



North Africa Development Forum

Youth chart the future

How can youth be involved in the development process as full fledged actors? How to prepare them for the challenges of sustainable development? What measures can be taken to ensure that this participation is effective and efficient at all levels? What is the role of governments, political and economic actors, development partners, civil society and the media in promoting youth participation?

These are some of the themes that will be examined by the North Africa Development Forum due to take place in Tunis (Tunisia) from 8 to 10 December 2011. The Forum is organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, through its Office for North Africa (ECA-NA), and in partnership with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), UNICEF, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNDP and UNIDO and UMA.

Placed under the theme "Youth, Actors of Development", this three-day Forum will aim, according to Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, Director, of the Office (ECA-NA) "to strengthen synergies between the different stakeholders involved in policy and program development, and establish a platform for exchange and dialogue with young men and women coming from the region".

More than one hundred fifty participants will be invited to enrich the debate on the various aspects of the active participation of youth in development, while highlighting best practices at the regional and national levels in the area of youth involvement in public life, as well as in economic, social and cultural fields. Specific issues will also be addressed, particularly youth employment, health, sustainable development, regional integration, the media and social networks.

Discussions will help identify challenges and limitations of youth participation, and explore new ways of thinking to help formulate adequate strategies and policies that are more inclusive, taking into account the latest developments in the region and the dynamics they have generated. A deeper understanding of the needs and expectations of youth, regardless of the category they belong to is essential to provide relevant solutions to the acute problems and challenges they are facing today, which hinder their growth and their participation in the development process of their respective countries.

To this effect, a study on the situation of youth in North Africa coordinated by ECA-NA will serve as a basis for the Forum to take stock of the current situation and identify alternatives aiming at promoting the effective participation of youth in the development process. This study will be enriched by data and inputs that other participating regional organizations would contribute, namely the League of Arab States among others.

After these three days of discussion and debate, operational recommendations will be made to the attention of governments, development partners and all stakeholders, to better integrate the concerns of youth in policies and programmes, and create an enabling environment so as to ensure youth's effective participation in the development process. A final Declaration will set guidelines and provide a framework for mobilizing youth themselves, policy makers, the economic and social actors, civil society and the media, in order to promote the role of youth as development actors, but also as the ones who are ultimately responsible for the future of their countries and their societies.



Maghreb Arab Union

