UN Youth Advisory Board

Terms of Reference

Background

Young people constitute a vital driving force for social progress, innovation, and sustainable development. Globally, the UN Youth Strategy emphasizes meaningful, rights-based, and sustained youth participation across all pillars of the UN system, including strengthening existing youth engagement mechanisms and amplifying youth voices through formal and informal platforms.

In line with these commitments and recognizing the importance of integrating youth voices into development processes, the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Turkmenistan has decided to establish a Youth Advisory Board (YAB), a voluntary group of young people under the UN in Turkmenistan. This platform will support inclusive youth participation, improve the youth-friendliness of UN programming, and promote young people's engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Turkmenistan.

The UNCT has previously engaged young people through initiatives such as the Young SDG Ambassadors, which enabled the UNCT to raise awareness of young people on SDGs and provided an opportunity for youth inclusion, advocacy, outreach, and dialogue on sustainable development issues. While these engagements demonstrated strong interest and potential among young people, they also highlighted the need for a more structured, inclusive, and sustained mechanism to ensure systematic youth participation across UN programming.

Purpose

The YAB in Turkmenistan will serve as a consultative mechanism enabling regular dialogue between the UN and young people in Turkmenistan, ensuring that programmes, strategies, and advocacy efforts reflect diverse youth voices and a gender-transformative approach. The YAB will advise the UNCT on the integration of youth priorities, challenges, and insights into the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2026-2030, participate in UN analytical and assessment exercises, and other joint and agency-specific engagements as per their mandates.

Objectives

The YAB aims to:

- Provide at least 2-3 recommendations to the UNCT on adolescent and youth priorities and inclusion across UN programmes, including the Cooperation Framework, joint programmes and agency-specific initiatives.
- Contribute to strengthening the quality of youth participation in planning, monitoring and evaluation of UN programmes in Turkmenistan through at least 2 exercises annually.
- Systematically identify emerging issues and barriers affecting young people, including girls and women, through at least 2 peer consultations per year, ensuring that marginalized youth are represented where possible, through participation in the UN country situation analysis and youth inclusion assessment exercises, as requested.
- Support UN-led advocacy and awareness efforts by co-developing or contributing to at least 2 youth-focused campaigns or communication initiatives per year, including those promoting gender

equality and positive social norms, related to youth inclusive SDGs acceleration and youth empowerment.
- Promote youth leadership, including participation of young women in leadership, and collaboration by facilitating or participating in at least 2 engagements annually between youth groups, UN agencies, and stakeholders.

The success of the YAB members' participation in the above activities will be measured by at least three contributions of the YAB individual members to each of the streams of engagement. Upon agreement, the YAB may wish to develop a common action plan with concrete deliverables to demonstrate cohesive engagement with the UN Country Team

Roles and Responsibilities

Participation in the Youth Advisory Board is voluntary, non-remunerated, and part-time. Members are expected to engage alongside their academic, professional, or personal commitments.
Members of the YAB are expected to:
- Develop an individual plan of activities reflecting the YAB member's ability to network with a diverse range of peers, communicate messages, collect inputs and organize personally-led events that can likely engage young women and marginalized groups using a UNCT provided template.
- Formulate ideas and proposals concerning the issues of young people, including the ones on gender equality, to be prioritized in the UN in Turkmenistan programmes, including communication and advocacy activities.
- Provide inputs and recommendations to the annual work-plans, strategies and programmes of UN in Turkmenistan.
- Consult UN on the ways to strengthen young people's meaningful participation in UN initiatives.
- Participate actively in quarterly YAB meetings, and other events, trainings, and capacity-building activities throughout the year.
- Undertake capacity building training provided by the UN at least once a year to enhance the quality of contributions.
- Demonstrate integrity, objectivity, and respect for diverse viewpoints and uphold UN values, including confidentiality, impartiality and zero tolerance to discrimination, harassment, and sexual exploitation and abuse, as integrated from the Code of Conduct models.

The UNCT, facilitated by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) and through its theme groups, is expected to:
- Provide YAB members with relevant documents, programme information and resources, including gender-sensitive analysis, to support informed engagement.
- Engage YAB members in analysis and assessments, such as horizon scanning and Youth 2030, UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality and Disability Scorecards.
- Offer capacity-building opportunities, including trainings on the UN system, advocacy, leadership, including gender-transformative leadership, and the SDGs, to strengthen meaningful participation.
- Respond, provide feedback and recommendations to issues and/or inquiries raised by the YAB members.
- Arrange YAB meeting logistics, maintain regular communication, and ensure effective follow-up.
- Facilitate linkages between the YAB and ongoing youth-related initiatives by agencies, including on gender mainstreaming and women's leadership, ensuring coherence and alignment.

Membership Composition

The YAB will consist of 10 members, selected to ensure inclusive representation of young people in Turkmenistan, based on regional and gender balance and including those most disadvantaged and marginalized between the ages of 18 and 30 years.

- 18-22 years of age: 4 members
- 23-26 years: 4 members
- 27-30 years: 2 members

Each member serves a two-year, non-renewable mandate, with a structured handover from outgoing to incoming members.

To the extent possible, the YAB membership shall represent a gender balance and at least one person with disability.

Member Criteria

Members of the YAB will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated experience in youth initiatives or community participation and willing to contribute to the UN agenda and priorities.
- Ability to engage constructively and respectfully with diverse viewpoints.
- Strong communication and advocacy skills demonstrated through previous projects or references.
- Commitment to attend meetings and contribute actively on voluntary and part-time basis.
- Ability to communicate in Turkmen and English, Russian is an asset (aligned with regional expectations).

Selection Process

Members of the YAB will be selected through an open, transparent, and inclusive process, as outlined below:

- A public open call for applications will be launched to ensure broad outreach and encourage applications from diverse backgrounds, regions, and lived experiences.
- Applicants will be required to submit a motivation letter, outlining their interest in youth engagement, relevant experience, and motivation to contribute to the work of the Youth Advisory Board.
- Applications will be reviewed against the established selection criteria by a UNCT-designated selection panel, appointed by the Resident Coordinator and guided by agency mandates relevant to youth issues.
- Shortlisted candidates may be invited for an interview to further assess motivation, communication skills, availability, and alignment with UN values.
- The final selection of YAB members will be endorsed by the UN Country Team (UNCT).
- The UN Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) will serve as the Secretariat of the Youth Advisory Board, supporting coordination and the smooth functioning of the selection process.

Resignation or Termination

The YAB members can resign at any time with a two week's written notice to the UNRCO.

If a member of the Youth Advisory Board is unable to fulfil his/her responsibilities, including remaining out of contact with the UN in Turkmenistan for a period exceeding two months without reasonable

explanation, or is found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct, the UN in Turkmenistan may initiate a review of the member's participation.

In such cases, the member will be informed in writing of the concerns raised and given an opportunity to respond and, where appropriate, take corrective action within a reasonable timeframe. If the situation remains unresolved, a decision may be made to discontinue the membership.

The member has the right to request a reconsideration of this decision by submitting a written appeal to the UN Resident Coordinator's Office within 10 working days of notification. The appeal will be reviewed by a designated panel, and the final decision will be communicated in writing.

Leadership and Management

- Each year, members of the Youth Advisory Board will elect a representative from among themselves to serve as a Chair for a one-year term based on simple majority 6/10 principle. The role rotates annually to provide leadership opportunities for members.
- A Chair will provide strategic support to YAB and its activities, lead YAB activities, including YAB meetings and discussions; serve as the main contact point for YAB when liaising with the UN System in Turkmenistan and other partners.

UNFPA as a UNCT lead on Youth 2030 in coordination with the UNRCO will provide guidance and coordination support to the YAB representatives.

Engagement

The YAB will meet quarterly – and ad hoc as needed. Frequency and the mode of meetings will be agreed upon in the first meeting. A simple majority 6/10 of present members is required for decisions. Consistent participation in meetings is required to ensure effective decision making with members respecting collective decisions made in their absence, reflecting reciprocal accountability to the group and the broader youth constituency. The YAB will maintain diligent documentation of the decisions and progress of initiatives is required to ensure institutional memory.

Meeting minutes will be taken by a designated YAB member and shared through Chair with the UNRCO. This role should be decided at the beginning of each session and members should rotate – this is not a role compatible with the role of representative. Minutes are a record of the meeting's conclusions, not a record of processes.

YAB drafts an activity report at the end of a year cycle and submits it to the UN Country Team.

Additionally, the representatives of the YAB may be invited to attend meetings of UN Theme Groups and contribute ideas for the prospective agenda when appropriate.

Amendments to the Terms of Reference

To ensure adaptability to an evolving context and an adaptive and responsive governance mechanism the UN Country Team may propose amendments to the Terms of Reference for consideration by the YAB.

Other considerations

UNRCO is the principal channel for communications with media on UN in Turkmenistan-related activities. Prior to engaging with the media on their role in the Board, a YAB member shall seek approval from the UNCT outlining the nature of the engagement, its purpose and expected impact. YAB members must be cautious of their public image and its implications for the UN when communicating with media to make sure their appearance does no harm to the reputation of the UN, and they do not reveal unauthorized information or attempt to influence decisions.

Benefits for Young People

- Exposure to the work of the United Nations at country level and participation in high-level dialogue and decision shaping;
- Opportunities to contribute to UN programmes and advocate for youth priorities;
- Capacity building, leadership development, and skill-enhancing trainings;
- Participation in youth-focused UN events and campaigns.

UN Youth Advisory Board Code of Conduct

The UN Youth Advisory Board (YAB) Code of Conduct applies to all members who serve with the YAB programme. It is applicable to every member who decided to dedicate part of her or his life to voluntary work within the United Nations system in Turkmenistan.

I. All members of the YAB must ensure that they undertake their duties in the interest of the United Nations. They must uphold and promote the highest standards of ethical conduct.

II. All members of the YAB must be guided by the motivation to devote their knowledge and abilities without regard to financial benefit. They must ensure that their conduct is consistent with and reflects the values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations: integrity, which embraces all aspects of behavior including such qualities as honesty, truthfulness, impartiality, and incorruptibility, respect for human rights, social justice, human dignity, and respect for equal rights of men and women.

III. All members of the YAB must show respect for all persons equally without distinction whatsoever of race, gender, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, language, age, socio-economic status, political conviction, or any other distinguishing feature. In the spirit of respect for all persons, the YAB members must not engage in any form of harassment.

IV. All members of the YAB must avoid any action, and particularly any public statement, which may affect the UN reputation in the country and adversely reflect on their status as the YAB.

V. During the time of the programme participation, all members of the YAB must neither seek nor accept instructions from any government detrimental to the compliance with UN principles and values, UN policies and ongoing UN programmes or from any other authority external to the UN system, except in the course of receiving programme-related instructions in the context of their activities, specified in their work plan.

VI. The YAB's activities outside the formal work setting must not represent a conflict of interest with their normal functions and responsibilities, nor detract in any way from their formal work plan, be contrary to the purposes or principles of the UN or a violation of the law. The appropriateness of the outside activity will be determined by the United Nations Resident Coordinator who represents the United Nations Country Team in Turkmenistan.

VII. All members of the YAB are not authorized to speak or write publicly on behalf of the UN unless specifically authorized to do so. The YAB must not engage in any activity, including any digital or physical behavior reinforcing harmful gender stereotypes or biases, that is detrimental to the United Nations.

VIII. Unless authorized by United Nations system in Turkmenistan, all members of the YAB shall not communicate to any government, entity, person or any other source any information known to them by reason of their function for the United Nations, which they knew or had reason to know has not been made public. These obligations do not end upon separation from the YAB programme.

IX. The United Nation system is represented by the UN Resident Coordinator (RC), the RC will reserve the right to terminate the designation of the member of YAB in line with the described procedures when it believes that she or he did not observe the Code of Conduct of the YAB.

Kindly sign and return the original of this Code of Conduct to the UNCT as evidence of your acceptance of the terms of your commitment.

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Name and signature

I proudly agree to serve as a member of YAB in accordance with the YAB Code of Conduct as above.

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Date and place