

# UN-Habitat Youth Advisory Board (YAB)

## Terms of Reference

*August 31, 2023*

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### BACKGROUND

The UN-Habitat Youth Advisory Board (YAB) comprises 17 advisors: 12 youth advisors representing UN-Habitat's six global regions, five subject matter advisors, and additional mentor advisors. YAB members are appointed by UN-Habitat for a term of two years with an optional extension of 1 more year at the discretion of UN-Habitat.

The YAB is convened in partnership with the Zero Waste Foundation, which provides logistical and capacity-building support for the YAB from 2023–2025.

The YAB advises UN-Habitat on strategies to engage youth in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda. It contributes to youth empowerment, policy development, and advocacy within UN-Habitat and its global partner networks. The YAB provides regular updates and reports on its activities to the UN-Habitat Deputy Executive Director, ensuring transparency and alignment with organizational priorities. The YAB is managed by a designated Programme Management Officer within UN-Habitat, who oversees its operations, supports coordination and ensures the effective implementation of its activities and recommendations.

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

All communications and public engagements by YAB members must align with the *Policy on Representation of UN-Habitat and the Youth Advisory Board*, adopted on November 1, 2023. This ensures alignment with UN-Habitat's values and protocols.

### MANDATE

The YAB works to empower and engage youth in sustainable urban development, ensuring their voices are integral to global initiatives such as the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda.

Key roles include:

- Providing strategic guidance to UN-Habitat for youth-led urban development and youth participation in policy planning, implementation, and monitoring.

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution 22/4- Strengthening the development of urban young people - April 3 2009

- Serving as a bridge between youth and global policy forums.
- Promoting collaboration and sharing knowledge among youth globally.
- Co-organizing events, mobilizing youth participation, and contributing to UN-Habitat publications.

The YAB collaborates closely with the Zero Waste Foundation, which hosts the YAB and supports its activities for the period 2023–2025.

## **CONTRIBUTION TO UN-HABITAT WORK**

YAB actively contributes to UN-Habitat’s mission through:

### 1. Policy Development and Advocacy:

- Authoring youth-centric publications.
- Encouraging youth-led organizations to share experiences.
- Disseminating UN-Habitat priorities and policies.

### 2. Monitoring and Reporting:

- Preparing reports on youth-led programs and urban initiatives.
- Providing briefings and updates to the UN-Habitat Deputy Executive Director to ensure alignment with agency priorities and activities.

### 3. Capacity Building and Training:

- Participating in orientation, training sessions, and annual work plan retreats.
- Attending key events such as the UN-Habitat Assembly and World Urban Forum.

YAB members are required to ensure their contributions, whether written or verbal, comply with the Policy on Representation of UN-Habitat and the Youth Advisory Board, emphasizing proper authorization and adherence to established guidelines.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF UN-HABITAT**

UN-Habitat supports the YAB by:

- Covering essential expenses for participation in key forums (subject to prior approval).
- Providing access to UN-Habitat documentation and resources.
- Facilitating training in fundraising, advocacy, and policymaking.
- Ensuring communication infrastructure for virtual meetings.
- Coordinating with the Zero Waste Foundation to ensure the YAB’s efficient functioning.

UN-Habitat ensures that YAB members adhere to the Policy on Representation of UN-Habitat and the Youth Advisory Board, protecting the integrity and reputation of the organization.

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

1. Youth advisors must be 18–32 years old and members of youth-led or youth-serving organizations.
2. Mentor advisors can be any age but must have experience working with youth and relevant expertise.
3. Candidates should possess strong oral and written English skills; knowledge of other UN languages is an asset.
4. Candidates must have access to communication technologies and availability for YAB activities.
5. Advisors serve a maximum of one two-year term.

## **SELECTION OF MEMBERS**

1. The current YAB, in collaboration with UN-Habitat staff, develops regional shortlists for final approval by senior management.
2. Youth advisors must represent all six UN-Habitat regions:
  - Africa
  - Asia and the Pacific
  - Arab States
  - Latin America and the Caribbean
  - Europe
  - North America
3. The YAB will also include:
  - Three advisors with expertise in urbanization topics, including Zero Waste, informal settlements, and climate change.
  - Three mentor advisors with youth engagement expertise or previous YAB experience.

Gender balance and representation from least-developed countries are prioritized.

## **REMOVAL AND RETIREMENT OF MEMBERS**

1. Members may be removed for non-performance, including lack of communication for over three months without reasonable explanation.
2. Vacancies resulting from member removal or resignation will be filled by new appointees to complete the remaining term.
3. Breach of the Policy on Representation of UN-Habitat and the Youth Advisory Board can result in immediate suspension or termination from the YAB. Violations include unauthorized use of the UN-Habitat or YAB name, logo, or representation in any official or informal capacity, as outlined in the policy guidelines.

## **DECISION-MAKING**

1. Each of the 12 youth advisors and 3 subject matter advisors has one vote on YAB decisions.
2. Mentor advisors participate in discussions but do not vote.

## **CHANGES TO TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. Changes can only be made by UN-Habitat in consultation with the YAB.
2. Recommendations for changes may be submitted to UN-Habitat for review.