Interregional Youth Policy Forum
UN ESCAP Conference Centre (UNCC) – Conference Room 4, Bangkok, 21-23 November 2017

Concept Note

1. Background

The current generation of youth (according to the United Nations definition, those aged 15-24) is the largest in history, and, at around 1.2 billion, accounts for one in every six people globally. A significant majority of these youth live in developing countries in the African, Asia-Pacific and Western Asian regions. While they tend to be healthier and more educated than previous generations, the youth of today face numerous challenges. These include having the right skills to participate meaningfully in the development process and, relatedly, facing levels of unemployment and underemployment which tend to be far greater than those for adults.

The absence of effective policies and implementation mechanisms, can lead to the disenfranchisement of youth, with participation in unwholesome activities, such as drug use and crime, as well as heightened risk of contracting HIV or other sexually-transmitted infections. When compounded by poverty and lack of opportunity, this may lead to chances of youth engaging in unrest multiplying.

The potential of youth, especially female youth, is not being effectively tapped into, bringing about missed opportunities for individuals, communities and societies at large. Nevertheless, with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as guiding parameters, and youth getting involved in many SDG activities, there is much scope for progress. This is especially so with greater emphasis being laid on equity and leaving no one behind.

Information and communication technologies (ICT), particularly the internet and social media, offer a strategic means of engaging youth, such that they feel and are empowered and actively contribute to shaping their societies. ICTs provide an opportunity for connecting youth with civic life and enhancing their participation in society.

Against this backdrop, the project “Strengthening the capacity of Governments in the ESCAP, ECA and ESCWA regions to respond to the needs of youth in formulating inclusive and sustainable development policies” seeks to promote national youth policies and programmes that are inclusive and sustainable, particularly through the active engagement of young people in design, implementation and decision-making processes. The main output of the project is the Youth Policy Toolbox, an online repository of knowledge, experience and good practices available here: http://yptoolbox.unescapsdd.org/
2. **Objective**

The aim of the workshop is to strengthen the capacity of participants to promote youth development, and in particular contribute to ensuring youth policies are more inclusive and sustainable. Further objectives are to share experiences and enhance partnerships, including those between policymakers and youth organizations, and to ensure the effective dissemination of the Toolbox in each region, drawing upon networks to spread the reach and applicability of the Toolbox as widely as possible.

3. **Target Group**

The training workshop will target policymakers engaged with youth policymaking, including government officials directly dealing with youth development issues, as well as civil society organizations, youth leaders and youth-led organizations. Representatives from the United Nations system and regional youth organizations will also be invited. A total of around 60 participants are expected.

4. **Strategy**

The workshop will be conducted in the format of interactive presentations and dialogues focused on the sharing of experiences and good practices on youth development and policies on youth. The workshop will strengthen the ongoing work of developing technical capabilities of government officials in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Western Asia to develop policies on youth, including by engaging actively with youth and using ICT. Capacity to apply participatory processes with youth organizations will also be enhanced. The workshop will also facilitate a dialogue between government and civil society entities, promoting exchange of experiences.

5. **Date, venue, and language**

The workshops will take place in Bangkok, Thailand (ESCAP Headquarters), from 21 to 23 November 2017.

The working language of the workshops will be English; documentation will be provided in English.