

**Towards the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum:  
Latin American and Caribbean perspectives on the COVID-19 recovery  
and youth action for a sustainable future  
Virtual Side Event for the Fifth Meeting of the Forum of the Countries of  
Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development 2022**

**Register at: <https://bit.ly/3lnVYvg>**

### **Identification**

**UN entities:** ECLAC, with UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNEP, UN WOMEN  
(tentative)

### **Youth-led networks:**

- Children, Adolescents and Youth Group - MeSCLAC / MGCY LAC
- The Millennials Movement - NNAYJ Group Coordination Organizing Committee
- Red de Salud de Mujeres Latinoamericanas y del Caribe - NNAYJ Group Organizing Committee Member
- RedLAC - NNAYJ Group Organizing Committee Member
- Caribbean Regional Youth Council (CRYC)
- Commonwealth Youth Council
- One Young World Caribbean
- Caribbean Youth Environment Network
- UNFPA Youth advisory group

### **Strategic Allies**

This meeting has the support of the cooperation project between ECLAC and the Government of Norway “Enhancing human capacities throughout the life cycle for equality and productivity”.

### **Background**

The multidimensional impact and intensification of already existing challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic on youth over the past two years has been widely discussed in various of ECLAC’s studies and seminars: gaps in access to education and school dropout, employability, mental health due to extensive periods of confinement, perspectives on the future, further marginalization of young women, among others. These circumstances surely put current and future children and youth at risk, generations that have a critical role in the attainment of the 2030 Agenda in the region and in the recovery process.

Towards the 2022 ECOSOC Youth Forum, a series of activities are being delivered to extend the dialogue with and for youth in Latin America and the Caribbean so as to create further opportunities to gather their opinions, expertise and recommendations on the five SDGs under review at the next High-Level Political Forum, namely SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals).

As a side event at the Fifth Meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development 2022, this Regional Youth Forum will create the space for the voices, concerns and needs of youth to be listened to by policy makers in the region so they can harness their power and innovative perspectives on the challenges and solutions that will be under discussion.

## **Key issues**

### **Education Youth Want and Need (SDG 4)**

The attainment of SDG 4 is facing various uncertainties, with new and amplified challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are, on the one hand, positive trends and reduction of structural gaps, such as the increase in the years of education of the population and the increase in access to the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels, particularly for girls and young women, for lower income quintiles of the population and children and youth in rural areas. On the other hand, however, some indicators have stagnated and even deteriorated, such as the completion and quality of secondary education and the alarming gaps in the access to tertiary education.

To control the spread of the COVID-19 virus, face-to-face classes were partially or entirely interrupted at all educational levels. Latin America and the Caribbean have the most prolonged period of interruption, 56 weeks on average until September 2021 (more than an academic year). The education disruption revealed and deepened existing inequalities, increasing dropout rates and learning losses and affecting young people's mental health and well-being. Indeed, the impact of the pandemic on students under vulnerable conditions, such as students with disabilities, migrants or students from indigenous communities requires urgent mitigation measures. Education is essential to enter the workforce under decent conditions, build citizens who actively engage on critical social and environmental issues, and achieve other SDGs. Therefore, inclusive quality education should be at the center of the recovery efforts by leaving no youth behind.

### **Generation Equality: Building back better with young women and girls at the center (SDG 5)**

Gender inequality has structural roots in Latin America and the Caribbean, which are fundamentally linked to the region's development model and the sexual division of work. The development model produces and reproduces inequality leaving women overrepresented in the economic sectors characterized by low-wage employment and limited access to social

protection. The sexual division of work, on the other hand, limits female participation in the economic and public spheres by making women the main responsible of domestic and care work. Broadly, there are four structural nodes of gender inequality limiting the economic, physical and decision-making autonomy of girls and women: (i) poverty and socioeconomic inequality, (ii) patriarchal values and the culture of privilege, (iii) the sexual division of work and care, and (iv) the concentration of power and the hierarchical relations in the public sphere.

The nature of the crisis and the confinement measures implemented to respond to the spread of the virus increased the burden of care work among girls, adolescents and women, as well as their exposure to situations of violence and abuse within their households. At the same time, the restrictions on mobility made it difficult to seek help and access services and safety nets. Moreover, given the difficulties in accessing appropriate, timely and quality health care, the pandemic has accentuated the gaps in the exercise of sexual and reproductive rights. In sum, the COVID-19 pandemic has deepened long-term gender inequalities in Latin America and the Caribbean, deterring the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda achievement.

### **Life below water and Youth: Connecting generations to protect our Ocean (SDG 14)**

The ocean is the planet's largest biosphere and climate regulator. It covers 70% of the earth's surface and absorbs 25% of all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and 90% of the heat from the emissions. The integrity of marine-coastal ecosystems is critical for the well-being and sustainability of people's livelihoods through its role in providing food and energy, sustaining economic activities such as tourism, fishing and marine gathering, and confronting climate change. However, there is little acknowledgement of its importance: pollution and overfishing, along with climate change, pose a significant threat to marine and coastal ecosystems.

The situation of mangrove forests, located along the tropical coastline and crucial for terrestrial and marine life, is particularly worrying. The region is home to almost a quarter of the world's mangroves, distributed mainly in coastal areas of its intertropical zone. They absorb 90% of the energy of the sea waves and protect against storms, giving security to coastal populations through their role in mitigating the effects of hurricanes and storms, reducing their financial, infrastructure and human lives costs. Moreover, they are very effective in carbon sequestration, harboring almost three times the amount maintained in temperate forests, and provide space for recreation and ecotourism. Unfortunately, however, this resource has been undervalued and is in danger due to significant losses in Latin America and the Caribbean and South and Southeast Asia.

### **Life on Land (SDG 15)**

There is no other region in the world with a higher average number of tons of biomass per hectare than Latin America and the Caribbean (50% higher than the world average). This figure shows the high quality of the forests in the region, generally with a multi-layered structure and enormous biodiversity, in species and life forms. The region's forests also stand out for their

relevance as a carbon sink and their role in stabilizing the world's climate and hydrological cycles, among many other ecosystem services. Unfortunately, although the diminishing rate has lowered, this area has declined by 138 million hectares in the last 30 years, which is equivalent, for example, to more than half of the size of Argentina.

Although deforestation rates have slowed in the region, forests remain in danger. In 15 countries, deforestation has increased in the last decade, threatening indigenous territories and livelihoods and pushing environments to a critical point of disturbance that can affect their capacity to recuperate. The main driver of deforestation in the region is the expansion of the agricultural and livestock frontier motivated by the high income associated with export products. At the same time, the impacts of climate change are growing, the frequency of disasters, such as forest fires, is increasing, pollution levels are worsening, and species extinction is growing. These trends have profound consequences for our planet's ecological integrity and people's lives, including many vulnerable young people. Among them is an increase in the risk of new outbreaks of zoonotic diseases and pandemics since ecosystems with high diversity reduce the possibility of diseases contagion to humans.

### **Financing our Future (SDG 17)**

Building back better and fairer from COVID-19 will require a strengthened global partnership that reduces risk, enables recovery and builds resilience—with a particular focus on the needs of youth and future generations. Despite inflation and other pressures, sustainable recovery requires targeted, high-impact sustained financing and investment in future generations. Non-financial investments, including capacity building, will also be critical to the long-term sustainability of recovery efforts.

In particular, efforts to mitigate the short- and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic require an unprecedented level of collaboration. We have seen many positive contributions from young people during the pandemic, which need to be made visible. Young people support the most vulnerable people in their communities and help save lives: even in a shortage of protective equipment, young health professionals risk their lives on the front lines of the pandemic. They also support the most vulnerable people in their communities. They must be acknowledged as key actors in the process of building a cohesive and inclusive social pact focused on well-being and rights in the context of the recovery process of the prolonged crisis.

### **Session Goals**

1. Provide space for young people of the LAC region to express their recommendations, insights and expertise on pressing needs and issues.
2. Showcase the youth engagement processes in preparation for the fifth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development and the ECOSOC Youth Forum LAC Regional Table with the 2022 HLPF theme “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

3. Follow up on regional youth consultation efforts towards the implementation and review processes of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the recovery process from the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. Reflect on the role of National Youth Policies as potential SDGs accelerators during the Decade of Action.
5. Create an interactive platform between youth and Member States to promote meaningful youth engagement in the revision, implementation and follow up process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Logistics:**

- a. **Date:** March 9th 2022, 2:30 a 4:00 pm (Costa Rica time), 90-minute session
- b. **Modality:** ZOOM
- c. **Applications to be used:** Pigeonhole/Slido, Mentimeter, Polls, Pollev, etc.
- d. **Registration form (link):** Provided by The Millennials Movement
- e. IT Support
- f. Translation in English confirmed
- h. Graphic Material  
 ESP: <https://trello.com/c/i1b9aNHj/16-english-graphic-material>  
 EN: <https://trello.com/c/i1b9aNHj/16-english-graphic-material>

**Session Structure (90min)**

Time	Activity	Potential presenters
10 min	Opening remarks	Jayathma Wickramanayake, United Nations Secretary-General Evouy on Youth
10 min	Context Presentation	Allán Sánchez, Working Group on Youth of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean
50 min	Intergenerational dialogue (conversation format)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Adrián Moreira, Representative of Costa Rica Government as Forum Presidency</li> <li>● Matías Capeluto, Representative of Argentina as Next Forum Presidency</li> <li>● 5 Regional Youth Representatives               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bernice Antoine, Co-chair of Youth Advisory Group of UNFPA</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Rosario Diaz Garavito, Punto Focal Electo del Grupo de NNAYJ - MeSCLAC / MGCY, Directora Ejecutiva The Millennials Movement</li> <li>● Eliana Riaño Vivaz, Punto Focal Adjunto Grupo de NNAYJ MeSCLAC, Red de Salud de las Mujeres Latinoamericanas y del</li> </ul>

		<p>Caribe RSMLAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sabrina Cabral Souza, Participante del Campamento Regional de Liderazgo Juvenil #JuventudesYa</li> <li>• Daniel Delgado; Coordinador de Movilización, World Vision Colombia</li> </ul> <p>Moderated by Daniela Trucco, UN ECLAC</p>
<b>15 min</b>	Q and A	Gabriela Nones, UNDP Miguel Trancozo, UNWOMEN
<b>5 min</b>	Videos youth voices	<p>Collection of videos from different youths that can share what action or what is the most important for them in the recovery process.</p> <p>Important: There must be a balance in terms of subregion/ countries, gender, and diverse youth groups.</p>
<b>6</b>	Closing remarks	TBC

### Trigger questions

1. What are the good practices in your country/community/youth networks that are being implemented in order to address the challenges of the SDGs prioritized?
2. What are your major concerns for the next 10-15 years of the regional youth that engaged during the process?
3. How do young people want to be involved in the response to the challenges and concerns identified?
4. From the consultation what are the practices and policies member States should follow to address challenges and concerns for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals? What are some concrete actions that need to be implemented to leave no one behind, in particular most vulnerable and traditionally marginalized youth such as youth with disabilities or indigenous youth?

### Suggested reading

#### General:

- A. Outcomes of the Caribbean Youth Dialogues (to be available by end of February)
- B. Outcomes of the Latin American Youth Dialogue (to be available 2nd week of march)

- C. First and Second United Nations Survey on Latin American and Caribbean Youth in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic
- D. Outcomes of the regional online consultation (1st cut)
- E. Statement of the Children, Adolescent and Youth Group Towards the Forum

**SDG 4:**

- A. [COVID-19 pandemic: the right to education of children and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)
- B. La educación en tiempos de la pandemia de COVID-19
- C. [Education during the COVID-19 pandemic: Access, inclusion and psychosocial support](#)
- D. Diversificación de la estructura de la escuela secundaria y segmentación educativa en América Latina

**SDG 5:**

- A. La autonomía económica de las mujeres en la recuperación sostenible y con igualdad
- B. Los riesgos de la pandemia de COVID-19 para el ejercicio de los derechos sexuales y reproductivos de las mujeres
- C. La pandemia del COVID-19 profundiza la crisis de los cuidados en América Latina y el Caribe
- D. Estrategia de Montevideo para la Implementación de la Agenda Regional de Género en el Marco del Desarrollo Sostenible hacia 2030

**SDGs 14 y 15:**

- A. Acuerdo de Escazú: Acuerdo Regional sobre el Acceso a la Información, la Participación Pública y el Acceso a la Justicia en Asuntos Ambientales en América Latina y el Caribe

**SDG 17:**

- A. Pactos políticos y sociales para la igualdad y el desarrollo sostenible en América Latina y el Caribe en la recuperación pos-COVID-19
  
- B. Building forward better: Action to strengthen the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Fourth report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean  
<https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/46696-building-forward-better-action-strengthen-2030-agenda-sustainable-development>