcome remarks*

*15:05 – 15:20 Opening remarks*

*15:20 – 15:30 Adoption of the Youth Declaration*

*15:30 – 15:40 BREAK*

*15:40 – 16:30 Thematic session 1: Driving Growth - Youth-Led Innovation in Digital Development for Sustainable Economies in LLDCs*

*16:30 – 16:50 Interactive discussion on the Thematic Sessions 1*

*16:50 – 17:40 Thematic session 2: Empowering Change - Youth Leadership in Tackling Climate Crisis in LLDCs*

*17:40 – 18:00 Interactive discussion on the Thematic Sessions 2*

### *Thursday 7 August 2025*

**10:00 pm – 12:00 pm Demographic Dividend as a Strategic Asset for LLDCs (breakdown of detailed programme of this section tbc)**

#### ***Youth Centre of the Awaza Conference Centre***

**Description:** This session will explore how landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) can strategically leverage their demographic dividend as a catalyst for inclusive and sustainable growth. With a large share of their young people, LLDCs face a historic opportunity to transform youth potential into productive human capital. LLDCs must adopt forward-looking, data-driven decision-

making frameworks that connect demographic analysis with national development strategies, labor market foresight, and education policy. The session will highlight the importance of aligning youth skills development with projected economic needs - not only to meet current labor demands, but also to cultivate the knowledge and capabilities that will enable the creation of entirely new economic niches. Emphasis will be placed on the role of universities and vocational institutions as drivers of transformation - preparing future-ready professionals, conducting strategic foresight research, and serving as knowledge hubs that can shape sectoral innovation and foster economic resilience. The session will highlight evidence-based approaches and data-driven tools for aligning youth capacity-building with emerging economic sectors, including how demographic foresight can inform education investment and reduce migration pressures, and identify mechanisms through which education systems can become foundational pillars in unlocking the demographic dividend across LLDCs. Participants will examine good practices, regional cooperation frameworks, and ways to institutionalize youth-centered economic planning across LLDCs.

**03:00 pm – 04:00 pm 'What's next after Awaza?' – A discussion on how LLDC youth can maintain the momentum and stay involved upon return to their countries**

***Youth Centre of the Awaza Conference Centre***

**Description:** The final session “What next after Awaza?” charts a course for LLDC youth to sustain momentum and engagement upon returning to their respective countries. This session will unveil a comprehensive roadmap for continued involvement, emphasizing actionable steps to harness the energy generated at Awaza. A highlight of this program includes the announcement of an upcoming online session with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) Coordination Office (DCO). This session will provide insights into optimizing youth engagement with their local Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs) in the implementation of the Awaza Programme of Action (APoA). The roadmap aims to pave the way for enduring youth participation and impact in LLDC development agendas.

**Focal Points**

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More information on LLDC3 is available at: **[Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries | United Nations](#)**