

ECOSOC Youth Forum 2026



The ESCOSOC Youth Forum -14th to 16 April 2026 at the UN headquarters in New York.

The forum focused on transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The forum placed emphasis on Sustainable Development Goal 6 (Clean Water), 7 (Affordable and clean energy), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and 17 (Partnership for the Goals).

The forum brought together young peoples, member states, the UN system and other partners. They exchanged and showcased innovative solutions and strengthened youth engagement in accelerating progress on the SDGs. Each day focused on a different sub theme:

Day 1 (Working with and for Young People: Shaping inclusive and sustainable Solutions for the 2030 Agenda), Day 2 (The future of Multilateralism: Global Dialogue on the Road to Post-2030 Framework- virtual session for young changemakers) and Day 3: (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

Discussion of various topics, such as Leaving no one behind and Youth Mental Health and Well-being, helped to understand the state of youth well-being. Throughout the forum, the discussions pointed to solutions and renovation, and they brought energy, passion and ideas, illustrating how young people are transforming our communities.



The [President of the General Assembly and the Deputy General Secretary



The SDGs

Youth- Challenges and Concerns



Among the challenges and concerns affecting youth, Digital safety and mental health were at the top of the list.

The young people are navigating an unprecedented storm of compounding crises, conflict, climate change, forced displacement, economic insecurity, pervasive misinformation and disinformation, and deepening inequalities, which threaten the young people's ability to realise their full potential.



SOME KEY MESSAGES FROM THE YOUTH FORUM

Some Key Messages from the Youth Forum included:

- Involve youth when Policies are being developed and when they are being implemented
- Young people who are closest to challenges are also close to solutions
- The mental health of young people is produced by systems that are put in place. Such Systems must change to solve these issues
- Digital safety is a key concern for youth
- Youth are politically engaged and are reshaping politics
- Young people are not waiting for change but rising to the occasion with solutions that are transforming communities and driving change globally
- Young people are advancing sustainable industries, regional infrastructure, digital inclusion and greener cities.
- Youth leadership is indispensable to shaping inclusive policies
- Young people bring visions, courage and purpose to decision-making spaces
- We must scale up partnership and financing to support youth led solutions





Reflecting on Youth messages of concern

“WE DID NOT COME TO WATCH HISTORY. WE CAME TO WRITE IT.”



Nicole Quintero, an intern at the UN-NGO office, shares her Experience as a Young Catholic Voice

THIS IS NOT JUST A FORUM. IT IS A WAKE-UP CALL

At the ECOSOC Youth Forum 2026, I did not just listen to speeches. I witnessed something deeper: a generation refusing to be silent, a Church-rooted hope that justice is not optional, and a global truth we can no longer ignore: youth are not a “future stakeholder group.” We are present-day builders of systems, peace, and change.

MAIN MESSAGES THAT STOOD OUT FOR ME

“Nothing about us without us.”.

Youth participation cannot remain symbolic. We are done being decorative in decision-making spaces. SDGs are not abstract goals; they are lived realities. Climate, education, poverty, violence, and mental health are interconnected and urgent. Intergenerational unity is not optional; it is prophetic. The world heals when wisdom and courage walk together. Justice is not separate from faith. Dignity, care for creation, and solidarity are not ideas; they are a mission in action.



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What can no longer be overlooked

Youth voices are still often heard but not heeded. Inequality continues to decide who gets a seat at the table. Climate anxiety is rising faster than climate action. Digital spaces are powerful—but still unequal in access and opportunity. And the hardest truth: we are running out of excuses faster than we are running out of time.

THE PHRASE I WILL NOT FORGET

“We are not too young to lead. We are just the first ones brave enough to say it out loud.” FINAL MESSAGE

If the ECOSOC Youth Forum 2026 taught me anything, it is this: hope is not naïve, it is revolutionary; silence is not neutrality, it is a choice; and youth are not waiting anymore. We are moving, we are building, we are praying AND acting. “The world is not waiting for perfect leaders. It is waiting for willing ones.”

CONCLUSION

The 2026 ECOSOC Youth Forum was a space for accountability, action and influence. The youth were inspired and encouraged to continue leading, convening, defending, innovating, catalysing, facilitating, driving change, and partnering to shape our collective future. Despite the barriers and risks young people face, they are ready to be part of the decision-making processes that concern them and their future. They are ready to create connections between local and global platforms.

