

TERMS OF REFERENCE

UNITED NATIONS SOMALIA Youth Advisory Board (YAB)

1. Introduction

Somalia is one of the world's demographically youngest countries with eight out of ten people younger than 35 years old. Although there is no universal definition of the term 'youth' as definitions are contextual, depending on the social, economic and political environment, the Somali National Youth Policy 2022-2026 defines youth as people aged between 15 and 30 years. It is projected that Somalia's population will be 18.4 million by 2025, and 21.2 million by 2030¹ with at least one in every three Somalis being a youth. With these figures, it is safe to say that the 2030 agenda for sustainable development is for the youth, and because of this it needs to be by the youth, as much as possible.

Somali youth have been unable to fully enjoy their rights and achieve their potential as transformative agents due to the continuing conflict, chronic underrepresentation, and socio-economic and political exclusion, disproportionately carried by girls and young women. They are experiencing difficulties in accessing quality education, securing gainful employment, training, and health services among others. Six per cent of the youth have not completed any level of education, while three out of every 10 young Somalis are unemployed. The importance of understanding youth participation comes from two complementary angles: the first being youth as targeted consumers for a range of public services and youth as strategic actors in the development process.

The United Nations in Somalia is one of the most integrated UN presences in the world, with its various mandates currently implemented through 26 Agencies, Funds and Programmes, one political mission (UNSO) and one logistical support mission (UNSOS). Several UN agencies working in Somalia have projects which focus completely or partially on youth, within the priorities outlined in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Somalia 2021-2025.

Although the UN recognizes the role that young Somalis could play in their country's peace- and state-building processes, so far, youth programming and interventions have lacked a comprehensive and integrated long-term approach. There has been inconsistent engagement of Somali youth in the planning, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes as well as very limited success in effectively mainstreaming youth issues in the political and development processes. Failure to respond to the aspirations and needs of the country's youth undermines the prospect for lasting peace and instability in Somalia.

An important element in empowering young people consists in guaranteeing their right to participate in decision-making processes. Lasting peace in Somalia will not be possible unless young people feel represented in political life, have a say in the national political dialogue and have a true stake in the country's future. Youth should be recognized as partners in decision-making so that they can express their views and make specific contributions to issues that concern them and society at large. The creation of appropriate permanent mechanisms of participation would enable meaningful and sustained participation of Somali young women and men in decision-making processes at different levels.

¹ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/somalia-population>



In August 2019, the UN Somalia established a Youth Advisory Board (YAB) – a multi-stakeholder all-inclusive advisory board with the intention of engaging directly with a small but highly representative and diverse panel of young women and men leaders, influential youth voices and representatives of institutions key to the implementation of youth development agenda in Somalia. The board's aim is to improve the relevance, mobilization and outreach of different United Nations initiatives among young people in Somalia and help the United Nations to improve its response to the needs of youth.

2. Objective and scope

Playing an advisory role to the SRSG, DSRSGs and the UN Country Team, the Youth Advisory Board helps make the UN action more participatory, relevant and effective for young people in Somalia, by enabling active engagement and exchanges between young people and all the UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes.

The Board works closely with the UN Inter-Agency Working Group on Youth, to increase the level and quality of youth participation in the planning, implementation and monitoring of United Nations programmes, and to mainstream youth issues in the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Somalia 2021-2025 and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development in Somalia.

The YAB's main objectives are to:

1. Create an opportunity for young people to advise and have impact on UN policy, programme design and/or implementation;
2. Ensure that UN's programme interventions effectively respond to the critical challenges and opportunities of Somali youth, and
3. Enable the young people to continuously hold UN to account on its commitments to youth development in Somalia.

3. Specific Functions and Tasks of YAB

As an advisory body to the United Nations in Somalia, the Youth Advisory Board is expected to:

- Advise the United Nations senior management team in Somalia on the strategic opportunities and necessary actions for addressing youth issues.
- Increase the level and quality of youth participation in planning, implementation and monitoring of United Nations programmes and policies.
- Advise UN on topics such as employment, education, training and entrepreneurship, environment and climate change, human rights and democracy, peace and security, digitalization and technology, gender social inclusion and health, among others.
- Provide contextual information from a youth perspective through participating in review process of United Nations programmes, when appropriate.
- Advocate the mainstreaming of the youth agenda and a youth responsive approach in the SDG development agenda.



- Engage and guide United Nations communications and advocacy campaigns targeting young people.
- Support the United Nations engagement with youth organizations and movements across Somalia.
- Represent and facilitate youth input at local, regional and national gatherings and share experiences from such gatherings with other young people to encourage youth involvement in the decision-making processes in their communities and regions. Provide feedback for relevant policy formulation and programming.
- Promote youth participation and input in the United Nations' work through organizing youth events, informing and mobilizing young people to participate in United Nations activities.
- Conduct youth surveys and engage with local and regional youth networks, including through social media, on issues affecting youth and make recommendations to United Nations in Somalia to guide the development of strategies, policies and programmes.
- Contribute to the United Nations policy development and publications by:
 - Contributing articles on Somali youth issues and concerns.
 - Encouraging youth and youth-led organizations in their regions to document and share their experiences and lessons learnt, towards the development of UN knowledge based on youth-led development best practices, tools and publications.
 - Disseminate United Nations Youth Strategy, relevant messages, materials and other publications.
- To encourage and support effective and meaningful participation of young people in youth-led development initiatives and programmes to strengthen United Nations response to policy and programme development for the youth.
- Provide quarterly reports to the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Youth detailing activities and impact at local, regional and national levels of the above-mentioned tasks and responsibilities related to youth programmes.
- Advise on the impact of programmes and strategies on young people. It will provide a forum to influence decisions through offering new ideas and solutions on issues that affect young people to maximize their development gains
- Challenge through critically examining policies, priorities, programmes and strategies from a youth perspective. It will challenge and shape strategic policies by exploring their impact on young people, investigate how the office engages with younger citizens and point to areas that need to change to improve the relationship with young people in the future
- Test whether the concerns and perspectives of young people are taken into consideration in decision making, on programmes and strategies. It will test the viability of pipeline and existing programmes that largely target young people.
- Ensure that young people's voices are heard and listened to at each level and that interventions are relevant to and help develop youth as partners and leaders in development.

4. Composition and Selection of Members

The Youth Advisory Board will strive to embrace diversity as a critical mechanism to ensure that different opinions are brought to the table and that issues affecting young people, as well as their aspirations, are well represented for integrated solutions. The second cohort will serve for one term of 2 years.



The second cohort of the YAB shall include young women and men (on a 50/50 basis) consisting of 20 members aged 15 to 30 years, who are involved with or have close links to local youth and professional organizations to provide a balanced representation of the different social backgrounds and interests of the young people in Somalia.

The YAB will be composed by:

- Twelve regional representatives, one young woman and one young man per region: Benadir, Jubballand, South-West, HirShabelle, Galmudug and Puntland.
- Four thematic representatives, representing each of the four thematic priorities of the United Nations Sustainable Cooperation Framework (UNCF): (1) Inclusive Politics and Reconciliation; (2) Security and Rule of Law; (3) Economic Development; and (4) Social Development.
- Four representatives of special groups and other special minorities such as Person with disability, Informal settlement, refugees etc

The selection of all the YAB members will be through an open call that will be managed by the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Youth. After selection interviews, the appointed members will be introduced to the regional youth associations and the regional authorities for a harmonious working relationship.

Board members will be selected on the basis of their ability to fulfil the following criteria:

- Somali citizenship
- Ages between 15-30 at the time of nomination
- Represent a diversity of sex, age, and geographic characteristics and an overall gender balance.
- Language capacity to understand development concepts and to articulate them clearly (in English). Preference will be given to those with strong communication and advocacy skills in order to ensure strong youth voices and active participation in the meetings.
- Commitment to support follow up actions and recommendations as outcomes of the Board discussions.
- Willingness to commit personally to the Board's work and to have the flexibility and availability to participate in meetings and other activities pertinent to the work of the Board.
- Agree with and sign the confidentiality agreement and code of conduct.
- Motivated and committed to serve on a voluntary basis.

To ensure effective transition, the second cohort will be trained by members of the 1st cohort and the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Youth.

5. Meetings and Decision-making

In carrying out their duties the full board should meet quarterly. The meetings will include the following:

- a. Orientation and Training Meeting (in person).
- b. Youth Advisory Board Annual Work Plan Retreat to review and project the board's activities (in person).
- c. The board shall hold regular meetings via a telecommunication network to be facilitated by



United Nations.

Members of the YAB will be expected to attend and participate in most of the meetings. In the event that a member does not participate for more than three meetings in a row, the expectation will be that the member should resign. Depending on the nature and content of the work as it develops, the Chair of the Board may call extraordinary meetings of the Board.

The YAB can make decisions with '50% plus one' of the total membership in attendance. It is preferable that decisions of the Youth Advisory Board are made by consensus however there may be circumstances where a matter is decided by a vote. Each member of the YAB shall have one equal vote, except that the Chairperson who only votes if there is a tie with the voting YAC membership.

6. Responsibilities of the United Nations

Through its Inter-Agency Working Group on Youth, the United Nations will support the coordination of the work of the YAB in Somalia. This will include:

- Members of the YAB will not receive any remuneration from the United Nations for their engagement. However, the United Nations shall provide funding for expenses incurred by members in fulfillment of the following responsibilities; participation on the meetings of the YAB, participation in youth events previously approved by the United Nations.
- Provide the Youth Advisory Board with information and documentation on the work of the United Nations in Somalia regarding youth issues.
- Meaningfully engage the Youth Advisory Board in the planning of youth activities.
- Provide access to conference calling capability to support Board meetings.
- Facilitate training and capacity building in the areas of advocacy, media, decision-making and policy-making to enable board members to fully and effectively fulfill their responsibilities, as outlined above.
- Provide an enabling environment for the Youth Advisory Board to liaise and collaborate with the United Nations senior leadership in Somalia and relevant youth focal points on agencies, funds and programmes.
- Provide learning and training opportunities for YAB members personal and professional growth.