

2020 IRENA Youth Forum Report to the IRENA Tenth Assembly

11 January 2020, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

10 January 2020 marked a historic moment as youth from more than 35 countries gathered at the first IRENA Youth Forum in Abu Dhabi, held in conjunction with the tenth Assembly of IRENA, to discuss the critical role of youth in accelerating the global energy transformation.

Building on the momentum of global efforts to accelerate the energy transformation, renewables must play a central role. The IRENA Youth Forum enabled a space for young people to take part in the global conversation around renewable energy beyond 2030.

Participants shared their perspectives on their ideas for the deployment of renewables in their communities and worldwide.

The Youth Forum provided a platform for young people to exchange views amongst each other, as well as with representatives from governments, private sector, international community and experts on renewable energy in the context of innovation, climate change and the socio-economic benefits of the energy transition.

As young people, we welcome this initiative from IRENA and echo the importance of amplifying the voice of renewables globally in order to achieve resilience, clean growth, a sustainable and climate-safe future, intergenerational equity, and a transition that is fair and just.

In exploring the interlinkages of renewable energy with the global development agenda, and the challenges and opportunities that are inherent to the energy transformation, we, the youth identified the following key messages and outcomes:

1. Urgent and unprecedented action is necessary to accelerate the pace of the energy transformation, implement the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and achieve the Paris Agreement.
2. It is possible to achieve SDGs and address climate change with renewables. The renewables-driven energy transition promises gains for climate, as well as a multitude of socio-economic benefits.
3. Renewable energy benefits have a ripple effect throughout society, improving public health, strengthening the role of women in the energy sector, creating jobs, stimulating innovation, ensuring inclusive education and boosting GDP while reinforcing water and food security. Renewable energy education and capacity building, including local and indigenous knowledge, and more broadly SDG7 should be taken into account in revised NDCs.
4. As the lead intergovernmental organisation mandated to promote renewable energy and support countries in their energy transition, we ask IRENA to continue to promote an inclusive platform, continuous and meaningful engagement of the new generation of decision makers that can develop plans and make recommendations for action, taking into account the essential role of sustainable development and the deployment of renewables in the global energy transformation.
5. We would also encourage IRENA to include youth as an enabling actor while implementing its work to accelerate the energy transformation at national, regional and global levels, a promoting impact on the ground.

In conclusion, we, the young people welcome the opportunity to strengthen the developing network of young energy advocates with the latest insights from the renewables sector. We call upon IRENA and its members to expand its engagement with youth, recognising us as equal partners, and empowering us to promote and advocate for renewable energy solutions in our communities and globally, by amplifying the global voice of renewable energy.

In 2020, we have entered into the Decade of Action - a decade that is going to be crucial on how we steer humanity, and the future of this planet. As you commence the 10th IRENA Assembly, we want you to remember who we are doing this for - the future generations.

“Dream, persevere and stay positive, then you’ll be able to make your ambitions a reality”.

Thank you.

** The report of the outcomes from the first-ever IRENA Youth Forum was delivered the 10th IRENA Assembly Plenary by Lydia Sanz Lozano, 17 years old, from Spain.*