

Bangladesh launches YVM to raise young people's voices in decision making

Marking the International Youth Day, the government and the United Nations system on Thursday launched the design phase of Youth Voice Mechanism (YVM) for Bangladesh.

This innovative platform aims to amplify the voices of young people in Bangladesh in policy development and governance processes, ensuring their active participation in shaping the country's future.

The YVM will be designed to create a sustainable and inclusive channel for young people, particularly those from marginalised, rural and underrepresented communities, to engage with government stakeholders and contribute to decision-making.

This initiative comes in response to growing demands for inclusive governance and recognises the significant role that youths play in driving progress and resilience across Bangladesh.

The design phase will employ a mixed-method participatory approach, including divisional workshops, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and national youth surveys to design how a Youth Voice Mechanism could work.

These methods will ensure that the mechanism is grounded in the real experiences, aspirations, and ideas of young people across the country, according to the UN Resident Coordinator's office in Dhaka.

Empowering Young People

"As Bangladesh marks a historical transitional moment, the

Youth Voice Mechanism serves as a tool for youth to raise their voices for justice, equality, to share their views on matters that affect them today and in the future,” said Rana Flowers, UN Resident Coordinator (a. I.) in Bangladesh.

The mechanism responds to the request by Chief Adviser Prof Mohammad Yunus during the last United Nations General Assembly.

“By creating a platform for meaningful engagement through peaceful and structured means, we are empowering young people to contribute their unique perspectives and shape a more inclusive and sustainable future for their country.”

The launch of the design phase of the YVM follows International Youth Day on August 12, highlighting the importance of investing in youth and recognising their potential as agents of change for the SDGs and beyond.

“We are committed to working with the UN system and young people across Bangladesh to make the Youth Voice Mechanism a success,” said Md Mahbub-ul Alam, Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

“This initiative will help us to better understand the needs and aspirations of young people and ensure that their voices are reflected in our policies and programmes.”

The YVM will operate through a multi-faceted approach designed to ensure broad participation and meaningful engagement.

This includes establishing online platforms for dialogue and consultation, organizing regional workshops to gather diverse perspectives and conducting targeted research to inform policy recommendations.

With the collaboration of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, a dedicated secretariat will coordinate these activities, working closely with youth organizations, government agencies,

and UN partners to facilitate collaboration and ensure the YVM's responsiveness to evolving needs.

The YVM is open to all young people in Bangladesh, regardless of their background, education, or geographic location.

Special efforts will be made to reach and include key groups of youth, including indigenous youth, rural and climate-vulnerable youth, youth with disabilities, university students, youth engaged in informal work sectors, young women, gender-diverse youth and those at the intersection of multiple vulnerabilities.

Young people can contribute to the YVM through online forums, participation in workshops and consultations, submission of policy recommendations, and involvement in advocacy campaigns.

The YVM will also provide opportunities for young leaders to develop their skills and build their capacity to engage in governance processes.

The YVM is co-designed by youth and relevant stakeholders to ensure legitimacy, diversity and effectiveness.

A Steering Committee facilitated by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, which is comprised of diverse and representative youth leaders from across Bangladesh, will oversee the YVM consultancy process, ensuring that it is youth-led, inclusive, and actionable within the national policy landscape.