4th Youth Forum on SDG Implementation

"Empowering the Youth to Build Resilience in Society – in the Context of Pursuing Sustainable and Resilient Recovery from COVID-19"

20 November 2020
Via Zoom

1. Background

Today, there are 1.2 billion young people aged 15 to 24 years, accounting for 16 per cent of the global population.[1] Projections suggest that the youth cohort in sub-Saharan Africa will continue to grow and will likely represent almost 30 per cent of the world's youth by 2050, up from 18 per cent in 2020 and almost 22 per cent in 2030.[2] Africa is the only region where the youth will continue to grow in the foreseeable future, presenting both an opportunity to reap the demographic dividend[3] and a big challenge to social cohesion as well as massive migration in search of opportunities if appropriate policies are not implemented to harness the dividend.[4] Youth are both a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development, and technological innovation. Failure to foster youth development inclusively or fulfill young people's rights can lead to inequalities with long-term economic and social consequences.

Far from being mere beneficiaries of the 2030 Agenda, young people have been active participants in its development and continue to be engaged in the processes of SDG implementation, follow-up, and review. The active engagement of youth in sustainable development efforts is central to achieving sustainable, inclusive, and stable societies and to addressing multi-faceted challenges to sustainable development, including the impacts of unemployment, poverty, gender inequality, climate change, disaster risk, and public health emergencies.

The United Nations has long recognized that the knowledge, talents, ideas, and enthusiasm of young people are vital for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. The Report of the UN Secretary-General on Youth and Peace and Security present two main challenges for the youth participation – i) opportunities for young people's political participation are still inadequate, and ii) structural barriers limit the participation of young people and their capacity to influence decision-making and insufficient investment in

[1] United Nations, World Population Prospects 2017, https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/
[2] (2019c). World Population Prospects 2019 — Volume II: Demographic Profiles. Produced by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. Sales No. E.20.XIII.8. Available at https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2019_Volume-II-Demographic-Profiles.pdf.
[3] Demographic dividend, as defined by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) means "the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure, mainly when the share of the working-age population (15 to 64) is larger than the non-working-age share of the population (14 and younger, and 65 and older)". In other words, it is "a boost in economic productivity that occurs when there are growing numbers of people in the workforce relative to the number of dependents." http://www.unfpa.org/demographic-dividend
[4] ILO. Global Employment Trends for Youth: Africa. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_737670.pdf

facilitating their inclusion, in particular through education (S/2020/167)[5].

Before COVID-19, youth were already three times more likely to be unemployed; one in five young people were shut out of education, training, or employment, and one in four-faced violence or conflict; and 126 million young workers were in extreme and moderate poverty worldwide (International Labour Organization, 2020)[6]. The COVID-19 pandemic and its economic and social impacts have disrupted nearly all aspects of life for all groups in society. For young people, the COVID-19 crisis poses considerable challenges in education, employment and disposable income, and even mental health. The COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and inequalities experienced by the youth, all further amplified in humanitarian contexts where fragility, conflict, and emergencies have undermined institutional capacity and limited access to services.

Notwithstanding limited strides in youth empowerment, young people continue to suffer disproportionately from conflict, poverty, and now the most severe effects of COVID-19. United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres sounded alarms about the acute impacts young people around the globe are feeling amid the virus outbreak, from job losses to family stress, mental health, and other hardships.[7] The increase in unemployment as a result of COVID-19 is expected to exceed the rise in rates of unemployment in the aftermath of the 2009 global financial crisis.[8] Secretary-General voiced that "the world cannot afford a lost generation of youth, their lives set back by COVID-19 and their voices stifled by a lack of participation."[9] Member States must address such challenges, beginning with support for young people's participation, organizations, and initiatives, protecting civic spaces and committing to emerge from the COVID-19 crisis with a massive boost in investment in young people to pursue sustainable and resilient recovery from the pandemic.

The impacts of COVID-19 are, and will continue to be, felt most harshly by young people already living in difficult and disadvantaged circumstances.[10] Moreover, while the youth and future generations will shoulder much of the long-term economic and social consequences of the crisis, their rights and well-being may be neglected due to short-term policy considerations.

An inclusive response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic requires an integrated approach to public governance, which could effectively address the impact of response and recovery measures across different age cohorts. In particular, to create an enabling ecosystem to empower youth, government institutions should collaborate with the private sector, CSOs, ICT sector, and other stakeholders. To avoid exacerbating intergenerational inequalities and to involve young people in building resilience in society, governments need to develop an effective governance mechanism. "Building better" requires decision-makers to acknowledge

[5] https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2020/167&Lang=E
[6] International Labour Organization (2020). Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020. Available from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/--- publ/documents/publication/wcms_737648.pdf.
[7] https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sc14170.doc.htm
[8] https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2020/05/PB_67.pdf
[9] https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sc14170.doc.htm.
[10] Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action (2020). COVID-19: Working with and for young people

generational divides and address them decisively to leave no one behind.[11]

It is critical to empower youth to engage with the local and national government for inclusive information-sharing, engage in monitoring and evaluating COVID-19 responses, engage in delivering responses to COVID-19, and tackling the spread of inaccurate information, debunking myths, and confronting stigma.[12] Only by instituting a mechanism to engage young people can the government truly facilitate dialogues with the youth and support them in addressing their specific needs. Meanwhile, the government can create an enabling environment for encouraging the youth to co-design and co-create inclusive government services for vulnerable groups while pursuing sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID-19.

In the wake of the outbreak of COVID-19, many activities such as healthcare, education, and work have been forced to be converted online, and the society has become more dependent on the ICT and digital government systems. Subsequently, there has been a big surge in use and demands on ICT digital government services, which has accelerated the pace of digital transformation. Digital transformation enables organizations to put in place seamless business continuity plans for times and crises, which would create a minimum impact of their business-as-usual operations and facilitated remote work and collaboration.[13] In building resilient societies to recover from COVID-19, it is also crucial to acknowledge the important role of youth in accelerating digital transformation as young people are better equipped with ICT knowledge and expertise. On the other hand, ICTs and frontier technologies, in particular, can further empower young people in mitigating the negative socio-economic impacts of the pandemic.

Recognizing the capacities of the youth as an important stakeholder in the recovery from COVID-19, if empowered, youth can: participate systematically through consultations and knowledge-sharing, involved in decision-making processes at all levels, including budget allocations, and engaged in the implementation of response measures[14]; assess the impact of COVID-19 on their communities by leveraging digital tools to build resilience in societies against future shocks and disasters; engage in responses to COVID-19 as health workers, advocates, volunteers, scientists, social entrepreneurs, and innovators and others.

Against this background, 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, are co-organizing 4th Youth Forum on SDG Implementation on *"Empowering*

[11] OECD (2020). Youth and COVID-19: Response, recovery and resilience
[12] Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action (2020). COVID-19: Working with and for young people
[13] KPMG. COVID-19 as accelerator for digital transformation and the rise of gig economy. https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/sa/pdf/2020/covid-19-as-accelerator-of-digital-transformation-and-the-gig-economy.pdf
[14] Ibid.

the Youth to Build Resilience in Society – in the Context of Pursuing Sustainable and Resilient Recovery from COVID-19". The Forum will serve as a unique platform for young people to share their vision and to elaborate their substantive contributions in pursuing sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID-19. 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.

2. Objectives

Within the theme of "Empowering the youth to build resilience in society – in the context of pursuing sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID-19," the Youth Forum seeks to:

- Provide a space for discussion on the importance of young people and formulate recommendations to advance the youth development agenda for potential inclusion in key processes and frameworks such as the COVID-19 recovery
- Facilitate active engagement of youth in the discussion of empowerment of youth to build resilience society in the post-COVID era
- Build the capacity of, and support, youth to engage in COVID-19 response coordination with other actors
- Incubate new ideas on the roles of youth and governments in combating COVID-19 and building back better
- Foster youth engagement in SDG implementation
- Expand UNPOG's contribution and partnerships for promoting the SDGs

3. Expected Outcomes

It is expected that by the end of the Youth Forum, participants will have an enhanced understanding of:

- The role of youth for sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19
- The impact of COVID-19 on their communities and how to leverage digital tools to build resilience in societies against future shocks and disasters
- Facilitating partnerships with various stakeholders in delivering responses to COVID-19
- The significance in combatting myths, rumors, fear, and the spread of stigma
- The process in which young people are engaged in and are leading on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

4. Eligibility for Application

Young individuals born between 1994 and 2004, residing in the Republic of Korea, are eligible to apply regardless of nationality and educational background.

5. Forum Process



① Preliminary Round

- Submit the following documents to jihyun.joung@un.org by **6 November 2020**.
  - Application with a short essay (maximum of 1500 words)
  - PowerPoint Presentation (maximum five slides, saved as both PDF and PPT)
  - Consent to use personal information
- Successful applicants will be notified on 10 November 2020

Theme:

Empowering the youth to build resilience in society – in the context of pursuing sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID-19

Essay Guiding Question

Propose a policy or government program which engages youth for building resilience in society.

- Identify challenges in current public governance framework to implement the proposal successfully.
- How will the youth and other marginalized groups be engaged?
- What types of partnerships would be helpful for continued success and in what ways? (NGOs, NPOs, CSOs, local/national government, private sector, etc.)

② Orientation Session

- Date: November 13, 2020, 13:00 – 14:00 pm (KST)
- Venue: Online Platform (Zoom)
- The Orientation Session will be attended by the 15 selected participants and six judges.
- The Orientation Session will include introductions of participants, followed by detailed instructions to further prepare for the Youth Forum Session.

③ Participation in the Youth Forum Session

- Date: 20 November 2020, 13:00 – 16:00 pm (KST)
- Venue: Online Platform (Zoom)

- The Youth Forum Session will include lectures and group discussions, followed by an interactive dialogue session.
- After an evaluation process, nine participants will be awarded with ministerial and mayoral awards.
- Among the nine selected participants, the candidate with the highest points will receive the opportunity to speak at the Regional Symposium, scheduled to be held 24 – 26 November 2020.

6. Evaluation

- **Preliminary Round:** Essay and PPT (70 points)
- **Youth Forum:** Group Discussion (30 points)

7. Awards

- Ministerial awards by the Minister of the Interior and Safety, Republic of Korea
- Ministerial awards by the Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea
- Mayoral awards by the Mayor of Incheon Metropolitan City, Republic of Korea

8. Organizers

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

9. Sponsors

- Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea

10. Contact Information

- Ms. Jenny Joung
  jihyun.joung@un.org (070-4230-7337)

11. Draft Agenda

Time (KST)	Agenda
13:00 – 13:25 pm (25 mins.)	**Opening & Introduction**
	Opening Remarks • **Mr. Bokyun Shim**, Head, United Nations Project Office on Governance, DPIDG/UN DESA (5 mins.) • **Mr. Sangsoo Yoon**, Ambassador for International Relations, Incheon Metropolitan City (5 mins.) **TBC** **Keynote Speech** • **Mr. Sanjaya Bhatia,** Head of Office, UNDRR ONEA&GETI, Incheon, Republic of Korea (15 mins.)
13:25 – 13:45pm (20 mins.)	**Empowering the Youth to Build Resilience in Society – in the Context of Pursuing Sustainable and Resilient Recovery from COVID-19**

	Preparing Youth for Sustainable and Resilient Recovery from the COVID-19 • **Ms. Natalie Mukundane Kyamutetera**, Executive Chairperson, African Youth Commission (15 mins.) **Interactive Discussion/Q&A** (5 mins.)
13:45 – 13:55 pm (10 mins.)	**Break**
13:55 – 14:00 pm (5 mins.)	**Introduction to Break-out Session**
14:00 – 14:50 pm (50 mins.)	**Break-out Session** • Three groups of five participants • Two judges per group
14:50 – 14:55 pm (5 mins.)	**Break**
14:55 – 15:15 pm (20 mins.)	**Empowering the Youth to Build Resilience in Society – in the Context of Pursuing Sustainable and Resilient Recovery from COVID-19** ***Engaging Youth in Leveraging Digital Tools to Build Resilience in Societies Against Future Shocks and Disasters*** • **Ms. Jaewon Son**, Capacity Building Lead, Youth4IG (15 mins.) • **Interactive Discussion/Q&A** (5 mins.)
15:15 – 15:45 pm (30 mins.)	**Open Dialogue Session** • **Facilitator: Mr. Keping Yao,** Senior Governance and Public Administration Expert, UNPOG/DPIDG/UN DESA (30 mins.) **Judges Final Evaluation**
15:45 – 15:55 pm (10 mins.)	**Announcement of Awards Winners** • Ministerial awards by the Minister of the Interior and Safety, Republic of Korea (3 winners) • Ministerial awards by the Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea (3 winners) • Mayoral awards by the Mayor of Incheon Metropolitan City, Republic of Korea (3 winners)
15:55 – 16:00 pm (5 mins.)	**Closing Session** **Closing Remarks** • **Mr. Jung-taek Lim,** International Administrative Cooperation Bureau Director General, Ministry of the Interior and Safety, Republic of Korea (5 mins.)