

Ensuring Sustainable and At-Scale Engagement of Adolescents and Youth in the Arab region: An Interactive Dialogue

Tuesday 9 April 2019 | 16:15-18:00 | Committee Room 1 | UN House, Beirut

Background

The Arab region is home to one of the most youthful populations in the world, with over 60% of the total population under 30 years. Young people are inherently motivated to apply their ideas, talent and energy to help shape societies. Their involvement is critical to achieving sustainable development, protecting the environment, harnessing technology and innovation, promoting tolerance, building peace and ensuring inter-generational transfer of protective family and, cultural practices. However, instead of entering an age of transition into adulthood and productivity filled with learning, exploration, dreams and ambitions – young people in the Arab region are faced with overwhelming challenges and continue to remain socially, economically inadequately fulfilled, politically excluded, and many living in conflicts areas. In few countries there are generations of youth who have not yet experienced peace and stability.

The issue of young people's engagement and participation is prioritized as a right on its own as well as an accelerator and solution to attaining inclusive development, and unlocking human potential. In the Arab region progress towards supporting adolescent and youth engagement has been possible: About 1 million young men and young women have actively and voluntarily participated in civic engagement programmes. However, much more efforts are still needed.

Session Objectives

The present session jointly organized by UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO and ESCWA aims to:

1. Support and make the space for the perspectives, opinions and voices of young people to be heard at AFSD and to influence decision-making processes affecting their present and their future.
2. Discuss a range of possible actions at the national and regional level, including formal and informal channels of participation, and providing an enabling legal framework, to increase investment in the adolescent and youth engagement and participation in different development areas, ensuring young people's engagement in decision-making, civic engagement opportunities, and access to citizenship and life skills education.

Facilitator:

- Ms. Laetitia Haddad, Journalist, NETMED Youth, Lebanon

Panelists:

- Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, SG's Envoy on Youth, video message
- Mr. Abdelaziz Bouslah, Project Manager at the Tunisian Association for Management and Social Stability (TAMSS), Tunisia
- Mr. Mohammad Makki Kalaaji, Undergraduate student in Law at the Islamic University of Lebanon
- Ms. Hager Ebaid, Representative of the Youth Forum in the Arab Region, Egypt
- Mr. Adonis Wazir, Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) at the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA), Lebanon
- Mr. Simon Abi Ramia, MP and Chair of the Parliamentarian Committee on Youth, Lebanon
- Mr. Foued Aouni, Director General of the National Youth Observatory - Ministry of Youth and Sport Affairs, Tunisia

This Special Session will be live-streamed

