

Safe spaces offer security and dignity for youth, and help make the world 'better for all': Guterres

The world's young people need safe spaces – both physical and digital – where they can “freely express their views” and “pursue their dreams” was the core message of United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres to mark this year's International Youth Day.

“The [hopes of the world](#) rest on young people,” said the UN chief on Friday, in advance of the official Day, which is celebrated annually on 12 August.

“Peace, economic dynamism, social justice, tolerance – all this and more, today and tomorrow, depends on tapping into the power of youth,” he added.

There are currently 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 24 in the world – the largest youth population ever.

Political instability, labour market challenges and limited space for political and civic participation have led youth to becoming increasingly more isolated, raising the need for more safe spaces where they can meet, engage and express themselves.

We must invest so that young people have access to education, training and decent jobs to achieve their full potential --
Secretary-General Guterres

Mr. Guterres pointed out that more than 400 million young women and men live amidst armed conflict or are vulnerable to organized criminal violence.

Moreover, he elaborated that “millions face deprivation, harassment, bullying and other infringements of their rights.”

[Safe spaces](#) offer security and dignity while interacting. These include civic spaces to engage in governance issues; public spaces to take part in community activity such as sport digital spaces to interact virtually across borders; and well-planned physical spaces for diverse youth; especially those vulnerable to marginalization or violence.

The [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), specifically [Goal 11](#), emphasizes the need for the provision of space towards inclusive and sustainable urbanization.

“We must invest so that young people have access to education, training and decent jobs to achieve their full potential,” underscored the Secretary-General.

“The United Nations is strongly committed to listening to the voices of young people – and opening pathways for meaningful participation in decisions that affect them,” he continued, announcing a new strategy to be launched in September “to step up our work with and for young people.”

“In making the world safe for young people, we make the world better for all,” concluded Mr. Guterres, “I wish all a happy International Youth Day!”

For her message for the day, Jayathma Wickramanayake, the UN Youth Envoy, stressed: “Young women and girls are particularly vulnerable, as are young refugees and migrants, youth living in conflict-prone or humanitarian settings, and LGBTQI young people,” referring to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex.

Events to celebrate International Youth Day 2018 will take place all over the world to promote youth engagement and empowerment.