

Youth Commission on Science, Engineering & Technology
for the Sustainable Development Goals:
Effective Science Policy for Society

Introduction

This document is a proposal for the formation of a **Youth Commission on Science, Engineering & Technology for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. It outlines proposed objectives, coordination structure, deliverables, and timeline for the Commission. Its main purpose is to facilitate and enhance the engagement of young practitioners (scientists, engineers, innovators, etc.) within the United Nations system, through formal avenues, to impact ongoing sustainable development policy efforts at the global level. It also aims to recognize the importance of science policy for achieving a shared vision of a sustainable society, for people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership. More specifically, it will make links between thematic expertise in individual SDGs being reviewed during this year's UN Cycle (SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14), with existing intergovernmental frameworks on sustainable development. The Commission, coordinated by the *UN Major Group for Children & Youth (UN MGCY) Science-Policy Interface Platform*, will leverage the existing network of the UN MGCY, its open and inclusive nature, and the institutionalized spaces it has within the UN system. The commission will be tasked with engaging young practitioners from diverse academic, formal/informal knowledge systems, and regions in order to develop a comprehensive report on the positions youth have on the role of science, technology, and innovation in informing the implementation, follow-up, and review of the SDGs, as well as ways to strengthen the nexus between science, technology, policy, and society.

The Youth CSET for SDGs will have an opportunity to showcase its work during the **20th Annual Session** of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) coordinated by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), as well as the **2017 Multi-stakeholder Forum** on Science, Technology & Innovation for the SDGs, and the **2017 UN High Level Political Forum** - as well as related meetings between January and July 2017.

What is the Science-Policy Interface?

The Science-Policy Interface (SPI) has become an increasingly important component of sustainable development within the United Nations system. It provides the foundation for empirically-based policies, facilitates the use of science as an enabler in policy implementation and review, and provides a unique scientific lens into monitoring impact. Furthermore, SPIs have been integral in identifying emerging priorities, drawing links between the interconnected nature of thematic issues, and devising solutions to address challenges and barriers to progress. Living in an increasingly sociotechnical world, locally-informed and context-appropriate applications of science and

technology are crucial in ensuring long-term resilience of development efforts. This has been reflected through the UN Secretary General's Scientific Advisory Board, adoption of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM), and numerous other efforts to enhance the SPI within different UN entities and fora.

What is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

The 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly was historic in ushering in a new era of sustainable development, making 2015 a year of transformative change. The UN Sustainable Development Summit saw the 193-member states adopt, celebrate, and make commitments to the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". The 17 SDGs highlighted are a revitalized commitment to build upon the progress achieved through the Millennium Development Goals to "leave no one behind" and close the gap of inequity, locally and globally by engaging everyone, everywhere. The SDGs are integrated and indivisible, balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social, and environmental) and establishing a framework for development over the next 15 years.

As young people, representing up to 50% of the world's populations, we are torchbearers of the agenda - as we will be the ones held accountable for implementing it in its entirety and ensuring its continuity for future generations. We have the potential and drive to make change, but must be given the proper tools and resources to meaningfully participate in the design, implementation, monitoring, review, and reporting of policies. As young practitioners, we have an especially important role in informing the appropriate application of science, technology, and innovation in order to identify emerging issues and to develop solutions to overcome roadblocks in achieving sustainable development.

What is the UN Major Group for Children and Youth?

The UN MGCY is a General Assembly mandated space for the meaningful engagement of children and youth in intergovernmental processes within the UN related to sustainable development. It is a space for young people to discuss ideas, build networks, share opportunities, and work collectively towards expanding and advancing the role of children and youth in contributing to sustainable development, as well as an avenue to voice diverse opinions, perspectives, and experiences on a range of issues related to sustainable development policy. To achieve this, it provides both online and offline platforms and avenues to foster dialogue amongst youth and other stakeholders including governments, ensures spaces for children and youth to prepare and present policy positions, conducts capacity building to participate in UN processes, hosts trainings for effective participation of young people, and coordinates logistics, formal inputs, and resources related to the various UN processes.

Objectives of the UN MGCY Youth SPI Platform

Strengthening youth policy and practice in sustainable development by equipping our generation with tools to drive empirically-informed, context-specific, and fit-for-purpose change through science, technology, innovation, and data.

- Establishing collaborations and partnerships between UN MGCY and science/engineering/technology groups/platforms focusing on the follow up and implementation of the science-policy interface for sustainable development and related capacity building.
- Facilitating a youth science-policy dialogue at local, regional, and global levels in order to create linkages between sustainable development frameworks, identify emerging issues, and develop appropriate solutions.
- Educating and equipping youth with the tools to drive resilient sustainable development change and effective science communication for appropriate policy and societal impact.

Objectives of the Youth CSET for SDGs

The objectives of the Youth CSET are meant to advance the work of the UN MGCY Youth Science-Policy Interface Platform and those of policy processes in which the work will be presented:

Engagement:

- Provide a platform for young practitioners to engage in science-policy discussions on the role of science, technology, & innovation to achieve the SDGs and affiliated intergovernmental processes within the UN system (DRR, SCP, SIDS, WHS, FFD, Goal 14, Habitat III, etc).
- Bring together a diverse group of youth from various backgrounds, experiences, and regions to contribute their perspectives to formulate positions that will be communicated at high-level forums with member states, governmental officials, UN agencies, civil society members, private sector, and other stakeholders.
- Facilitate communication, access to information, and progress towards deliverables, as well as access to formal avenues to present work of the Youth CSET.

Topics of Focus:

- Ways to strengthen the science-policy interface within the UN System.
- Policy coherence and synergies across agendas to build appropriate S&T roadmaps towards the implementation of the SDGs.
- Role and responsibility of young practitioners in sustainable development policy at all levels.

YOUTH SCIENCE POLICY INTERFACE PLATFORM

ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A Platform Facilitated by the UN Major Group for Children and Youth - www.childrenyouth.org.

- Best practices on knowledge assessments, science interpretation, communicating science for appropriate policy design and societal uptake, and science education.
- Work towards the themes of the **20th Session of the Commission on Science & Technology for Development**.
- Work towards the themes of the **2017 Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology & Innovation for the SDGs**.
- Work towards the goals of the **2017 UN High-Level Political Forum**.

Timeline of Formal Engagement Opportunities:



* Indicates meetings with thematic relevance to the work of the UN MGCY Science-Policy Interface, for which the work of the Youth Commission can be linked to promote coherence and cross-sectional synergies. The deliverables prepared for the UNCTAD CSTD, 2017 ST&I Forum, & 2017 HLPF can be showcased in the other meetings listed as well.

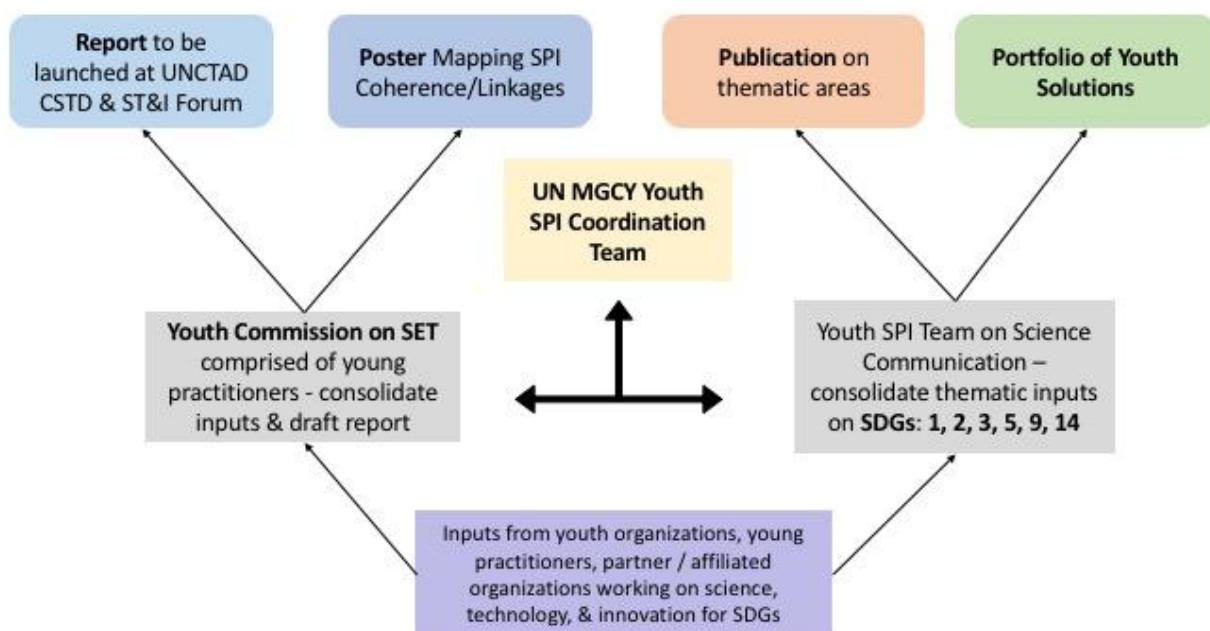
Timeline for Coordinating Engagement:

Based on best practices of a youth-led process, as outlined by the procedures and practices of the UN Major Group for Children and Youth, the following dates are proposed as benchmarks for progress and deliverables:

- **December 7, 2016:** Selection of Commission support team
- **January 15:** Preparing inputs for UNCTAD CSTD Inter-Sessional meeting
- **February 12:** Finalizing Poster for AAAS 2017 Conference

- **March 26:** Progress Report on Deliverables
- **April 23:** Deliverables for UNCTAD CSTD Annual Meeting submitted for review
- **May 1:** Finalize Deliverables for UNCTAD CSTD Annual Meetings
- **May 5:** Finalize Deliverables for 2017 Multistakeholder Forum on ST&I for SDGs
- **July 1:** Finalize Deliverables for 2017 HLPF

Composition of Youth Commission (*Subject to change)



The Youth Commission welcomes inputs from any youth organization or young practitioners through an inclusive platform coordinated by the UN MGCY. This will be complimented by a group of professionals working on similar topics and eager to work with youth to promote an inter-generational dialogue, while providing guidance and insights throughout the process.

Potential Partners (tentative)

Linkages will be sought with other organizations, including:

- ICSU / ISSC - International Council for Science / International Social Science Council
- WFEO - World Federation of Engineering Organizations
- UNESCO - UN Education, Science, & Culture Organization
- GYA - Global Young Academy
- Office of the UN Secretary General's Envoy on Youth
- UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development

- Youth-led organizations working on **SDG 1** on poverty eradication (e.g. ATD Fourth World, Global Poverty Initiative, IMCS - Pax Romana, etc.)
- Youth-led organizations working on **SDG 2** on food security (e.g. YUVA, etc.)
- Youth-led organizations working on **SDG 3** on health (e.g. IFMSA, Global Health Next Generation Network, Young Professionals in NCDs, Lancet Youth Commission on EMP, etc.)
- Youth-led organizations working on **SDG 5** on gender equality (e.g. WAGGGS, Dance4Life, Hairou-Y, WEIDO, etc.)
- Youth-led organizations working on **SDG 9** on infrastructure/industrialization/innovation
- Youth-led organizations working on **SDG 14** on Oceans (e.g. SIDS WG, Oceans Group)
- Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) - Youth - *Youth Solutions*
- Future Earth, et...

Expected Deliverables

The following are a broad overview of deliverables of the Youth Commission on SET for SDGs:

- **Report** highlighting youth inputs and positions on the different topics outlined in the objective above.
- **Publication** (in the form of policy briefs) highlighting challenges, emerging issues, and potential solutions on the following:
 - Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world.
 - SDGs 1 - eradicating poverty, 2 - food security, 3 - health, 5 - gender equality, 9 - industry/innovation/ infrastructure, 14 - life below water (oceans).
- **Portfolio** of Youth Solutions on the following topics:
 - SDGs 1 - eradicating poverty, 2 - food security, 3 - health, 5 - gender equality, 9 - industry/innovation/ infrastructure, 14 - life below water (oceans).
- **Poster** mapping the interlinkages, coherence, and gaps between the ST&I and SPI components of different intergovernmental agendas for sustainable development.

Conclusion

The proposal lays out a plan for engaging young practitioners in formal science-policy avenues within the UN system in order to share their perspectives on the role of science, technology, and innovation for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and helping implement associated sustainable development frameworks. It seeks to mobilize youth efforts towards concrete deliverables to be showcased at global platforms, such as the UNCTAD Annual Session of the Commission on Science & Technology for Development, Annual Multistakeholder Forum on ST&I for SDGs, and High-Level Political Forum. It also seeks to build the appropriate linkages across themes and processes in order to break silos, while promoting concerted and collective efforts towards strengthening the role of the science-policy interface. The expected deliverables will be youth-led and motivated by the innovation, passion, and enthusiasm of young practitioners.