

2024 ECOSOC Youth Forum Plenary Session on the SDG 11
***Urban Youth Leading Climate Action, Community Resilience
Initiatives and Sustaining Peace***

April 16th, 4.45-6.00pm EST

Short bios of speakers and moderators

Speakers (A-Z)

Ms Leah Namugerwa @Leahinitiative



Short version: TBC

Unabridged version: Leah Namugerwa, a 19-year-old Ugandan climate and child's rights activist, serves on the UN Habitat Youth Advisory Board. She's a driving force in the global fight against climate change, organizing strikes, rallies, and events to stress the urgency of climate action. With over 10 keynote speeches worldwide, Leah sensitized 15+ local schools and led global climate strikes. An attendee at conferences like COP27, she effectively amplifies her voice. Leah's strength lies in connecting climate change to her community's daily life, highlighting its immediate impacts. She founded the Birthday Trees Project, planting 20,000+ trees to celebrate birthdays and inspire others. Through her Fight Child Hunger in Africa initiative, she fed 2000+ children during the pandemic and initiated food gardens. Committed to children's well-being, she organizes Christmas parties in slum areas and supports orphanages.

Ms Milagros Costabel Bionda, @mili_costabel



Short version: TBC

Unabridged version: The work of Milagros in youth advocacy has always revolved around ensuring that all individuals can access the resources necessary for their personal development. She has been a staunch advocate for the rights of young people, especially those with disabilities, both in Uruguay and on a global scale. Milagros has spearheaded social media campaigns alongside young people, reaching millions of individuals, government officials, and international organizations. Thanks to UNICEF's Sumá Tu Voz program, she has been able to raise youth-related concerns with the Uruguayan government, contributing to the creation of documents and frameworks for future implementation. Through TheirWorld, Milagros has received training and participated in campaigns with and for young people across the region. While her primary focus is Uruguay, Milagros is also a member of the National Federation of the Blind, actively involved in global initiatives to secure the rights of youth with disabilities. Her writings on youth issues have gained recognition in international media outlets like Huffington Post and Business Insider. Additionally, Milagros is part of the Latin American youth network, Concausa, where young people establish connections and networks to expand their volunteer and advocacy work.

Mr Miroslav (“Miro”) Polzer @glocha_mp



Short version: Miroslav is founder and CEO of the International Association for the Advancement of Innovative Approaches to Global Challenges, a UN accredited civil society organization based in Klagenfurt am Wörthersee (Austria). IAAI's mission is to build the youth focused Global Challenges action empowerment ecosystem GloCha with digital innovation, culture and organizational innovation, including innovative business models and digital tools for SDGs and climate focused (micro) social entrepreneurship.

Ms Sarah Syed @activistsarah



Short version: TBC

Unabridged version: Sarah Syed, is a 19-year-old first-year Environmental Studies student at York University, passionate about youth empowerment, innovation, and policy advocacy for sustainable cities. Being involved with The Starfish Canada since 2021, her new capacity as the Community Engagement Manager, Sarah has been recognized as a Top 25 Environmentalist, she shares the online journal, amplifying the voices of Indigenous/marginalized youth and Co-organizes the Top 25 Environmentalists program that provides mentorship and funding for youth finalists. As a Project Manager at EarthNet, Sarah oversees hubs with the goal of encouraging 10 million youth to develop climate projects spanning policy/innovation/community organizing. Facilitating opportunities for youth involvement, she fosters a meaningful dialogue among Canadian youth and a network of organizations dedicated to youth empowerment. Sarah's research during her 2023 fellowship at The David Suzuki Foundation centers on designing a rotating solar panel. She orchestrated a hackathon with 1000 global participants and \$42,000 in funding for winners/participants. Her work with DSF/The Future Ground Networks spans from 2020 as a youth leadership ambassador. Her work has been recognized by the Lieutenant Governor/government officials.

Mr Yosuke Nagai @you__27



Short version:

Dr. Yosuke Nagai, founder of Accept International since 2011, leads P/CVE and peacebuilding efforts in conflict zones like Somalia and Yemen. He also advocates globally for youth associated with non-state armed groups (YANSAG) as agents of peace.

Unabridged version: Dr. Yosuke Nagai serves as the founder and executive director of Accept International, a role he has held since its inception in 2011. His unwavering commitment has been directed towards the implementation of deradicalization, reintegration, and reconciliation initiatives, primarily targeted at defectors, prisoners, and detainees from violent extremist organizations, with a particular emphasis on regions such as Somalia, Yemen, Kenya, and Indonesia. Moreover, he has introduced emergency humanitarian aid programs to assist victims and internally displaced individuals in these areas, involving graduates from rehabilitation programs. Furthermore, Dr. Nagai actively engages in outreach and awareness campaigns in remote and underserved regions, encouraging disengagement from

non-state armed groups and promoting community-based reconciliation efforts. In addition to his fieldwork, he has initiated a global lobbying and advocacy movement aimed at addressing the unique needs of youth associated with non-state armed groups (YANSAG) worldwide and harnessing their potential as agents of peace.

Moderator

Mr Ali Mustafa @smalimustafa



Ali Mustafa, Representative to the United Nations, AFS Intercultural Programs, Advisor to Youth Representative Steering Committee United Nations Department of Global Communications

Ali is a youth development professional who brings with him over 14 years of experience as a human rights advocate and a youth mobilizing force. He has worked with numerous multilateral organizations in various capacities and has developed programs on youth and gender. He founded the International Youth Conference in 2019, since then engaging youth from the global south. In his role with United Nations Population Activity (UNFPA), he engaged with a group of university students to present youth mobilization programs to various targeted communities.

Ali is currently serving as the Consultant for United Nations Affairs at AFS Intercultural Programs and a Civil Society Representative to the United Nations Department of Global Communications and previously served as Co-Chair to Youth Representative Steering Committee, UN Department of Global Communications and Co-Chair for youth planning sub-committee for 68th United Nations Civil Society Conference in 2019.