



ECOSOC
YOUTH FORUM

YOUTH2030

Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

"COVID-19 recovery: Youth taking action for a sustainable future"

CONCEPT NOTE

REGIONAL SESSION ON "COVID-19 RECOVERY: YOUTH IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC TAKING ACTION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE"

20 April 2022, 8:00 PM – 9:30 PM

IDENTIFICATION	
SDG/theme or Region	SDGs 4, 5, 14, 15 and 17/ Asia and the Pacific
Session co-lead UN	ESCAP
Session co-lead Youth	Asia-Pacific Youth Caucus, UN Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY)
Session co-organizers (both UN and Youth)	ILO, ITC, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNV ARROW, Asia-Pacific Youth Environment Caucus – Children and Youth Major Group of UNEP, AsiaTV Studios, IYC4Peace Initiative (International Youth Centre Kuala Lumpur), YPEER, YouthLEAD
BACKGROUND & KEY ISSUES	
Asia and the Pacific is home to the majority of the world's young people, with around 700 million youth aged between the ages of 15 and 24 years. Young people are critical for the region's current and future	

economic and social development, yet the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a serious toll on their well-being and development. Compared to other population groups, the impact of COVID-19 on their morbidity and mortality was less severe. However, children and young people have been hit at many fronts, socio-economically, through severe disruptions to their jobs and employment opportunities; their education, training and learning have been disrupted; and their personal and social life has been shattered at a crucial age, negatively affecting their mental health. The pandemic has also tested and derailed progress in gender equality, disproportionately affecting girls and young women's rights and opportunities. Furthermore, the Asia-Pacific region is also one of the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, with land and marine degradation, biodiversity loss, also impacting the lives and ability to grow, develop and survive of young generations. The impact of the pandemic has also affected progress in these areas. The UN Decades of Ocean Science and Family Farming are two opportunities for young people to actively engage in protecting ocean and land resources as we move into the post-pandemic era.

As countries bounce back from COVID-19, it will be necessary to reimagine youth-adult relationships in development. To advance and deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals meaningfully and effectively, it will be crucial to create enabling and supportive ecosystems that provide opportunities for young people to be fully involved in shaping, developing, and implementing policies, strategies and interventions. Health and well-being needs should be addressed. Education, training and learning must be tailored to the requirements of youth, with technology being used in equitable terms. Furthermore, targeted and effective investments are needed to enhance the labour market prospects of young people, including through effective training initiatives and support to enterprises, jobs and incomes.

The Asia-Pacific Regional Session will explore the significant role that young people play, including volunteering, in ensuring a meaningful, inclusive and sustainable COVID-19 recovery, highlighting the necessity to treat them as equal partners in development, mobilize their talent and harness their potential and skills in innovation, technology, job creation, to boost the economies and advance social and environmental progress. The event will present key trends and challenges faced by young people, such as lack of decent work and productive employment opportunities, gender disparity, education, social and political exclusion, access to resources, and digital divide and will shed light on the importance of youth empowerment and partnerships to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized.

By presenting key recommendations from young people in all their diversity across the region, best practices and transformative pathways for youth empowerment and participation in governance, it will celebrate young people leaderships and their agency as agents of change.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

- To ensure that the interests of young people are meaningfully included in setting, transforming, and implementing the regional agenda on sustainable development, with specific reference to the ECOSOC Youth Forum, and the HLPF 2022 processes.
- To explore the role youth play in building back better from COVID-19 and how this can be leveraged to achieve the SDGs.

- To assess the progress, gaps and challenges related to achieving the SDGs slated for in-depth review - SDG 4, 5, 14, 15 and 17 - from a youth perspective, as well as address structural and systemic barriers to youth inclusion as partners to address these SDGs.
- To share the inclusive Youth Call to Action developed at Asia-Pacific regional, subregional and national levels to inform the ECOSOC Youth Forum and HLPF in 2022.
- To promote partnership, youth volunteerism and civic participation as an efficient mechanism for community engagement to implement the 2030 Agenda and be partners in COVID-19 recovery.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Sharing of lessons learned from youth-led action on the ground to inform future action for achievement of the SDGs through a young people lens.
- Young people from all walks of life, including the ones from disadvantaged communities and marginalized groups of population, are encouraged to take part and action through volunteerism in the efforts to achieve the SDGs.
- Youth voices are amplified in the regional and global SDG review processes.
- Recommendations from the session are integrated in national policies and programmes through continued advocacy on SDGs.

APPROACH USED TO GENERATE CONCRETE CONTRIBUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The event will build on the outcomes of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) Youth Forum. A discussion involving diverse youth will identify the effective models to support an upscale youth-led action that increase opportunities and mechanisms for young people to be partners in building societal resilience and advancing SDGs in the region while building back better from COVID-19. It will lead to a series of recommendations, which will be developed to hone key messages from the region to inform the drafting of the ECOSOC Youth Forum Presidential Statement.

OVERALL STRUCTURE AND FLOW

Keynote speech followed by two sets of fireside chats, with panellists focusing respectively on SDGs 4 (Quality Education) and 5 (Gender Equality); and 14 (Life under Water) and 15 (Life on Land). The same person will moderate the two panel discussions. The moderator will anchor the session and will be a youth representative who has actively engaged in the APFSD Youth Forum.

Flow:

07:30 – 08:00

Waiting room slide show - these will be short stories contributed by youth on the work they are undertaking to implement the SDGs

08:00 – 08:07

Welcome and opening remarks (Video and speech by Youth representative) 6 minutes

08:07 – 08:15

Inspirational talk 8 minutes

08:15 – 08:18

Mentimeter: 3 minutes

08:18 – 08:20

Introduction on the 2 fireside chats by the moderator: 2 minutes

08:20 – 08:40

Fireside chat on SDG 4 and SDG 5, with SDG 17 as cross-cutting issue: 20 minutes

08:40 – 09:00

Fireside chat on SDG 14 and SDG 15, with SDG 17 as cross-cutting issue: 20 minutes

09:00 – 09:15

Moderated Q&A: 15 minutes

09:15 – 09:18

Mentimeter: 3 minutes

09:18 – 09:25

Youth Call for Action video: 3 minutes

Possibilities for youth engagement: 4 minutes

09:25 - 09:30

Closing remarks and way forward (United Nations) 5 minutes

SESSION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What were some of the major contributions of young people to combatting the COVID-19 pandemic and how can these be harnessed to support future sustainable development efforts, with specific reference to the ECOSOC Youth Forum, and HLPF 2022 processes?

2. How can youth better collaborate to ensure that the available youth convening spaces are expanded and harnessed to increase opportunities for youth to be part of policy dialogue and solution setting for the SDGs?
3. What are the main areas of progress, as well as gaps and challenges, related to achieving the SDGs slated for in-depth review - SDG 4, 5, 14, 15 and 17 - from a youth perspective, including on gender-responsive initiatives to improve education, learning, training and employment opportunities, sustainable use of ocean and land resources, and peacebuilding by and with young people?
4. What are some immediate steps that can be taken to address structural and systemic barriers to youth inclusion in sustainable development processes?

NAMES OF SESSION SPEAKERS AND MODERATOR(S)

Master of Ceremony

- Ms. **Agatha Lydia Natania**, ASEAN Youth Organization / Asia- Pacific Youth Caucus, Major Group for Children and Youth

Welcome and opening remarks:

- Ms. **Sharifah Norizah Syed Ahamad Kabeer**, Regional Caucus Coordinator (Asia-Pacific), Major Group for Children and Youth / IYC4Peace Initiative of International Youth Centre Kuala Lumpur

Inspirational talk:

- Mr. **Jivitesh Gupta**, Youth Volunteer, STEPS (Stepping Towards Enhancing Policy Structures) Youth network anchored by The YP Foundation

Mentimeter facilitator:

- Ms. **Eriko Yamada**, Young Professionals in Foreign Policy (YFPF) / Migration Youth and Children Platform

Fireside chats:

- Moderator: Ms. **Riju Dakal**, President, YUWA
- Panellist SDG 4: Mr. **Lepani Penijamini Vunituraga**, UNV Associate Humanitarian Affairs Officer
- Panellist SDG 5: Ms. **Jennelaine Dingalan**, UN Women Consultant, Youth Advocate, Co-Founder Daily Habi
- Panellist SDG 5: Ms. **Afruza Tanzi**, SDG Activist
- Panellist SDG 14: Mr. **Zhu Jiannan**, Chief Executive Officer, Orca Uboat
- Panellist SDG 15: Mr. **Aidil Iman Aidid**, Eco-activist and Volunteer affiliated with the Malaysian Youth Delegation
- Panellist SDG 17: Ms. **Wakana Asano**, IBM / Asia- Pacific Youth Caucus, Major Group for Children and Youth

Moderated Q&A:

- Mr. **Fsahat ul Hassan**, SAARC Youth Platform / Asia- Pacific Youth Caucus, Major Group for Children and Youth

Youth Call for Action:

- Mr. **Clarence Gio Almaite**, Children and Youth Major Group for the United Nations Environment Programme

Closing remarks:

- Mr. **Riccardo Mesiano**, Sustainable Development Officer, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

OVERVIEW OF PREPARATORY EVENT/CONSULTATION

ESCAP in collaboration with ARROW along with the regional co-conveners, YouthLead and YPEER Asia-Pacific, is organizing a Youth Forum, back-to-back to the 9th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD). Resonating the theme of the HLPF 2022 and APFSD 2022, the annual APFSD Youth Forum theme is: **“Building back better from COVID-19 while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific with young people at the forefront of SDG Action.** The forum will take into account the different and particular impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across the identified Sustainable Development Goals, and forge meaningful and inclusive youth engagement in the follow-up, review and implementation of the SDGs.

The outcomes of the APFSD Youth Forum, the APFSD Youth Call to Action, will feed into the ECOSOC Youth Forum 2022, as well as the High-Level Political Forum 2022. At the same time the outcomes of the youth forum will contribute to the APFSD intergovernmental fora outcomes, including engagements with Member States interventions. The Youth Call to Action will also contribute to national level follow-up and review with governments in respective countries. In addition, we will ensure young people representation and active participation in all these identified forums such as the ECOSOC Youth Forum, and HLPF.

SUGGESTED READING

ILO and ADB, 2020. Tackling the COVID-19 Youth Employment Crisis in Asia and the Pacific.
Available at: <https://www.adb.org/publications/covid-19-youth-employment-crisis-asia-pacific>

ILO, 2021. An update on the youth labour market impact of the COVID-19 crisis.
Available at: https://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/pubs/WCMS_795479/lang--en/index.htm

ILO, 2021. Youth employment and entrepreneurship in Asia-Pacific: Lessons for a human-centred recovery.

Available at: https://ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-jakarta/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_821343.pdf

Pacific Community, 2021. Policy Review, COVID-19 and Pacific Youth.

Available at: https://spccfpstore1.blob.core.windows.net/digitallibrary-docs/files/0f/0f1140ab0f24d6effe7c1bf5196de596.pdf?sv=2015-12-11&sr=b&sig=3fLciOvCwd2Hz86SkGYc8Q%2B8Fy%2BqElyf7jSycTF25kc%3D&se=2022-08-29T15%3A15%3A15Z&sp=r&rsc=public%2C%20max-age%3D864000%2C%20max-stale%3D86400&rsc=application%2Fpdf&rscd=inline%3B%20filename%3D%22Policy_Review_Number_1_COVID_19_and_Pacific_youth.pdf%22

UNDP, 2021. How Young Entrepreneurs in Asia-Pacific Responded to COVID-19.

Available at: <https://www.undp.org/publications/how-young-entrepreneurs-asia-pacific-responded-covid-19>

UNFPA, 2021. Youth and Covid-19 in Thailand: Socioeconomic impact of the crisis

https://thailand.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/youth_and_covid-19_summary_brief_en.pdf

Pacific Community, 2021. Policy Review, COVID-19 and Pacific Youth

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UNESCO; 2021. Situation analysis on the effects of and responses to COVID-19 on the Education Sector in Asia: Regional synthesis report.

Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379539>

UNESCO, 2021. Youth in East and Southeast Asia confront the COVID-19 pandemic: It's time we listen to them.

Available at: <https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/youth-east-and-southeast-asia-confront-covid-19-pandemic-its-time-we-listen-them>

UNESCO and UNICEF, 2021. 5-Year Progress Review of SDG 4 – Education 2030 in Asia-Pacific.

Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379173/PDF/379173eng.pdf.multi>

UNFPA, 2021. Youth and Covid-19 in Thailand: Socioeconomic impact of the crisis.

Available at: https://thailand.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/youth_and_covid-19_summary_brief_en.pdf

UNV, 2021, 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report: Building Equal and Inclusive Societies, available at <https://swvr2022.unv.org/>

UNV, Youth and Volunteering, Knowledge Portal on Volunteerism, available at <https://knowledge.unv.org/theme/youth-and-volunteering>

UNV, Volunteerism and the SDGs, Knowledge Portal on Volunteerism, available at <https://knowledge.unv.org/theme/volunteerism-and-the-sdgs>

UNV, Climate and Volunteering, Knowledge Portal on Volunteerism, available at <https://knowledge.unv.org/theme/climate-and-volunteering>

UNV, Gender and Volunteering, Knowledge Portal on Volunteerism, available at <https://knowledge.unv.org/theme/gender-and-volunteering>

UNV, Health and Volunteering, Knowledge Portal on Volunteerism, available at <https://knowledge.unv.org/theme/health-and-volunteering>