



10TH EDITION

VATICAN YOUTH SYMPOSIUM 2026



8-9 October 2026 | Vatican City



ABOUT THE VYS

The Vatican Youth Symposium is an annual gathering of young leaders and experts from around the world to discuss and generate solutions addressing the most urgent issues of humanity. The Symposium, now in its tenth year, has developed into a leading global forum for young leaders in sustainable development and an intergenerational platform for building social movements. On October 8-9, SDSN Youth and PASS will host the 2026 Vatican Youth Symposium in the Casina Pio IV, Vatican City.

The Symposium is made possible by the generosity and support of Dr. Betsee Parker.

“Solidarity arises precisely when we decide not to remain indifferent to what happens to our neighbor but instead to transform unavoidable bonds — economic, cultural and technological — into paths of sharing, cooperation and mutual care, embracing the idea of ‘thinking and acting in terms of community.’”

Pope Leo XIV

Magnifica Humanitas, §74

ABOUT THE HOSTS



Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences

The **Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences** (PASS) was established by the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II with the Motu Proprio of 1 January 1994. Each of the Academy's meetings begins with a report on the Church's social teachings relative to the topic in question. The Academy investigates points where further elaboration of these teachings seems advisable and provides a constructive evaluation of the teachings in the light of the social sciences. To achieve its aims, the Academy organizes conferences and workshops on specific themes, promotes scientific surveys and research, helps institutions and private individuals to execute them, publishes the results of its own consultations and issues publications of a scientific nature.

The Academy's headquarters are in the Casina Pio IV, in the Vatican City. Built in 1561 as a summer residence for Pope Pius IV and surrounded by the trees and lawns of the Vatican gardens, the Casina is a well-preserved treasury of 16th century frescoes, stucco reliefs, mosaics and fountains.



SDSN & SDSN Youth

The **UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network** (SDSN) has been operating since 2012 under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General. The SDSN mobilizes global scientific and technological expertise to promote practical solutions for sustainable development, including the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Agreement.

In 2015, the SDSN launched its official youth division, **SDSN Youth**, to empower youth globally to create sustainable development solutions. SDSN Youth aims to amplify youth's unparalleled energy and capacity to generate broad support for implementing the SDGs. The SDSN Youth's programs and initiatives tackle critical areas of sustainable development, focusing on three pillars: (1) advancing solutions and capacity building; (2) creating spaces and nurturing a community to amplify youth voices; and (3) supporting a global network of networks.

ABOUT THE 2026 VYS

The theme of the 2026 Vatican Youth Symposium, *Safeguarding Our Common Future: From Vision to Collective Action*, will prompt participants to consider how youth can envision and create progress for our common future, inspired by the words of Pope Leo XIV: “Solidarity arises precisely when we decide not to remain indifferent to what happens to our neighbor but instead to transform unavoidable bonds — economic, cultural and technological — into paths of sharing, cooperation and mutual care, embracing the idea of ‘thinking and acting in terms of community’” (Magnifica Humanitas, §74).

Approximately 50 participants are expected at the 2026 Vatican Youth Symposium. Attendees and speakers will represent over 30 countries, including 19 delegates from the Global South. Thirty-two participants are between the ages of 18 and 35, and more than half are women.



Scan to Meet the
VYS 2026 Delegates



Scan to View the
VYS 2026 Trello Board





AGENDA

Day 1 – October 8

8:45 – 9:00 *Arrival and Networking — Start of the Day*

9:00 – 10:30 *Opening Session*

- Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson, Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences
- Prof. Sr. Helen Alford, OP, President of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences
- Professor Jeffrey Sachs, President of the SDSN and PASS Academician
- Dr. Betsee Parker, Philanthropist, Naturalist and Conservationist
- María Cortés Puch, Vice President of Networks and Europe, SDSN
- Dr. Felipe Paullier, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs and Head of the UN Youth Office
- Raquel Armendariz, SDSN Youth Global Manager, SDSN

10:30 – 11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00 – 12:00 *Upholding Dignity and Justice: Human Rights and Gender Equality In Focus*

- Phil Chan, Senior Legal Counsel - Human Rights, Booking.com
- Rosalia Joseph, Doctoral researcher, University of Greenwich
- Mohammad Shehadat, Director, Youth for Peace Initiative.
- Sara Di Luca, Research Fellow, International Relations and Outreach Coordinator, UNESCO Chair on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Comparative Law, Unitelma, Sapienza University of Rome
- Moderated by Tara Everton, Manager, Communications and External Relations, SDSN

12:00 – 13:30 Lunch Break

11:00 – 12:00 *Turning the Tide on Climate Change: Practical Paths for Resilient Futures*

- Davide Agretto, Youth Education Specialist, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Amal Ridene, Adaptation and Resilience Associate, Cadlas
- Nate Wilbourne, Future Generations Lead, Wellbeing Economic Alliance Aotearoa
- Paula Castillo Alonso, Ocean Advocate
- Moderated by Kayla Colyard, Senior Program Manager at the SDG Academy, SDSN

14:30 – 15:30 *The Future of Work: Keeping Humanity at the Center*

- Max Amanu, Thematic Lead for Education and Employability, The Queen Elizabeth II Commonwealth Trust (QECT)
- Veronica Stefan, AI & Digital Researcher, Youth Partnership, European Commission, Council of Europe
- Elizabeth Quishpi, Founder & Trustee, Empower LATAM UK
- Nicole Zapata, Purpose & Impact Manager, Fundación Futuro
- Moderated by Nardos Berehe, Program Associate, Africa Lead, SDSN

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee Break

16:00 – 17:00 *Shared Spaces, Shared Lives: Building Inclusive Communities*

- HY William Chan, Adjunct Associate Professor in Architecture, University of Technology Sydney
- Nakita Aboya, Cameroon Chapter Lead, FAO World Food Forum
- Anaïs Salabert, Member of the Youth Advisory Committee, Science Panel for the Amazon
- Juan José Ayerza, CEO-Executive Director, TECHO International
- Moderated by Camila Kakabadse, Events and Partnerships Project Lead, SDSN Youth

17:00 – 18:00 *End of Day Exchange: Reflections and Takeaways*

18:00 *Dinner and Presentation of the Marco Polo Drive of Peace, Culture and Sustainable Development*

- Professor Jeffrey Sachs, President of the SDSN and PASS Academician
- Mr. Patrick Zhong, Founding Managing Partner, M31 Capital & Co-Initiator and Ambassador, The Marco Polo Drive of Peace

Day 2 – October 9

8:45 – 9:15 *Arrival and Networking — Start of the Day*

9:15 – 10:30 *The Future We Choose: Driving Sustainable Development Forward*

- Harshani Dharmadasa, Senior Director, Our Future Agenda, UN Foundation
- Beatrice Goddard Watts, Project Manager, European Institute of Innovation for Sustainability
- Tara Everton, Manager, Communications and External Relations, SDSN
- Elizabeth Zion, Sustainability Educator and Facilitator, University College Dublin (UCD) Innovation Academy
- Caillum Hedderman, President, European Youth Forum
- Moderated by Raquel Armendariz, SDSN Youth Global Manager, SDSN

10:30 – 11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00 – 12:00 *Closing Session*

- Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson, Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences
- Professor Jeffrey Sachs, President of the SDSN and PASS Academician
- Dr. Betsee Parker, Philanthropist, Naturalist and Conservationist
- Harshani Dharmadasa, Senior Director & Head of Our Future Agenda, UN Foundation
- María Cortés Puch, Vice President of Networks and Europe, SDSN
- Raquel Armendariz, SDSN Youth Global Manager, SDSN
- Moderated by Kayla Colyard, Senior Program Manager at the SDG Academy, SDSN

12:00 – 13:30 *Lunch Break and End of the Symposium*



*If you have any questions, please contact the organizers
of the event via email or WhatsApp.*

The Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences

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2026 Network's in Action Report**