

**The Assistant Director-General
for Priority Africa and External Relations**

To Secretaries-General
of National Commissions
for UNESCO

26 March 2025

Ref: SHS/REI/YOU/25/008

Dear Secretary-General,

On behalf of the Director-General, I am pleased to inform you that the **14th UNESCO Youth Forum** will be held on 27 and 28 October 2025 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, immediately preceding the 43rd session of the General Conference.

This event will be an opportunity to mobilize UNESCO's cross-cutting mandate to further discussions on climate action and social impacts, particularly for young people. It will result in concrete youth recommendations and youth-led actions, that will be presented at the General Conference.


In line with the decision adopted by the Executive Board at its 216th session, I am pleased to invite you to propose up to three young people to be considered to take part in this Forum. They should be aged between 18 and 35 and have recognized expertise in UNESCO's fields of competence as related to the theme of the Forum, and/or experience in designing or leading impactful initiatives within the scope of UNESCO's work related to the theme. Based on these three recommendations, and according to the enclosed selection criteria, the UNESCO Secretariat will select one youth participant per National Commission.

You are invited to submit your National Commission's proposals **by 18 April 2025, midnight Paris time**, by filling out the form at the following link: <https://forms.office.com/e/1UBMKPDS9z>. Please note that the National Commission will be responsible for bearing all costs and making arrangements for their selected participant.

I would also like to take the opportunity to ask all National Commissions to consider the possibility of supporting (1) the participation of youth from Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS); (2) the costs for the Forum organization; and/or (3) the Forum follow-up by funding youth-led action projects through the UNESCO Global Youth Grant Scheme and its Multi-Donor Special Account. Should you be able to do so, kindly notify Ms Souria Saad-Zoi (s.saad-zoy@unesco.org – tel. +33 1 45 68 20 56) by 18 April 2025.

Further information on the Forum, the role of its participants and the selection criteria is enclosed (Annex 1 and Annex 2).

Yours sincerely,



Firmin Edouard Matoko

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C.C.: Permanent Delegations to UNESCO

Guidelines for the participants of the 14th UNESCO Youth Forum

The UNESCO Youth Forum

- In 1999, UNESCO became the first United Nations agency, at the time, to implement a youth engagement mechanism, the Youth Forum, in the context of the General Conference as the Organization's highest decision-making body. UNESCO being an intergovernmental organization, its General Conference consists of the representatives of the Organization's Member States. It meets every two years. It determines the policies and the main lines of work of the Organization and adopts its programmes and budget.
- For 26 years now, the Youth Forum has been a space where young people can express their views, share their challenges and propose relevant solutions. Through the years, the Forum has undergone innovations with a view to deepening its alignment to the needs and challenges of young people. The most recent editions have also aimed at designing concrete solutions to strengthen youth engagement through youth-to-youth cooperation and partnerships between UNESCO and young people and youth-led organizations, highlighting the non-governmental nature of this space.
- The theme of the 14th UNESCO Youth Forum, "Climate action and social impacts, particularly for young people" is aligned with the young people's expressed preference, and will ensure continuity with the 13th edition, for a greater and more lasting impact.
- The 13th edition of the Forum in 2023 resulted in tangible outcomes in the form of a call for action and global and regional recommendations, which were shared with Member States during the 42nd session of the General Conference. Five youth-led projects were also selected for implementation after the Forum and as part of the Global Youth Grant Scheme: on climate impact on people with disabilities (Nepal), climate education capacity-building in Petra (Jordan), mapping water-related risks (Argentina), youth mental health (Slovenia), and STEM for climate action (Malawi). See the Conclusions of the Youth Forum [here](#) (42 C/INF.13).
- Youth participants from the Forum will be selected to present its recommendations at the General Conference, ensuring their voices are heard by all 194 UNESCO Member States.

The Forum participants

- Have expertise in UNESCO's fields of competence and mandate as related to the theme of the Forum.
- Have demonstrated experience as active and engaged citizens in their communities, showcasing a commitment to creating positive change.

- Should reflect the different ways in which youth engage as active citizens: from participation in national youth councils to youth-led social enterprises, youth-led research, advocacy and media initiatives. As an ultimate goal, their perspectives should contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Are expected to bring new ideas and innovative solutions to the pressing challenges of our time.
- Are expected to contribute their perspectives to the global debate, enabling UNESCO and its Member States to integrate them into policy and programme development.
- Are expected to foster a constructive and inclusive environment for positive debate and exchange, focusing on substantive discussions while avoiding politicization.
- Are expected to respect each other's differences, embracing the diversity of cultures, experiences, and viewpoints.

14th UNESCO Youth Forum

Selection criteria of the participants

The selection process will be transparent and inclusive, and based on the following criteria:

- Recognized expertise in UNESCO's fields of competence and relevant to the Forum's theme, and/or demonstrated experience in designing or leading impactful initiatives on the ground within the scope of UNESCO's work in this area
- Age range: 18-35 years old
- Gender balance
- Regional balance
- Balance in terms of experience/expertise in UNESCO's fields of competence
- Diversity of profiles, such as students, researchers/scientists/experts, practitioners, i.e. social entrepreneurs, NGO leaders, young staff in the United Nations and development organizations, representatives of youth constituencies, artists, social influencers, athletes.

From the recommendations received from National Commissions, the Secretariat will select one youth participant per National Commission.

From recommendations received from UNESCO partners, the Secretariat will select up to one-third of all youth representatives.