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# **STUDY GUIDE**

**General Assembly Third Committee**  
Policies and Programmes Involving Youth



# Economic and Social Council

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## Commission for Social Development

Sixty-third session  
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Item 3 (b) (iii) of the provisional agenda\*

**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups: World Programme of Action for Youth**

## Policies and programmes involving youth

### Report of the Secretary-General \*\*

#### Summary

In response to Commission for Social Development resolution 61/1 on policies and programmes concerning youth [\(see E/2023/26-E/CN.5/2023/9\)](#), the Secretary-General explores in the present report the connections between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the World Programme of Action for Youth, with a particular focus on how local youth actions can accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In so doing, he underscores the importance of policy coordination and cohesion at the local and national levels to foster trust and dialogue between youth and public authorities. Drawing on input from Member States, United Nations entities and youth organizations, the report further highlights existing mechanisms and partnerships designed to strengthen policy coordination between local and national authorities in three cross-cutting areas critical for youth development: (a) investing in youth through enhanced social protection for poverty alleviation, food security and health; (b) building resilient livelihoods; and (c) fostering sustainable communities and climate action. In the report, the need to support youth engagement in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in these areas is stressed. The report concludes with recommendations for the Commission's consideration focused on improving youth engagement in policymaking; improved coherence and cross-fertilization among levels of decision-making and across stakeholder groups; and better identification of and action within the nexus points of policies and programmes that have an impact on poverty reduction, education, labour market policies and climate action.

\* E/CN.5/2025/1.

\*\* The present report was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline for technical reasons beyond the control of the submitting office.



## 1 Interesting Facts

Report on the sixty-first session of the Commission for Social Development of the United Nations the main topics and outcomes of the 2023 Youth ECOSOC forum, reiterating the urgent need for youth representation and engagement in initiatives, programmes, and policymaking regarding the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals. The document urges member-states to ensure meaningful youth participation in all matters related to the SDGs with enhanced representation and empowerment, as well as emphasizing the need for intergenerational equity and cooperation in order to properly address global challenges that all face.

## I. Introduction

In its [resolution 61/1](#), the [Commission for Social Development](#) requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its sixty-third session a report on the implementation of the resolution, to be prepared in consultation with Member States and relevant United Nations entities, as well as with youth organizations. The present report illustrates how local youth actions contribute to global progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, which is currently affected by multiple crises, including economic [instability, conflicts and declining](#) trust in public institutions. In addition, the report underlines the need to improve youth engagement in policymaking and better align local and national development policies, and to build trust between youth and public authorities.

- Section II provides an overview of the current global context and the state of youth in relation to the theme of the present report. It highlights the connections between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the [World Programme of Action for Youth](#), focusing on how local youth actions can accelerate the achievement of the Goals.

Section III focuses on three thematic areas critical to youth development:

- investing in youth: enhancing social protection for poverty alleviation, food security and health; (b) building resilient livelihoods: promoting quality education and decent work; and (c) youth as drivers of change: fostering sustainable communities and climate action. For each area, the report highlights policies and programmes advancing local youth actions for acceleration towards the Goals, based on input from Member States;<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The present report drew information from the following sources: International Labour Organization (ILO), *World Social Protection Report 2024-26: Universal Social Protection for Climate Action and a Just Transition* (Geneva, 2024); United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *International Youth Day 2023, International Youth Day 2024 and World Youth Report: Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (United Nations publication, 2018); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "Fast facts: youth as partners for the implementation of the SDGs", 2017; "Local 2030: Localizing the SDGs", available at [www.local2030.org](http://www.local2030.org); Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and UNDP, "Roadmap for localizing the SDGs: implementation and monitoring at subnational level", 2016; UN-Habitat, "Multi-level governance for SDG localization", 2022, and *Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews, Volume 1: A Comparative Analysis of Existing VLRs* (2020) and *Volume 2: Towards a New Generation of VLRs: Exploring the Local-National Link* (2021); United Nations Economist Network, "Thematic brief: social protection", 2020; *World Public Sector Report 2018: Working Together – Integration, Institutions and the Sustainable Development Goals* (United Nations publication, 2018); World Youth Report: Youth Civic Engagement – A Conceptual Framework (United Nations publication, 2016); United Nations, summary of "VNR Lab 2023", "Multi-level governance for SDG implementation: the role of VNRs and VLRs", 2023; report of the Secretary-General entitled "Our Common Agenda" (A/75/982); UNDP, Regional Bureau for Africa, "Issue brief: exploring the role of social protection in enhancing food security in Africa", July 2011; UNDP, presentation on the theme "Localizing the SDGs to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: lessons on SDG integration and multilevel governance from Kenya", 2023; Fondation Botnar and UN-Habitat, *Models and Programs for Youth's Governance and Participation in Planning: More Inclusive and Sustainable Cities* (2024); and United Nations Environment Programme, *Emissions Gap Report 2023: Broken Record – Temperatures Hit New High, Yet the World Fails to Cut Emissions* (Again) (Nairobi, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> Azerbaijan, Belarus, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cyprus, Czechia, El Salvador, Finland, Guatemala, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, the Philippines, Qatar, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovenia, Türkiye, Ukraine and Uruguay.

## 1 Interesting Facts

General Assembly Resolution 61/1 effectively encourages member states to strengthen and develop internal policies regarding the youth, ensure youthful participation in political affairs and decision making, and to align such actions with the Sustainable Development Goals.

## 1 Definition

The Commission for Social Development serves as an advisory UN entity for the Economic and Social Council that is specialized in social development affairs, such as but not limited to: youth empowerment and protection; and the fight against global widespread poverty

## 1 Did you know that...

Nearly 385 million children currently live in extreme poverty, with 19.5% of children from developing countries living below the extreme poverty. Unfortunately, it is very likely that these numbers will only continue to grow in the upcoming years due to the world's current economic instability and state, as well as other factors.

## 2 Did you know that...

The youth represents nearly 40% of the world's current refugee population, with more than 473 million children residing in areas affected by armed conflicts.

## 2 Definition

The World Programme of Action for Youth is a United Nations framework that has the objective to ensure cohesion between actions of local and international scales that address youth development. It does this by defining an agenda with 15 broad areas that all address a different type of problem faced by the modern youth.

United Nations entities<sup>3</sup> and youth-led organization members of the children and youth major group.

<sup>4</sup>Section IV provides an update on additional activities of the United Nations relating to youth development. The report concludes with recommendations in section V.

## II. Overview

### A. Local youth actions to accelerate delivery of the 2030 Agenda

5. With only five years remaining until 2030, the world is not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Multiple interlinked challenges – including escalating climate crises, economic instability, emerging conflicts and an erosion of trust in institutions – have exacerbated inequalities, disrupting progress on numerous Goals and causing regression in others. In this complex global landscape, achieving the Goals by 2030 urgently requires innovative and inclusive strategies to mobilize communities and leverage the strengths of diverse **stakeholders**.

6. There is a growing recognition that the achievement of the Goals hinges on local action. Indeed, many of the Goals directly address issues that local communities experience, such as **access to healthcare, education, clean water** and sustainable economic opportunities. Local governments and communities are often best positioned to understand and respond to challenges, as they are closest to the people and aware of their specific needs, priorities and contexts. This understanding has driven a push for Sustainable Development Goal localization, defined as “the process of adapting and customizing the SDGs and translating them into local development plans and strategies – ones that fit the needs, contexts and priorities of a particular region or locality, in coherence with national frameworks”.<sup>4</sup> By investing in inclusion, multi-stakeholder partnerships and multilevel governance, Sustainable Development Goal localization ensures that efforts are more responsive, inclusive and effective. It also fosters greater community engagement, trust and ownership of the development process.

7. **Young people are central to this equation for several reasons, including their demographic influence, their unique capacity to act as connectors and mobilizers of other groups and generations, their focus on accountability and transparency, and their drive for innovation and concrete actions.** Despite this, many youth continue to face systemic barriers in employment, health, housing, civic and political spaces.

### B. Strengthening coordination and alignment between levels of governance

8. Effectively localizing the Goals requires strong coherence and cooperation across all levels of government. **Vertical integration** ensures that local initiatives are

<sup>3</sup> ILO, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNDP, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Regional Collaboration Centre for Asia and the Pacific, the Internet Governance Forum, the Peacebuilding Fund, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

<sup>4</sup> *Inter-agency Policy Brief on Accelerating Progress on the 2030 Agenda from Local to Global Levels: the Critical Importance of SDG Localization* (United Nations publication, 2024).

#### 5 Definition

Refers to any non-governmental entity or organization that has direct influence, and/or is affected by, the UN's resolutions, actions, and stances.

#### 6 Something to think about

What are examples of effective measures taken by the UN to ensure access to healthcare, education, and clean water as a fundamental right to every human being according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? To what extent have they been effective? And how could such measures be made more effective if necessary?

#### 7 Did you know that...

Digital technologies will most likely positively impact over 70% of all SDG goals in the upcoming years, making achieving them by 2030 a much more plausible reality. Moreover, around 40% of the global youth have the necessary digital-skills to cause this positive impact, with experts claiming this percentile will rise even further as over 75% of the entire world's youth is already connected to the internet and developing strong digital-skills. Hence, making them indispensable agents for sustainable development.

#### 8 Definition

Refers to the alignment of goals between youth-led initiatives and political policies and frameworks regional and/or national scopes. All with the purpose and intention of ensuring that youth-led initiatives are supported by their local authorities and have the resources to carry out their work.

supported and amplified by regional and national frameworks, while **horizontal integration** promotes collaboration across different silos of government. Partnerships with non-State stakeholders, including young people, are essential for developing holistic solutions and adaptive strategies that effectively address today's interconnected challenges.

9. **Youth-led organizations**, which bring together diverse youth, often work across various sectors to address challenges holistically. Moreover, by pushing for **representation**, youth ensure that policies are inclusive and address the barriers that **marginalized groups face**. Their advocacy promotes **"whole-of-society" approaches** by highlighting diverse voices and needs.
10. Member States are increasingly establishing mechanisms to enhance policy coherence around the Goals. One approach is through the creation of national Sustainable Development Goal coordination councils or bodies. In some cases, such mechanisms or groups also include non-governmental stakeholders to ensure broader participation and input. When young people are absent from these groups or mechanisms, their capacity for innovation cannot be leveraged. In addition, young people's push for **intergenerational equity** and policies that address both present and future needs would be useful in these efforts to develop balanced approaches that align immediate goals with sustainable, long-term outcomes. Finally, youth participation in these mechanisms or groups can help to ensure that policies are not only coherent and aligned, but also forward-looking and adapted to emerging needs.
11. Voluntary reporting at both the national and subnational levels has also emerged as a powerful vehicle for advancing multilevel coordination and integrated planning. **National Governments are increasingly utilizing voluntary national reviews to highlight national-level advances and challenges in the implementation of the Goals and to capture the efforts of local and regional stakeholders, including youth, in support of their implementation.**
12. The voluntary local review movement has also continued to grow globally. Since the first voluntary local reviews were presented in 2018, over 300 of them have been conducted by local and regional governments. While voluntary local reviews do not have the same official status as voluntary national reviews, they play a crucial role in bringing local stakeholders, such as youth and youth-led organizations, closer to decision-making processes and strengthening multilevel governance by collecting timely, accurate and disaggregated data.
13. These mechanisms provide a valuable opportunity to strengthen youth mainstreaming across all sectors and levels of government. Many countries are establishing youth councils and caucuses at the national and subnational levels to ensure that young voices are heard in these processes. Youth engagement is reflected in the growing number of youth contributing to voluntary national reviews and voluntary local reviews in recent years.

### C. Rebuilding trust and dialogue between youth and public authorities

14. Trust between public institutions and the people they serve is crucial for sustainable development, yet concerns over transparency, accountability and the capacity of these institutions to address critical issues have led to widespread feelings of exclusion, social unrest and misinformation. Youth, especially those most marginalized, face multidimensional challenges and exhibit lower levels of trust, often due to their experiences with systemic barriers and a perceived lack of responsiveness. There is a need to rebuild trust through inclusion, protection and participation.

### 8 Definition

Refers to the collaboration between different policy areas and entities in order to address and solve interconnected problems together in an efficient and synchronized manner.

### 9 Interesting Facts

Youth-led organizations have become of such paramount significance to policies regarding youth, including within the UN itself, that the UN-Secretary General established an official umbrella framework whose main purpose is to align and ensure the UN is ever-so more ready to cooperate with the youth given the rising crises surrounding the world's modern youth. This youth strategy is called Youth2030.

### 9 Something to think about

What are effective ways of promoting diversity and how can we ensure that they surely address the barriers that marginalized groups face?

### 9 Definition

**Whole-of-society** approaches are approaches that endorse collaboration and unity between the various sectors of modern society, those being the private, public and governmental, as to properly and efficiently address common goals that haunt the society as a whole.

### 11 Something to think about

While national voluntary reviews and mechanisms alike are crucial tools that help government bodies coordinate their actions and properly direct resources wherever is needed, not all developing member-states have access to such tools. This is due to many reasons, mainly due to lack of funding, technical capacity, and the institutional foundations required to perform such studies. Therefore, is this an appropriate and efficient tool for all member-states of the Third Committee of the General Assembly? If not, what are some plausible alternatives? Or how can the Third Committee of the General Assembly make this tool accessible to all?

supported and amplified by regional and national frameworks, while horizontal integration promotes collaboration across different silos of government. Partnerships with non-State stakeholders, including young people, are essential for developing holistic solutions and adaptive strategies that effectively address today's interconnected challenges.

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#### 11 Definition

"Voluntary national reviews" refers to reports done by the member-states themselves on their individual progress in regards to the implementation and fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. Such reports typically highlight the challenges faced by member-states, and the initiatives, efforts sanctioned by them that contributed to their fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda. Moreover, as the name says, such reports are not mandatory, and member-states must submit them individually and at their will.

#### 14 Something to think about

Where do such concerns stem from? Can the United Nations General Assembly 3 mitigate the youth's feelings of unease or is that a matter outside its scope? And if yes, how so?

15. In this context, local youth actions can accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and serve as a powerful catalyst for rebuilding trust and dialogue with public authorities. When youth actively lead and participate in localizing the Goals, through either direct community action or participation in governance structures, they showcase their unique perspectives and innovative solutions.
16. Local youth actions can also open channels for dialogue and engagement with local authorities and other stakeholders, strengthening intergenerational solidarity, mutual respect and understanding. In opening such channels, youth gain a platform for voicing their concerns and priorities. When public authorities meaningfully engage with youth – recognizing and integrating their contributions – it strengthens trust and deepens their commitment to civic engagement.
17. Local governance, in turn, is strengthened by incorporating diverse perspectives, leading to more inclusive, responsive and effective approaches.

### Thematic areas

#### III. Investing in youth: enhancing social protection for poverty

##### A. alleviation, food security and health

###### Overview

#### 1.

18. Around 3.8 billion people, or 47.6 per cent of the global population, lack any form of social protection, leaving them vulnerable to economic, health and environmental shocks. Moreover, social protection coverage is highly uneven, with low-income countries having the least access. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic exacerbated these disparities, underscoring the urgent need for robust social protection systems. Beyond immediate relief, these systems are foundational for achieving longer-term development goals by providing a social protection floor and ensuring that no one is left behind.
19. Social protection measures can promote food security and health by reducing poverty and increasing household income. For example, conditional cash transfers in rural areas that encourage sustainable agricultural practices not only support income stability but also boost food security for entire communities. More direct measures can help to ensure access to affordable healthcare. Together, such measures help families and individuals to maintain good health, reduce the burden of disease and break the cycle of poverty, driving progress across multiple Sustainable Development Goals.
20. For young individuals, social protection provides a crucial safety net, helping to mitigate the risks of unemployment or underemployment, which are common challenges at the start of their careers or during the transition from education to work. Social protection not only ensures that they have short-term income security to address immediate needs, but also provides the resources required to pursue education and training opportunities which are essential for their long-term economic independence. Through targeted measures, such as school-based meal programmes or youth-specific health insurance plans, young people gain access to nutritious food and healthcare, providing them with adequate security to develop. Globally, coverage of social protection for youth between 15 and 24 years of age is low, particularly in developing countries. According to ILO, only 18.6 per cent of unemployed youth receive unemployment benefits. The vast majority of youth from developing countries

<sup>3</sup> ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2020-22: Social Protection at a Crossroads – In Pursuit of a Better Future* (Geneva, 2021).

#### 15 Interesting Facts

An example of this would be the impact of youth-led NGO YES! Rwanda. In an initiative aimed towards substance abuse reduction and mental health assistance, the NGO was able to reach and help over 10,000 members of the local youth and increased youth participation, estimatedly, by 35% in regional health committees and councils, ensuring that the local youth's voices are heard. Consequently, also helping the nation's fulfillment of SDG goals 3 and 16.

#### 16 Something to think about

To what extent do actions of this nature confront systemic barriers and effectively empower the youth?

#### 18 Definition

Social protection are policies and social programmes designed to establish a safety net to ensure citizens will at least be able to live under a basic standard of living in the case of unemployment, unemployability or retirement.

#### 18 Did you know that...

Roughly 69.4% of the economically active population of low-income nations completely lack any type of any form of social protection and proper welfare.

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<sup>3</sup> ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2020-22: Social Protection at a Crossroads – In Pursuit of a Better Future* (Geneva, 2021).

#### 19 Definition

'Conditional cash transfer' refers to a government-sponsored social protection programme whose objective is to relieve families in low-income economic situations of their financial burden by providing them with money if they follow certain conditions. Conditions such as, ensuring that the children in the family attend school properly.

#### 19 Interesting Facts

Due to a collaboration between UN agencies, multinational development banks and several member states of the UN General Assembly, it is expected that the conditional cash transfer programme will be able to assist more than 500 million people worldwide.

#### 20 Definition

There is an entire UN specialized agency, the International Labour Organization, that serves as a space where member-state governments may work alongside their respective national labour force to ensure lasting decent and humane working conditions, as per Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states.



are engaged in informal employment, which often lacks social protection coverage. Ultimately, investing in comprehensive social protection during young people's formative years lays the foundation for them to thrive.

21. Localizing target 1.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which focuses on implementing social protection systems for all, involves empowering local governments to deliver tailored services that meet the specific needs of their communities. Decentralizing social protection measures empowers local authorities to better address the unique challenges faced by vulnerable populations. This approach makes social protection more responsive and inclusive as it improves the delivery of services and strengthens local governance and community engagement.
22. Young people can play a crucial role in localizing target 1.3 of the Goals by actively participating in the design and implementation of social protection initiatives. By contributing innovative ideas and solutions, engaging in advocacy and serving as community mobilizers, they can help to ensure that social protection measures are effective and equitable, reaching the most vulnerable populations, including youth.
23. Ultimately, investing in comprehensive social protection during young people's formative years lays the foundation for them to thrive and fully participate in society.

#### Actions by Member States

2.

24. To achieve poverty reduction, food security and increased health, various countries have committed to integrating social protection systems for youth welfare into their national policies.
25. Brazil created its Unified Social Assistance System to support individuals facing social vulnerabilities, including poverty, food insecurity and limited access to public services, at both the national and local levels and to prevent social risks through programmes such as *Bolsa Família*. Moreover, the National Youth Council of Brazil collaborates with local organizations to ensure that youth policies are in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.
26. In Burkina Faso, the Listening and Dialogue Centres for Young People aim to improve youth socioeconomic security through extracurricular activities and socioeconomic integration, and support youth in various circumstances.
27. In the Philippines, as part of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programme (4Ps), the Youth Development Session is a school-based activity that, based on local needs, cultivates essential life skills and supports youth in making better life choices, leading to improved employability and development.
28. The Ministry of Tourism and Youth of Serbia signed a statement of intention to engage youth in policy development for the protection of mental health, with a focus on youth in 10 local communities through youth centres and spaces, health counselling and psychosocial support.
29. The National Youth Institute of Uruguay created the Ni Silencio Ni Tabú programme to promote youth mental health and psychosocial well-being throughout the country, together with UNICEF and the Ministry of Public Health, civil society partners and regional and local authorities.
30. In Czechia, the Youth Panel, established by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, is an independent body designed to support the national youth strategy and youth involvement in the decision-making process, including marginalized and vulnerable groups.

## 20 Did you know that...

In developing nations, over 77% of the youth are involved with informal employment, which totally lacks any sort of legal labour protection and social benefits, with many of the youth involved leaving school or educational institutions to fully focus on work.

## 25 Interesting Facts

The Brazilian government reports that the Bolsa Família Programme has assisted a little over 25% of Brazil's population, summing up to 48 million people, making it one of the largest conditional cash transfer programmes of the modern world. Moreover, in recent years, the programme has cost the Brazilian government 0.5% of the country's GDP, and over 82.4% of the people under the wing of the programme have reported to have eaten properly and better, as well as having less difficulties in paying their domestic bills.

31. Similarly, the SDG Youth Champions initiative of Malta selected five individuals in 2024 to advocate for one of the country's national strategic goals, which include poverty alleviation, food security and health.

#### Actions by United Nations entities

3.

32. **IOM** and **ITC** are leading efforts to address social protection. IOM collaborated with Dominica to improve access to protection-oriented services, focusing on youth and vulnerable populations.

33. Similarly, in partnership with the Gambia, ITC developed mechanisms that align local initiatives with national frameworks, ensuring that youth-focused projects are well-coordinated and effective and bridge local actions with national development plans and that young people in need of social protection benefit from comprehensive support systems. ITC, in collaboration with the European Union and the Peacebuilding Fund of the United Nations, implemented agricultural training programmes that teach young farmers sustainable farming techniques in the Gambia.

34. **UNFPA**, in collaboration with local governments, has rolled out a comprehensive sexual education programme in Timor-Leste, addressing critical health challenges such as teenage pregnancy and adolescent maternal mortality. This programme, which targets out-of-school youth, equips young people with essential health knowledge to make informed decisions.

35. UN-Habitat actively promotes localization of the Sustainable Development Goals by and for youth through a number of global programmes. The Youth 2030 Cities initiative – which operates in 10 countries in the global South – seeks to empower youth and youth-led organizations by enhancing their capacity to influence urban planning and participate in local governance. One of the most successful Youth 2030 Cities programmes has been the prioritized engagement of Indigenous youth in Otavalo, Ecuador, to protect and revive their language and cultural heritage.

36. The UN-Habitat Young Gamechangers initiative improved the health and well-being of young people in cities in Colombia, India and Senegal by actively involving them in urban governance, designing inclusive public spaces and encouraging their participation through digital platforms such as Minecraft. This approach led to the increased participation of young people in designing their own city and improving the health and well-being of its citizens.

37. UN-Women has implemented programmes that focus on food security, such as initiatives in the Pacific that emphasize gender-responsive agricultural practices. By integrating youth and women in community-based food production, UN-Women contributes to the sustainability and resilience of food systems at the local level.

38. The UN-Women Menstrual Hygiene Management initiative, in partnership with the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, focuses on improving health outcomes for young women in the Niger by raising public awareness of menstrual health and integrating menstrual hygiene management into national health policies to help young people to stay healthy, overcome social taboos confidently and be engaged in their communities.

#### Actions by youth

4.

39. Children and youth major group member organizations have implemented diverse agriculture-based projects to boost food production and household income, tackling poverty and food security issues.

40. In Nigeria and Ghana, Girls Power Green Economy and Climate Change Education implemented smart agriculture training programmes and invested in young

32

#### Definition

The International Organization for Migration is a specialized UN agency responsible for migration affairs within the UN. Its purpose is to ensure that member-states are providing and able to provide safe and organized migration processes to foreign citizens. It also serves as an advisory entity to the governments of member-states by helping them write and enact adequate migration laws and policies.

32

#### Definition

The International Trade Center is a joint agency from both the UN and the World Trade Organization whose purpose is to assist small corporations/companies operating in developing nations to be better integrated into the global market. It is also important to note that the ITC, although heavily linked with it, is not effectively part of the UN itself.

34

#### Definition

The United Nations Population Fund is a specialized UN agency responsible for ensuring that member-states are capable of providing safe child-birth procedures to their respective female population and proper sexual education to the youth. It also plays a crucial role in the fight for gender equality regarding sexual practices and child-birth, as well as the fight against harmful and dangerous practices such as child marriage and child pregnancies.

35

#### Did you know that...

Recent studies have shown that a little over 90% of Gen Z has demonstrated interest in cities that are more prone to walking as a pedestrian

36

#### Something to think about

Given that over 90% of young adults aged 16-24 have the habit to regularly play video games, should they be incorporated into projects, programmes and initiatives to make them more attractive to the youth?

entrepreneurs' agribusinesses. Skynok and the Hephzibah Beulah Initiative in Nigeria leveraged new technology to boost yields and cut costs for young farmers, engaging local leaders to tailor solutions to specific agricultural challenges. In Ghana, the University for Development Studies engaged over 9,000 students in practical agricultural challenges through its field practical training programme.

41. In Egypt, the National Youth Council collaborated with the Egyptian Food Bank to organize food security conferences. The International Organization for the Oneness of the Arab Peoples and Youth 4 Global Goals (Youth4GG) amplified youth voices by conducting workshops in Somalia. Youth Building the Future Global in Mexico and the Agape Earth Coalition in Botswana organized conferences and encouraged dialogue between different stakeholders.

42. YES! Rwanda partnered with the World Health Organization on **substance abuse reduction**, while Girl Power implemented a social health insurance fund. In India, Huesofthemind Mental Wellbeing Foundation hosted mental health workshops and advocated for policy changes supporting underrepresented youth in the global South.

43. In Burundi, the Initiative de promotion de l'éducation des Batwa pour le développement durable supported youth-led poverty alleviation and food security projects within the Batwa community. Plant for the Planet Côte d'Ivoire employed 15,000 youth in urban clean-up. The Mathare Roots Initiative in Kenya works on the development and maintenance of Mathare Community Park, a community library and skills training programmes.

## B. Building resilient livelihoods: promoting quality education and decent work

### Overview

#### 1.

44. The need to build resilient livelihoods<sup>6</sup> is heightened by interconnected crises, including economic inequality, climate change and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

45. **Resilient livelihoods** are critical to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals, especially for youth, who are often disproportionately affected by these crises and lack the resources to recover, deepening cycles of poverty and inequality. Youth face higher unemployment rates: they are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults (13 per cent v. 3.7 per cent). Working poverty also disproportionately affects youth: they are twice as likely as adults to be in working poverty. Lastly, the global net in employment, education or training rate among young people was 21.7 per cent in 2023, going back to the 2015 rate, and a notable decrease from 23.8 per cent in 2020. At the local level, strengthening resilient livelihoods is key to reducing vulnerability, promoting economic stability and achieving sustainable communities.

46. Young people play a crucial role in shaping resilient livelihoods, yet they often face significant barriers to achieving stability and security in their own lives. Youth unemployment rates remain high around the world, while many young people are **trapped in precarious or informal work that lacks social protection and rights**. This situation is particularly pronounced in developing regions, where opportunities for quality education and decent work are often limited. Young people from marginalized communities often face additional barriers due to discrimination. Addressing these

<sup>6</sup> ILO defines resilient livelihoods as livelihoods that can withstand shocks and stresses and adapt to changes, while providing individuals and communities with sustainable well-being, economic security and social protection.

#### 42

### Something to think about

Given that member-states have varying stances regarding the legality of recreational drugs, with some legalizing it to an extent and others completely prohibiting it, what are some measures and policies the GA can adopt to protect the world's youth without disrespecting a nation's decision?

#### 45

### Definition

"Resilient livelihoods" refer to the ability of individuals or communities to maintain or improve their well-being during crises by adapting to new circumstances and avoiding poverty or financial instability.

#### 46

### Did you know that...

Around 160 million children currently find themselves working in extremely precarious work environments. However, experts assume that such a number is probably much bigger.

challenges is essential to both harness the potential of youth as agents of change and to ensure that no one is left behind.

47. Quality education and decent work are foundational building blocks for resilient livelihoods, especially for youth. They must provide all youth, including young women, youth with disabilities and youth in rural settings, with robust digital skills, as these play a critical role in sustainable development. Among other things, digitalization helps local governments to innovate and become more efficient in service delivery. With a profound impact across economic, social and environmental dimensions, digital technologies and data contribute to at least 70 per cent of the 169 targets of the Sustainable Development Goals while potentially reducing the cost of achieving them by up to \$55 trillion. Thus, a population with digital skills can effectively accelerate local sustainable development.

48. Young people are leading the way in digital adoption and innovation, with 75 per cent of those between 15 and 24 years of age using the Internet in 2022, a higher percentage than any other age group. However, significant disparities persist, especially in low-income countries and communities and among youth with disabilities, as well as young women, who often face greater barriers to accessing the Internet and developing digital skills compared with their male counterparts. Despite these obstacles, youth are widely regarded as "digital natives", using technology to drive change and create solutions to challenges faced by their communities. Their role in fostering digital innovation is vital for addressing global challenges in ways that are adapted to local contexts.

49. Quality education must also support the shift towards an environmentally sustainable and climate-friendly world. A successful transition towards a greener world depends on the development of green skills: the knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes needed to live in, develop and support a resource-efficient society. Ensuring that youth in their local communities have the skills to navigate and leverage the green transition and build resilience from the ground up will significantly contribute to sustainability. For that to happen, green skills, essential to the green economy, must be at the core of young people's education, employment and everyday lives. A green transition will result in the creation of 8.4 million jobs for young people by 2030. However, if current trends persist, by 2030 more than 60 per cent of young people may lack the skills required to thrive in the green economy.<sup>7</sup> A lack of alignment of skills and education policies with environmental and green economy policies poses roadblocks for young people seeking to prosper within the green economy.

50. Decent work – including fair wages, safe working conditions and social protection – provides the economic stability needed to build resilience against shocks. Access to quality education enhances employability and opens doors to better job opportunities. Conversely, decent work allows individuals to invest in their education and lifelong learning. Together, these pillars both strengthen youth development and empower young people to contribute to the achievement of the Goals.

#### Actions by Member States

## 2.

51. With regard to education, El Salvador conducted a comprehensive reform and implemented specialized programmes to promote access to education. The reform guarantees access to free education at all levels and access to digital tools through the public education system. In addition, the country's *Signe Estudiando* programme provides students with access to secondary or higher studies by offering loans both domestically and internationally.

<sup>7</sup> ILO, "Ramboji joins forces with UN-led Green Jobs for Youth Pact to build skills urgently needed for the low carbon economy", 23 September 2024.

## 47 Something to think about

Given the importance of digital skills and the access to the internet per se in the modern world, what are some ways that the UN can effectively, and realistically, ensure that the youth in rural areas have proper access to the internet?

## 48 Interesting Facts

In some developing nations, only about 10% of young women and girls have proper access to the internet, and an even smaller percentile have proper digital skills. Whilst about 22% of their male counterparts have proper access to the internet and are connected on-line.

52. Guatemala is addressing access to education by ensuring quality education in rural and urban areas, including improving infrastructure and access to education in more remote areas, especially in rural areas, to cultivate opportunities for youth. Similarly, in Senegal, the Programme d'amélioration de la qualité, de l'équité et de la transparence focused on the inclusion of vulnerable youth, including youth with disabilities, in schools, including in rural and underprivileged areas.

53. Senegal has also taken steps to improve the digitalization of education, including supplying schools with equipment (e.g. computers) and providing updated training to teachers.

54. Member States such as Senegal, Qatar and Ukraine have focused their efforts on youth entrepreneurship. Senegal has created incubators and accelerators to support youth start-ups and other innovative projects focused on the Sustainable Development Goals, providing financial support and mentoring to young entrepreneurs. In Ukraine, the Youth Worker programme cultivates opportunities for youth in aspects of creative personal development, self-improvement, leadership skills, career counselling and youth entrepreneurship. The Ministry of Social Development and Family of Qatar similarly supports youth entrepreneurship by providing services such as training programmes in technical and craft skills, exhibitions for small businesses, and marketing services through social media.

55. In Belarus, the State Programme for the Labour Market and Promotion of the Population's Employment 2021–2025 aims to advance youth employment by, for example, reserving employment opportunities for youth under 21 years of age and providing subsidies to unemployed youth for their self-owned businesses. In Singapore, to reconcile the difficult school-to-work transition, the Mentoring SG initiative supports youth by guiding them through major life decisions and career pathways. In Uruguay, the National Youth Institute coordinates policy development and legislative drafting with other local bodies. A recent legislative modification was focused on active youth employment policies.

### 3. Actions by United Nations entities

56. Youth engagement in policy development is crucial to ensuring that young people have a voice in shaping their futures and contributing to decision-making processes. ECLAC, in collaboration with UNICEF and the non-governmental organization América Solidaria, facilitates youth participation in policy discussions on education, employment and social protection through platforms such as the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. Such discussions enable young people to present their priorities directly to policymakers, ensuring that their needs are considered in national and regional discussions.

57. UN-Women and ILO, through the Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) project in Uganda, offer vocational training in non-traditional fields such as metal fabrication, targeting young women and refugees.

58. The UNESCO Global Skills Academy, in partnership with 25 organizations, supported 170 technical and vocational education and training institutions across 63 countries, providing 860,000 young people with vocational and digital skills to enhance their employability.

59. ECLAC has provided technical assistance to Argentina on secondary education, supported Honduras with a supply and demand plan for secondary education, and worked with Chile, Mexico and Peru on social mobility issues, addressing critical challenges influencing youth employment.

## 54 Something to think about

Given that this focus on youth entrepreneurship has already delivered great results, creating over 92,000 jobs in Senegal, 200,000 in Qatar, and 1,300 jobs in Ukraine, how can the Third Committee of the General Assembly possibly help boost these programmes? Should other member-states adopt similar initiatives?

### 54 Definition

These are programmes designed to help small businesses and their respective entrepreneurs in two different stages. Incubators are more directed towards the early-stages of business development by helping the entrepreneurs develop and refine their ideas, business model and product per se. Whilst accelerators are directed to already established and running businesses, with the objective of providing them with resources and mentorship to improve their sales and make a name for themselves in the market.

### 54 Did you know that...

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, a specialized UN agency responsible for handling trade affairs, agreements and policies within the UN, has written a policy guide regarding young entrepreneurs that serves as a guiding point to many member-states when drafting policies that affect young entrepreneurs. The document, named "Policy Guide on Youth Entrepreneurship", outlines six main recommended policy topics, such as: financial and business education; customized finances; networking support and incentives; and adequate market and business regulations. Thus, ensuring that the youth may have an opportunity to start businesses of their own and actively participate in the market.

### 56 Definition

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean is a regional UN group whose purpose and focus is to promote cooperation between Latin American and Caribbean countries in the name of regional economic and social development. The group's nature is advisory as it guides delegations from Latin America and the Caribbean when developing development policies by providing them with sensible information.

## 56 Something to think about

In many UN member-states, political, legal, and social bureaucracy can be an obstacle to the participation of young voices in policymaking and regional politics, acting as a systemic barrier for the youth. Given such reality, should the UN encourage more direct dialogues between the youth and policymakers? If so, what are some actions the UN can take and/or adopt to encourage this?

60. **ESCWA** and the Internet Governance Forum have collaborated to create Schools on Internet Governance, which focus on digital capacity-building and governance skills for youth.

61. **WIPO** has launched initiatives aimed at training youth on intellectual property rights, equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to protect their creations and leverage intellectual property tools for entrepreneurship and competitiveness.

62. Gender equality is crucial to quality education and decent work. The **UN-Women Menstrual Hygiene Management initiative** has improved access to health services for young women, enabling them to stay in school and pursue careers.

63. Similarly, UN-Women partnered with the Community Volunteers Foundation to implement the Strong Civic Space for Gender Equality project in **Türkiye**, where training on gender equality and non-violent communication is offered to break down barriers to education and employment for young women.

64. UN-Women, through its Data Visualization and Advocacy for Gender Equality Hackathon in Türkiye, encouraged youth to engage in data-driven advocacy efforts related to gender equality and employment policies to ensure that youth are positioned at the core of global social and economic progress.

65. The UNFPA project entitled "Gender transformative psychosocial support for peace and community resilience" in Hela Province, Papua New Guinea, builds youth capacity through training and cultural exchanges, helping youth to transition from coercion to employment, promoting gender equality and strengthening community cohesion.

66. The one-stop youth resource centres, located in eight cities across East Africa, Asia and Latin America, are a partnership between UN-Habitat, youth-led organizations and local governments that provide safe spaces for youth to access skills training, employment opportunities and resources in areas such as entrepreneurship, health, arts, sports and information and communications technology. The most recently established centres were in the Indigenous community of Otavalo, Ecuador, and in Mogadishu.

#### 4. Actions by youth

67. Children and youth major group member organizations are supporting Sustainable Development Goals 4 (quality education) and 8 (decent work) through innovative and varied approaches.

68. In Nigeria, Giddy2School focuses on grass-roots education through book clubs and digital literacy programmes, addressing local educational gaps; the Earth Foundation offers vocational training through its Youth Skills Development Programme; and GritinAI works to improve education and job readiness by partnering with businesses and the Government to provide practical skills development and entrepreneurial support. In addition, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network supports youth leadership development through its Own-A-School project, aligning education with career pathways to ensure that youth are prepared for employment.

69. In the Philippines, the Office of the Youth in Maritime hosts webinars and symposiums to help young seafarers to access job opportunities in the maritime industry.

70. In Chad, the Better Life Youth Association established a youth advisory council to engage youth in policy decisions, providing them with a platform to contribute to national discussions.

## 60 Definition

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia is a regional UN group whose objective is to encourage cooperation amongst member-states in Western Asia in regards to social and economic development by means of joint technological and data research, economic investments, and adoption of social/economic policies.

## 61 Definition

The World Intellectual Property Organization is a specialized UN agency that handles affairs related to the protection of Intellectual Property within the scope of the UN and its member-states. Its nature is advisory, as it helps member states to develop internal policies and measures that protect national Intellectual Property.

## 61 Something to think about

How can the Third Committee of the General Assembly effectively encourage other specialized UN agencies to take on similar initiatives of educating the youth on specific matters that might be of great help for their future careers?

## 62 Interesting Facts

1The Agreed Conclusions for the 68th UN Commission on the Status of Women, named "CSW68 Agreed Conclusions", recognizes how young women, especially in low-income member-states, are disproportionately more affected by poverty in comparison to their male counterparts. Moreover, it also encourages member-states to adopt internal policies that secure women the right to attend educational institutions and have proper access to basic hygienic products.

## 63 Did you know that...

Western Asia is pointed out to be one of the regions of the world with the biggest gender gap. Where, on average, women only represent about 19% of the workforce, contrast to the global average of 47% of female representation in the workforce.

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#### 65 Definition

The United Nations Population Fund is a specialized UN agency responsible for ensuring that member-states are capable of providing safe, child-birth procedures to their respective female population and proper sexual education to the youth. It also plays a crucial role in the fight for gender equality regarding sexual practices and child-birth, as well as the fight against harmful and dangerous practices such as child marriage and child pregnancies.

#### 65 Something to think about

To what extent are cultural exchanges and interactions effective tools for youth empowerment and development? If seen as a powerful tool, what are some measures the General Assembly, and consequently the UN, could take/adapt to ensure such exchanges happen between members of the global youth?

#### 66 Something to think about

Are youth voices from indigenous communities, regardless of their country of origin, effectively represented by the UN and their respective governments? If not, should the UN seek to empower these voices? If yes, what are policies and measures the General Assembly could adopt to ensure such?

#### 67 Definition

Grass-roots education refers to a specific type of complementary education that has a strong focus on local knowledge according to a community's culture, needs and hardships, geographic setting, and customs. It also heavily encourages the unity of the local community and independent learning.

## C. Youth as drivers of change: fostering sustainable communities and advancing climate action

### Overview

1.

71. The triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss is one of the defining challenges of today. As of 2023, carbon dioxide levels have reached record highs, with the last decade being the hottest ever recorded. Extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and severe, deepening inequalities, damaging ecosystems and displacing communities.

72. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warns that without decisive action, global temperatures could rise to catastrophic levels, further accelerating disruptions to food and water supplies. A recent United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report highlights that global greenhouse gas emissions increased by 1.2 per cent from 2021 to 2022, reaching a new record of 57.4 gigatons of carbon dioxide equivalent. The report emphasizes that without drastic increases in mitigation efforts, the world is on track for warming beyond the agreed-upon target of 1.5°C or even 2°C.

73. Young people are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. They face not only its immediate effects but also long-term consequences of environmental degradation, including health risks, economic instability and resource depletion. As climate change deepens existing inequalities, it disproportionately affects vulnerable communities, including youth, who already often lack adequate access to education, healthcare and economic opportunities. In many regions, young people are at increased risk of displacement due to climate-related disasters, while their livelihoods are threatened by shifting environmental conditions.

74. Young people are astutely aware of the catastrophic impacts of climate-induced disasters on their socioeconomic well-being. This vulnerability is compounded by young people's limited access to decision-making spaces, which makes it difficult for them to influence policies that shape their future.

75. Amid these challenges, young people are drivers of climate action. Around the world, youth-led movements and initiatives are at the forefront of advocacy for ambitious climate policies, sustainable practices and environmental justice. From organizing global climate strikes to engaging in community-based sustainability projects, young people demonstrate a deep commitment to protecting the planet and fostering sustainable communities.

76. At the local level, young people bring innovative solutions and fresh perspectives to environmental issues, leveraging digital platforms and social media to raise awareness and mobilize action in their communities. By setting a strong example and demanding accountability from their leaders, starting at the local level, young people drive progress from the bottom up and shape a more sustainable future.

77. This approach supports multiple Sustainable Development Goals at the local level by fostering resilience, social cohesion and political accountability, reducing environmental degradation and promoting sustainable resource use.

2. **Actions by Member States** 78. The Azerbaijan Youth Climate Envoys programme aligned national climate action efforts with the global Sustainable Development Goals framework. As a part of this programme, two youth delegate envoys participated in the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. At a more local level, the Baku Decides forum offered youth a

### 71 Did you know that...

In 2025, the average level of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere was 430.5 ppm, in contrast to 2023's average level of carbon dioxide, 420.0 ppm. For comparison, any levels above 350 ppm are considered to be dangerous and a hazard to human health and well-being.

### 71 Interesting Facts

Human Rights Council Resolution 53/6 recognizes that extreme weather events are a push factor for displacing communities worldwide and an immense hazard to the environment. It urges member-states to urgently act on the matter by adopting internal policies that will support displaced communities, through the establishment of social safety-nets and programmes of similar nature, and protect the local environment by encouraging sustainable practices and initiatives.

### 71 Did you know that...

Children below the age of 18 represent over 40% of the total displaced population of the world, despite only representing 29% of the entire global population.

### 72 Something to think about

What are the main causes for this radical rise of global temperature? To what extent has contributed to the rising temperatures, if they have at all?



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### 73 Interesting Facts

As a child's body is still in development and thus still very vulnerable, they are extremely prone to developing health complications and/or contracting diseases, especially in areas more affected by climate change as it exacerbates chances of children contracting fatal diseases such as malaria, dengue, and cholera. According to UNICEF, around 88% of the additional disease burden caused by climate change will fall upon children below the age of five. Moreover, as the youth are forced out of their homes due to worsening climatic conditions of catastrophic climatic events, most of them cannot continue pursuing education and leading a normal life, having to resort to informal labour.

### 75 Something to think about

To what extent are these actions effective in the fight against climate change, given that temperatures are still on the rise whilst such actions are still showing results?

central role by providing a platform to engage in climate action negotiations and work towards developing solutions.

79. The focus of Slovenia on youth for climate action is evident through several youth-led initiatives, such as Youth for Climate Justice to raise awareness and advocate for climate action. Furthermore, the country's Eco-School programme, a school-based initiative, promotes environmental awareness and practices sustainable actions in schools, such as recycling, energy conservation and sustainable gardening, in collaboration with local municipalities.

80. Cyprus, climate action has also been integrated within the education system, with the aim of empowering its youth through education and skills to advance sustainability. Cyprus established mechanisms to strengthen the coordination of local and national frameworks for the implementation of climate-oriented action. The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, through its Unit of Education for the Environment and Sustainable Development, monitors and reviews the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the integration of climate-centred education in both the formal and informal education sectors.

81. As part of its national priorities, Finland has introduced the National Youth Work and Youth Policy Programme for the period 2024–2027, which aims to strengthen youth engagement in national discussions and efforts to mitigate climate change and enhance ecological protection, as well as other aspects of the 2030 Agenda.

82. The Green Competence Programme for Youth of Türkiye, developed in collaboration with UNICEF, empowers students by training them in green skills and offering activities in four areas: (a) capacity-building of teachers and students' engagement; (b) the development of green skills laboratories; (c) dissemination and visibility; and (d) updating curricula in alignment with a green transformation.

83. Through its Programme d'appui aux initiatives des jeunes pour l'environnement, Senegal is supporting innovative youth projects focused on sustainable agriculture, renewable energy and natural resources management. This support includes financing, mentoring and networking.

### 3. Actions by United Nations entities

84. The Secretary-General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change offers practical advice, diverse youth perspectives and recommendations to advance his climate action agenda. Established a few years ago, the Group enables direct youth engagement in accelerating climate action and advancing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The current cohort, appointed in March 2023, comprises members nominated by global youth and climate-focused organizations.

85. ECA and ESCAP both emphasize the importance of engaging youth in promoting climate resilience. ECA is working to create platforms where young people can engage in entrepreneurship, showcase climate solutions and form partnerships with investors. Similarly, ESCAP has focused on empowering youth to take leadership roles in environmental protection, particularly in efforts to combat ecosystem degradation.

86. ITC and UNDP have implemented strategies that focus on reinforcing youth capacity to contribute to climate resilience. ITC works closely with local communities to promote environmentally sustainable practices, while UNDP, through partnerships with organizations such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Regional Collaboration Centre for Asia and the Pacific and UNICEF, focuses on training young leaders to engage in policy and climate initiatives. These efforts, driven by the shared goal of building climate resilience, demonstrate how young people can lead impactful local actions that align with national climate strategies.

## 84 Interesting Facts

In recent years, it has been a trend within the UN to establish Youth Advisory Groups across the many different sectors that compose the UN. Youth Advisory Groups are platforms established by the UN, whom are composed solely by members of the global youth, all appointed by UN personnel and local youth groups, whose purpose is to advise member-states in the drafting of policies and resolutions that might or will impact the global youth somehow. This is a form for the UN to ensure that young voices are effectively and actively heard within the UN.

## 85 Definition

The Economic Commission for Africa is a regional economic UN group that is specialized in the social, cultural and economic development of Africa as a whole. It does this by providing African member-states with advisory in policymaking by providing them with crucial and sensible information, as well as serving as a portal for African member-states to establish a joint and cohesive agenda of development, ensuring efficiency and unity.

## 85 Definition

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific is a regional UN group focused on promoting development in the Asia-Pacific region through means of providing advice to delegations of Asian-Pacific member-states and, much like other regional UN groups, serving as a space where Asian-Pacific nations can align their ambitions and plans in order to ensure mutual and joint development in the region. Furthermore, the ESCAP has continuously promoted youth empowerment, sustainable development and that Asian-Pacific member-states attempt to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals as much as possible.

## 85 Definition

The United Nations Development Program is a network within the UN where over 170 member-states work together in the name of mutual global development with the hopes of ending poverty and social and gender inequalities, as well as ensuring that vulnerable and marginalized communities are protected and rightfully represented.

In addition to capacity-building, both the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and UNDP prioritize involving young people in decision-making processes. By providing platforms for dialogue between youth and policymakers, these organizations are ensuring that young voices contribute to climate policies and actions. The Alliance of Civilizations, through its Intercultural Innovation Hub, supports grass-roots organizations, particularly youth-led and women-led initiatives, by providing them with the necessary resources and mentorship to effectively participate in these dialogues, strengthening youth participation and fostering collaboration between generations.

88. UN-Habitat and UNEP have established the Climate Changemakers programme, which trains young climate changemakers in the **global South**. The curriculum focuses on increasing the capacity and leadership abilities of young people to undertake climate-related community development projects.

89. Through these collaborative efforts, United Nations entities are supporting youth as central actors in shaping sustainable, resilient communities, recognizing their potential to influence climate action locally and globally as drivers of sustainable climate action at all levels.

#### 4. Actions by youth

90. Children and youth major group members promote sustainable communities and climate action through two main approaches: **capacity-building** and increased youth participation in climate-related discussions.

91. The Global Youth Leadership Development Council organized 50 climate change webinars through the United Nations Youth Leadership Development Programme, while South-North Scholars partnered with UNDP for the Solving for Humanity competition, engaging over 3,000 youth in drafting climate action strategies. In Australia, Young Women in Sustainable Development implemented workshops on policy writing and grass-roots project development. In the Congo, the Congolese Youth Biodiversity Network enhanced youth capacity in the Congo basin through international workshops on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

92. Youth participation in decision-making processes is crucial for effective climate action. In Portugal, Generation Resonance ran programmes such as one for youth environmental stewardship, involving young people in project planning with local authorities. The Collective of Young Ambassadors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo advocated for strengthening youth councils' capacities.

93. The Congolese Youth Biodiversity Network's "Youth manifesto for the preservation of the Congo basin" demonstrates youth advocacy in conservation efforts. The **Birthdays Tree Initiative**, launched by a Ugandan climate activist, encourages people to celebrate their birthdays by planting trees instead of hosting traditional parties.

## IV. United Nations youth development-related efforts

### A. United Nations Youth Strategy

94. The United Nations Youth Strategy, launched in 2018, aims to transform the Organization's work for and with youth. Six years later, the Strategy has achieved significant progress, with 58 United Nations entities and all 132 United Nations country teams involved in its implementation. Reporting on the Strategy's progress has been institutionalized across the United Nations system. Several knowledge products have been produced to support implementation, including a public-facing

### 88 Interesting Facts

The Global South is disproportionately more affected by climate change and global warming in comparison to the Global North. In Sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Asia alone, more than 33.5 million people, including children, have already been displaced from their homes due to ever-worsening climatic conditions. Experts also worry that this number will have grown to 122 million people by the end of 2030, with it only growing exponentially from 2030 onwards. Moreover, the World Health Organization has also alarmed UN member-states as it estimates that by 2030, 90% of people whose health is severely impacted due to climatic conditions are going to be children.

### 90 Definition

"Capacity-building" refers to the process of enhancing and developing skills, knowledge, resources, and abilities that individuals and communities must have in order to actively contribute to climate-related discussions and policymaking. Such enhancement typically occurs through the establishment and strengthening of public and universal educational institutions and programmes.

### 93 Something to think about

Should the UN encourage the global youth to adopt habits and cultures such as the birthday tree initiative given its long-term benefits and accessibility, due to its low cost? If so, how could the UN do that in a realistic and effective manner?

dashboard to track progress. In addition, the first interim review of the Strategy was commissioned to assess progress and lessons learned, providing concrete recommendations to accelerate implementation.

95. The Strategy's high-level steering committee, the joint working group (the technical leadership group) and its time-bound task teams have continued to ensure that the Strategy's implementation remains on track. Following the establishment of the United Nations Youth Office by the General Assembly in its [resolution 76/306](#), these governance and coordination structures for the Strategy have transitioned from the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth to the United Nations Youth Office.

## B. Economic and Social Council youth forum

96. The Economic and Social Council youth forum is a unique and vital platform for young people to engage in a dialogue with Member States and other actors to voice their views and concerns and galvanize actions to transform the world into a fairer and more sustainable place. For the first time in April 2023, the youth forum was held over three days rather than the previous two days. The third day served to gather youth input toward the Sustainable Development Goals Summit held in September 2023.

97. The first two days included interactive discussions focused on addressing the theme of the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, "Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at levels". They also allowed young people to discuss clean water and sanitation (Goal 6), affordable and clean energy (Goal 7), industry, innovation and infrastructure (Goal 9), sustainable cities and communities (Goals 11) and partnerships for the Goals (Goal 17).

98. The Economic and Social Council youth forum in 2024 also focused on preparing youth input to the Summit of the Future, held in September 2024. The 2024 discussions were guided by the overall theme of the 2024 high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Council, "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions". The discussions took place around the Goals under review at the 2024 high-level political forum: no poverty (Goal 1), zero hunger (Goal 2), climate action (Goal 13), peace, justice and strong institutions (Goal 16) and partnerships for the Goals (Goal 17). In both years, the youth forum convened several dozens of youth delegates representing their Member States as part of the youth delegate programme of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat.

For both the 2023 and 2024 youth forum, the President of the Economic and Social Council issued statements summarizing the youth recommendations generated during the discussions. Several recommendations touched on local youth actions, inclusive policies and meaningful partnerships.

100. The Economic and Social Council youth forum is convened by the President of the Economic and Social Council and co-organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Youth Office, in collaboration with the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, the children and youth major group and the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organizations.

## 95 Interesting Facts

The General Assembly Resolution 75/306 decrees that a new office within the UN is to be created in order to properly handle youth affairs within the framework of the UN per se. The United Nations Youth Office is responsible for centralizing all youth affairs within the UN and allocating needed resources to ensure that there is adequate youth participation within all scopes of the UN. This way, Youth Advisory Groups may be organized, created and directed more easily, as well as ensuring that the youth may direct their voices to wherever they deem necessary within the UN, may that be the General Assembly or even specialized agencies.

## C. Summit of the Future

101. In his report on Our Common Agenda, the Secretary-General called for meaningful youth engagement in efforts to shape a sustainable and inclusive future. The Secretary-General's policy brief on future generations developed as a follow-up to Our Common Agenda [A/77/CRP.1] outlines a commitment to institutionalize mechanisms that amplify youth perspectives and protect the rights of future generations. Along the same lines, the Secretary-General's policy brief on meaningful youth engagement in policymaking and decision-making processes [A/77/CRP.1/Add.2] emphasizes that youth contributions are pivotal to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

102. The Summit of the Future was held at United Nations Headquarters on 22 and 23 September 2024. The Pact for the Future, adopted at the Summit, places strong emphasis on fostering intergenerational dialogues to build stronger partnerships between individuals of different age groups, including youth, and between Governments and youth. In addition, with its section on "Youth and future generations", the Pact for the Future includes concrete actions focused on investing in the social and economic development of youth so that they can reach their full potential, as well as on strengthening meaningful youth participation at all levels. The Declaration on Future Generations, also adopted at the Summit, highlights the importance of promoting intergenerational solidarity, dialogue and social cohesion, fostering understanding and collaboration between age groups and promoting shared values and mutual support, which are essential to long-term success and ensuring that no group is left behind.

103. With a view to generating additional opportunities for partners to engage in this event, Action Days were held prior to the Summit of the Future, on 20 and 21 September. The Action Days started with a youth-led half-day, convened by the United Nations Youth Office in close collaboration with other United Nations entities, youth and relevant networks. Under the theme "Youth lead for the future: we believe in the promise of a better world for all", the Youth Action Day featured plenary meetings, including a high-level dialogue with the Secretary-General, and thematic segments (on gender, the digital future, governance, foresight and climate, intergenerational solidarity and humanitarian action). The recommendations stemming from the six thematic sessions were consolidated into an outcome document, featuring over 20 key proposals grounded in three core principles: inclusion, equity and trust. These recommendations are aimed at strengthening multi-stakeholder engagement, enhancing youth participation and mainstreaming human rights in alignment with the Pact for the Future and beyond.

## D. International Youth Day

104. To mark the 2023 International Youth Day on 12 August, a global webinar was held to explore the theme "Green skills for youth: towards a sustainable world". The webinar featured discussions on green skills and presented insights from international organizations, governments and young experts. Knowledge products were also developed to support and inspire stakeholders in celebrating the Day and promoting green skills. The theme was selected as the world is undergoing a green transition to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, requiring the development of green skills, which are the knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes necessary for a sustainable and resource-efficient society. Green skills encompass technical expertise for using green technologies and cross-cutting skills for making environmentally sustainable decisions. These skills, also known as "skills for the future" or "skills for green jobs", are crucial for all age groups but are especially important for youth, who

### 101 Interesting Facts

Policy brief A/77/CRP.1 of the Secretary-General addresses the broader term and initiative "Our Common Agenda". The "Our Common Agenda" was a document written in 2021 by the Secretary-General himself where he outlined the hope and vision for the future of global assistance and diplomacy. One where multilateralism is ever present within the UN, the SDG goals are strengthened and further incorporated into the internal political agenda of member-states, and where topics such as climate change and global crises can be easily addressed. Moreover, the policy brief outlines in further detail future steps for the UN to take after multiple feedbacks and negotiations with member-states regarding the topics outlined in the "Our Common Agenda" document.

### 101 Interesting Facts

Refers to an addendum to the original Policy Brief A/77/CRP.1 document where the matter of youth engagement, on all levels, receives a new layer of depth and focus within the document per se.

### 102 Definition

The Pact for the Future refers to a series of agreements adopted by the UN General Assembly regarding the sustainable development, peace and security, the security and fostering of the global youth, and global scientific and digital governance, through the adoption of Resolution A/RES/79/1. The Pact for the Future outlines 56 explicit and planned out actions, all regarding a specific aforementioned broad topic, on how the signing UN member-states can fulfill and guarantee the broad topics. Moreover, the document is also vintulated to two other important UN bodies/documents, the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations.

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#### 102 Definition

The Declaration on Future Generations is a document circulated to the Pact for the Future that determines and affirms that it is the responsibility of the current global youth to consider and reflect upon the long-term impacts of current human attitude and activity towards the environment in the sake of future generations to come. The declaration also calls upon the establishment of several policies that promote and assure justice for the current and future generations, deep inclusion of young voices in policymaking and environmental protection

#### 103 Interesting Facts

The 20 key proposals presented at the Youth Action Day - all stemming from the three core principles of inclusion, equity, and trust - call for greater youth participation in policymaking within all scopes of both national and international politics, universal and strengthened access to digital education, immediate, stronger and more effective environmental action, and intergenerational unity. Such proposals have the goal of reforming global governance by empowering youth voices and ensuring their participation in crucial processes, recognizing them as pivotal agents to sustainable development and the ones to enable change in the world for a better future.

can drive long-term progress in this area. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs partnered with the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, ILO and Generation Unlimited.

105. The theme for the 2024 International Youth Day was “From clicks to progress: youth digital pathways for sustainable development”. This theme underscored the vital link between digitalization, youth actions and the acceleration of the Sustainable Development Goals. Digital transformation has a significant impact on the Goals, with technologies such as mobile devices, digital platforms and artificial intelligence driving progress. Despite challenges of the digital divide, youth are pivotal in adopting and innovating new technologies. They are the largest group of digital users and developers, shaping global digital trends and contributing to the Goals. The observance of International Youth Day included case study infographics, interactive online quizzes and a social media toolkit that helped to promote the transformative impact of digital technologies on sustainable development. For this International Youth Day, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs collaborated with the International Telecommunication Union, UN-Habitat and the UN Internet Governance Forum.

## E. Youth delegate programme

106. The youth delegate programme of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has continued to support youth participating in intergovernmental processes as official members of their national delegations, enabling their effective engagement in global-level decision-making. At the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly, in 2023, 66 youth delegates from 37 Member States and a regional group participated. At the seventy-ninth session, in 2024, 63 youth delegates from 36 Member States and the European Union took part.

107. Youth delegates, while operating under mandates defined by their respective Member States, play a crucial role in linking local efforts to broader Sustainable Development Goals-related national consultations, gathering input from diverse groups across various local contexts. These consultations are instrumental in enhancing the understanding of local challenges, perspectives and priorities, which youth delegates bring forward in United Nations processes. Local stakeholders consulted typically include young individuals, youth-led or youth-focused organizations and municipal and local authorities. By incorporating these diverse insights, youth delegates ensure that the voices of local communities are represented in international policy discussions.

## V. Conclusions and recommendations

108. In the present report, it is argued that young people are crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level because they bring unique skills and perspectives in efforts to address the challenges faced by communities. It is stated in the report that meaningful youth engagement in decision-making contributes to solutions that are more inclusive and reflective of the needs and aspirations of young people and future generations. Greater support for local youth actions for the Goals is advocated, as well as improved coordination of Goal-related data to ensure inclusive, evidence-based development, while transparency and accountability in national, regional and local planning are also promoted. Ahead of the Second World Summit for Social Development, set to be held in 2025, the importance of policy coordination and cohesion at the local and national levels is highlighted in the report

### 107 Something to think about

The dialogue between youth groups and their respective governments/local stakeholders is something addressed and encouraged quite frequently in the UN. However, the same can't be said about the dialogue between youth groups themselves. Should the UN encourage direct dialogue for youth groups? If so, how should the UN do it?

as a clear and effective path to rebuilding trust and dialogue between youth and public authorities.

The Commission for Social Development may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) Support youth engagement in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes that have an impact on youth, including those enhancing social protection, building resilient livelihoods and fostering sustainable communities;

(b) Ensure greater vertical and horizontal coordination and cooperation between Sustainable Development Goals-related data custodians so that planning of national, regional and local development is based on evidence and foresight and more efficient and includes development partners, including young people;

(c) Enhance transparency and accountability of the national, regional and local development planning and implementation processes so that shared ownership and commitment are increased and trust between authorities and the population, including young people, is strengthened;

(d) Encourage and support meaningful youth engagement in voluntary national reviews and voluntary local reviews to ensure that national and local governments include innovative youth-led initiatives with the potential to enhance the country's progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, leveraging young people's participation in the voluntary national review and voluntary local review processes can meaningfully inform policies and programming and, in turn, further advance trust between young people and national and local authorities;

(e) Integrate a youth perspective into poverty reduction strategies (community-based projects aimed at building youth resilience against poverty), and ensure that social protection programmes are inclusive of specific needs of young people, including those in vulnerable situations such as those in informal work, rural areas and marginalized communities. Developing or strengthening programmes focused on sustainable livelihoods for young people in rural areas, for example, sustainable agriculture, forestry and eco-friendly practices, would help to lift rural youth out of poverty while ensuring food security;

(f) Ensure alignment between education systems and labour market needs by incorporating technical and vocational education and training, apprenticeships and other skills development programmes that respond to evolving industries, particularly in the green and digital sectors, and contribute to accelerating local sustainable development;

(g) Integrate climate action and sustainable development education into formal school curricula so that young people are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to address climate change and accelerate sustainable development. Investing in technology and innovation that engages youth, such as smart city technologies, green buildings and clean energy projects, would offer opportunities for young people to contribute locally to advance the Sustainable Development Goals.

## a Something to think about

How can both regional and national governments create functional and accessible platforms, channels, and initiatives for the youth to voice their ideas and evaluate the effectiveness of policies made for their communities?

## b Something to think about

How can the Third Committee of the General Assembly ensure the cooperation between Sustainable Development Goals-related data custodians and actively serve as a channel between these same data custodians and national governments in order to guarantee that the crucial foresight of the youth and development partners are included in the policymaking process?

## d Something to think about

What would be an efficient way for national governments to enhance transparency and accountability of national and regional developments to increase an exceedingly low trust with the public, especially the youth?

## e Something to think about

How can the Third Committee of the General Assembly make participating in voluntary reviews of both national and regional scopes attractive for the youth and consequently encourage them to participate in order to ensure that their insight is collected and taken into consideration?

## e Something to think about

What would be an efficient way to integrate and ensure the voices from vulnerable youth groups, such as those involved in informal labor, originating from rural areas, and marginalized communities, are taken into consideration within the context of poverty reduction policymaking?



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f

### Something to think about

How can the Third Committee of the General Assembly assist in the alignment of education systems in order to set a global standard for basic knowledge and skills a member of the global youth should have?

g

### Something to think about

How can the Third Committee of the General Assembly that all schools worldwide have enough financial and structural resources in order to implement the skills and knowledge the youth must have in order to be able to positively contribute to sustainable development into their respective curriculums?