

Fourteenth session of the IRENA Assembly

2024 IRENA Youth Forum: The New Generation of Decision Makers “Youth at the core of a Just Energy Transition: Skills, Empowerment and Innovation”

14-18 April 2024

Abu Dhabi

Background

The global call for a just transition was further amplified within the framework of the UAE Consensus, emerging as a pivotal component of our collective commitment in accelerating progress towards the goals of the Paris Agreement. Achieving these goals, including tripling renewable energy and doubling energy efficiency by 2030, demands a significant shift in the global energy landscape. In this context, the active involvement of young people holds paramount importance as a catalyst for driving the Just Energy Transition forward.

With half of the world’s population aged 30 and under, young people are not only a key stakeholder but are also a powerful, yet often under-utilised, asset that can contribute to accelerating the shift to renewable energy. Recognising the central role of youth across all levels of strategic planning and decision-making, IRENA remains committed in cultivating their engagement. Through tailored initiatives, IRENA provides avenues for young voices to resonate and solutions to flourish, with the overall objective of achieving an equitable energy transition by leveraging the creativity and passion of young people.

At the heart of this endeavour lies the IRENA Youth Forum, a dynamic platform facilitating intergenerational dialogues between youth, high-level officials and stakeholder representatives with the aim of bolstering the capacity of young individuals, fostering the advancement of youth-led innovations, and amplifying their voices on the global stage.

Amidst the evolving landscape of the global energy discourse, IRENA acknowledges the increasing significance of youth participation and envisions an expanded role for young leaders in shaping our sustainable future. As such, starting from the fifth anniversary since the establishment of the IRENA Youth Forum, its duration has been extended, commencing with its high-level official opening on 14 April, and spanning two full days of immersive activities on 14-15 April hosted at the Arab Youth Center, Abu Dhabi, culminating in its high-level closing event on 16 April in the Assembly venue at the St. Regis Hotel, Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi.

Held under the theme "Youth at the core of a Just Energy Transition: Skills, Empowerment and Innovation," the 2024 edition of the IRENA Youth Forum is poised to ignite dialogue and action. Through a dynamic selection of plenaries, workshops, and bilateral meetings, young delegates from diverse backgrounds will gather to explore cutting-edge innovations and share knowledge in the field of renewable energy.

The IRENA Youth Forum features an engaging programme of activities for youth, delivered with the support of the IRENA Global Council on Youth for SDG 7, with opportunities for learning, collaboration, and networking spread throughout five days from 14 to 18 April:

- 14-15 April: IRENA Youth Forum at the Arab Youth Center, including the High-level Opening Ceremony
- 16 April: High-Level Closing Ceremony at the St. Regis Hotel, Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi
- 16-18 April: Youth-led events and engagements at the Youth Booth and Youth Lounge located at the St. Regis Hotel, Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi
- 17 April: Youth-led events and engagements at the IRENA Booth at the World Future Energy Summit 2024 (WFES) taking place at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre, Abu Dhabi.

Objectives

More than just a gathering of minds, the IRENA Youth Forum embodies a shared vision of empowering young leaders to drive transformative change and ensure a just energy transition for all. Through capacity building, innovation, and advocacy, the Forum aims to equip young participants with the tools and knowledge necessary to shape a more sustainable and inclusive energy future.

Within this context, the main objectives of this edition of the IRENA Youth Forum are to foster discussion and promote action on:

- 1) *Skills for a Just Energy Transition*: Acknowledging that strengthening the renewable energy skills and capacities of young people will be pivotal for transitioning our energy system, the Forum seeks to promote dialogue on enhancing global education and training measures, as well as to equip participants with key knowledge and competencies.
- 2) *Empowering Youth Voices in Energy Agendas*: Through the elevation of youth voices within both local and global energy agendas, the Forum aims to empower young leaders to actively shape and accelerate the energy transition, ensuring that their perspectives are heard and valued.
- 3) *Fostering Youth-Led Innovation in Sustainability*: Recognising the transformative potential of youth-led innovation and entrepreneurship, the Forum will foster an environment conducive to innovation and leverage the creativity and skill of young minds to drive sustainable change.

Guiding Questions

1. Skills for a Just Energy Transition

- What specific skills and knowledge gaps need to be addressed for young people to contribute effectively to a just energy transition?
- How can education and training programmes be improved to equip young people with the necessary skills for a just energy transition?
- What innovative approaches can be used to provide young people with the practical skills required for renewable energy careers?

2. Empowering Youth Voices in Energy Agendas

- What challenges do young people face in having their voices heard on energy issues?
- How can we ensure that the perspectives of young people from diverse backgrounds are represented in discussions about the energy transition?
- What strategies can be used to empower young people to advocate for change and hold decision-makers accountable?

3. Fostering Youth-Led Innovation in Sustainability

- What types of innovative ideas and solutions are young people developing to address energy challenges?
- What are the key barriers to scaling up youth-led innovations in the renewable energy sector?
- How can young entrepreneurs be connected with the resources and networks they need to bring their ideas to life and contribute to a sustainable energy future?

Associated Publications and Activities

[World Energy Transitions Outlook \(2023\)](#)

[Tripling renewable power and doubling energy efficiency by 2030: Crucial steps towards 1.5°C \(2023\)](#)

[Renewable energy and jobs: Annual review \(2023\)](#)

[Renewable Energy Benefits: Leveraging Local Capacity \(Series\)](#)

[IRENA Youth Engagement Programmes](#)

[NewGen Renewable Energy Accelerator](#)

[Energy Transition Education Network](#)

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