



3 June 2014 – “This is about your future – so it must be your agenda,” [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon [told participants](#)

at the opening of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum. The two-day event gathers young people from more than 1,000 youth organizations at United Nations Headquarters. On the meeting’s schedule is a discussion about a new global agenda that will follow the Millennium Development Goals ( [MDG](#) ).

With 1.8 billion adolescents and youth around the world, young people face unique challenges in securing quality education, basic health and decent work, Mr. Ban noted. “There is a world of need out there, but also a world of opportunity. So I urge you to keep doing your part. Keep showing your leadership as global citizens,” he added, urging the youth participants to “keep making a difference.”

These negotiations must bear in mind that with half the world’s population is under the age of 25, the largest youth generation ever, and specific targets focused on youth should be integrated into any future development framework. Especially in the post-2015 era when the MDGs will end and a new agenda must be forged.

More than 1.2 million young people voted in the [My World 2015](#) survey, and participated in a

crowdsourcing platform convened by UN agencies and partners, to voice their concerns. Jobs are the key area that young people want world leaders to focus on. Some 75 million youth are unemployed, and more than 600 million jobs need to be generated globally in the life span of the new development agenda to absorb current unemployment levels and provide jobs to new labour market entrants, according to the UN.

Also [addressing](#) youth in today's opening, the current president of the UN General Assembly, John Ashe, urged youth representatives to stay engaged in the decision-making processes underway ahead of the 2015 MDG deadline. "I urge you to get involved. If you don't, and an agenda emerges without your priorities addressed, you have no one to blame but yourselves," he said.

Brittany Trilford, Activist and Youth advisor at CIVICUS Alliance highlighted that young people, who are often marginalized and excluded from resources and decision-making, are "oversimplified and silenced." She further added, "Despite our large role in society and our exciting potential, there is very little done to harness the power of young people or to target them in development schemes or to measure their impacts at all".

"Define the future that you want, and commit to it, and work hard at it and ask other young people to do the same," she urged. "Get angry at current leaders for leaving you so much to clean up, and demand that they fix up their game now."