

6th Youth Forum on SDG Implementation

“Leveraging Public Governance to Promote Youth Participation for Climate Action and Building Resilience”

Background

Since 2017, the Youth Forum has established a platform to bring young people’s views, ideas, solutions, and innovations to policy discussions on issues that matter to them. The 6th Youth Forum on SDG Implementation on “Leveraging Public Governance to Promote Youth Participation for Climate Action and Building Resilience” will be co-organized by the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), with the support from its Project Office on Governance (UNPOG), and in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior and Safety of the Republic of Korea and Incheon Metropolitan City Government. The Forum will serve as a unique platform for young people to share their vision and elaborate on their substantive contributions to pursuing sustainable and resilient recovery from climate change amidst the continuing crisis. Consequently, the youth forum will be a platform to enable the youth to raise their voices and exchange ideas to accelerate SDG implementation whereby focusing on the roles of public governance.

To engage the young people in policy dialogue, the “6th Youth Forum on SDG implementation” will take place virtually on 3 November 2022.

A special youth session will be organized during the UN DESA Symposium where the winners and participants of the 6th Youth Forum will engage in a dialogue with the UN Member States and explore ways and means of promoting youth development and engagement for climate action with the view of realizing the SDGs Decade of Action. Consequently, the youth forum will be a platform to enable the youth to raise their voices and exchange ideas to accelerate SDG implementation whereby focusing on the roles of public governance for climate action. The Symposium will be attended by the Under-Secretary-General of UN DESA, ministers, and senior decision-makers from Asia and the Pacific.

Context and Substantive Focus

“My generation has largely failed until now to preserve both justice in the world and to preserve the planet. It is your generation that must make us be accountable to make sure that we don’t betray the future of humankind.” - United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres

Climate change has increased levels of uncertainty about our future. According to the United Nations’ latest World Economic Situation and Prospect Report 2022, climate change has increased the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, which may also adversely affect supply chains and cause upward pressures on prices.¹

As the impacts of climate change intensify over time, one thing has become certain: We will leave the Earth to today’s children and young people and future generations.² The world is home to 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 to 24 — the largest generation of youth in history³. Young people

¹ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/world-economic-situation-and-prospects-2022/>

² <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/youth-in-action>

³ <https://www.unfpa.org/youth-participation-leadership#readmore-expand>

are increasingly aware of the challenges and risks presented by the climate crisis and the opportunity to achieve sustainable development brought by a solution to climate change.

From gender equality to education and skills development to fighting climate change and protecting our oceans and biodiversity, young people are advocating many initiatives with creativity and commitment in response to our fast-changing world and for future generations. Young people's unprecedented global mobilization shows the massive power they possess to hold decision-makers accountable. Their message is clear: the older generation has failed, and the young will pay in full — with their very futures.⁴ Young people are not only victims of climate change. They are also valuable contributors to climate action. They are agents of change, entrepreneurs and innovators. Through education, science or technology, young people are scaling up their efforts and using their skills to accelerate climate action. Young people are advancing solutions and demanding accountability from world leaders and non-state actors, and their active involvement in building a low emission, high resilience world is now more important than ever.

The 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) is the make-or-break moment for the future of our planet. Over the past year, the increasing frequency and severity of global climate-related disasters, combined with the IPCC's warning, labeled as 'code red for humanity' by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, highlighted the imperative for ambitious and immediate climate action. Recognizing that climate change is the defining crisis of our time, and it is happening even more quickly than we feared, the [UN Secretary-General António Guterres](#) pointed out, "the climate emergency is a race we are losing, but it is a race we can win... ... let's lace up our running shoes and win the climate race for us all."⁵ He has called for a comprehensive response linked to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs Decade of Action and delivery. More efforts are needed from all actors of societies to mainstream the SDGs in their respective national development and sectoral policies.

As the UN Secretary-General highlighted in his recent report, "[Our Common Agenda](#)", "it is time to find ways to give more weight to young people's collective interests and make our systems work to safeguard their futures". This report presents his vision for the future of global cooperation, proposes solutions to address today's challenges and highlights the main areas of proposal, among them several on youth. The United Nations has been strengthening its work for and with young people worldwide. The main objective has been to engage, support and empower young people to put their ideas into action.

Strengthening local governance for climate action and building resilience at the local level

As the closest level to the people, local governments have contextual knowledge about their territories and the climate change challenges affecting them. They are more likely to accurately appreciate their local population's needs and concerns and more likely that their authority will be accepted as legitimate. Local governments are well-positioned to develop policy and programmatic solutions that best meet specific geographic, climatic, economic, and cultural conditions. Local authorities serve as a vehicle for implementing global, national and regional policies, ensuring that the mandates outlined at the global, national and regional scale are carried out and deliver meaningful results at the local scale.

Their involvement in these activities means local governments are well-positioned to steer growth towards less GHG emissions and more resilient systems. Local governments are in a good position to "provide a means of social and technical innovation that is not possible at a broader scale, ultimately providing a vehicle for learning and broader dissemination as well as lead to bottom-up diffusion of

⁴ <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/youth-in-action>

⁵ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2019-09-23/remarks-2019-climate-action-summit>

successful approaches that may influence regional, national and even international actions”.⁶ Local governments can elaborate on in-depth city resilience profiles, providing a systemic approach to the city from a multi-hazard, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder perspective, and produce actionable guidance to increase their capacity to build urban resilience for the long term.⁷

However, the lack of capacity for climate action at the local level has been a key barrier to building resilience at the local level. The current and projected impacts of global warming emphasize the urgency of strengthening the local governance systems for responding to climate change. Young people can play an important role in strengthening local governance. Yet, interactions with the elected members and other key functionaries of local governments, deliberations with the experts and practitioners, discussions with the representatives of youth organizations and reflections from the field indicate that youth participation in local governance is not happening to the desired extent.

Young people must assume an important role in local governance systems, institutions and practices. The programmes initiated and implemented by the local governments should take care of the specific needs, concerns, interests and priorities of youth from the geographical area. In addition, the local governments could utilize the youth’s competencies, dynamism, energy and skills in planning, implementing and monitoring programmes/projects. To make this happen, more and more youth should participate in local governance.

Promoting inclusive climate action and resilience building to ensure leaving no one behind

Climate change is not only an environmental issue because it is intrinsically connected to the challenges of eradicating poverty and creating an equal world. Delivering on the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement presents a unique opportunity to follow a low-carbon and climate-resilient development path that can create a more inclusive urban society, with new protections for the groups that the fossil fuel economy has historically marginalized.⁸ The ambitious climate action demanded by the Paris Agreement will not deliver the maximum positive impacts unless it is inclusive of all citizens and distributes resources and benefits equitably.

National and local governments need to understand that promoting inclusivity can build resilience and sustainable cities to ensure no one is left behind. Promoting inclusive climate action ensures engagement of a wide range of communities and stakeholders, fairness and accessibility in design and delivery, and wider benefits of action as equitably distributed as possible.

Inclusive climate action starts with a process where everyone’s voice is represented. Inclusive climate action underpins the delivery of equitable climate policies and should help to ensure that impacts are fairly distributed across the city’s population. The absence of an inclusive climate action process for climate change risks makes communities more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, especially if these communities already experience systemic exclusion — socially, economically or spatially.⁹ Vulnerability to climatic events is often higher amongst indigenous peoples, women, people with disabilities, children, youth and the elderly, especially those who face conditions of poverty, persistent

⁶ Corfee-Morlot, Jan et al (2009). Cities, Climate Change and Multilevel Governance. OECD Environmental Working Papers No. 14

⁷ UN-Habitat (2018). Guide to the City Resilience Profiling

⁸ <https://resourcecentre.c40.org/resources/inclusive-climate-action>

⁹ Markkanen, S., & Anger-Kraavi, A., 2019. Social impacts of climate change mitigation policies and their implications for inequality. Climate Policy, 19, 7.

inequality and deprivation.¹⁰

The [Paris Agreement](#) recognizes the need to put vulnerable groups at the heart of decision-making. These groups have the best understanding of what they need to overcome their vulnerabilities, and incorporating their understanding can inform and improve climate actions. However, these groups often lack the power to ensure these actions are actually implemented.¹¹ Local and regional governments are encouraged to engage a wide range of communities and stakeholders, with a particular focus on increasing the involvement of populations adversely affected by climate change and suffering from inequality, such as children, youth, women, persons with disabilities, elderly and indigenous peoples and their communities.

Fostering partnerships with the private sector for climate action and building resilience

Partnerships that seek to build inclusive, fair and resilient communities, societies and economies need to effectively engage young people along the chain of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery from future pandemics or similar challenges. The multidimensional nature of the climate risks can only be addressed by a whole-of-society, intergenerational approach that engages young people as partners and strengthens their leadership.¹² This paradigm needs to also inform the means of implementation, including financing for development, development cooperation and science, technology and innovation.

SDG 17 seeks to strengthen global partnerships to support and achieve the ambitious targets of the 2030 Agenda, bringing together national governments, the international community, civil society, the private sector and other actors. Partnerships are fundamental to creating cohesive climate action on multiple levels and catalyzing initiatives and projects that promote and build a resilient community. Partnerships, including those with the private sector, not only make business sense, but are also a necessity.

The private sector accounts for 85 per cent of all investments worldwide, represents about 75 per cent of global climate finance flows and, in developing countries, 90 per cent of people depend on private sector-generated income.¹³ In the climate change context, the private sector can be an important player in providing technology, mobilizing finances, and engaging with governments, civil society and community organizations to develop relevant policies, plans and actions. The private sector also has a key role in climate change mitigation by transforming its business practices into actions that contribute to low-emission pathways. Nonetheless, research shows that the potential offered by the private sector is not fully exploited in developing countries. Private sector investments in developing countries also tend to bypass people living in extreme poverty since it is usually directed at the formal sector.

Yet, the informal economy accounts for the majority of total employment in these countries, estimated at 85.8 per cent in Africa and 68.2 per cent in Asia and the Pacific (excluding agriculture, the percentage stands at 71.9 per cent and 59.2 per cent, respectively).¹⁴ Furthermore, the for-profit nature of private sector activities has limited its contribution to supporting community adaptation and low-emission

¹⁰ IPCC, 2018. Summary for Policymakers. In: Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impact of global warming of 1.5°C above preindustrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty.

¹¹ Swiderska, K., 2016. The Paris Agreement – a framework for local inclusion

¹² Example - [UNICEF, MGCY, UNESCAP - Guardians of the Planet, Asia Pacific Children and Youth voices on disaster risk and climate change](#)

¹³ Climate Action Network (2013). Climate Change Adaptation, and the Role of the Private Sector: Creating effective tools for private sector engagement

¹⁴ International Labour Organization (2018). Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture.

development in resource-poor contexts.¹⁵ Accordingly, there needs to be a broader discussion on how the private sector’s potential may be harnessed for climate action in developing countries, including through increased investment and climate finance for the poorest and greater engagement with the informal economy.

The ability of young people to seek out partnerships, network and build alliances, both within and between generations. They identify with and act as connectors or “mobilizers”—in person, online and in public and private spheres. There is an untapped role that young people may identify with in terms of communicating the message of climate change.¹⁶ This has big implications for SDG 17 on Partnerships and the “Leave no one behind” agenda.

Objectives

- Provide a platform for young people to engage in a dialogue on concrete governance actions to recover from climate change
- Provide an opportunity for meaningful youth engagement, consultation, collaboration, empowerment, participation and calls for climate action
- Share experiences and identify solutions to support youth in surmounting the devastating impact of climate change in their economic, social, health and education lives and bolstering their resilience to future shocks.
- Allow young people to contribute to the review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and to shaping policy recommendations.

4. Organizers

- UNPOG/DPIDG/UN DESA
- Ministry of Interior and Safety, Republic of Korea
- Incheon Metropolitan City, Republic of Korea

5. Sponsor

- Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea (ME)

6. Eligibility for Applications

Young individuals born between 1996 and 2006 are eligible to apply regardless of nationality, educational background, and residing country.

7. Forum Process

Stage	Date	Contents
1. Announcement of the 6th Youth Forum	August 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online promotion • Offline promotion
2. Preliminary Round	14 October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of PPT & Essay by team

¹⁵ Climate Action Network (2013). Climate Change Adaptation, and the Role of the Private Sector: Creating effective tools for private sector engagement

¹⁶ Asian Development Bank & Plan International UK (2018). [What’s the evidence? Youth engagement and the Sustainable Development Goals.](#)

Submission Deadline		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 people per team
3. Announcement of Shortlisted Candidates	26 October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 teams
4. Orientation	28 October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of guideline • Q&A
5. 6th Youth Forum	3 November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keynote Speech • Preliminary Round Essay Presentation • Group Discussion • Presentation of the Group Discussion Results

① Announcement of the 6th Youth Forum

- Date: August 2022

② Preliminary Round

- Submission Deadline: 14 October 2022
- Submit the following documents in groups (3 people per team)
 - Application with a short essay (maximum of 1500 words)
 - Power Point Presentation (maximum 5 slides, saved both PPT and PDF)
 - Consent to use personal information
- Email address to submit the files: Prabin.maharjan@un.org
- The submitted essays and PPTs will be evaluated by UNPOG staff.
 - 9 teams will be selected.

Theme:

“Leveraging Public Governance to Promote Youth Participation for Climate Action and Building Resilience”

- Select one topic from the three topics.
 - Theme 1: Strengthening local governance for climate action and building resilience at the local level
 - Theme 2: Promoting inclusive climate action and resilience building and ensuring leaving no one behind
 - Theme 3: Fostering partnerships with the private sector for climate action and building resilience

③ Announcement of Shortlisted Candidates

- Date: 26 October 2022
- Shortlisted applicants will be notified individually via email.

④ Orientation

- Date and time: 28 October 2022, 3pm, virtually
- Shortlisted applicants are strongly encouraged to attend the orientation session.
- The orientation will help applicants better prepare for the Youth Forum. They will be provided an overview of the agenda and the assignment.

⑤ Youth Forum

- Date: 3 November 2022
- Format: Online
- Participants: 9 teams (27 applicants)
- The presentations and discussion during the Youth Forum will be evaluated by 3 UNPOG staff and 3UN staff of other UN agencies.
- Through the evaluation, three teams will be awarded. The first prize will be the ministerial award from MOIS, Republic of Korea. The second prize will be the ministerial prize from ME, Republic of Korea. The third prize will be the mayoral award from the Incheon Metropolitan City, Republic of Korea. The certificate of awards will be mailed to the winners. Certificate of Participation will be distributed to all the participants.

Youth Forum Agenda

Time (KST)	Agenda
13:00 – 13:25 (25 min)	Opening & Introduction
	Opening Remarks Keynote Speech
13:25 – 13:50 (25 mins)	Elevating Meaningful Youth Engagement for Climate Action and Building Resilience at the Local Level Interactive Discussion/Q&A
13:50 – 14:00	Break (10 mins)
14:00 – 15:00 (60 mins)	Preliminary Round Essay Presentation (9 teams – 6 mins each)
15:00 – 16:30 (90 mins)	Group Discussion
16:30 – 17:00 (30 mins)	Resolution Paper Presentation (3 groups – 10 mins each)
17:00 – 17:10	Break (10 mins)
17:10 – 17:35 (25 mins)	Accelerating Experimentation to Elevating Grassroot Solutions for Climate Action and Building Resilience Interactive Discussion/Q&A
17:35 – 17:45 (10 mins)	Announcement of Awards Winners
17:45 – 17:50 (5 mins)	Closing Remarks & Group Photo

⑥ Youth Session during the Regional Symposium 2022

- Date: 22, November 2022
- Venue: Convensia, Incheon, Republic of Korea
- Participants: The winners of the Youth Forum
- Domestic winners will be invited to join the Youth Session in person, and the international winners will be invited to virtually.

Contact Information

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