

9th Youth Forum on SDG Implementation

“Youth as Innovators: Driving AI Solutions for Sustainable Development”

13 August 2025
13:30 – 17:00 KST, GMT+9

Context

“As Artificial Intelligence reshapes our world, young people must also be front and centre in shaping digital policies and institutions.” - United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres

Digitalization is transforming our world, offering unprecedented opportunities to accelerate sustainable development. Today’s digital technologies, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), are pivotal in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by enhancing service delivery, optimizing resource allocation, and fostering innovation. The [United Nations Roadmap for Digital Cooperation underscores](#) that AI, when aligned with the principles of sustainability and equity, can catalyse progress across all 17 SDGs. With only five years remaining to achieve the 2030 Agenda, AI holds the potential to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs. However, its development and deployment should be guided by ethical principles and inclusive perspectives to avoid deepening inequalities.¹ Youth, with their unique insights and innovative spirit, are at the forefront of shaping AI’s role in sustainable development.

The ethical development of AI must prioritize the protection and empowerment of youth, who are both key stakeholders and vulnerable users in the digital age. UNESCO’s [Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence](#) underscores the necessity of safeguarding children and young people from AI-driven harms, such as algorithmic bias, privacy violations, and exposure to misinformation, while ensuring their active participation in shaping ethical frameworks². The [UN Global Digital Compact](#) further emphasizes the need to integrate youth perspectives into AI governance, calling for inclusive dialogues and capacity-building initiatives that equip young innovators to address systemic inequalities and embed human rights principles into AI systems. By centering youth voices in ethical AI discourse, these UN frameworks aim to bridge intergenerational divides and ensure AI technologies align with the needs of future generations.

We are the AI generation, tasked with shaping a future where technology serves humanity and the planet. As highlighted in the [UN Secretary-General’s Strategy on New Technologies](#), young people—digital natives—are uniquely positioned to drive ethical AI innovation. Their creativity and adaptability are critical to ensuring that AI systems address global challenges while leaving no one behind. Youth, with their unique insights and innovative spirit, are at the forefront of shaping AI’s role in sustainable development.

Against this backdrop and guided by the [UN Youth Strategy](#)³, the United Nations Project on Governance (UNPOG), under the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS) and Incheon Metropolitan City, with support of the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea, will organise the 9th Youth Forum on “Youth as Innovators:

¹ UNESCO (2024). [Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence](#)

² <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/11/1106612>

³ UN Youth Strategy 2030 calls for empowering young people with technical and leadership skills.

Driving AI Solutions for Sustainable Development” virtually on 13 August 2025 at 13:30 – 17:00 Seoul, GMT+9. The Forum will serve as a platform for youth to lead discussions on AI’s role in achieving the SDGs.

Substantive Scope

AI is revolutionizing public administration by enhancing policymaking, governance, and operational efficiency, while enabling innovative and efficient approaches across various sectors. By embracing AI technologies and fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration, government agencies can unlock new opportunities for efficiency, effectiveness, and citizen empowerment, thereby accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The forum will explore the transformative potential of AI in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs, with a particular focus on youth-led innovation. It will place special emphasis on SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, recognizing the transformative potential of AI in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

SDG 16 stresses the need for strong institutions that are built on respect for human rights, effective rule of law, and good governance at all levels. It is arguably one of the most ambitious goals in the 2030 Agenda because it is also an enabler for the achievement of other goals. Trends show that SDG 16 is not likely to be met by 2030, and that there is even regression on some targets.⁴ There is a clear need to strengthen public institutions and confidence and trust in them. Youth-led AI innovations can strengthen public institutions by enhancing transparency and civic participation. By leveraging AI solutions, youth can contribute to building effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels in support of the SDGs. AI-powered platforms can analyse public feedback to improve service delivery, fostering trust in institutions.

In line with the UN Digital Global Compact and UNESCO’s Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, ethical AI governance is central to public sector innovation by ensuring that AI applications mitigate biases, promote transparency, and safeguard human rights. Youth involvement is critical as their fresh perspectives and technical acumen foster the development of robust ethical standards that enhance civic participation and trust in public institutions. As digital innovators, they can design fairness-aware models, open-source auditing platforms, and explainable AI systems that detect discriminatory patterns while ensuring accountability, traceability, and human oversight. This approach paves the way for resilient institutions that align digital advancements with the broader goals of social justice and equity. The forum aims to bring together these forward-thinking young innovators, to develop, promote, and implement ethical AI practices while maintaining public trust in institutions.

Furthermore, the forum will facilitate capacity-building, knowledge exchange, and networking among young innovators from diverse regions, including Asia and the Pacific, East Africa, and beyond. Through interactive sessions, participants will have the opportunity to share innovative practices and solutions, ultimately fostering a vibrant ecosystem where digital transformation meets sustainable development.

Objectives

The 9th Youth Forum on SDG Implementation aims to bring together youths from Asia and the Pacific, East Africa, and beyond to:

- Equip young people with the knowledge, skills, and platforms to harness AI for sustainable development.
- Provide a platform for young innovators to present AI-driven ideas and projects that contribute

⁴ [UN DESA SDG 16 Conference Report 2024](#)

to the SDGs.

- Ensure that young people's perspectives are integrated into global discussions on AI and the SDGs.
- Encourage youth leadership in reimagining public institutions through the lens of AI and digital governance.
- Promote ethical AI innovation by integrating principles of transparency, fairness, and accountability into youth-led projects, in alignment with UN ethical standards.

Expected Outcomes

The Forum is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

- Participants will gain a deeper understanding of how AI can be leveraged to address sustainable development challenges, particularly in the context of SDG 16.
- The Ideas for Change Contest will showcase innovative AI-driven initiatives that will inspire further action and collaboration.
- Interactive discussions and expert insights will inspire and equip youth to take concrete steps toward implementing AI solutions for the SDGs in their local contexts.
- The forum will raise awareness about the role of AI in achieving the SDGs and underscore the importance of youth engagement in this process.
- Participants will increase their awareness and understanding of the ethical considerations and governance frameworks necessary for the responsible deployment of AI.
- The forum's highlights and key takeaways will also be reflected during the Youth Session of the 9th Regional Symposium.

Format

The 9th Youth Forum on SDG Implementation will be held virtually using Zoom to accommodate the young individuals participating from all over the world. The Forum will be held from 13:30 to 17:00 Seoul time (GMT+9).

The Forum will feature presentations by youth experts and leaders who will share their knowledge with participants, followed by a discussion and Q&A session to foster peer connection, idea exchange, and shared learning.

The Forum will also feature presentations from five (5) shortlisted teams of the Ideas for Change Contest, with each team allocated 8 minutes to present their ideas to the audience. The winners will be announced before the Forum concludes.

Three (3) winners will receive a certification award from the Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS), the Ministry of Environment, and Incheon Metropolitan City of the Republic of Korea. Winners will be selected fairly and openly by evaluators, with audience participation playing a role in the decision.

All participating teams will be invited to join the Youth Session of the UN DESA's Regional Symposium on 24–26 September 2025, held virtually. Additionally, the MOIS awardee winners will have the opportunity to deliver an in-person presentation of their project proposal during the Youth Session.

Note: Please read the Contest Guideline to join the contest.

Participation

Formal representation of youth and student voices is essential to achieve the implementation of the SDGs. The 9th Youth Forum on SDG Implementation will bring together young people from wide and diverse backgrounds and countries from all over the world, representing formal and informal youth entities, organisations, and groups from across regions. Young individuals between 15 through 24 are strongly encouraged to join the Forum regardless of nationality, educational background, and residing country.

Registration

- Register [here](#) by **8 August 2025** if you wish to attend the Forum only.
- If you are participating in the Ideas for Change Contest, please complete the Contest Entry Form and upload it [here](#) by **27 June 2025**.

Agenda of the Forum

13 August 2025	
Time (KST)	Agenda
13:30-13:50	Introduction and Opening Session Moderator: Mr. Prabin Maharjan , Programme Management Expert, UNPOG/DPIDG/UN DESA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Changseob Han, Head of Office, UNPOG/DPIDG/UN DESA <i>(5 mins)</i> • Mr. Yung-Suh Park, International Administrative Cooperation Bureau Director General, Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS) <i>(5 mins)</i> (TBC) • Incheon Metropolitan City <i>(5 mins)</i> (TBC)
13:50-14:05	Keynote Speech <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Felipe Paullier, Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, United Nations Youth Office <i>(15 mins)</i> (TBC)
14:05-14:10	Photo Session (Online and Offline)
14:10-14:50	Session 1: AI for Strengthening Public Institutions and Achieving SDGs Moderator: Mr. Navin Ramesh Aade , Associate Capacity Development Expert, UNPOG/DPIDG/UN DESA AI in the public sector: Opportunities and Challenges for Youth Empowerment and Engagement <i>(10 mins)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Junho Lee, Associate Expert, DPIDG/UN DESA Harnessing AI for Transparent and Accountable Governance through Youth Innovation <i>(10 mins)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Luísa Franco Machado, UN Young Leaders for Sustainable Development Goals, Digital Rights Activist and a Published Data Justice Researcher Interactive Discussion/QA <i>(15 mins)</i>
14:50-14:55 Break	

14:55-15:40	<p>Session 2: Ideas for Change Contest: Presentation from the Shortlisted Teams</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Carolit Grace Salvacion, Associate Networking and Outreach Expert, UNPOG/DPIDG/UN DESA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team 1 (8 mins) • Team 2 (8 mins) • Team 3 (8 mins) • Team 4 (8 mins) • Team 5 (8 mins)
15:40-16:10	<p>Question and Answer Session (30 mins)</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Carolit Grace Salvacion, Associate Networking and Outreach Expert, UNPOG/DPIDG/UN DESA</p>
16:00-16:05 Break	
16:10-16:50	<p>Session 3: Ethical AI Governance: Youth Pioneering Accountability and Trust in Public Institutions</p> <p>Moderator: Mr. Jin Seong Choi, Associate Research and Policy Analysis Expert, UNPOG/DPIDG/UN DESA</p> <p>Youth-led Efforts for Inclusive, Trustworthy and Ethical AI Systems (10 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Abhishek Venkateswaran, Project Officer, UNESCO Regional Office for South Asia <p>Youth Innovations for Bias Mitigation and Accountability in Public Sector (10 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Abil Sudarman, AI Ethics Activist, Indonesia <p>Interactive Discussion/QA (15 mins)</p>
16:50-16:55	<p>Announcement of Winners (5 mins)</p> <p>Moderator: Mr. Prabin Maharjan, Programme Management Expert, UNPOG/DPIDG/UN DESA</p>
16:55-17:00	<p>Closing Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Changseob Han, Head of Office, UNPOG/DPIDG/UN DESA (5 mins)

Contact information

UN DESA/DPIDG/UNPOG

Mr. Changseob Han, Head of Office, UN Project Office on Governance (UNPOG)/DPIDG/UN DESA

Mr. Prabin Maharjan, Programme Management Expert, UNPOG/DPIDG/UN DESA, prabin.maharjan@un.org

Ms. Carolit Salvacion, Associate Networking and Outreach Expert, UNPOG/DPIDG/UN DESA, carolit.salvacion@un.org

Ms. Hye Kyung (Shelley) Choi, Senior Programme Management Assistant, UNPOG/DPIDG/UN DESA, choi9@un.org