

UNITED
NATIONS

INTERNATIONAL
YOUTH DAY

2020

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
FOR GLOBAL ACTION

**Statement by United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident
Coordinator, Jamie McGoldrick.
on the occasion of International Youth Day**

Jerusalem, 12 August 2020

Today, the United Nations (UN) in Palestine celebrates International Youth Day under the global theme, “**Youth Engagement for Global Action**”. This year’s theme seeks to put the spotlight on the ways in which young people at the local, national and global levels are enriching national and multilateral institutions and processes, as well as draw lessons on how their representation and engagement in formal institutional politics can be significantly enhanced.

Active engagement and empowerment of young people is essential for the global community to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda. This is illustrated by the fact that more than one-third of the SDG targets directly or indirectly reference young people, with a focus on empowerment, participation and well-being.

As the UN marks its 75th anniversary, the UN75 campaign in Palestine has helped shed light on the positive role youth can play in reaching vulnerable groups in their communities. This was exemplified by their contribution in raising awareness on COVID-19 prevention in the most marginalized neighbourhoods of their communities.

While we have seen some positive steps to better engage and empower young people in Palestine, the reality remains dire as the physical and social barriers seem to increase on a daily basis. With youth comprising more than 30 per cent of the population, they struggle with high unemployment rates, low levels of political representation and inadequate access to opportunities that youth in other parts of the world take for granted. This reality has led to a sense of widespread hopelessness which could be a dangerous development unless we jointly take action to reverse this trend.

As we celebrate this year’s International Youth Day, I encourage all of you to take action to include and empower young people to help them shape their own future.