

ReGeneration 2030

Today | Tomorrow | Together

Youth Viewpoint on the Post-2030 Agenda - The ESDN Conference 26.11.2025

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The 2030 Agenda was a promise. A promise to eradicate poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. But as we approach 2030, it's clear that this promise is largely unfulfilled. My generation is not just inheriting these unfinished goals; we are inheriting a system that failed to meet them with the urgency they required.

From the viewpoint of ReGeneration 2030 and **youth globally**, the post-2030 agenda cannot be 'SDGs 2.0'. It requires a fundamental **system shift**. Our message is not just about being included in your process; it's about **redefining the process itself**.

Core Pillars of the Post-2030 Agenda

1. From "Green Growth" to "Post-Growth & Well-Being Economies"

The Critique (The "Why")

The current model of economic **growth** is directly linked to ecological destruction and inequality. We can't just make this system "greener"; we have to **question its core** objective.

The Demand (The "What")

The new agenda must prioritize **well-being and ecological integrity over GDP**. This means advocating for concepts like **Doughnut Economics**, **Universal Basic Services**, and **re-localizing economies**. The goal is thriving within planetary boundaries, not infinite growth.

The Municipal Action (The "How")

So how do we make this real? Cities can't fix the whole economy, but they are the perfect place to start. Here's how:

First, **change the scorecard**.

Stop obsessing over **GDP and city revenue**. Instead, measure what actually matters: our **health, our air and water quality**, and whether people can **afford to live** here. Make that your official dashboard for success.

Second, **re-write the rules of your city**.

Build **15-minute neighborhoods**. Zone for shops, homes, and jobs to be **close together**, so people don't need a car for every trip.

Starve the car, feed the people. Stop expanding roads only for cars, take that space and money and build **better buses, bike lanes, and parks**.

Buy local, build community. Use the city's massive purchasing power to support **local businesses and co-ops**, not big chains. Keep wealth right here.

Third, **stop chasing dirty growth**.

No more tax breaks for big polluting companies. Instead, invest in what truly makes us resilient and well: **local clean energy, affordable housing, and community gardens**.

It's about shifting from a goal of "more" to a goal of **"better"**.

2. From "Gentle Capitalism" to "Scientific & Justice-Led Transformation"

The Critique (The "Why")

The original Agenda 2030 was built on a flawed consensus that we could tweak our economic system ("gentle capitalism") without confronting its core driver: **infinite growth on a finite planet**. Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) is scientifically incompatible with planetary boundaries. Furthermore, the current framework unfairly places the burden of change on the **Global South and marginalized communities**, rather than on the **rich countries, corporations, and individuals responsible for the vast majority of emissions and overconsumption**.

The Demand (The "What")

We must abandon the failed model of "green growth" and be bold in advocating for **scientifically-backed, just transition models**, including **degrowth in overdeveloped nations**. This is not about chasing the approval of powerful interests; it's about prioritizing **ecological integrity and justice** over corporate profits.

The Municipal Action (The "How")

First, **lead by example**.

Municipalities must shift their procurement, planning, and policies away from promoting growth-at-all-costs and towards fostering **localized well-being economies**.

Second, **regulate and tax**.

Use **local powers to regulate and levy taxes** on the most polluting industries and luxury developments within your city limits.

Third, **champion justice**.

Explicitly design policies that shift the burden of transition onto **wealthy districts and corporations**, ensuring that climate action repairs **historical inequalities** instead of exacerbating them.

3. Decolonizing Sustainability & Embracing Plural Knowledge

The Critique (The "Why")

The current sustainability framework is still dominated by **Western, neoliberal ideologies**.

The Demand (The "What")

The post-2030 agenda must **actively decolonize** knowledge and power. This means centering **Indigenous knowledge, respecting land rights**, and ensuring that solutions are **locally led and culturally appropriate**. It's about **justice, not just technology transfer**.

Municipal Action (The "How")

How does a city hall actually do this? It's about shifting power and listening differently.

First, **return decision-making power**.

Create **Shared Stewardship Agreements**. Don't just "consult" with Indigenous and local communities. Create formal **partnerships** where they have real power in decision-making over the land, water, and projects that affect them. This means **co-management** of parks, watersheds, and urban forests.

Second, **value different kinds of knowledge**.

Pay Knowledge Keepers, Don't Just Invite Them. If you bring in an Indigenous Elder or a local community expert to guide a project, **pay them like you would any other consultant**. Their knowledge is **professional expertise, not a free resource**.

Fund **Local Solutions**, Not Top-Down Plans. Instead of imposing a standard recycling program, for example, **provide grants** for communities to design their own waste-reduction systems that fit their culture and context.

Lastly, **protect and restore land access**.

Support **Land Back and Community Land Trusts**. Use municipal tools to facilitate the return of urban land to Indigenous stewardship or to create **community-controlled land trusts for farming and housing**. This repairs historical injustice and embeds local knowledge in land care.

In short, it's not about adding "diverse voices" to your existing plan. It's about handing them the pen and letting them help write the plan and paying them for their work.