



2018 UNCTAD Youth Forum Report



Geneva, March 2019

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Introduction

Every two years, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) organizes a Youth Forum. Under the theme of **Youth Entrepreneurship: A Force Towards Inclusive and Sustainable Growth**, the 2018 edition took place at UNCTAD’s headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, as part of the World Investment Forum. It offered youth the opportunity to have an interactive dialogue with global players involved in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and allowed them to express their views on issues they want to see included in the international agenda, while learning more about UNCTAD’s work and projects with the youth.

**“Flag of every nation
hoist together here.
Hence, bringing out the
essence of the world
United.”**

Vansh Madaan, India

Over 150 young men and women, aged between 18 and 30 years old, from 70 countries, participated in the forum’s panel sessions and workshops with thought leaders, futurists and experts, as well as in Youth o’Clocks where eminent guest speakers engaged with youth to share experiences to help make them thrive.

The programme was set up by youth in close collaboration with the UNCTAD secretariat and covered a wide range of topics of concern to millennials such as the future of entrepreneurship, smart villages, cybersecurity, blockchain technologies, leadership and teamwork, negotiations and social media influencers, women’s empowerment and the concept to think globally and act locally – to name a few.

The Youth Forum is part of a larger programme that UNCTAD runs with youth with the principle “for youth, with youth”. Through its Youth Network, students or young professionals between the ages of 18 to 30 who are interested in trade and development issues, can participate in the Youth Forum for which 250 seats are usually available. Participation is subject to a competitive application and selection process based on best practices.

UNCTAD Youth Network and its Youth Forums contribute to the overall work of the United Nations in support of youth.

**“UNCTAD Youth Forum 2018 was
a week full of intellectual
discourses & stories of how
people are helping to achieve the
ambitious SDGs. It was a time of
great networking & meeting
people from all walks of life.
Thanks to UNCTAD for organizing
such a forum, it will always be a
proud moment for me.”**

Christian Inkum, Ghana

Outcome

Building upon the first-ever UNCTAD Youth Forum in 2016 that resulted in a Youth Declaration, the 2018 edition successfully focused on reinforcing a strong network among the youth.

The youth participants considered it crucial to take the UNCTAD Youth Network a step further with the following outcomes :

- ◇ Further strengthen the youth platform that UNCTAD set up in 2016 which enables youth to interact among themselves as well as with world leaders and other important stakeholders;
- ◇ Continue with and reinforce the “for youth, with youth” principle that UNCTAD maintains in its dealings with youth;
- ◇ Pledge UNCTAD’s support to launch the Youth Action Hub initiative;
- ◇ Be invited to UNCTAD meetings and be able to share the views of the youth related to UNCTAD’s work;
- ◇ Have UNCTAD Youth Forums as part of another major UNCTAD event in order to provide youth with opportunities for networking, and continuous learning and to bring forward the youth agenda;
- ◇ Submit news to UNCTAD on youth-related activities in support of the SDGs to UNCTAD to support their efforts as game changers for inclusive and sustainable development;
- ◇ Inspire trust and confidence in youth;
- ◇ Enable youth to share their experiences and learnings at community level and help implement them;
- ◇ Call to further support and empower youth entrepreneurship which is considered as a force towards inclusive and sustainable development, rural development and green economies, promote gender equality, support a mindset makeover and provide an environment where youth have a right to fail as well as continuous education and skill development.



“Together we had five intense days of discussions, workshops and inspirational seminars with full emersion in SDGs and youth empowerment issues”
Chenxi Zhu from China



“Seeing the best and brightest minds and politicians in their field while working with the future youth leaders of the world was an inspiration and a blessing ”
LeAundré Knight from Barbados

Day One – 22 October 2018

Way to the Future

“Young people have great solutions and given the right opportunities and support, they have huge potential to drive economic growth”

*Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi,
Secretary-General of
UNCTAD*

With the UNCTAD Youth song “Pamoja” (Together) by the Kenyan musical group ELANI playing in the background, youth participants were welcomed to the 2018 edition of the Youth Forum. Following an icebreaker exercise where youth got to know each other, Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD, opened the forum and emphasized that youth are the real owners of the 2030 Agenda. He expressed the hope that this forum would offer an opportunity for all young participants to take part in the global policy dialogue and take action.

The morning sessions focused on the **Way to the Future** to set the scene for the rest of the week. Cybersecurity - a topic that will gain in importance, and impact both private and professional life was discussed, after which one of the youth teams presented the recently adopted United Nations (UN) Youth Strategy 2030 with the aim to align the forum’s sessions with the international youth agenda. Finally, a Youth o’Clock session took place where a futuristic version of entrepreneurship was presented.

Cybersecurity Starts with You

Nowadays, it is important to learn how to protect computer systems from hackers, be it from the theft and damage of hardware and software to data breaches. Rubi Hernandez from Mexico led the session on cybersecurity that allowed youth to get a good insight on the role each individual plays therein. She presented Prof. Solange Ghernaouti, a reputed advisor on security policies from the University of Lausanne, Switzerland, who, after having



“We don’t plug our devices, we plug our life. All the Internet of Things can be the Internet of Threat”

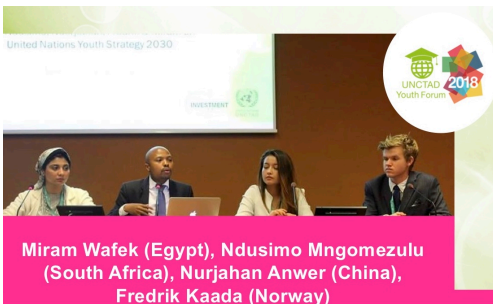
*Prof. Solange Ghernaouti,
UNIL; Advisory roles on
Cybersecurity*

introduced the participants to the challenges and developments of cybersecurity, went into detail about the critical lens that needs to be applied to technology, as quite often, people simply accept new developments without asking questions on the kind of impact these new technologies many have in our lives. However, she stressed that it is more and more difficult to be conscious of the risks and impact because of the increased level of interdependency and interconnectedness that globalization, digitalization and

hyperconnection bring along. Dr. Ghernaouti outlined that there is a need to strike a balance within business models between security, privacy and liberties due to the shift of power to electronics, artificial intelligence and computer sciences.

Youth as Partners : the United Nations Youth Strategy 2030

Well ahead of the Youth Forum, a youth team took ownership on the topic of the United Nations (UN) Youth Strategy 2030 and started their short interventions throughout the week with a well-received introductory presentation on the first morning. Their role was to explain what the UN



Youth Strategy 2030 is about and engage the forum’s 150 participants in how youth can make a contribution to “... a world in which the human rights of every young person are realized; that ensures every young person is empowered to achieve their full potential; and that recognizes young people’s agency, resilience and their positive contributions as agents of change...”.

Miram Wafek (Egypt), Ndusimo Mngomezulu (South Africa), Nurjahan Anwer (China), Fredrik Kaada (Norway)

Important elements of the UN Youth Strategy 2030 that were brought forward are the five pillars of (1) youth engagement, (2) participation and advocacy, (3) ensuring informed and healthy foundation through education and health care, (4) economic empowerment through decent work, (5) human right and peace and resilience building. The team highlighted the unique role that young people have in supporting development, as this generation can support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through creativity, digital savviness and embracing new perspectives.

“The UN Youth Strategy truly sets the entrepreneurial scene for the youngest generation 18 – 30 years”
Fredrik Kaada, Norway

Youth o’Clock : Way to the Future with Tiago Mattos

Tiago Mattos is a futurist from Brazil and a member of the UNCTAD EMPRETEC entrepreneurship programme. He came to Geneva to hold a Youth o’Clock session where he delivered a thought-



provoking presentation about the way to the future of entrepreneurship. After having been introduced by Chenxi Zhu from China, he asked the youth to re-examine the idea of “abundance” which is based on playing the “innocent wonderment” as he calls it, a role in an organization where one fearlessly aspires towards leaving a meaningful legacy and working altruistically towards furthering the common good.

Moderated by Chenxi Zhu (China) with Tiago Mattos, Futurist (Brazil)

Under loud applause, youth were encouraged to re-spect abundance and look again at our primary assumption to challenge it and create abundance rituals every day.

“Re-spect means to look again”
Tiago Mattos, Futurist from Brazil & Empretec

Day Two – 23 October 2018

Investing in Digital Youth

The second day of the youth forum focused on **Investing in Digital Youth**. Young entrepreneurs running tech businesses were invited to share their stories and the challenges they face, both as young entrepreneurs and pioneers on new technologies in their respective countries. What does this mean? Are the difficulties these entrepreneurs encounter different from the ones of other economic sectors? And in particular, what are blockchains about and why should youth care?

Meet the Netpreneurs - champions for the New Digital Economy

The fast development of cutting-edge technology allows for new ways in doing business that creates opportunities for developing countries. An e-commerce ecosystem, bringing together industry sectors such as an e-commerce platform, e-payment, logistics and big data, offers businesses the ability to expand from local to regional or global markets, develop rural areas, and involve vulnerable groups such as women and youth in trade. It also brings, among many other features, market knowledge allowing for the formulation of sound economic policies.

“Leadership is about setting a direction and inspiring”

*Brian Wong,
Vice-President,
Alibaba Group*

During this panel session that was moderated by Viridiana Garcia-Quiles of UNCTAD, five young start-up entrepreneurs from Africa and Asia shared their experience and insights on what it meant to them to participate in the joint UNCTAD and Alibaba Business School eFounders Fellowship programme that helps bridge the digital divide faced by young entrepreneurs in developing countries.

As champions for the new economy, Caroline Kariuki, founder of Sarai Afrique Fashion House from Kenya, Jessica Anuna, founder and CEO of Klasha from Nigeria, Teddy Warria, founder of Africa’s Talking from Kenya, Magellan Fetalino, founder and CEO of Acurdeen from the Philippines and Nancie Amunga, CEO of Dana Communications from Kenya explained how the 10 day study tour to the headquarters of Alibaba Group had enabled them to successfully further develop their business. They learned from China’s e-commerce development over the last 20 years and what are the important elements needed to successfully develop a tech business.

“As an entrepreneur, they will always see the glory, but not the story”

*Caroline Kariuki,
eFounder Fellow*

Having a long-term plan with a clear vision and mission, setting up partnerships, finding a business solution to a problem and putting customers first were among the takeaways they said. They also emphasized on the right to fail which forged them as an entrepreneur, and the number of times they would stand up again.



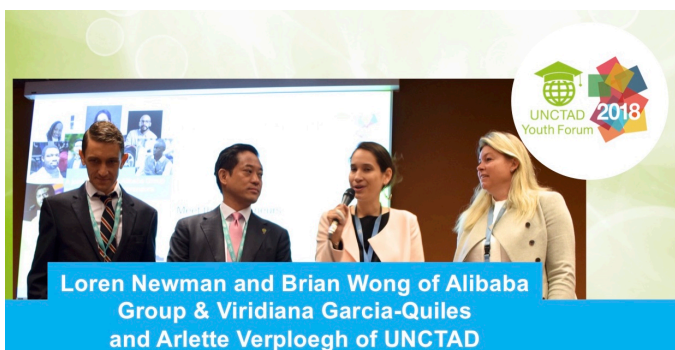
In addition, Magellan spoke about how to find niches in a market full of inefficiencies and the importance of thoroughly understanding your model and being able to explain it in a 30 seconds or less pitch; thereby showing your command of market knowledge to potential investors. Teddy recalled one of Jack Ma’s sayings “Small is beautiful, small is wonderful” meaning that even though you will start small, you will have to appreciate the small beginning. Caroline mentioned that being able to visit China has allowed her to rethink what retail is and how

Africa is in the unique position to skip many of the analogue market days and go straight to the digital age. In their closing words, the panellists encouraged youth to take part in this digital transformation and redefine the job landscape.

Youth o’Clock : a Smart Partnership to tackle the Digital Divide

Arlette Verploegh of UNCTAD and Brian Wong of the Alibaba Group continued the discussion to talk about the smart partnership UNCTAD and the Alibaba Business School entered into. A few times a year, youth start-ups have the possibility of visiting Alibaba Group’s headquarters and experience the development of ecommerce over the last 20 years in China and what it entails setting up an ecommerce ecosystem. Upon return in their home countries, these young entrepreneurs are better equipped to further advance their businesses. Many of them are social entrepreneurs and see it as their duty to be game changers and help bridge the digital divide by offering vulnerable groups with training and online platforms as well as to help consumers in getting acquainted with ecommerce to name a few.

“When you have an inspiring story to tell, share it with other youth entrepreneurs and empower them to thrive”
*Arlette Verploegh,
 Deputy Chief of Staff,
 UNCTAD*



In total, 1000 entrepreneurs from developing countries will become champions for the new economy, inspire and mentor other youth entrepreneurs and participate in creating a conducive e-commerce environment.

Blockchains, why should I learn more about it?

When people invest in Bitcoin or Ethereum, are they cognizant of the blockchain technology beauties? The digital currencies sphere is enormous, and many people are talking about it worldwide, but do we really understand what lies under the name? And what is the connection with the global economy in the fourth industrial era? Moderated by Eugenia Novoa Zubiria from Ecuador, a panel of experts and youth entrepreneurs on blockchains gave a brief description of what blockchains are and the technology's ability to revolutionize industries.

"Core value is to bring power back to the people"

*Francesco Abbate,
Swiss Crypto Advisers*

Francesco Abbate, CEO of the Geneva based Swiss Crypto Advisers, started by saying that a blockchain is itself based on inherent trust since the ledgers can be seen by everyone, which eliminates the need for a central governing body, thereby leading to less bureaucracy and increased efficiency. The young start-up entrepreneurs Nicholas Kee of Next Gen Creators from Jamaica and Arnaud Salomon of Mt Pelerin from Switzerland, then went on to talk about the concepts of smart contracts that they described as a protocol that verifies, negotiates and performs a contract without any oversight of a human. The

panel ended by addressing some specifics about the future of blockchains and cryptocurrencies, and that the hype over Initial Coin Offerings (ICO) will most likely decrease over time and government agencies will try to start regulating the crypto market.

Following the more technical part of the session on blockchains, Eugenia Novoa Zubiria and Rohan Singh from India challenged the youth in the room to test their knowledge about blockchains in a practical and business-minded manner. Joined by Yann Gerardi, also from the start-up Mt. Pelerin, the blockchain team asked the youth to return to their teams and design a business model that would include blockchain technology. While at the beginning youth felt lost, they all said at the end of the day that they enjoyed the exercise. With help from the blockchain experts who

had been giving advice, the youth presented innovative ideas to the entire group covering, for instance, more efficiency in food distribution in Africa, SDG sustainability in Latin America, and even how to solve problems of unreliable online dating platforms. At the end of the workshop, one of the participants said "We will stop talking about blockchains as something foreign once it will be as normal as "http" for the web. It will be in the background we don't even notice it."

Youth Entrepreneurship in Latin America

Following on from the morning focus on youth entrepreneurship in the new economy in Africa and Asia, the International Youth Organization for Ibero-America (OIJ) subsequently took the floor, represented by its Director for International Relations Alejandra Saenz, to present its most





**Daniela Perozo Coste (Dominican Republic)
with Alejandra Saenz, Director OIJ**

“Invest in technology infrastructure, promote entrepreneurship in high technology and work in tandem with entrepreneurs to learn about their needs”
Alejandra Saenz, Director, OIJ

recent report on youth entrepreneurship. The report is an analysis of political and economic systems of Iberoamerican countries and their impact on youth and entrepreneurship. Indicators behind “good youth entrepreneurship” include physical infrastructure, access to training, along with social and cultural norms that predict the level of youth entrepreneurship in various Iberoamerican countries. Backed up by Daniela Perozo Coste from the Dominican Republic who introduced the speaker and managed the questions part of the session, Alejandra Saenz concluded by giving some recommendations on how governments can improve the entrepreneurial landscape in the region.



Investing in Digital Youth Day

Day Three – 24 October 2018

Youth at the Negotiating Table

Under Wednesday’s sub-theme of **Youth at the Negotiation Table**, that talked about the position of youth, the role of the youth in the world became even more relevant as the day’s events were coloured by youth wearing national costumes, celebrating the United Nations Day that marks the anniversary of the entry into force in 1945 of the United Nations Charter.

“There is a clear link between being passionate about a specific SDG and realizing a positive impact”
Panellists Youth4SDGs session

How the youth can influence outcomes of the goals set by world leaders and other international players were discussed in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Youth Strategy 2030. A clear example was given on rural development and not leaving anyone behind. How youth can act to realize their true potential came about in a Youth o’Clock conversation with the First Lady of Botswana, followed by a lively debate on how youth can be social media influencers while protecting private data.

Youth for Sustainable Development Goals

As a way of introducing the topic, guest speaker Adam Koniuszewski of the Bridge Foundation, took the floor and gave an insightful talk about why young men and women in the world should care about the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the role of finance in their implementation.

“Business models should be based on social impact and not on revenue”
Daniele Guadagnolo from Italy

This was followed by a panel session, led by Samira Fierro Sedas from Mexico, on the challenges that exist to implement the SDGs and how to ensure that the knowledge and expertise of the youth are mobilized. The SDGs are inseparable and difficult to achieve because of their broad nature and the challenge of reaching all sectors of the population. Concrete examples of difficulties to overcome are, for instance, youth unemployment and corruption. It is important to include everyone in the process, which requires specific actions such as empowering youth and finding creative solutions.

While Ebba Engstrom from Sweden highlighted the potential of technology and recommended systemic applications of technological solutions, and Daniele Guadagnolo from Italy pushed for typical profit-based businesses to incorporate the SDGs into their models, Thomson Ch’ng from



Moderated by Samira Fierro Sedas (Mexico), with Chris Garroway (UNCTAD), Daniele Guadagnolo (Italy), Ebba Engstrom (Sweden), Linda Okero (Kenya), Thomson Ch'ng (Malaysia), Alejandra Saenz (OIJ), Laurens Houwink (the Netherlands)

Malaysia introduced the concept of the “5 Ps”, namely public-private-profession people partnerships stressing the need to expand collaborative efforts beyond traditional public-private partnerships. Chris Garroway from UNCTAD continued by saying that the United Nations should be used as a foundation for the expansion of the SDGs into other sectors of society. While adoption of the SDGs by private companies and other stakeholders is already occurring, this must be expanded if there is hope of meeting the SDGs by 2030.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

With irresistible enthusiasm, the discussion on the sustainable development goals continued in the form of a youth debate, this time led by a team of four youth representatives who focused on strategies that youth can employ to help meet the SDGs. As a warm up, youth in the room were invited to participate in a quiz where their knowledge on the millennium development goals and the SDGs were put to the test.

“SDG related initiatives require resiliency and a shift in perspective, a task for which youth are particularly well-suited”
Panelists SDGs debate



Christian Inkum (Ghana), Amanda Abrom (USA), Felipe Villela (Brazil), Qaiser Nawab (Pakistan)

This was followed by concrete examples being given on youth strategies, which included the SDGs. For example, Qaiser Nawab from Pakistan explained several initiatives being used in his country, including translating the SDGs into local dialects, participating in United Nations’ days, engaging in gender equality campaigns and creating SDG chairs in local governments. In Brazil, the founder of ReNature, Felipe Villela, is seeking to restore ecosystems by developing agroforestry instead of the more traditional agriculture.

Youth o’Clock : A conversation with H.E. Mrs. Neo Masisi, First Lady of Botswana

During an intimate conversation that was facilitated by Nancie Amunga from Uganda, the First Lady of Botswana, H.E. Mrs. Neo Masisi, shared her insights about the SDGs based on her experience working at the United Nations and now as her role as First Lady. Topics she touched upon were the importance of education, including life-long learning, and how people are a key resource in life. A partnership between world leaders and the youth can help advance the SDGs. The First Lady also had special words for the female youth in the room, stressing the importance of encouraging them to surround themselves with people who are supportive and aspire to further development.

**“Put a value tag to yourself.
Nobody would give it to you
and don’t allow anybody to
define that value tag for
you; define it yourself”**

*H.E. Mrs. Neo Masisi, First
Lady of Botswana*



Linking Rural Markets to the Global Economy

Developing rural markets’ ecosystems is central to addressing societal and environmental challenges towards reducing poverty and enhancing sustainable production and consumption practices. How can youth businesses contribute to connecting (offline) rural markets to the global economy? How can rural population be sensitized to the opportunities that new technologies offer?

**“Combining improved data,
traditional knowledge and
modern science has the
potential to create a thriving
smart village economy in which
youth and other parts of the
population can prosper”**

*Panellists of Linking Rural
Markets to the Global Economy*

A key message coming out of the panel session was that rural markets ought to be developed if the issues of poverty and increased sustainable production are to be addressed. Moderated by Kanika Sahijani from India, panellists said that not only are challenges in least developed countries more prominent in rural areas, there are also still areas in these countries where 80 per cent of the population live below the poverty line. Adversity related to stagnated rural economies encourages migration and leads to brain drain, causing youth with high potential to move to large cities or emigrate to other countries where there are often

more diverse opportunities. The panellists suggested two avenues to stimulate rural economies, namely to improve the situation and perception of agriculture or develop other sources of viable income for rural areas, such as small-scale industry.

The concept of Smart Villages was also discussed. Advanced technology and access to information technology tools for agriculture are currently lacking, but could be increased by expanding the electrical infrastructure in rural areas. Apps are being created to benefit farmers, and by providing access to information such as successful farming techniques, market prices in nearby cities, weather, rainfall and more, agricultural yields could be substantially improved.



“Let’s empower young people to take action and support rural communities facing the challenge to increase their production and help them create job opportunities to reduce the migration of their people to urban areas”
Daniela Perozo Coste from the Dominican Republic

Data.Me

New technologies and business models rely a lot on trust and people willing to share personal information. Lately, we hear a lot about data collection, such as artificial intelligence, big data, Internet of Things or cloud computing and the ways they impact personal life and work.

“As an influencer, use social media for positive change”
Zanna van Dijk, Vlogger & Blogger from the UK

Sanya Rajpal from India, led a dynamic discussion-based panel on protecting youth data, while also utilizing social media and digital tools to maximize the impact of youth social entrepreneurship projects and the creation of impact by getting messages out there. In the panel, UK based vlogger and blogger Zanna van Dijk, and founder and CEO of SuperSocial Mathias Haas from Austria, discussed the applications of social media for businesses and non-governmental organizations. Both stressed that, with a proper understanding of target audiences and tactics, online

tools can be used to inspire people to create major real-world impacts. Although there are several ways to accomplish this, specific suggestions included using data analytics to measure the audience being reached and ensure the right people are being engaged, rather than reaching many of the wrong people.



“Check out your digital footprints and use online tools to create offline activities for global goals”
Mathias Haas, Founder and CEO of SuperSocial from Austria

They suggested that increasing international collaboration requires high-quality content that also sparks engagement. They stressed that, while imposter syndrome is common throughout the technological world, applications are giving regular people a platform to create real and lasting change, and social media can be harnessed to drive positive global change.

United Nations Youth Strategy 2030 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

“1.8 billion youth is enough to change the planet”
Felipe Villela, founder of ReNature, from Brazil

Camila Capassi Malagodi from Brazil took the floor at the start of the debate to share her views on the SDGs. She considers that these are inseparable from one another and that, despite the inherent complexities the world faces and the lack of simple solutions, youth need to believe in themselves to make progress towards the SDGs.

Following this intervention, both youth teams on the 2030 Youth Strategy and the SDGs came forward and kickstarted a debate about action plans for a better future. How can youth help shape the world they want was a key question. The concept note of a youth-led project on “Thinking globally, Acting locally” whereby youth can take the lead both in sharing their views, and working at community level, was presented and received with great enthusiasm.



Day Four- 25 October 2018

#Millennials



What is the definition of Millennials? What are their expectations and what are their needs? With new technologies, a shift in geopolitics, climate change and other important factors having an impact on the job landscape, how do millennials see their future and how can they best prepare? The fourth day of the forum focused on **#Millennials** and kickstarted with a brief presentation by Laurens and Matheus from the Netherlands and Brazil respectively, to define this part of the population.

The Changing Job Market Landscape; why should I care?

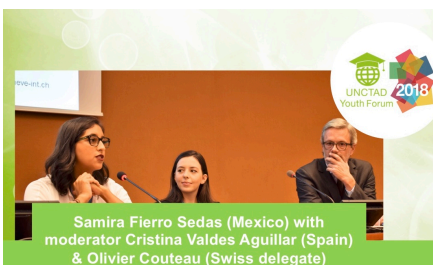
The job market landscape, with the new technology era, is shifting considerably. Existing jobs will undergo changes, new ones will be created, and geographical shifts of jobs and production chains will occur. Education and skills, as well as continuous learning, are becoming more and more key for youth to succeed.



“The most important skill youth should develop today is learning how to learn”
Brian Wong, Vice - President, Alibaba Group

Youth participants felt that this session was important as the topic affects everyone in the job market and is very much related to the overall theme of the youth forum, namely youth entrepreneurship as a force towards inclusive and sustainable development. Led by Alena Dique from Oman, the panellists shed light on how the youth can keep up with the market, specifically outlining the importance of staying up-to-date with technology to improve their chances of getting good jobs.

International Geneva with a Youth perspective



Geneva hosts many international organizations and is at the heart of the former League of Nations. A Youth Debate took place with Olivier Couteau, a Swiss delegate from the Canton of Geneva, and Samiras Fierro Sedas from Mexico, who explained the background and workings of “International Geneva”. Facilitated by Cristina

Valdes Aguillar from Spain, they shared some historical background of the United Nations in Geneva and the youth perspective of working at a Permanent Mission of a Member State of the United Nations.

Youth Debate on Sustainable Development Pitching

“When you identify your theory of change in the SDGs, you can separate your goals and work on those that you really care about”
Youth participant

As a follow-up to previous discussions on the United Nations Youth Strategy and the Agenda for Sustainable Development, youth participants continued discussing and presenting SDG related projects and activities they have been involved in. In preparation for a pitching session that would take place later in the day, youth were asked to return to their working groups and think of an SDG they felt was most pressing and design a project around it, something that they could take back with them for implementation at community level. This was an interesting way of getting the youth perspective across while also instilling the qualities of successful group work among the participants.

This was considered as the most interactive session of the day and resulted in ten working groups each deciding on a group representative who was to pitch the projects to a jury, facilitated by Bareha Abbas from Pakistan. The five members of the jury, Hans Docter, Delegate from the Netherlands, Waleed Nasir from Pakistan, Jessica Anuna from Nigeria, Prof. Désirée van Gorp of Nyenrode University and Loren Newman of the Alibaba Group, had a difficult time determining the winner of what was a very competitive pitching competition, but ultimately opted for the working group who covered SDG 2 on zero hunger.



Launch of the Policy Toolkit on Youth Entrepreneurship for Blue and Green Economies

“Ask why. Why are others not thinking like you? Never accept small solutions, easy solutions. The world is complex and you are part of its complexity”
Isabelle Durant, Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD

The Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Ms. Isabelle Durant, welcomed the Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, to the youth forum for the launch of the joint Policy Toolkit on Youth Entrepreneurship for Blue and Green Economies. The Toolkit aims to promote green and blue economic growth through entrepreneurship, going beyond a business-as-



Hon. Patricia Scotland, Secretary-General of Commonwealth & Ms. Isabelle Durant, Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD with youth

usual approach. It calls for a shift in the conventional economic and social frameworks used to guide development, and the engagement of youth in new, disruptive and transformational markets. Jessica Anuna from Nigeria facilitated the debate and facilitated the exchanges with youth participants to allow them to get a better insight on what it takes to create green and blue economies, and how young entrepreneurs can call upon relevant authorities to establish such economies.

Youth o’Clock on Leadership and what does it take in today’s world, with Dona Bertarelli

Hayatun Nafysa from Indonesia held a conversation with Dona Bertarelli, a successful entrepreneur, sportswoman and philanthropist. She is a leader in her own right; being an influential woman in every field she pursues and is a perfect example of a modern leader. Ms. Bertarelli inspired the youth participants to reflect on what it means to be a leader in the current day and age, and its many challenges. She explained how, for her, a true leader is the individual who makes sure that everyone is on an equal footing and inspires those around them, or their subordinates, to become better versions of themselves. She emphasized the importance of passion for one’s work and how it is essential to transmit that passion. For her, a good leader is one who collaborates with their team members and ensures that everyone is on the same page. In her final message to tomorrow’s leaders, she highlighted that collaboration is key in any leadership position.



Moderator Hayatun Nafysa (Indonesia) with Dona Bertarelli

“Leadership is about creating trust in a team and transmitting passion”
*Dona Bertarelli,
 Philanthropist, Entrepreneur
 & Sportswoman*

Youth Crossing the Border

In our interconnected world, the notions of global and local have become more fluid concepts. The emergence of new technologies, for example, has been one of the driving forces behind the erosion of the idea of borders. Although there appears to be a shift away from multilateralism and rising nationalistic sentiments, millennials have grown up and been shaped by a world far more globalized than at any time in the past. Many millennials do not see borders; they see

people and they see humanity. Matters to consider are how millennials envisage trade and the movement of people in the future, how can youth address concerns around multilateralism, and how can new technologies be used to not only connect more people around the world but to also more widely distribute the benefits produced by this hyper-connected world?



“In an era of technological efficiency, the true added value from a human perspective will be reflected in our soft ability to break boundaries and build collaboration”
Amougou Aristide Agbor from Cameroon

Issues that were discussed in the panel session, moderated by Jeroen Plantinga from the Netherlands, were migration, specifically pertaining to the brain drain, as well as security and challenges to obtain visas.

Before continuing with the next panel session, Muhammad Sarim Raza from Pakistan and Rui Mousinho from Mozambique each gave a presentation where they showcased their projects.

Beyond Education and Skills

New technologies are shaping the way job-seekers connect with the labour market to access opportunities, and how entrepreneurs scale-up their businesses. Linkages between educational development and skills training, on the one hand, and requirements for the job market, on the other, do not match. How can stakeholders contribute equipping young men and women with the right skills and prepare them for the labour challenges that lie ahead? How can they contribute to overcome the rural versus city education divide? What are best practices youth can share?



Youth participants felt that this panel session was especially relevant to the theme of the Youth Forum on youth entrepreneurship. It involves taking risk and going beyond the ordinary, and this session did just that. Moderated by Ariel King of the Ariel Foundation International, the panellists wanted to highlight the importance of moving beyond the class curriculum and stepping outside

of it to acquire skills that are more useful in everyday life. They emphasized the importance of indulging in extracurriculars that are in line with one's intended career, as this separates one from the other in an applicant pool. But most importantly, one must pursue their true passion regardless of what society tells them.

Young Women in Business

The participation of women in business brings enormous opportunities for sustained, inclusive economic growth. Innovative ways need to be put in place that close the gender gap in entrepreneurship and allow for empowerment of women. Youth are known to be creative when it comes to shaping an inclusive economy that also involves young female entrepreneurs.

“Young women in business still continue to face a lot of challenges; from finances, lack of technical support, lack of mentoring and more”
Nancie Amunga, eFounder Fellow & Empretec

A group of talented young female entrepreneurs were guided by Somya Sharma from India to talk about resilience and having the will to do something with your life, which is what makes you successful even if the odds are against you. Women generally face more difficulties simply by virtue of being a women. The panellists served as great role models for not only the young female participants at the youth forum, but for all participants.

“If you don't have a seat for yourself at the table, make your own table”
Dorothy Tembo, Deputy Executive Director, ITC



Day Five – 26 October 2018

Thinking Globally, Acting Locally

It was an exciting last day where, after a whole week of discussions, youth were eager to agree on ways to take forward the sub-theme of the day: **Thinking Globally, Acting Locally**. While preparing for this, they had one last panel session on the mindset makeover.

Mindset Makeover

Youth are under constant pressure to kick-start their professional career. Youth unemployment is high: as is the percentage of youth living in poverty. This impacts their self-esteem and ability to plan a career path. What can be done to change the game and create a conducive environment in which youth can prosper?

Prior to the start of the panel session, Botswana Minister Bogolo Kenewendo of Investment, Trade and Industry, was welcomed by the youth and through a conversation with Eugenia Novoa Zubiria from Ecuador, shared her views on transformational impact in the lives of the people, especially young females, in her country. Her message to the participants was to continue learning, have faith in your ability and focus on qualifying for leadership roles rather than just looking at age. With regard to the use of technology and social media, she said that these tools can drastically enhance strategic effectiveness.



“I believe that our generation can and will change the world for the better, but no more glossy buzzwords, let’s turn these words into action and think critically about what steps we need to take”
Tina Kuek from Australia

The session’s panellists agreed with the Minister’s assessment that maintaining a growth mindset is crucial, adding that there is no fixed recipe for success. Through a variety of strategies, such as engaging in international exchanges, embracing change, maintaining a positive attitude, and being adaptable, youth can bring a critical point of view to global issues. Innovation and execution were described as especially important and represent strengths that youth can utilize to add invaluable insight to topical discussions.

“We are all here to be the best versions of ourselves, not better than each other”
Matheus Falasco from Brazil



Alena Dique (Oman), Loren Newman (Alibaba Group), Tina Kuek (Australia), Waleed Nasir (Pakistan) with moderator Eugenia Novoa Zubiria (Ecuador)



Bareha Abbas (Pakistan), Lindsay Davis (USA), LeAndré Knight (Barbados) & Alexandra Hönschied (USA) Rabia Ahmad Mughal (Qatar)

At the end of the session, the report writers of the Youth Forum took the floor and proposed that the youth participants work on strategies for translating their ideas into actions. This was followed by an intervention from the podium by Rabia Ahmad Mughal from Qatar where she presented an SDG related project she is working on.

UNCTAD - Youth Action Hubs

Arthur Mclean from Australia and Thomson Ch’ng from Malaysia presented the concept of Youth Action Hubs. The underlying idea is to take what was done at the Youth Forum out to the respective regions of the participants around the world. The aim is to make the SDGs available and pervasive, taking them wherever the youth goes, with youth being divided into various youth action hubs. The hubs would bring together youth at city or national level and allow them to be game changers and engage (1) *globally* to share their views on UNCTAD’s areas of work and (2) *locally* to carry out SDG related projects at community level. The latter could be in the form of awareness-raising activities, workshops and capacity-building projects, to name a few.

“UNCTAD Youth is a network of global youth leaders from various backgrounds, aspiring to create positive changes across the world regardless of who you are and where you are”
Thomson Ch’ng from Malaysia

Following a questions and answers round, the participants enthusiastically pledged UNCTAD to take onboard the project of Action Hubs and help them in their realization.



“I recommend everyone to get engaged, to take all opportunities that come across, and get out of the comfort zone. Do so, do it to discover your potential, there is anyone better than the others but only some work harder, bon courage!”
Silvia Chilet-Jorge from Spain

Conversation on 2016 UNCTAD Youth Forum

A number of the youth present had also participated in the first-ever UNCTAD Youth Forum that took place in Nairobi, Kenya in 2016. Arlette Verploegh, the Forum’s coordinator at UNCTAD, asked them to join her on the podium to share their experiences. They conveyed how the tent setting in Nairobi lent itself to a strong sense of community, and also expressed the importance of drafting an integrated Youth Declaration and presenting it to high-level officials.



Closing



On the last day, Dr. Kituyi met again with the youth to discuss highlights of the Youth Forum week and to hear the reflections of youth delegates. In an inspirational address, he shared with them the steps youth can take to be provided with a seat at the table. Youth should carefully consider their goals and have a clear sense of what they want.

Each working group then summarized for Dr. Kituyi what they considered to be the highlights of the Youth Forum. The event was considered to be a wonderful opportunity to grow as individuals and leaders of the future. Some youth emphasized the opportunities for increased mentorship and guidance, while others stressed the benefits of knowledge sharing that occurred throughout the week. This was considered to be of incredible value, and hope was expressed to see this further expanded in future interactions with UNCTAD. The youth felt strongly about the force of having shown a united front leading to good outcomes of the Forum and contributing to youth strategies worldwide. Overall, the week provided a platform for new connections, inspirational messages, interaction with global leaders, learning from one another, and an opportunity for each youth to do his or her part to advance the SDGs.

The day ended with a few surprises. The first one came from Manuj Bhardwaj from India who, under great applause from the youth, announced that his business was going to give an award worth USD 15'000 to a young start-up. The second one came from another youth from India, Saurabh Navande, who had prepared a small video containing interviews with the participants of the Youth Forum on the occasion of the International United Nations Day.



**Manuj Bhardwaj and Saurabh Navande
both from India**



#WeAreUNCTADYouth

When saying goodbye, the participants all agreed to meet again at the next UNCTAD Youth Forum that will take place in the year 2020.

Words of Thanks

This was the second Youth Forum that UNCTAD held. It was an overwhelming success thanks to the commitment and active role of the young game changers who shared their passion and energy throughout the week. UNCTAD hopes that many of the inspirational messages, knowledge-sharing and interactions will be of help to the young men and women who will be the leaders of tomorrow.

A special thanks goes to the UNCTAD Youth Team, consisting of Samira Fierro Sedas, Omar Hernandez Arauz, Arthur Mclean, Rubi Hernandez, Eugenia Novoa Zubiria, Sarah Poko, Reyana Seyouf, Katsiaryna Fedatsenka, Thomson Ch'ng, Zarja Vojta, Alessandra Gatti and Tristan Gianora, under the lead of Arlette Verploegh and Viridiana Garcia-Quiles of UNCTAD.

Special tribute is also given to the many youth volunteers, including the report writers team Alexandra Hönschied, Bareha Abbas, LeAundré Knight and Lindsay Davis, photographers Chengxi Zhu and Sarah Poko and the social media team, and last but not least, the many moderators, facilitators and speakers.

“It was amazing meeting a lot of young entrepreneurs from all over the world.

Their passion is really contagious”

*Hayatun Nafysa from
Indonesia*

UNCTAD and the youth participants also wish to thank the guest speakers who joined the Youth Forum to interact with the youth and share their knowledge and inspirational messages.

UNCTAD and the youth participants welcome those young men and women who were not in a position to come to Geneva, to join current and future activities of the UNCTAD Youth Network and that it is hoped that this report will be a source of inspiration to them.

“Speaking at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development-Youth Forum was a reminder that I may only be one person, but I can be one person that makes a difference. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide the kind of difference you want to make. Yours from now make sure you can say you choose your life and didn't settle for it”

Linda Okero from Kenya

SEE YOU IN 2020 AT THE NEXT UNCTAD YOUTH FORUM

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