

# Accelerate!

## Youth for SDGs 2030

Pre-Conference Sessions (July 8, 15, 22) • Conference (August 7-9)



### BACKGROUND

In recent years, global dialogues and movements gained momentum to tackle the climate emergency, violent conflicts, gender inequalities, extreme poverty, and the global pandemic COVID-19. In 2015, member states of the United Nations gathered to address such critical global issues and proclaim - the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030. Since then, while claiming successes and staying on track to meeting certain targets, overall progress for the SDGs has been uneven across goals and regions. With only ten years left, urgent action is needed by all sectors of society to expedite progress towards the 2030 Global Goals.

At a pivotal time, the COVID-19 global pandemic has disrupted global systems, exacerbating issues in health and development everywhere. This unprecedented crisis has rendered action for the SDGs even more urgent for humanity to save lives and thrive. Coming together in friendship to build a healthier, safer, and more sustainable world is now more important than ever, as we are all in this together.

The crucial population of 1.2 billion youth holds key potential to remedy this global health crisis, end poverty, rescue the environment, and build a more peaceful world by 2030. Young people - through ingenuity, energy, open-mindedness, and entrepreneurship - are in a unique position to bridge the gap between the SDGs and advancing the remaining work needed to realize them.

### INTRODUCTION

In the face of such challenges and opportunities, the Friendship Ambassadors Foundation (FA) convenes the 26th Session of the Youth Assembly in a virtual setting with the theme "Accelerate! Youth for SDGs 2030" to hasten the mobilization for the SDGs during this turning point and vital remaining 10 years. This program is a part of the [Decade of Youth Action \(DYA\) Campaign](#), following the official [DYA Launch](#) on March 4, 2020 at the [United Nations headquarters in New York City](#) to renew and further commitment for the SDGs, particularly by youth.

Thus, as part of the broader DYA Campaign, and in accordance with the [Declaration of Priorities](#), FA presents the 26th Youth Assembly Virtual (also known as YA26 Virtual) where young leaders from around the world will gather online to learn, engage in, and resolve to act to accelerate progress towards achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals through action at the local and global scales.

### VIRTUAL FORMAT

After 18 years of consecutive signature Youth Assembly gatherings that have brought together thousands of young people from around the world, the 26th Youth Assembly Virtual sees the first large-scale global conference that is entirely virtual held by FA. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and physical distancing measures necessary to reduce virus transmission and save lives, the YA26 Virtual will be conducted wholly online, harnessing the power of technology to transcend physical boundaries. In this way, the Summit will enable global and inclusive participation, and incorporate and connect the voices of youth from around the world.



The YA26 Virtual consists of:

- **Conference** - a three-day online conference from August 7 - 9, 2020 featuring Opening and Closing plenaries, a variety of virtual panels and discussions on central SDG topics, networking activities, and more. The summit will include youth participants from around the world and showcase participant content through action-oriented projects, arts initiatives, and multicultural sharing.
- **Pre-Conference Sessions** - a series of preparatory specialized virtual events and activities leading up to the Summit to take place weekly throughout July in preparation for the 26th Youth Assembly Virtual. These will feature experts from the field, and take the shape of webinars, discussion forums, online skill-building workshops, chats, and more.

## PROGRAM AGENDA

The Conference and Pre-Conference Sessions will impart knowledge and facilitate exchange of ideas through virtual presentations and discussions with experts and youth leaders. YA26 Virtual will highlight the interconnectedness of the SDGs - from poverty to climate change to peace - to deliver on and speed up real progress in these areas. These sessions will feature field experts, industry leaders, and youth champions. Topics will also include those delineated in the Declaration of Priorities, the agenda-setting document built from the diverse voices and consultations of Youth Assembly alum and community:

- **Human Development** – These sessions will explore core issues to improve the well-being of all people in order to live to their potential: ending poverty, providing quality education, and reducing inequalities, among others.
- **Peace** – These sessions will spotlight building and sustaining peace, both within and between societies, through conflict resolution, good governance, human rights, and inclusivity.
- **Environment** – These sessions will focus on the alarming environmental threats and setting the path for a greener world: environmental protection, sustainable consumption patterns, and more.

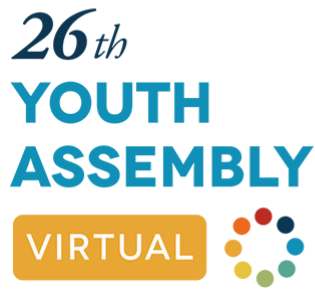
Additionally, the Summit will celebrate multicultural diversity by connecting Delegates across the online platform using the power of the arts, as rooted in the Friendship Ambassador Foundation's tradition in the performing arts and music. The summit will incorporate the power of the arts and music to unite, and to promote peace and understanding to make a difference.

## OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

The goals of the YA26 Virtual and its Pre-Conference Sessions are as follows:

- Connect and unite youth from around the world through this virtual platform in support of the SDGs and work of the United Nations
- Educate participants on critical SDGs and solutions to help achieve them by 2030 or earlier
- Inspire youth to lead efforts to expedite progress towards the SDG and the Declaration of Priority focus areas
- Generate youth commitment and action for the Global Goals 2030





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Following completion of the YA26 Summit and Pre-Conference Sessions, participants will receive a Certificate and be deemed “Friendship Ambassadors,” working to address the world’s greatest challenges while embodying the values of Friendship.

As next steps, graduating YA26 Delegates may partake in upcoming Decade of Youth Action activities and join the Global Action and Impact Network (GAIN) to connect with community members, continue their engagement, and create or scale up their projects for the SDGs.

Using virtual gatherings, knowledge sharing, and follow-up engagements, the 26th Youth Assembly Virtual aims to continue inspiring and catalyzing youth action. Joining this conference for the SDGs, participants become part of the greater DYA Campaign and efforts to help make possible a more healthy, peaceful, and sustainable world.

