2017 SUMMER

Youth Assembly at the United Nations

OUTCOME DOCUMENT

9-12 August 2017
UN Headquarters, New York City
The Youth Assembly at the United Nations is the global gathering of young leaders, social entrepreneurs, and advocates for sustainable development. It provides a unique platform for meaningful dialogue and partnership between youth, civil society, the private sector, and the United Nations. At the Assembly, young people are equipped with the necessary tools, knowledge, and skills to create action-oriented solutions that help achieve the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

What is the Youth Assembly?

“Youth are not only the future but also the present of our world.” This motto became a reality during the 20th session of the Youth Assembly held at the UN from August 9-12, 2017. One of the largest youth gathering held at the UN Headquarters, the event was attended by over 1,000 young leaders from 112 countries who shared a common vision: achieving a “society for all,” leaving no one behind. Taking the 2030 Agenda as a reference point, the delegates participated in workshops and panels, presented their ideas and projects, and exchanged knowledge on the best practices to achieve sustainable development.

“You are all part of an extraordinary occasion to discover the world from a brand-new perspective, to become aware of the global current realities of the challenges we face and to seek opportunities that you would never have had.”

– H.E. Simona-Mirela Miculescu, Representative of UN Secretary-General and Head of UN Office in Belgrade

Quick Facts

- Number of Delegates: 1,188
- Countries represented: 112
- 96% gained a better understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals and current issues/challenges
- 97% felt more inspired to take concrete action that will include community involvement
- 94% made valuable connections with Youth Assembly participants, new/potential collaborators, mentors, or partners

Introduction

The Youth Assembly at the United Nations is the global gathering of young leaders, social entrepreneurs, and advocates for sustainable development. It provides a unique platform for meaningful dialogue and partnership between youth, civil society, the private sector, and the United Nations. At the Assembly, young people are equipped with the necessary tools, knowledge, and skills to create action-oriented solutions that help achieve the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, the organizer of the biannual Youth Assembly at the UN, worked jointly with the Permanent Missions of Sri Lanka, Portugal, and Kenya, UN agencies, civil society organizations, and corporations to create a space for interaction and skill-building among young people and to elevate the voice of youth in the United Nations. Some of the main speakers included the President of the 71st General Assembly of the United Nations H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson, UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth Jayathma Wickramanayake, the Permanent Representatives of Kenya and Sri Lanka, and the Deputy Permanent Representative of Portugal. Ravi Karkara of UN Women and Isabel Perez Dobarran of SDSN also participated as speakers at the closing ceremony.

The 20th session of the Youth Assembly focused on the theme “Society for All: Equity and Inclusion for a Sustainable Future,” exploring the role of youth in achieving more peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable societies. This report will highlight recurring themes of the discussions, present a summary of the panel and workshop sessions, and share the outcome of the competitions at the conference.
Advancing Women and Girls’ Rights

Both guest speakers and delegates highlighted the importance of advancing women and girls’ rights to achieve the 2030 Agenda. While outcomes for women in education and health have been improving worldwide, there are persistent gender gaps in economic, social, and political outcomes. Social norms and lack of economic agency limit women’s ability to adapt to crises, increasing their vulnerability to human trafficking, sexual violence, and natural disasters. Delegates demonstrated their commitment to achieving gender equality and advancing women’s empowerment at local, regional, and international levels.

Sustainable Technology for All

Participants analyzed the role of technology in the implementation of the SDGs, with particular emphasis on SDG 3 (improving clinical operations and medical diagnosis); SDG 4 (providing online high quality education resources for free); SDG 5 (mainstreaming women’s efforts in all fields, promoting women empowerment, and firmly condemning gender-based violence); and SDG 12 (promoting sustainable production and consumption practices).

“There is an urgent need to focus on education, especially in the form of skills development with a focus on innovation in order to address the practical realities of the present day evolving world. We believe that future economies and societies are knowledge-based economies.”

– H.E. Mr. Amrith Rohan Perrera, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the UN

Technology and the rise of social media have given young people new tools for organizing and taking political action, magnifying youth voices in global dialogues and expanding possibilities for collaboration. Additionally, technology has opened up new labor market opportunities for youth, with the potential to transform international market structures to accommodate more creative, flexible work arrangements. Several panelists highlighted the importance of reforming education policy to more fully incorporate technology, in order to best prepare youth with the skills needed to enter the changing economy.

Partnerships: Key for Success

“We all have to play our part in creating a sustainable world... We should all recognize the intergenerational impact of biodiversity loss and see it through the same lens of inequality”

– H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the 71st General Assembly of the United Nations

Innovative new partnerships that span sectors, borders, and generations will be vital to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Public-private partnerships open up new pathways to enhance collaboration and foster inclusive social growth, as well as opportunities to develop creative financing models for development. For youth delegates, building bridges from grassroots organizers to global movements across all sectors is one of the most promising ways to magnify local issues and mobilize resources for inclusive development.
Summaries

The panels and workshops at the 2017 Summer Youth Assembly provided delegates with interactive opportunities to engage with a number of esteemed organizations who are working to contribute to the 2030 Agenda. Panel sessions offered delegates the chance to hear from technical experts in diverse fields about cutting-edge research and best practices for sustainable development, while workshops focused on practical skills-building, creative problem solving, and action-oriented advocacy. The sessions were organized across four tracks – economic, social, environmental, and partnerships – offering delegates from different backgrounds many opportunities to explore issues from a new perspective.

A ECONOMIC

Microsoft YouthSpark: MakeCode.com & TechPitch 2017

Representatives from Microsoft hosted two 90-minute hands-on training workshops to equip participants with practical coding skills and encourage them to explore how technology can be applied for social good.

In a session for beginner and intermediate coders, Microsoft YouthSpark Innovative Educator Todd Beard provided an introduction to coding and the Internet of Things (IoT). Using micro-controllers such as the micro:bit computer, participants investigated how technology can help communities increase health and wellbeing, power economic development, and build sustainable cities. The objective of the workshop was to design and create a working IoT prototype.

A second session for participants with advanced coding skills focused on teaching techniques to program a multitude of microcontrollers such as the Arduino, Adafruit Circuit Playground, micro:bit, and Raspberry Pi, as well as create real-world, working prototypes of IoT objects. Working in teams, the attendees created a web-based presentation about their project to pitch to other attendees. Participants also created rubrics to evaluate the projects created during the session. At the end of both workshops, delegates received certificates and physical badges to verify their completion of the “hacks.”

World Bank Group

As a global leader in the fight to end poverty and tackle inequality, the World Bank Group’s session at the 2017 Summer Youth Assembly gave delegates the chance to consider macroeconomic issues through a new lens. Guest speaker Angelica Silvero traced the historical trajectory of poverty across the 20th Century, describing both the incredible progress that has been achieved as well as the daunting obstacles that remain in many developing countries.

Speaker Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo then focused the audience’s attention on one such obstacle: the exclusion of disabled peoples from social and economic life, which can cost a country’s labor market up to 7% of GDP. Of the estimated 15% of the world’s population who have a disability, 80% of these individuals live in developing countries where they face significant challenges related to mobility, quality of life, and increased vulnerability to violence. Ms. McClain-Nhlapo shared the extraordinary gains to society that can be achieved from greater inclusion of disabled peoples and discussed the channels through which the World Bank is working to address these issues.
Power Differentials: How to Reach the Most Vulnerable

As the lowest earning and most vulnerable demographic group in the world, the ultra-poor often lack access to basic social services and support from governments and NGOs. In this session led by BRAC, facilitators aimed to help participants gain a critical understanding of the multi-dimensional nature of extreme poverty and the importance of accurate targeting of community-based interventions. BRAC led participants in a guided activity called “The Power Walk,” which provides an opportunity to imagine oneself in a different social situation and explore the dynamics which shape people’s economic agency. This opened up a discussion about structural barriers faced by people living in poverty, analyzing the conditions that create a poverty trap for many of the ultra-poor.

BRAC speakers shared the Ultra-Poor Graduation Approach, a comprehensive, time-bound and sequenced set of interventions that aim to move people from deep poverty into sustainable livelihoods. Graduation-style programs have been implemented and adapted with great success across 40 countries as a strategy to break the cycle of extreme poverty. Participants had the opportunity to engage with the facilitators in a Q&A to discuss best practices for implementing and evaluating community-based programs that target the ultra-poor population.

From Ideas to Action: How to Design a Successful Venture for the SDGs

Ideas for Action hosted a session which focused on youth entrepreneurship as a catalyst for sustainable development. Attendees were invited to utilize the new insights, knowledge, and friendships they built during the Youth Assembly to develop their own ideas on how to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Delegates were introduced to the 2018 Ideas for Action Competition, where winners will present their ideas at the IMF & World Bank Annual Meetings in Bali, Indonesia and receive support from a dedicated start-up accelerator at the Wharton School.

The workshop focused particularly on approaching innovation from a broader social and environmental context. Rather than merely developing a simple business plan, attendees were invited to think critically to form ideas that are scalable and create measurable, systemic change to deliver the SDGs. Participants also had a chance to hear from experts about how they can apply new ideas, such as innovative financing solutions and public-private partnership models, to put their ideas into practice.

The Power of Youth: Making a Difference Through Sustainable Tourism

In concurrence with International Year of Sustainable Tourism, the World Tourism Organization and Hilton Worldwide hosted a panel on sustainable tourism. The speakers discussed responsible travel practices and the opportunity for tourism to stimulate entrepreneurship and create new labor market opportunities. Tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors and most significant job creators in the world. Beyond its immediate socio-economic impact, tourism has the power to bring together millions of people of different backgrounds to learn from each other and develop mutual understanding.

How are youth specifically affected by tourism? Today, young people represent more than 20% of the almost 1.2 billion tourists travelling internationally each year. As such, youth travel can be a powerful force to foster change towards a more responsible tourism sector, and help build cultural bridges around the world. Furthermore, tourism creates jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities for youth in communities around the globe, bringing new opportunities for innovation and development.
STEM as a Key to Achieving the SDGs

How can technology be best utilized to achieve the 2030 Agenda? Industry leaders from Google, AeroFarms, Novartis, Microsoft, and Rutgers University explored this topic with the audience, addressing the role technology has played in improving health outcomes, increasing access to education, and ending hunger.

From new developments in cancer treatment through machine learning to the application of smart data to scale-up vertical farming, technology has the potential to revolutionize the way people connect and live.

The panel emphasized that the use of technology is not an easy or straight-forward path, as it involves a great deal of trial and error. They encouraged the audience not to be afraid of failure, but to see it as an opportunity for learning and advancement. In the words of one speaker, “If you have not failed enough, you have not thought big enough.”

Debate: Impact of Technology in the Modern World

The Youth Assembly held its first ever debate session on a key question for all those concerned with the welfare of society and achieving the SDGs: the Impact of Technology in the Modern World.

Three subtopics were debated, with eloquent cases made for both sides of each topic: a) Human and Machine Interface; b) Nature of Influence; and c) Preparedness. The arguments were evaluated on their cogency, strength of evidence, and quality of presentation.

The strength of arguments led the judges to a split decisions on the winner of the debate. However, delegates who argued against technology presented stronger evidence using concrete studies, while delegates arguing that technology has a positive influence made claims that were larger in scale, pointing towards the greater good that comes from technology.

The overarching message was that though technology is bringing us unprecedented opportunities in education, job creation and spreading of information that can help achieve the SDGs, it is also changing society in unpredictable ways, and so we must be cautious to ensure its impact remains positive.

B SOCIAL

Empowering Youth to Take Action on the Global Refugee Crisis

Speakers from the Permanent Mission of the OIC to the UN, the International Development Law Organization, the International Rescue Committee, Northeastern University, and UNHCR gathered to address the multifaceted challenges that refugees face worldwide.

Given the enormity of the current migration crisis, the panelists urged a united response across all areas of society, stressing the need for increased funding and foreign aid to meet the magnitude of the situation.

In an engaging interactive conversation with the panel, delegates raised the importance of gender-responsive humanitarian aid and immigration policy, acknowledging the differentiated impacts of migration on women and girls.

The discussion focused largely on questions of action to resolve the crisis, with panelists encouraging young people to raise awareness in their own communities, promote peer-to-peer support for migrants, and volunteer to raise money or provide assistance for local refugee organizations.
Building a Global Movement to End Violence Against Children

Every five minutes, a child dies as a result of violence. An estimated 120 million girls and 73 million boys have been victims of sexual violence, and almost one billion children are subjected to physical punishment on a regular basis. This violence is entirely preventable, but in order to stop it government actors, business leaders, advocates, and youth voices must come to the table together to find solutions and drive policy reform.

In celebration of the one-year anniversary of their launch, the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children led a session on how to navigate government institutions and gain the tools to affect policy change to prevent violence against children. The workshop included a breakout session, where the participants convened in small groups to discuss advocacy tactics and develop actionable solutions on sub-topics such as online violence, human trafficking, child soldiers, and domestic abuse.

Mainstreaming Youth in All Spheres of Society

Inclusion and youth engagement across social sectors was the focus of discussion among panelists from the Sustainable Development Solutions Network Youth, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and government representatives from Kenya and Sri Lanka. Considering the low participation of youth in the labor market, the panelists highlighted the need to strengthen technological skills and support creative working arrangements to build an economy that is sustainable and inclusive. The speakers recommended investing in open online educational resources and promoted affirmative funds that support youth entrepreneurship.

The discussion shifted to the political realm, where there is a significant gap in youth representation. While young people constitute more than half of the voting population, they hold only 2% of parliamentary seats. The panel considered a number of diverse strategies to overcome this problem including lowering the age eligibility for election, lowering the voting age, establishing youth quotas, supporting proportional systems which favor youth presence in parliaments, and more actively integrating technology in the political process.

Out with Exclusion, In with Rights

Inspired by the SDGs’ mandate to “leave no one behind,” this workshop facilitated by Lucy Odigie-Turley featured five dynamic and accomplished young leaders who utilize arts and strategic communication to fight for social inclusion. Twin activist brothers shared their story of overcoming homophobia and social stigma around autism to lead an empowered and independent life. Richard Castillo, a communications expert at UN Women, discussed the role of young men in ending violence against women and girls. Victoria Kimani, a Kenyan-American singer and songwriter, shared her strategies to support women in the workplace and fight against patriarchal social norms which limit women’s economic agency. After breakout sessions to discuss social inclusion more in-depth in small groups, global activist Trevor Arnett concluded the workshop with a rousing musical performance about advocacy.

Using Values-Based Communications for Social Inclusion

Led by The Opportunity Agenda, this workshop focused on how to use values, affirmative stories, and a solutions-oriented approach to shift narratives around diversity and social inclusion. Using recent research, The Opportunity Agenda provided examples of values-based communication techniques that can be applied to persuade audiences to embrace diversity and inclusion. Using the “Values Problem Social Action” method,
attendees were given the opportunity to craft compelling messages for traditional and digital audiences. This hands-on session provided participants with the storytelling skills and resources to begin spreading their own messages for social change and policy reform.

**A Society For All: Stories Across Borders**

The Global Young Voices workshop aimed to inspire, drive, and build momentum within the minds of young delegates to create change within and beyond their societies. After having reviewed dozens of submissions received on the GYV platform, their team selected four delegates to present the initiatives they have undertaken to create a #SocietyForAll.

At the workshop, the delegates heard stories of how these young people have impacted societies. The set of presenters was a very young, globally diverse group with powerful messages to share with youth all around the world. The workshop was followed by a networking session where delegates engaged in interviews with Global Young Voices and further shared their endeavors.

**Opportunities in “Technovation” to Create the World We Want and Achieve Gender Equality**

This session explored the future of the fight for gender equality and the ways in which technology can be used to accelerate global progress toward SDG 5. Panelists encouraged the Youth Delegates to seize the entrepreneurial spirit that is driving technological growth and apply it to achieve the SDGs and gender equality as well. There is great opportunity to push forward the technology frontier through greater inclusion, as evidence shows that companies are more successful and innovative when women's voices are included.

The panel stressed that the gender gap exists in all areas of society and must be considered when tackling any of the SDGs. Despite these obstacles, each panelist shared an inspiring story of women overcoming the odds to make a great impact on the world. At the end of the session, the audience raised the importance of issues such as women's sanitation, inclusion of women in politics, and the need for men and women to work together to achieve gender equality.

**Shaping the Narrative of an Inclusive Society**

With participation from Dear World, DevEx, Instagram, Global Young Voices, and Great Big Story, this panel discussed how the power of storytelling can be used to influence public opinion or inspire action towards equity and inclusion. The magnitude of global social and economic problems can be daunting to many individuals, but storytelling can be used to raise awareness and inspire people to take action. Beyond changing the minds of individuals, creative communication can also help persuade policy makers and companies to take the next steps to address social issues. As the development of modern media platforms has opened up new doors for collaboration, the panel encouraged young people to seize these new tools to advance the 2030 Agenda.

**Film Screening: “Salam Neighbor”**

“Salam Neighbor” is an award-winning documentary and campaign to connect the world to refugees. At a critical moment when there are more refugees today than at any time in the last century, the goal of the screening was to share the stories of refugees around the world with the dignity and depth they deserve. As the first production ever allowed by the United Nations to be given a tent and be registered in a refugee camp, the documentary gives
an unprecedented look into the world’s most pressing crisis. The audience was encouraged to think critically about how the world can come together to support healing, ease the burden on host countries, and empower the disenfranchised by unleashing people’s creativity.

**ENVIRONMENTAL**

Environment, Poverty and an Inclusive Green Economy

The objective of this panel was to explore the connections between poverty, the environment, climate change, and the 2030 Agenda. Climate change is expected to compound the problems experienced by the world’s poorest and most marginalized people, including food and water insecurity, forced migration, and health problems linked to poor sanitation and air quality. Moreover, climate change will have differentiated impacts on women, who account for approximately 70 percent of the world’s population living below the poverty line. When there is a natural disaster in a poor country, women suffer heavier consequences due to their caretaking burdens and limited access to resources and social services.

To address these interlinked issues, the panelists agreed that the inclusion of youth in decision-making processes is essential at all levels. The lack of youth engagement in political processes and marginalization of youth in the labor market presents significant obstacles to finding equitable and actionable solutions. Encouraging the audience to “learn, act, and lead,” the panel shared inspiring examples of innovative solutions developed by other young people. The speakers also encouraged delegates to think about small steps they can take in their own lives to align their daily actions with sustainable practices, thinking critically about personal choices around consumption, transportation, and housing. This includes those living within cities, where the panel stressed there are still ample opportunities to partake in significant environmental work.

Dialogue for Change: Bringing the Youth Perspective into Global Decision Making

Can we tackle climate change by investing in entrepreneurship or incubating new ideas? How can youth voices be brought into national and international decision-making? In this session with speakers from The International Institute for Environment and Development, The Climate Justice Resilience Fund and Climate-KIC, youth delegates had the opportunity to answer these questions and discuss the best ways to become involved in global environmental movements.

IIED shared their history of collaborating with representatives from developing countries during UNFCCC negotiations, as well as their experiences working on climate change policy and campaigns on the ground in Kenya, Nepal, and Tanzania. The Climate Justice Resilience Fund discussed their strategies to increase resiliency and adaptive capacity of people in the Global South to deal with the impacts of climate change, focusing particularly on young people, women, and indigenous peoples. Finally, Climate-KIC presented their model for public-private partnerships to accelerate innovation to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The panel encouraged youth to share their perspectives with leaders and policy makers in their own communities and to apply their energy to address these global problems together.
Civil Engagement and Urban Innovation

While 34% of the world’s population in 1960 lived in cities, today that figure has jumped to approximately 56% and it is anticipated to rise to 70% by 2050. Mass urbanization presents new challenges to society, as increased population density leads to the development of “heat islands,” new public health threats, and strains on waste management systems. However, there are also great opportunities to develop clean mass transit systems and efficient energy systems in urban spaces. How will society adapt to these changes and what role can youth have in decision-making processes?

This panel, led by Civ:Lab, explored the opportunities for collaboration among urban innovation ecosystems. Youth delegates learned to analyze the relationships between governments, universities, entrepreneurs, corporations, and civil society in urban environments, as well as the ways individuals can get involved and have a measurable impact.

Youth, Peace and Security

This panel offered delegates the opportunity to learn more about United Nations Resolution 2250, a tool for attaining sustained peace and economic development. The panelists stressed that the active participation of the world’s 1.8 billion young people is crucial to achieve the SDGs in politics, social justice, peace, and economic growth.

The panel also discussed key components of a thematic paper “Impacts of Climate Change on Youth, Peace, and Security,” authored by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network Youth. The paper includes policy recommendations on how to protect young people from the adverse impacts of climate change and how youth can be engaged in environmental issues and peacebuilding.

Delegates raised important questions about the constraints that young people in the Global South face in addressing peace and development. The panelists agreed that the active engagement of stakeholders in business, governance, and civil society at all levels is fundamental to achieve peace and secure a brighter future for young people.

Everyone in for the 2030 Agenda: Working Together and Leaving No One Behind

In this session, the panelists introduced youth delegates to the concept of multi-dimensional partnerships, which involve collaboration between actors from the public sector, private sector, religious institutions, academia, philanthropy, and civil society. The panel emphasized the importance of engaging youth in these partnerships to accelerate progress towards the SDGs.

In an interactive dialogue with the speakers, delegates raised the issue of cultural barriers as one of the main obstacles to developing strong cross-sector partnerships. The speakers advised youth-led NGOs on best practices to build public-private partnerships, find common ground with other organizations, and create actionable plans to achieve their goals.

Introduction to Finding U.S. Grants

Driven by their mission to strengthen the nonprofit and social sector through hands-on training, Foundation Center is a leading source of information on the logistics
The Center organized training for Youth Assembly delegates to discover what U.S. funders are looking for in grant applications, and how to find potential funding opportunities for their NGOs.

In the workshop, attendees learned the ten most important things to know about finding grants, including who typically funds nonprofits, what their motivations are, what funders really want to know about grant applicants, and how to identify and approach potential funders.

**Wikimedia: Health, Science, and Inclusion Through Wikimedia**

This session discussed the potential for technology to promote transparency, open new opportunities for collaboration, and improve decision-making through access to data. Three panelists discussed how various Wikimedia platforms can be used to distribute information related to healthcare, water and sanitation, and science.

The workshop gave practical demonstrations of Wikimedia tools and best practices, including how to add citations, use language and translation tools, utilize the live editing map, and understand the platform’s page view and quality metrics. Participants were encouraged to actively participate in the Wikimedia community and to think of creative strategies to increase global access to information.

**Open Working Group: From Delegate to Game-Changer**

Four former Youth Assembly attendees shared their stories of how the Assembly fostered their engagement in the global community. Raina Kadavil, President of Global Ambassadors, moderated the discussion with alumni delegates, exploring how the skills and knowledge of the SDGs they gained at the Assembly started them down a path of action.

From beginning a career at the UN to becoming more active in the social entrepreneurship community, the alumni have pursued diverse activities since their time at the Assembly. Two delegates shared how the Assembly motivated them to pursue new partnerships, as Razan Al-Aqeel went on to work with the Saudi Arabian government to raise awareness about the SDGs and George Rosenfeld went on to collaborate with WaterAid to raise money to deliver clean, safe water to people in developing countries around the world. The session inspired the current delegates to consider how they can carry forward their ideas and partnerships formed at the Assembly to contribute to sustainable development.

**Inclusive Project Design**

This session, led by TrickleUp and Fresh Truck, focused on the challenges of project management, particularly around the issue of inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized populations. Taking attendees through the project cycle from design to implementation, the workshop shared tools and case studies to support youth leaders in their work.

**Quick Facts**

- 97% thought the guest speakers, panelists, and presenters were of high quality
- 95% hope to attend the Youth Assembly again in the future
The Resolution Project, Inc. brought its eleventh Resolution Social Venture Challenge to the 2017 Summer Youth Assembly at the UN. The Challenge allows undergraduate students to build teams and submit their plans for actual social ventures that will make a positive impact today.

With thirty-one (31) teams and seven (7) winners, the 11th Resolution Social Venture Challenge sets the record as having the largest number of participants and winners at the Youth Assembly. Resolution Fellows were awarded grants of up to US $3,000 along with long-term dynamic, hands-on mentorship for their respective projects.

To celebrate youth excellence and recognize young role models in today’s world, the Youth Assembly Organizing Committee selected two (2) Outstanding Youth Delegates for the 2017 Summer Youth Assembly at the UN. The winners were selected through a rigorous process and criteria, which included their unique perspective and demonstrated understanding and commitment toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This summer, the winners were Ms. Natalie Hampton of U.S.A., who created the extraordinary app “Sit With Us” as part of her continuously innovative efforts to combat bullying, and Mr. Pamir Ehsas of Norway, who founded “Brighter Tomorrow” and “Studentaksjonen” among his undaunted efforts to bring education to young people in Afghanistan.

Mr. Wantoe Teah Wantoe, a citizen of Liberia, received the first merit-based scholarship, in recognition of his strong commitment to humanitarian and environmental action by mobilizing youth and empowering his community, along with frontline work in efforts to end Sexual Gender Based Violence and the Ebola outbreak in his country.
The 2017 Summer Youth Assembly at the UN showed young people’s extraordinary talents, limitless capabilities, and unwavering determination to achieve the SDGs.

During the sessions, the delegates denounced injustices at the local, national, and international levels, proposed solutions to overcome our society’s current challenges, and identified the need for global change. They demanded a societal transformation that would involve all people and all sectors, leaving no one behind—a transformation that would work towards peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable societies that are invested in the well-being of citizens of the present and the future.

The delegates stated their adherence and commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs as the common path that international society should follow. Conscious of their responsibilities as youth leaders, they embraced the challenges and opportunities of sustainable development and made them their own.

The Youth Assembly showed how progress cannot be fully achieved without the efforts and active participation of youth in all fields of society. In this forum young people revealed themselves as change makers, innovators, and leaders in their communities. The Assembly provided them with the tools, resources, and networks needed to advance their projects and scale up their efforts.

Armed with the knowledge and connections they gained at the Assembly, the delegates will be able to translate their extraordinary ideas into decisive action and inclusive social movements for the implementation of the SDGs, working towards a society for all and leaving no one behind.

What Delegates Say...

“The 2017 Summer Youth Assembly at the UN was an excellent platform to connect the youth and ignite their interest in bringing valuable input to make change in their respective communities.”

– Guei Sosthène Auguste Grégoire, Youth Assembly Delegate, Cote d’Ivoire

“I’m forever grateful for the Youth Assembly for opening these doors for me, for providing me a platform to grow into a better human being, and to help others to do the same.”

– Morgan Madden, Youth Assembly Delegate, U.S.A.
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