

To Secretaries-General
of National Commissions
for UNESCO

9 June 2023

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

Ref: SHS/REI/YOU/23/008

Dear Secretary-General,

On behalf of the Director-General, I have the pleasure of informing you that, in line with the decision adopted by the Executive Board at its 216th session, the **13th UNESCO Youth Forum** will be held on 14 and 15 November 2023 at UNESCO Headquarters, during the 42nd session of the General Conference.

This edition will be an opportunity to take advantage of UNESCO's cross-cutting mandate to discuss the social impact of climate change and the need for an equitable climate transition, particularly for young people. It will also make it possible to put forward concrete recommendations and actions, which will be highlighted at the end of the Forum.

To ensure that the Forum's discussions have a lasting impact, Member States can provide crucial support through the Multi-Donor Special Account. In addition, financial support for the most promising solutions is possible through the Global Youth Grant Scheme, which also provides for capacity-strengthening workshops and mentoring.

Further information on the cross-cutting approach of the Forum and the role and contributions of participants is enclosed (Annex I).

I am therefore pleased to invite you to propose up to three young people 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 initiatives connected with the mandate of our Organization.

You are kindly invited to submit these names **by 28 June 2023, midnight Paris time**, by filling out the form at the following link: <https://forms.office.com/e/Jv2wQxWe2J>

In this framework, I am pleased to inform you that the next online monthly meeting with National Commissions will take place on 20 June 2023 and will be dedicated to the preparation of the Youth Forum. This meeting will also be an opportunity to answer any questions that you might have related to this major event.

The final selection of participants will be based on the criteria adopted by the Executive Board at its 216th session (Annex 2). Due attention will be paid to ensuring a fair gender, geographical and thematic balance, as well as to ensuring a diversity of engagement profiles.

All participation costs will be borne by the National Commission, which will also make all necessary arrangements to ensure that the selected participant is able to contribute to discussions.

Allow me to take this opportunity to invite all National Commissions to consider the possibility of supporting (1) the participation of youth from Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States; (2) the costs for the Forum organization; and/or (3) the Forum follow-up through the UNESCO Global Youth Grant Scheme. Should you be able to do so, kindly notify Ms Souria Saad-Zoi, Chief, Youth Section, Social and Human Sciences Sector (s.saad-zoy@unesco.org – tel. +33 1 45 68 20 56) by 28 July 2023.

Yours sincerely,


Firmin Edouard Matoko

Encl.: 2

C.C.: Permanent Delegations to UNESCO

Guidelines for the participants of the 13th 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 24 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 making it more in line with the needs and challenges of the youth. The two 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 organizations, highlighting the non-governmental nature of this space.

The Forum participants

- Have expertise in UNESCO's fields of competence as related to the theme of the Forum.
- Have demonstrated experience as active and engaged citizens in their communities.
- Should reflect the different ways in which youth engage today as active citizens: from engagement in National Youth Councils to youth-led social enterprises, youth-led research, advocacy and media. As an ultimate goal, youth perspectives should contribute to Sustainable Development Goals.
- On that basis, are expected to bring new ideas and innovative solutions to the challenges of our time.
- As such, are expected to bring their perspectives to the global debate for UNESCO to take them into account in developing its policies and programmes.
- Are expected to promote constructive, positive debate and exchange, focusing on substantive discussions and avoiding politization.
- Are expected to be respectful of each other's differences.
- Young participants in the Forum will be selected to present the recommendations of the Forum to the General Conference, thus having their voices heard by the 193 UNESCO Member States.

13th 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 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 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, representative 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 youth representatives.