



8th Youth Forum on SDG Implementation

Empowering Young People as Digital Innovators to Realize the SDGs

Concept Note
(6 September 2024)

Introduction

The world has witnessed a growing number of global movements towards sustainability and environmental consciousness. Young people from across the globe have become more actively engaged in sustainable development and climate action, and their need to be involved and heard have become increasingly urgent.

During the 2024 ECOSOC Youth Forum, the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, highlighted that “our world is bristling with challenges, tragedies and injustice”¹ which has kept the Sustainable Development Goals way off track. He has outlined that critical consequence of these challenges and emphasised the necessity of involving young individuals to turbocharge the SDGs and reinvigorate multilateralism².

This year, 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 8th Youth Forum on SDG Implementation on **Empowering Young People as Digital Innovators to Realize the SDGs** to ensure that young people are provided with necessary support and skills to mobilise the advancement of the SDGs, and continuously give them a platform to be heard.

The 8th Youth Forum on SDG Implementation will be held **virtually via Zoom** on **6 September 2024 at 13:30 – 17:00 Seoul, GMT+9**. It will continue to include and engage young people from Asia and the Pacific, East Africa and beyond on the discussion of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and tap their potential to realise the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Objectives

The 8th Youth Forum on SDG Implementation: *Empowering Young People as Digital Innovators to Realize the SDGs* will aim to bring together youths from Asia and the Pacific, East Africa, and beyond to:

- Engage young people in meaningful discussions and encourage them to share innovative ideas and green solutions to realise the SDGs.
- Develop youth consciousness, creativity, and ability to take responsibility for their actions to promote and achieve the SDGs.
- Provide a platform for young people to be heard and bring innovative ideas and solutions to issues that matter to them.

¹ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2024-04-16/secretary-generals-remarks-the-2024-ecosoc-youth-forum-delivered>

² <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2024-04-16/secretary-generals-remarks-the-2024-ecosoc-youth-forum-delivered>



Substantive Scope

The Summit of the Future calls to include young people in meaningful global decision making³. The United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, further stated that while “truly transformative action requires all of us pulling together to drive change”, young people have greater stake in the future and offer more bold solutions⁴.

As youth are the forefront of driving innovation and sustainability, meaningful discussions and engagement with young people are essential to achieve collective action and realise the SDGs. More than ever, advocating for more participation from young people in the decision-making process has become relevant as they have the skills and ability to contribute to the advancement of the society.

To ensure that young people are equipped with essential knowledge as digital innovators and green champions for a sustainable future, the 8th Youth Forum on SDG Implementation: *Empowering Young People as Digital Innovators to Realize the SDGs* will aim to cover the topic below.

Exploring the Power of Youth in Shaping Digital and Innovative Solutions for the SDGs

Digital technologies do not exist in a vacuum and has an enormous potential for positive change⁵. For young people, these can be more than just tools but also a gateway to new horizons. It provides youth the opportunity to start new business, explore new opportunities, develop new skills and acquire new knowledge, and build global connections⁶.

The United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, emphasised the need to keep harnessing digital technologies to help deliver the SDGs to build a better world⁷. The rapid advancement of technology, including data governance, artificial intelligence (AI) acceleration, and cybersecurity, provides young people opportunities and empowers them to participate in the decision-making as they bring unique perspectives and capabilities to the conversation on digital innovation.

Growing up in a rapidly changing world, young people are more adaptable to new technologies and ideas. As active and influential users of new technology⁸, youth are natural innovators in finding solutions to today's challenges. They are considered as the driving force behind digitisation and innovation⁹, and more than ever, recognising and harnessing their potential to shape digital innovation is imperative to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and secure a sustainable future for the next generation.

Format

The 8th Youth Forum on SDG Implementation: *Empowering Young People as Digital Innovators to Realize the SDGs* will be held virtually using Zoom to accommodate the young individuals

³ <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/our-common-agenda-summit-of-the-future-what-would-it-deliver.pdf>

⁴ [Youth2030 Progress Report: 2023](#)

⁵ [Report of the Secretary-General: Roadmap for Digital Cooperation](#)

⁶ [How Digital is Transforming the Lives of Young People in Small Island Developing States](#)

⁷ [Internet Governance Forum Pivots to Global Digital Compact](#)

⁸ <https://www.unicef.org/eap/what-we-do/digital-transformation>

⁹ [Promoting Youth Participation in Decision-Making and Public Service Delivery through Harnessing Digital Technologies](#)

participating from all over the world. The Forum will be designed for 3 hours 30 minutes from 13:30 – 17:00 Seoul, GMT+9.

The first part of the Forum will invite youth experts and leaders to share their knowledge with the youth, followed by the discussion and question and answer session to allow the participants to connect with peers and share ideas and lessons learnt.

The Forum will then be followed by presentations from five (5) shortlisted teams of the Ideas for Change Contest. The prospective teams will be given 10 minutes each to deliver ideas to the audience. Announce of the winners will be made before the closing of the Forum.

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 8th Youth Forum on SDG Implementation: *Empowering Young People as Digital Innovators to Realize the SDGs*, 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 30 are strongly encouraged to join the Forum.

To register for the Youth Forum, click [here](#).

Expected Outcome

The 8th Youth Forum on SDG Implementation: *Empowering Young People as Digital Innovators to Realize the SDGs* will bring together different UN entities, youth organisations, private sectors and young individuals to build multi-stakeholder partnership to realise the SDGs. An informal summary capturing the key messages and findings during the two sessions and the presentations will also be prepared to further include youth ideas into the work of UNPOG.

The 8th Youth Forum also expects the participants to view the event as a journey that helps them realise the power that they hold to drive change on the ground within their communities and across the world.

The highlights and key takeaways of the Forum will also be reflected during the Youth Session of the 8th Regional Symposium.

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