



CONCEPT NOTE

Side Event — 2026 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Youth Voices for a Sustainable Future:

Experiences, Perspectives, and Recommendations on SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11, and 17

Event Details

Event Title	Youth Voices for a Sustainable Future: Experiences, Perspectives, and Recommendations on SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11, and 17
Forum	2026 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF 2026)
Dates	7–15 July 2026, United Nations Headquarters, New York
Date	July 8, 2026
Time	8:30am EDT (New York); 90-minute session
Format	Online
Registration Link	https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/w711VosBRSeKB1zu-65C_Q
HLPF 2026 Theme	"Transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs for a sustainable future for all"
Target Audience	Youth delegations and young changemakers; civil society organizations; UN member state representatives; UN agencies and NGOs working on SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11, and 17
Event Sponsors	Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Loreto Generalate, VIVAT International, Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, The Grail, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, The Dominican Leadership Conference, Justice Coalition of Religious
Event Partners	JPIC Office, Spain; Mary Ward Centre, Toronto

Event Objective

This side event creates a platform for young people from around the world to facilitate meaningful dialogue on their lived experiences, perspectives, and recommendations on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under in-depth review at the 2026 HLPF: SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Youth will not only speak to the barriers or inequities they may face in accessing clean water, energy, safe cities and communities, and essential infrastructure, but will also present creative solutions and concrete, community-oriented recommendations for policymakers and global partners. The event is designed, facilitated, and led by young people, reflecting the HLPF 2026 call for transformative and inclusive action for future generations.

Through plenary panel discussion, interactive breakout conversations, and a youth-led closing call to action, event participants will gain a grounded understanding of how SDG interlinkages are experienced at the community level, and leave with actionable insights to carry forward in their own advocacy and implementation efforts.

Background

With 2030 just four years away, the world is at a critical moment in delivering on the SDGs. The 2026 HLPF focuses on five goals that are interconnected and foundational to the wellbeing of current and future generations — clean water, affordable energy, resilient infrastructure, inclusive cities, and enhanced through global partnerships.

Progress on these goals remains uneven, and in some cases, there is regression. Young people (aged 10 to 24 years) number 1.8 billion today, and this generation is disproportionately affected by the consequences of slow or insufficient action. Youth in low- and middle-income countries face daily realities of water insecurity, energy poverty, and exclusion from the digital economy. Young residents of rapidly urbanizing cities grapple with inadequate and unaffordable housing, infrastructure deficits, and climate vulnerability. At the same time, young people are among the most dynamic advocates, innovators, and implementers driving SDG progress in their communities.

This side event places young people at the center of the conversation as co-facilitators, panelists, and co-creators of actionable policy recommendations for the global community.

Format / Speakers

- Welcome - Youth Host (Australia)
- Opening Remarks - Member State (TBC)
- Moderator - Youth (United States)
- Panelists:
 - Youth Speaker 1 - Philippines
 - Youth Speaker 2 - Ukraine

- Youth Speaker 3 - India
- Youth Speaker 4 - Spain
- Youth Speaker 5 - TBC
- Small Group Breakout Conversations
- Closing - Youth Host (Nepal or India)

Alignment with Global Frameworks

This side event is grounded in and contributes to several key global frameworks and commitments:

- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — directly supports in-depth review of SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11, and 17 at HLPF 2026 under the theme of transformative, equitable, and innovative action.
- HLPF 2026 Theme — "Transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda" — the event embodies this theme by centering youth-led transformation and innovation as catalysts for SDG progress.
- Pact for the Future (2024) — reflects commitments to meaningful youth engagement in global governance and to accelerating SDG implementation with the full participation of young people.
- ECOSOC Youth Forum — complements and extends the work of the annual forum by bringing youth perspectives directly into the HLPF side event space.
- UN Secretary-General's Youth2030 Strategy — aligns with the strategy's call for youth co-leadership in the 2030 Agenda and its emphasis on investing in young people as agents of change.

Expected Outcomes

By the conclusion of this 90-minute side event, organizers expect the following outcomes:

- Amplified youth voices: Policymakers, UN agencies, and civil society partners hear directly from young people about the real-world impact of SDG 6, 7, 9, 11, and 17 progress and gaps.
- Youth Declaration / Call to Action on SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11, and 17: A concise, publicly available document capturing youth recommendations for member states, UN bodies, and non-governmental partners.
- Enhanced cross-sectoral dialogue: In-person and online participants engage in substantive, peer-to-peer exchange on SDG challenges and solutions.
- Strengthened youth networks: Youth participants from diverse regions connect across issue areas and organizations, building solidarity and collaborative capacity for ongoing SDG advocacy.
- Increased institutional accountability: Event proceedings and the Youth Declaration are shared with HLPF delegations and included in the broader civil society record of HLPF 2026.