

UN chief calls for 'meaningful' youth engagement in peace efforts, not just symbolism

21 September 2017 – Young people must be meaningful partners in conflict prevention and sustaining peace, and the United Nations should think outside the box on how to relate to youth globally, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres told a ministerial event held today on the margins of the General Assembly's annual debate.

"Young women and men and their contributions to peace should stand at the very core of what will become our new common approach," Mr. Guterres [said](#), explaining that he has set in motion reforms to rethink the UN's work on preventing war and sustaining peace.

The event, co-chaired by Jordan and Norway, was held in support of Security Council Resolution 2250, a ground-breaking resolution adopted in 2015 which recognizes that "young people play an important and positive role in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security."

Mr. Guterres noted that in today's uncertain and unsettling world, young people find themselves left out of decision-making and increasingly unemployed.

"We must do better in bridging these gaps and drawing on the enormous initiative, energy and ideas of the world's young people. We must make the most of the power of young women and men as drivers of a culture of peace," he said.

In a larger sense, the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, adopted by UN Member States in 2015, provides a tremendous foundation for action, he said, as it rightly defines young people as "critical agents of change" and as a priority across its 17 Goals.

"In all we do, our destination is clear: empowerment," he said. "We must commit to engaging young people fully – not as a symbol or to simply check a box. The goal must be meaningful participation."

In June, Mr. Guterres appointed Jayathma Wickramanayake as his Envoy on Youth to advance youth rights and priorities.