



**ECOSOC
YOUTH
FORUM**

#YOUTH2030

2024 ECOSOC Youth Forum
**"Youth shaping sustainable and innovative solutions:
Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of crises"**

16 April 2024
4.45-6.00pm EST
Trusteeship Council Chamber

Concept Note

IDENTIFICATION	
Plenary title	Urban Youth Leading Climate Action, Community Resilience Initiatives and Sustaining Peace
Plenary focus (SDG, region or topic)	SDG 11, SDG 13, SDG 16, SDG 17, youth engagement, youth empowerment, community resilience, sustaining peace, social cohesion
Plenary UN co-lead UN 1	UN-Habitat, Douglas Ragan
Plenary UN co-lead UN 2	UN DESA
Plenary youth co-lead 1	UN-Habitat Youth Advisory Board
Plenary youth co-lead 2	Accept International
Plenary UN co-organizers	AFS Intercultural Programs
	IAAI - Glocha
Plenary youth co-organizer	International Youth Conference
BACKGROUND & KEY ISSUES	

Urbanization is reshaping the global demographic, with two-thirds of the world's population expected to live in cities by 2050. This growing urban population is mainly young, with 60% of the urban population projected to be less than 18 years of age by 2030, the year the SDGs are to be attained. This shift not only marks a significant change but also presents an opportunity to drive sustainable urban initiatives. Leveraging the vigor and potential of the youth is crucial for cities to tackle the challenges of the 21st century.

However, data also indicates a lag in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This is attributed to various factors, including the repercussions of the global pandemic, climate change, armed conflicts, and an overall failure to allocate adequate resources for global and international sustainable development efforts. It is imperative to mobilize support across all societal groups and governance levels to bridge the gap and expedite the realization of the Global Goals, alongside youth.

Resilience is crucial in the face of these challenges. Climate change exacerbates existing vulnerabilities not only in urban settings but also in all human settlements, while armed conflicts disrupt communities globally and locally and hinder development efforts. Yet, amidst adversity, communities led by resilient youth demonstrate remarkable adaptability and innovation, serving as beacons of hope for sustainable peace and development.

The Summit of the Future will chart the path towards implementing the forthcoming Pact of the Future, in collaboration with youth residing in cities and other human settlements worldwide. It is time to recognize the transformative potential of localities in shaping the global landscape. The sustainable development agenda must be contextualized to local realities, fostering a "localized" approach that integrates global objectives into local settings. Moreover, youth, including youths who have left out such as ones associated with armed groups, must be empowered to leverage the development agenda for personal growth, positive socialization, and the advancement of humanity, thereby evolving into "Global Citizens" who bring their local priorities to the global stage.

This plenary session will convene youth, representatives from national and subnational governments, development practitioners, private sector actors, and civil society stakeholders for a dynamic exchange on the role of youth in shaping a sustainable community and peace for all, with a focus on climate change and armed conflicts. The agenda will reflect on the achievements and challenges of localizing the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda, New Agenda for Peace, along with other critical declarations and roadmaps towards sustainable peace with and for youth, culminating in discussions surrounding the preparation of the Pact of the Future.

OBJECTIVES OF SESSION/PLENARY

The overall goal of the plenary session is to validate the key messages on urban youth's role in leading climate action, community resilience and peace initiatives. The specific objectives of the session are as follows:

- To highlight the importance of integrating youth perspectives in urban planning and sustainable development efforts to address the challenges posed by rapid urbanization, climate change, and armed conflicts.
- To explore innovative approaches and best practices led by youth in building resilience in face of the negative consequences of climate change and promoting peace within communities.

- To facilitate dialogue and collaboration among youth, governments, development practitioners, private sector actors, and civil society stakeholders to strengthen partnerships and identify concrete actions for advancing the implementation of SDGs 11, 13, and 16 at the local level.

OVERALL FORMAT/STRUCTURE

The plenary session will consist of a keynote address, two interactive panels with embedded Q&A exchanges, and concluding remarks. Each panel features three to four speakers engaging in a "Davos style" semi-conversational format, allowing a maximum of 2 minutes per speaker for presentations. Likewise, the questions and interventions made from the floor cannot exceed 2 minutes. The session commences with a keynote speaker setting the stage.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can youth participation in inclusive planning and decision-making processes contribute to building resilient communities in the face of challenges such as rapid urbanization, climate change, and armed conflicts?
2. What strategies and interventions have proven effective in empowering youth, including those marginalized or associated with armed groups, to become agents of positive change and contribute to sustainable peace and development in their communities?
3. How can governments and international organizations better support and leverage the role of youth in implementing the [New Urban Agenda](#), New Agenda for Peace, and other critical frameworks adopted by youth such as the [Global DeclarACTION on Youth and Sustainable Urbanization](#), aimed at promoting sustainable urbanization and peacebuilding efforts?

NAMES AND TITLES OF SESSION SPEAKERS AND MODERATOR(S)

Moderators:

Mr. Ali Mustafa , AFS Intercultural Programs

Speakers:

Mr. Yosuke Nagai, Accept International, Japan

Ms. Milagros Costabel Bionda, Human Rights and Disability Inclusion Activist, Uruguay

Mr. Miroslav Polzer, IAAI GloCha

Ms. Sarah Syed, Climate Activist, Canada

Ms. Alexandra Kulik, Implementing partner of the City of Lublin, Poland

Special invitee:

Ms. Leah Namugerwa, Climate Change Activist, Founder Birthday Trees Initiative, Uganda

Interventions from the floor:

Mr. H.E. Mustapha Ussif, Minister for Youth and Sports, Ghana

Mr. Krzysztof Tarabura, Poland

Youth Delegates (TBD)

OVERVIEW OF PREPARATORY EVENT/CONSULTATION

The UN-Habitat Youth Advisory Board, made up of youth representing 17 countries of the world, developed a urban youth response to the Pact for the Future, building on the Global DeclarACTION on Youth and Sustainable Urbanization. This document focused identified the challenges faced by urban youth, and proposed solutions to empower them and enhance their contributions to achieving SDG11, SDG 13, SDG16, SDG17. Key themes addressed included youth inclusion in urban planning processes, capacity-building initiatives, and the importance of addressing the needs of marginalized youth, including those affected by armed conflicts.

POTENTIAL KEY MESSAGES FOR ECOSOC PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT

In the ECOSOC Presidential Statement, it is essential to emphasize the following:

- As urban youth are a growing and predominant global demographic, especially those from the Global South who often live in informality, it is critical that urban youth and their needs and aspirations are represented fully in the Pact for the Future and the Declaration on Future Generations.
- Their innovative contributions and solutions are instrumental in addressing urban issues, necessitating a shift towards more inclusive and participatory decision-making processes that consider the voices of all youth, including those marginalized or associated with armed groups.
- To amplify their impact, it's imperative for governments to critically review and align their sustainable development initiatives with the needs and aspirations of urban youth. This includes assessing the effects of these initiatives on young people and ensuring their active engagement.
- A focus on intergenerational justice is essential to ensure that today's policies do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- Furthermore, establishing dedicated financing mechanisms to support youth-led initiatives is crucial.
- This should involve allocating resources specifically for projects in urban areas, providing financial support, technical assistance, and capacity-building opportunities to empower young leaders and their organizations.
- Transparent mechanisms that ensure the effective allocation and utilization of resources intended for youth initiatives, preventing bureaucratic hurdles that hinder the execution of impactful projects.
- Enhanced measures to protect the rights and well-being of youth activists and leaders, especially those advocating for environmental justice and sustainable urban planning, who may face opposition or threats.
- Integration of modern technology and digital tools in participatory processes, making it easier for urban youth to contribute to policy-making and project implementation regardless of their physical location.
- Encouragement of urban planning and development projects that prioritize sustainable and youth-friendly public spaces, promoting mental health, community engagement, and environmental sustainability.
- Implementation of educational curriculums that include practical skills for sustainability, peacebuilding, and civic engagement, preparing urban youth to be informed and active participants in their communities.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF SESSION FOR OFFICIAL PROGRAMME

Discover how urban youth drive solutions for resilient communities amid climate challenges and conflicts. This session unites varied stakeholders to weave youth insights into development strategies, forming alliances to propel Sustainable Development Goals 11, 13, and 16, and forward the Pact of the Future.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS, SUGGESTED READING, IF ANY