

# YOUNG AMERICAS FORUM

Road to Peru 2018



The Young Americas Business Trust (YABT) is a non-governmental organization working in cooperation with the General Secretariat of the Organization of the American States (OAS) to promote social and economic development amongst young people around the world. This framework of cooperation has been supporting the mission of the OAS and the Summits of the Americas to encourage and implement youth entrepreneurship and participation programs in the Americas to overcome poverty, articulate initiatives and create opportunity for our youth.

Thus, in 2005, the “Youth Forum of the Americas” was developed for the first time, providing an official space for youth, who in the framework of the Civil Society Dialogue made their contributions at the Summit of the Americas. Since that moment the Young Americas Business Trust has been in charge of coordinating the Youth Forum as well as the development of various important dialogues and events within the framework of the General Assemblies of the Organization of the American States and the processes of the Summits of the Americas in coordination with the Secretariat of the Summits of the Americas.

The Forum is an official platform for young people to take the lead in the implementation of activities that generate spaces to contribute proactively in defining priorities and mandates for states.

As a result of each Forum, the Youth adopts a declaration of commitment related to the mandates of each Summit. This is how young people are able to make concrete proposals to governments, while at the same time setting their own agenda for action and follow-up to the agreements reached at the Forum.

From each statement, the youths themselves will take action and present recommendations to the actors involved in the forum and delegations of the participating governments. Young people undertake not only to demand actions from governments, but also to take on responsibilities to meet challenges to each region.

The First Youth Forum of the Americas took place mid-2005 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. It was attended by about 300 young people who contributed to the central theme of the IV Summit of the Americas “Creating Jobs to Confront Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance.” There, the real articulation between young people from schools, universities, NGOs, entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs, civil society actors and the private sector began to take shape.

Subsequently, in April 2009, the Second Youth Forum of the Americas was held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. They were convened under the themes of youth, entrepreneurship, innovation, migration, business opportunities for young people in environmental issues and development of alternative energies, as well as the promotion of technologies that could connect to the Americas. The Forum promoted a platform for participation through a series of online and live consultations; Hundreds of young people from all over the Americas discussed and adopted the “Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain,” which was presented at the Dialogue of Ministers of Foreign Affairs with Social Actors of the VII Summit of the Americas.



The forum was preceded and resulted from a process of participation that lasted more than eight months and included an online consultation and four sub-regional dialogues in Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic. Through these activities, thousands of young people from different social backgrounds in the region contributed their opinions and commitments to the Summits of the Americas process and presented the youth perspective in relation to the priority themes of the Fifth Summit: Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability.

The III Youth Forum of the Americas held in 2012 in the city of Cartagena, Colombia; This being the continuity of the desire to connect to the Americas and with the goal of establishing young people as “Partners for Prosperity” to face the current challenges of the Americas.

More and more tools for participation are starting to be incorporated, so virtual consultations and face-to-face dialogues take place in the different countries with the participation of more than 3,500 young people. The Young Americas Business Trust identifies that this is possible through local partners, youth networks, NGOs, universities, incubators, chambers of commerce and others.

The III Youth Forum of the Americas brought with it the Declaration of Commitments of Youth of the Americas and the Plan of Action of Cartagena which has resulted in three major commitments: 1. Generate a Youth Network of the Americas and strengthen the work of existing networks and youth organizations at local, national and regional level; 2. To create a Youth Observatory for Monitoring and Control of the proposals and agreements of the Summit, through which the youth of the Americas, their networks and their organizations are vigilantes of the tasks of governments and, if appropriate to propose contributions and improvements (effective action depends on accurate diagnosis and measurement); And 3. Organize the youth and participate in the process towards the VII Summit of the Americas, carrying out the IV Forum of Youth of the Americas to continue initiatives and projects in progress, promoting them and generating added values through a collaboration network.

The year 2012 ended with the first Youth Conference of the OAS, “Youth in Action: For Democracy and Entrepreneurship,” held in Washington D.C., an initiative led by the Office of the Assistant Secretary General of the OAS. The conference held a second and third edition in 2013 and 2014 respectively, generating high-level discussions and follow-up on youth mandates deposited with the OAS. In this sense, the mandate of the 38th OAS General Assembly in Medellin, Colombia, in 2008, where Member States entrusted the General Secretariat of the OAS to “incorporate the perspective of young people in Programs and activities of the OAS, in particular those that focus on the promotion of democratic principles and values.”

The IV Forum, an official event of the VII Summit of the Americas, focused on the theme “Prosperity with Equity: The Challenge of Cooperation in the Americas.” The Fourth Edition of the Forum was held in April in Panama City during the VII Summit of the Americas. YABT collected the contributions of 1345 young people between the ages of 18 and 30, of the preparatory process of the Forum that were the basis of the “Youth Declaration of Panama 2015.”

More than 500 young people from different sectors and organizations attended the Youth Forum of the Americas in Panama. It should be noted that the Youth Network of the Americas, the Ibero-American Youth Network, the International Youth Organization for Iberoamerica, the Latin American Youth for Democracy Network, Club Botánico Ambiental, Asociación Vale Emprender Association, and others. These and other organizations support day by day the work of YABT at the local level in the 34 Member States and follow up with the agreements emanating in each Forum.

Among the participation components of the IV Forum, it is worth highlighting: 1) Face-to-face Dialogues: Regional, National and Local Dialogues led by young people will be developed in the different OAS Member States. 2) Virtual Community: Space of interaction where the social actors who debated and presented projects, recommendations and actions for the VII Summit of the Americas. 3) Virtual Consultation; Served as a channel to receive suggestions, proposals and concerns that will be taken into account for the development of the next Declaration of Commitment of the Youth of the Americas.

The IV Forum also had an implementation component, through which young entrepreneurs contribute innovative solutions and actions to the sub-themes of the VII Summit, the Talent and Innovation Competition of the Americas “TIC Americas 2015,” an international platform of entrepreneurship and accelerator of start-ups.



The [Youth Forum of the Américas in Panamá](#) was the first official event within the framework of the Summit of the Americas and was attended by 60 young Cuban citizens, marking a historic milestone for the Americas. For the first time, the Secretary General of OAS and the Secretary General-elect were present, reaffirming the commitment and vision of the organization with the youth, at a time when young people are marking the productive and social transformation amongst the people in the Americas.

Realizing their commitment, young people organize and participate in various thematic activities alienated from the mandates of each Summit and the commitments made in the Declarations of the Youth.

Briefly, we could outline some activities carried out as a follow-up to the last Forum and towards Peru 2018.

[Youth and Education](#) - The Education Working Group, who postulated in the Declaration that they wanted, as a youth, to be considered in the development of the Inter-American Agenda for Education. YABT channeled this request and the young people were able to make their contribution to the construction of the Agenda. A virtual consultation and a dialogue with experts in Education resulted in a Report that was presented to the Ministers of Education in the Day of Reflection towards the Construction of an Inter-American Educational Agenda.

[Youth and Sustainable Development](#) - Sustainable Development was another of the topics that recently achieved a “Declaration of Young Americans United for Sustainable Development” that was presented at the Dialogue with Civil Society in the framework of the Meeting of High Authorities of Sustainable Development developed in Tela, Honduras. This is another example of the follow-up to the proposals put forward by young people in April, in this case, to the Working Group on Environment.

[Youth and Social Inclusion](#) - From this IV Forum emerges the need to work on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the different areas of the Organization of American States. That is why, accompanying a proposal that emerged in Panama, a project for social inclusion for persons with disabilities “Accessible OAS” was presented to the new Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity of the OAS. In this way YABT accompanies the youth in their concern to guarantee access to information and contents in the OAS for people with disabilities.

[Youth and Indigenous Towns](#)- Another important aspect of the Forum was that, for the first time in the framework of the Summit of the Americas, the young members of indigenous peoples had a space and made their voices heard. They drafted a “Declaration of the Indigenous Youth” which was presented to the presidents of the Member States. This was a historic Forum, where voice was given to those who had no voice.

[Annual Meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund](#)- Another historic milestone was the World Bank and IMF Annual Meetings held in Peru in 2015, which, after more than 50 years, were held outside of Washington D.C. Jim Kim, President of the World Bank, was the keynote speaker at the event that convened more than 500 people to talk about youth and entrepreneurship in the Peruvian capital. “Young entrepreneurs: drivers of sustainable growth” was the title of the activity that took as a prelude 4 months of interaction with the youth of 43 countries to know and be able to replicate their success stories in Lima. There the Young Americas Business Trust coordinated the development of a report that shows how young people have become drivers of innovation, economic growth, and positive impact on their societies. The same came from the contribution made by thousands of young people who participated in the different channels that YABT made available during the months prior to the meeting in Lima: 3 global dialogues, in English, French and Spanish, 25 National dialogues covering 5 continents and more Of 1,000 responses to virtual queries.

[General Assembly of the OAS](#) - Another event where youth is represented every year is the General Assembly of the Organization of American States. It is a goal of YABT to include young people in the OAS process as drivers of change. In Washington DC and later in Santo Domingo, the youth made their recommendations regarding the pillars of the OAS and were listened to by the highest authorities of the Organization and the heads of Delegation, so that their word reaches every corner of the hemisphere. Prior to the Assemblies, YABT develops virtual dialogues and virtual surveys that involve hundreds of young people from all over the hemisphere making their contributions to the OAS.



[Open Dialogue with the Secretary General of the OAS](#)- It should be noted that in May 2016, young people had the opportunity to participate in an open dialogue with the Secretary General of the OAS, and in June a youth delegate shared the report that thousands of young people contributed to the OAS General Assembly in Dominican Republic.

[Youth and Immigration](#) – The Committee on Migration Issues of the OAS, provided a prominent place for Youth in the Forum “Migration and Development: Towards the implementation of the Agenda 2030”. The results of this dialogue as well as 27 hemispheric dialogues developed in partnership with the Ibero-American Youth Network, the Youth Network of the Americas and other local, national and regional initiatives were presented at the Dialogue of Social Actors with the Heads of Delegation to the General Assembly of the OAS.

[Youth and Youth Employment](#) – In December 2016, the “Intersectoral Workshop on Youth Employment: an articulation between education and work” was held in Brasilia, bringing together authorities from the Ministries of Education and Labor and other key actors to analyze experiences and discuss youth employment strategies. There, a youth spokesperson had the opportunity to share the contributions of 24 national dialogues held during that year in follow-up to the Forum process. The meeting sought to recognize the changes that are taking place in the world of work and the demands imposed by the new technologies and the so-called ‘fourth industrial revolution’ in employment, education and training and YABT had the task of bringing the youth vision To that workshop.

[Youth and Inequalities](#) - It is worth noting the participation of YABT in the International Meeting on Policies for Youth and Inequalities in Latin America developed in Mexico in November 2016. This event defined an overview of the problem of social inequality in Latin America and its relationship with young people approaching Themes such as: Youth, public policies, social inequality and Development in Latin America among others.

[Youth Network](#) - In addition to facilitating a Dialogue with the Secretary General of the OAS, in 2016, YABT had the honor to support and be part of important youth-led summits; In Medellín the Youth Network of the Americas had its first International Meeting, and Bogota was the scene of the First Summit of Entrepreneurship and Democracy, organized by the Ibero-American Youth Network. Five virtual follow-up meetings were also held for networks and partners at the local level.

[Annual United Nations Economic and Social Council \(ECOSOC\) Youth Forum](#) – In 2016 and 2017 the YABT played a central role in these Forums. In 2016, YABT Executive Director Valerie Lorena was a panelist at a plenary session on promoting alliances that involve youth in the implementation of Agenda 2030. In 2017, YABT CEO Luis Viguria was in charge Moderation and presentation of the results of the session on the challenges of youth in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Today, YABT channels are still open and we are projecting youth participation at the next General Assembly to be held in Mexico, with a view to the Fifth Youth Forum of the Americas to be held in Peru in 2018.

For more information visit [www.yabt.net/foro](http://www.yabt.net/foro) or email [foro@yabt.net](mailto:foro@yabt.net)