

## **UN-Habitat Youth Advisory Board Terms of Reference**

### **BACKGROUND**

The UN-Habitat Youth Advisory Board (YAB) comprises 18 advisors: 12 youth advisors to provide critical input from the perspective each of UN-Habitat's six regions, plus 3 subject matter advisors and 3 adult mentors. YAB advisory are appointed by UN-Habitat to serve for a period of 2 years.

The YAB is convened in partnership with the Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality, under the auspices of Mayor Yücel Yılmaz. Balıkesir provides logistical and capacity support to the Youth Advisory Board for the period of 2022-2025.

The Board advises UN-Habitat on strategies to engage young people in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda. The input from the YAB helps UN-Habitat develop appropriate policies and practices across the agency to address issues related to youth empowerment and engage young people directly in development. The Board also advocates for and seeks to strengthen youth participation and youth-led initiatives in UN-Habitat and its partner networks.

The first YAB was established at the World Urban Forum IV held in Nanjing, China on 1 and 2 November, 2008 and launched at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the UN-Habitat Assembly in April 2009.

### **MANDATE OF YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD**

The Youth Advisory Board (YAB) possesses a mandate focused on empowering and engaging young individuals to promote sustainable urban development. The YAB's central mission involves inclusively advancing both the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. This encompasses ensuring that youth voices and perspectives are integral to the formulation and execution of these global initiatives.

The YAB provides strategic guidance to UN-Habitat in the realm of urban youth-led development. This involves offering recommendations regarding the active participation of youth in various facets of urban development, including research, planning, governance, and the implementation and monitoring of policies and practices within local authorities.

Furthermore, the YAB serves as a conduit between young people and the global policy arena. It represents youth concerns at diverse policy forums, both at the local and international levels, while also working to encourage the involvement of other young individuals in these forums.

The YAB plays a pivotal role in fostering global collaboration and knowledge sharing. It actively disseminates the valuable experiences gained from policy gatherings to inspire young individuals worldwide to actively engage in governance processes within their respective regions.

Additionally, the YAB promotes youth participation and input in UN-Habitat's work by co-organizing youth events, mobilizing young individuals to participate in UN-Habitat activities, and actively contributing to UN-Habitat's publications.

To ensure accountability and transparency, the YAB monitors UN-Habitat's commitment to youth engagement through biennial reports. Upon completing their mandate, YAB members provide a comprehensive briefing to UN-Habitat. The YAB convenes regularly for various purposes, including orientation and training meetings, annual work plan retreats, and collaborative efforts with the Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality.

In summary, the YAB is dedicated to advancing the goals of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals through meaningful youth engagement, knowledge-sharing, and advocacy, ensuring that young people play a vital role in shaping the future of urban development.

#### Contribution to UN-Habitat work:

The Youth Advisory Board (YAB) actively contributes to UN-Habitat's mission in several key ways. Firstly, YAB members engage in policy development and publications, authoring articles on youth issues, offering youth-centric input to UN-Habitat publications, encouraging youth and youth-led organizations to share knowledge and experiences, and disseminating crucial information about UN-Habitat's policies and priorities.

Secondly, the YAB monitors UN-Habitat's commitment to youth engagement, preparing biennial reports that comprehensively detail progress in urban youth-led programs and sustainable urbanization initiatives.

Upon completing their mandate, YAB members provide UN-Habitat with comprehensive briefings, summarizing their accomplishments and insights. The YAB convenes regularly, including orientation and training meetings, annual work plan retreats, and online meetings, ensuring active participation and coordination.

Each YAB member commits to attending essential events like the UN-Habitat Assembly, the World Urban Forum, and youth-focused meetings, either in person or virtually, as required by UN-Habitat.

The YAB works closely with the Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality to uphold the quality of its outputs, reinforcing its commitment to advancing the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals through meaningful youth engagement and advocacy.

## **B RESPONSIBILITIES OF UN-HABITAT**

UN-Habitat's support to the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) is integral to its effectiveness in championing youth-led development and sustainable urbanization. Firstly, YAB members receive no monetary compensation from UN-Habitat, but the organization does allocate funding, subject to prior approval, to cover essential expenses incurred during their participation in key policy forums and meetings. This financial support enables YAB members to actively contribute to these vital gatherings.

Secondly, UN-Habitat provides the YAB with essential information and documentation regarding its work and related UN institutions. This access to critical knowledge empowers YAB members to fulfill their responsibilities effectively, focusing on youth-led development, sustainable urbanization, and human settlement issues.

Additionally, UN-Habitat is committed to involving the YAB meaningfully in the planning of youth activities, ensuring that the board's insights shape the design and execution of these initiatives.

UN-Habitat facilitates communication by providing access to telecommunications infrastructure for virtual meetings and by coordinating and managing the communication efforts of the Youth Advisory Board.

Furthermore, UN-Habitat places a strong emphasis on capacity building, offering training in areas such as fundraising, advocacy, media engagement, decision-making, and policymaking. This investment equips YAB members with the skills needed to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

UN-Habitat's commitment extends to fostering collaboration between the YAB and its regional offices and relevant youth focal points, thereby strengthening the board's capacity to engage in youth-led development across diverse regions.

Lastly, UN-Habitat works closely with the Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality, the official sponsor of the YAB from 2023 to 2025, to ensure the efficient and effective functioning of the board. This partnership reinforces the YAB's mission to promote the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals through meaningful youth engagement and advocacy.

## **C ELIGIBILITY**

- I. YAB candidates, excluding mentors, should be between the 18 and 32 years old at the time of candidacy.
- II. Candidates must be members of youth-led or youth-serving organizations and the must be able to demonstrate access to youth networks within their regions.
- III. YAB candidates should ideally have good oral and written skills in English. Fluency in other United Nations languages is an asset.
- IV. YAB Candidates should have access to, and be reasonably proficient in, communication technologies.
- V. YAB Candidates must be available and accessible for conference-calls with the Board and UN-Habitat representatives and be able to avail themselves for Board activities.
- VI. YAB members shall serve for a maximum of one two-year term, provided they fulfill their responsibilities as detailed above. There may be possibilities of extending the appointment.

## **D SELECTION OF MEMBERS**

- I. The current Youth Advisory Board working with UN-Habitat staff will develop a short list. This final list will be submitted to UN-Habitat for final approval.
- II. All members of the Youth Advisory Board shall be appointed by UN-Habitat from a pool of vetted eligible candidates who are between the ages of 18 and 32.
- III. UN-Habitat shall target at least 50% of youth advisors being under 24 years of age.
- IV. UN-Habitat shall ensure gender balance.
- V. To ensure advice has a globally balanced perspective, the Youth Advisory Board shall have members who are actively working and reside in all six UN-Habitat regions (unless there is an exceptional circumstance):
  - Africa Region
  - Asia and the Pacific Region
  - Arab States Region
  - Latin America and the Caribbean Region
  - Europe
  - North America

- VI. The Board shall also include 3 additional advisory members who are selected due to their expertise in urbanization in the areas of zero waste; informal settlements; youth, peace and security; and climate change.
- VII. UN-Habitat will work to ensure that the board has at least 1 youth advisor from a least developed country.
- VIII. Relevant information regarding the Youth Advisory Board selection policies and processes will be made available to young people in all six regions through digital platforms.
- IX. Candidacy application forms shall be made available on UN-Habitat's website.
- X. The Youth Advisory Board shall not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, colour, gender, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation

#### **F REMOVAL AND RETIREMENT OF MEMBERS**

- I. If a Youth Advisor or Mentor Advisor resigns or does not satisfactorily fulfill his / her responsibilities (including remaining in contact with both UN-Habitat and Youth Advisory Board for a period of three months without a reasonable explanation), the Board may vote by simple majority to remove and replace the member.
- II. The Advisor may be replaced and his/her term completed.
- III. UN-Habitat also has discretion to remove board members if necessary.

#### **G DECISION-MAKING**

- I. Each of 12 youth advisory board members and 3 advisors shall have one equal vote in relation to YAB business.
- II. Mentor advisors can participate as board members but have no vote

#### **H CHANGES TO THESE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- I. Changes to these guidelines can only be made by UN-Habitat in consultation with the Youth Advisory Board.
- II. Recommendations for changes may be made directly to UN-Habitat from members of the Youth Advisory Board for internal review and consideration.