

**PRESS RELEASE** (*Embargoed until 19 September 12:00 PM EDT*)

***United Nations Announces Young Leaders for Sustainable Development Goals***

New York, September 19, 2016 – The UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ahmad Alhendawi, today unveiled the inaugural class of UN Young Leaders for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the Social Good Summit in New York.

The 17 Young Leaders have been recognized for their leadership and contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a set of 17 Goals to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030.

“Today I am pleased to join in welcoming the inaugural class of UN Young Leaders for the Sustainable Development Goals,” said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. “These 17 young change-makers are a testament to the ingenuity of youth and I congratulate them for their exceptional leadership and demonstrated commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals.”

The flagship initiative of the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth comes against a backdrop of increasing efforts by the UN to engage young people in its efforts to achieve the SDGs. Selected from over 18,000 nominations from 186 different countries, the UN Young Leaders for the SDGs will support efforts to engage young people in the realization of the SDGs and will have opportunities to engage in UN and partner-led projects. The initiative will also contribute to a brain trust of young leaders supporting initiatives related to the SDGs.

Speaking at the event, the Youth Envoy, Ahmad Alhendawi, said: “We are proud to announce this group of young global citizens who are already transforming their communities. At the same time, the selection process was an important reminder of the great potential and talent of so many young people around the world, who are making immense contributions to peace, development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.”

The UN Young Leaders for the SDGs will be at the United Nations in New York for the opening of the 71<sup>st</sup> Session of the General Assembly, where they are scheduled to take part in a series of high-level meetings and events.

**About the initiative:** The Young Leaders Initiative is powered by the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and is part of the Global Youth Partnership for Sustainable Development Goals, launched in 2015 and housed in the Envoy's Office. From food to fashion to micro-finance, the UN Young Leaders for the SDGs, aged 19-30 years old, come from many different backgrounds, represent every region in the world and inspire all of

us to achieve the goals. The UN Young Leaders for the SDGs are recognized for their leadership and contribution to a more sustainable world. They will come together as a community to support efforts to engage young people in the realization of the SDGs both through strategic opportunities with the UN and through their existing initiatives, platforms and networks.

**About the Selection Process:** The UN Young Leaders for the SDGs were selected through a multi-step rigorous process during which they were also evaluated by a high-level Selection Committee comprised of representatives from governments, the United Nations, civil society and the private sector.

**About the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth:** In 2013, the UN Secretary-General's appointed Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi of Jordan as his first-ever Envoy on Youth and as the youngest senior official in the history of the organization. Mr. Alhendawi's mandate is to harmonize the UN system's efforts on youth development, enhance the UN response to youth needs, advocate for the development needs and rights of young people, as well as to bring the work of the United Nations on youth closer to them. The Envoy on Youth also acts as the advisor to and the representative of the Secretary-General on youth related matters.

**About the Sustainable Development Goals:** On January 1, 2016, the 17 SDGs of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an historic UN Summit — officially came into force. Over the next fifteen years, with these new Goals that universally apply to all, countries will mobilize efforts to promote prosperity while protecting the planet.

To meet the 2016 Class of the UN Young Leaders for the SDGs visit:

[www.sdgyoungleaders.org](http://www.sdgyoungleaders.org)

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