YEDxEgypt Report

August 12th, 2026 | International Youth Day

Organized by:

Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP
Arab Council for Childhood and Development
Arab Network for NGOs

1. Overview

On the 12th of August 2026, in celebration of the International Youth Day, the Youth Environment Dialogues in Egypt (YEDxEgypt) brought together approximately 100 young people between the ages of 9 and 35 at the headquarters of the Arab Council for Childhood and Development (ACCD) in Cairo. YEDx is the first to take place in the Arab Region, in Egypt, and was organised by the Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP[1] in partnership with the Arab Council for Childhood and Development, and the Arab Network for NGOs. The event created a space to connect young people in Egypt with the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment, convening every two years at UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi. UNEA adopts resolutions that set the normative framework for global environmental governance and implementation at different levels.



However, young people at a national level outside international environmental processes may have limited opportunities to understand how UNEA works, what the resolutions mean at a global and national level and where young people can engage.

This is the gap that CYMG aims to bridge with its new initiative of the Youth Environment Dialogues (YEDx), which are local, youth-led exchanges that connect global environmental governance and policy with local youth action and implementation.

[1] The Children and Youth Major Group (CYMG) to UNEP is the formal youth engagement mechanism to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) representing youth networks, organizations and individuals committed to addressing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

2. Speakers and Programme of the Day

The day was divided into two main parts. The first were presentations and capacity-building sessions in the Plenary space. This was followed by five facilitated working groups which enabled stronger dialogue and knowledge exchange.

2.1 Morning Session: High-Level Opening Remarks

The day began with high-level welcoming remarks from **Ms. Hoda El Bakr,** Secretary General of the Arab Council for Childhood and Development (ACCD) and the Executive Director of the Arab Network for NGOs (ANNGO), where an overview was given of the history and uniqueness of the regional organizations of the ACCD AND ANNGO, founded by the late Royal Highness Prince Talal Abdulaziz Al Saud. Ms. El Bakr reaffirmed the positioning of the ACCD to become a channel of the visions of the young generations to transform their ideas into reality, and to reach the decision-makers to make that change possible for a healthier and sustainable future, with rights for health, education and elimination of poverty.



This was followed by an opening presentation from **Dr. Mahmoud Fathallah,** Director of the Department of Environments and Meteorological Affairs under the League of Arab States. He provided perspective about multilateralism and collective decision-making, and the variables to consider when thinking of environmental policies. Additionally, he reflected on how UNEP and UNEA's processes had an institutional mechanism to include the voices of children and youth which diversified the inputs into collective multilateral decision-making. Dr. Fathallah's main takeaways were to encourage young people towards learning about institutions and systems in the global and regional spaces to be able to contribute to policies as Arab youth to the global platforms.



Following the opening-remarks, a dialogue was enabled with the participants to discuss why they have attended YEDxEgypt, what they hope to gain, and the challenges young people are facing towards development and the environment.

2.2 Mid-day Session: What is UNEA?

In this session, participants learned about international diplomatic processes under the United Nations, particularly the work of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), and how young people can engage in UNEP's processes, and influence global environmental negotiations.



Capacity building on the history of the United Nations, the UNEP and UNEA as a decision-making body was delivered by **Mr. Mohamed Kamal,** Director of Greenish and Organizer of the Arab Forum on Land and Climate.

This set the historical and contextual background of participants to understand how multilateralism works and set the scene for the next presentation.

An overview of the formal Children and Youth engagement mechanisms in UNEP's system through the Children and Youth Major Group (CYMG) to UNEP was led by **Ms. Janna Radi,** part of the CYMG leadership team**.** Specific ways in which young people can start engaging in environmental policymaking was shared, including through UNEP's regional meetings (which include Youth Days), and the Youth Environment Assembly (YEA) which happens before every UNEA in Nairobi, Kenya led by CYMG and partners.



2.3 Afternoon Session: Implementation.. Case Studies!

Participants had a chance to learn about Egyptian youth-led initiatives and expertise relevant to topics from UNEA-7: specifically, on **sports and sustainability** and the **use of AI for sustainability.**



The first presentation was delivered by **Mr. Abdelmoez Shahin, Founder of Rowcycle,** where he shared his story of taking action to protect the marine environment whilst training as a rowing athlete. His initiative Rowcycle, transforms used aluminium cans from the beverages industry and transforms them into medals and trophies for sports events. Through Rowcycle, Abdelmoez showcases that startups can also be socially responsible, to meet a market need and also support environmental and development causes as young people. He demonstrated the power of utilizing social media to raise awareness, creativity, knowledge and curiosity to improve the environment young people are interacting with. This is especially inspirational as he rethinks the sports industry as a place for sustainability, and methods to make it a reality.



The second presentation was delivered by **Ms. Samah Abdallah,** a young expert on Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems. This session was particularly important in a world where young people are users of AI, and may not realize how to use AI as a tool for sustainability and the principles to do so. Samah went through a comprehensive interactive overview to explain what AI is to the audience, and how it can be used for sustainability.

2.4 Workshops and Exhibition Tour

Afterwards, the participants were divided into five working groups to complete the activity and dialogue with their facilitators. During the halfway point, groups took turns to tour the Exhibition Hall dedicated to his late Royal Highness Prince Talal Abdulaziz Al Saud.

The groups explored implementation of the following resolutions: (1) UNEA7/1 on Coral Reefs and Climate Resilience; (2) UNEA7/8 on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution; (3) UNEA7/2 on Sport and Sustainability; (4) UNEA7/6 on Youth Participation and Environmental Education, and (5) UNEA7/9 on AI and the Environment. Each group began by understanding the challenge in Egypt, followed by generation of youth-led solutions and opportunities to connect existing institutions and ideas to scale impact relevant to the topics.

Working Group 1: UNEA7/1 on Coral Reefs and Climate Resilience



Image source: Photo by Pascal van de Vendel on Unsplash

The first raised challenge was on **the need for monitoring and data collection** on coral reefs in the Red Sea, which can connect NGOs, ministerial entities and divers to share knowledge and monitoring systems. This data platform can enable **cooperation** between young people across the Red Sea to participate in identifying restoration options, and proposing innovations to protect the coral reefs.

Secondly, the group raised to have **dedicated coral reef fundraising mechanisms**, including through supporting communities nearby the Red Sea in developing and selling sustainable products (e.g., handmade crafts), whose proceeds can support conservation.

Thirdly, a recommendation was shared for **accessible public engagement materials, especially for the younger generation**, such as using animations to communicate coral reef protection to a wider audience.

Working Group 2: UNEA7/8 on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution



Photo by Collab Media on Unsplash

First, participants highlighted the need for greater **public awareness of hazardous chemicals and toxic metals**, particularly helping families and young people understand where exposure may occur in everyday life, including through batteries, products and improperly disposed waste.

Second, the group emphasized the importance of stronger **oversight and accountability for industries using or generating hazardous substances,** alongside better systems for the sound management and disposal of chemicals and waste to reduce risks to both human health and the environment.

Third, young people expressed interest in becoming part of the solution through **pollution-focused hackathons, competitions and innovation challenges.** These could provide structured opportunities for youth to develop practical solutions to chemicals, waste and pollution challenges across different governorates and connect promising ideas with relevant government institutions.

Working Group 3: UNEA7/2 on Sport and Sustainability



Photo by Sheriff Magdy on Unsplash

First, participants identified sporting equipment and infrastructure as an opportunity to demonstrate the **circular use of materials,** including recycled cones, nets, signage, participant IDs, giveaways and other materials used in schools, clubs and sporting events.

Second, the group explored how sport could become a space for **environmental and energy innovation,** including the potential to convert movement generated through running tracks, cycling or spinning equipment into usable energy[2].

Third, participants proposed using **major sporting events as visible demonstrations of sustainability in practice.** Ideas included recycled event materials, reusable items and public scoreboards or leaderboards that show participants how much material is being reused, recycled or saved. This would turn sustainability itself into part of the sporting experience.

[2] Example provided from Japan which turns footsteps into electricity with Piezoelectric Technology: https://parametric-architecture.com/japan-turning-footsteps-electricity/?srsltid=AfmBOorFd8OxcvJi8OW2J8xbViMp5jE690OkW_YqAyTBy4tNbbhBrqA_

Working Group 4: UNEA7/6 on Youth Participation and Environmental Education



Photo by Susan Q Yin on Unsplash

First, participants called for **continuous environmental education across different stages of learning,** beginning early and extending through universities and technical education. Environmental issues should also be connected to sectors such as agriculture, tourism and industry, and delivered through varied formats including simulations, science fairs, community activities, competitions and digital campaigns.

Second, the group identified the need for a clearer **youth-to-institution pathway.** Young people often do not know where to submit an idea, which institution is responsible, how to access mentorship or funding, or what happens after participation.

Third, participants stressed that environmental opportunities need to become **more inclusive and better connected.** Engagement should **reach beyond** already-active youth to government schools, governorates, rural and lower-income communities, girls and young women, and people with disabilities.

Working Group 5: UNEA7/9 on AI and the Environment



Photo by Conny Schneider on Unsplash

First, the group emphasized the need to fund the full environmental AI pipeline, beginning with environmental data collection and extending through research, development, testing and deployment. Support should particularly enable youth-led projects, startups and initiatives that may otherwise struggle to move from an idea or prototype toward implementation.

Second, participants proposed building stronger **connections between government, researchers, universities, startups, investors and communities.** A more coordinated ecosystem

could allow environmental data, technical expertise, funding and policy needs to meet, helping promising AI solutions move from research into real-world environmental applications.

Third, the group stressed that environmental AI must also be **Green AI.** Participants proposed assessing the energy, carbon, water and computational footprints of AI systems and encouraging more efficient models, so that AI solutions generate environmental benefits without creating disproportionate environmental costs of their own.

3. Post-YEDx Steps

The majority of participants recommended that the YEDxEgypt participant network be maintained as a platform for **continued youth engagement beyond the event,** including opportunities for mentorship, ideation, youth diplomacy, consultations and learning.

ACCD could also play a valuable **convening role** by **connecting young people across the Arab region,** enabling peer exchange, cross-country learning and mentorship between youth working on similar environmental challenges, while creating pathways to link promising ideas with relevant institutions and regional processes