

UPF International: Welcoming the United Nations ECOSOC Youth Forum 2026

Tageldin Hamad
April 14, 2026



From April 14-16, 2026, the United Nations will convene the [ECOSOC Youth Forum 2026](#) at its headquarters in New York. Held in the context of the 2026 ECOSOC theme and the [High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development](#), the forum will support transformative, equitable, innovative, and coordinated actions for the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and its Sustainable Development Goals. Among the goals under review, SDG 11, sustainable cities and communities, is especially relevant this April. It concerns the places where people live, study, work and share responsibility. It also concerns the quality of neighborhoods, the dignity of public space, and the ability of young people to help shape a more inclusive social environment. The SDG 11 session will examine youth participation in urban governance, safe public space, resilience, and local decision-making as part of the wider work of building inclusive, safe and sustainable cities.

For the Universal Peace Federation, this forum deserves a direct welcome. It aligns with UPF's current international campaign, [100 Days of Serving Community](#), which runs from February 20 to June 1, 2026. Within that campaign, [April is the Month of Service](#).

The United Nations has, over many years, treated the ECOSOC Youth Forum as an important platform for bringing youth perspectives into the wider work of sustainable development. The 2026 edition also connects youth dialogue with broader international processes, including the 2026 UN Water Conference, the World Urban Forum 2026, the 2027 SDG Summit, and the 2027 United Nations Habitat Assembly. The 2026 Youth Forum also reflects the UN Youth Office's Core Principles for Meaningful Youth Participation, which call for engagement that is meaningful, representative, inclusive and safe.

For UPF, this remains part of its ongoing work. Through the [Religious Youth Service](#), young people from different backgrounds have worked together in service projects in many countries. UPF was founded on the conviction that peace requires moral renewal, responsibility in family and public life, and service to others. [Dr. Hak Ja Han](#) and [Rev. Sun Myung Moon](#) gave that conviction institutional form.

In societies marked by distrust, loneliness, and weakened civic life, sustainable communities deserve more serious attention. A sustainable city is not only one with transport systems, infrastructure and energy planning. It is also one in which people feel responsible for one another, and where young people are treated as partners in building the common good. This is where UN priorities on sustainable development meet UPF's practical service work. UPF also recognizes that youth leadership becomes stronger when it is linked to intergenerational cooperation. As the ECOSOC Youth Forum opens in New York, UPF welcomes the forum as a practical opportunity for youth, governments and civil society to turn commitments into local action. It also welcomes the young voices the forum brings into the discussion and the partnerships it can strengthen.



FOLLOW US

[DONATE](#)[WORLDWIDE CHAPTERS](#)[NEWSLETTER SIGN UP](#)

HUMANITARIAN AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

[Humanitarian Service Programs](#)[Youth Service Programs](#)[Youth UPF](#)[Religious Youth Service](#)[Sports Programs](#)[PeaceIN Project](#)

Search

LANGUAGES

[Français - French](#)[Español - Spanish](#)[русский - Russian](#)[Italiano - Italian](#)

RELIGIOUS YOUTH SERVICE PROJECTS

[Religious Youth Service](#)

Founded in 1985, the Religious Youth Service is a project devoted to education and peacebuilding among young people of all national, cultural and religious backgrounds. RYS blends substantial work service with cultural and peacebuilding training, in order to equip young people with the tools they need to be positive influences within their communities and in their interaction with other communities.

UPF chapters organize Religious Youth Service projects that offer service-learning opportunities with a special focus on developing personal leadership and peacemaking skills. Through living together and providing altruistic service in a community, participants demonstrate that it is possible for our global human family to come together in peace for our mutual wellbeing.

- [Resource page for organizers](#)
- [RYS Programs and Reports](#)
- [Backgrounder and Purpose of the RYS](#)

PAST PROJECTS

2023

Aug 17 [UPF-Sri Lanka Commemorates UN International Youth Day](#)

Apr 8 [UPF-Sri Lanka Provides Food Aid to Families](#)

Jan 24 [UPF-Sri Lanka Commemorates UN International Day of Education](#)

2022

Sep 4 [UPF-Sri Lanka Distributes Food Aid to Families](#)

2021

Mar 20 [Religious Youth Service \(RYS\): The Power of Cooperation](#)

2018

Dec 31 [2018: A Year of Accomplishments for UPF in Eastern Europe](#)

Dec 13 [RYS-Sri Lanka Trains Future Leaders](#)

Aug 17 [RYS Island Friendship Project in Sri Lanka](#)

Jan 31 [World Interfaith Harmony Week Observed in Moscow](#)

2017

Aug 18 [RYS Volunteers Build a Bridge in Sri Lanka](#)

[See More Past Projects](#)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE RELIGIOUS YOUTH SERVICE

The Youth Seminar on the World's Religions, the predecessor to RYS, was created based on an idea presented to the Rev. Sun Myung Moon in 1985 at the First Assembly of the World's Religions (sponsored by the International Religious Foundation). The first international project took place the following year in the Philippines. RYS has organized hundreds of interfaith service projects in more than 70 nations, with participants from diverse religious and spiritual backgrounds. Advisors have included Dr. Huston Smith, widely regarded as one of the world's most influential figures in religious studies, the distinguished theologian Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios, who promoted many inter-religious dialogue and cooperation projects, and other interfaith leaders.

As a service learning program, RYS brings together youth from different cultures and religions in order to promote mutual understanding and respect and to develop personal leadership and peacebuilding capacities. Participants serve a community in need, visit religious and historic sites, and learn communication and team-building skills.

The Three Pillars of RYS's Vision

RYS is a tool for young people to live and work together as a community, deepen their faith, share their best qualities, and leave a legacy of a culture of peace, service, and compassion. Through living and providing altruistic service within a community, RYS demonstrates that it is possible for our global human family to live together in peace and co-prosperity.

• **Interfaith and Intercultural Education:** Interfaith understanding and cooperation is the

- **Intercultural and Intercultural Education:** Intercultural understanding and cooperation is the foundation for peace. By gaining insight into the principles and values shared by people of diverse religions and cultures, we can learn to respect one another and lend a hand to build a better world. Mother Teresa said, "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."
- **Leadership Development:** To invest in young people, who are the future of our society, involves giving them the necessary tools — internal and external — to lead and influence others in the challenging years ahead. Our participants meet with leaders who are role models from all walks of life, to understand people of different cultures, races, and ethnic groups. They practice communication skills, gain team-building experience, learn respect for the universal values taught by all religions, and promote community development.
- **Service to Others:** By serving people in the community, the ideal of compassion becomes a reality. Altruistic service and living for the sake of others is the foundation for a culture of peace.

Global Outreach

- **Humanitarian Aid:** In response to natural and man-made disasters, UPF provides donations and volunteers to help with emergency relief. Immediate and long-term projects include clearing the debris from homes after a tsunami struck in Japan and bringing food and water to stranded survivors and scrubbing the walls and floors of an Islamic school after Thailand was struck by floods. Other activities aided people in Haiti, Pakistan, Russia and India.
- **Sports for Peace:** Young people from diverse backgrounds compete as teams in popular sports such as soccer. Coaches focus on respect and sportsmanship to promote personal development and community cohesion.

RYS volunteers — Muslim or Jew, Christian or Hindu, Buddhist or Unificationist or of any other faith — learn there is much to share and much to discover from one another. It is this cooperative inter-faith element that makes RYS distinct from any other social service project. UPF is proud to support the RYS program because young people are the future of our global society, and living for the sake of others is a UPF core principle for good citizenship and lasting peace.



View on Slideshare < 1 / 24 >

Religious Youth Service Introduction from Universal Peace Federation International

If you find this page helpful and informative please consider making donation. Your donation will help Universal Peace Federation (UPF) provide new and improved reports, analysis and publications to you and everyone around the world.

UPF is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization and all donations are tax deductible in the United States. Receipts are automatically provided for donations of or above \$250.00.

Donate to the Universal Peace Federation: *Your donation to support the general programs of UPF.*

[Donate](#)

Donate to the Religious Youth Service (RYS): *Your donation will be used for service projects around the world.*

[Donate](#)

Donate to UPF's Africa Projects: *Your donation will be used for projects in Africa.*

[Donate](#)

ABOUT UPF

[Donate](#)
[Mission](#)
[Contact](#)
[Principles](#)
[Founders](#)
[Global Peace Council](#)
[Board of Directors](#)

TOOLS

[Downloads](#)
[Guidelines for Reports](#)

We are an international and interreligious network of individuals and organizations, including representatives from religion, government, civil society and the private sector dedicated to achieving world peace. UPF supports the work of the United Nations, particularly in the areas of interfaith peacebuilding, peace education, and the strengthening of marriage and family.

**Universal Peace Federation is an NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
We support and promote the work of the United Nations and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals**

Copyright ©2006-2024 Universal Peace Federation. All rights reserved

[Login](#) | webmaster@upf.org

[About the Founders](#) | [United Nations](#) | [ECOSOC](#) | [Sustainable Development Goals](#) | [Home](#)