



# Youth Participation in Electoral Processes

## Handbook for Electoral Management Bodies



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With support of:



European Commission  
United Nations Development Programme  
Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance

**GPECS II** Global Project  
for Electoral Cycle Support II

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## ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYMS

<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>EMB</b>	Electoral Management Body
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>IPU</b>	Inter-Parliamentary Union
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goal
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>UNCAC</b>	United Nations Convention against Corruption
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme

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# INTRODUCTION

Never before have so many young people been involved in movements for change worldwide. They are taking to the streets and using online social networks and communities to connect, express their voices and campaign for change. They are protesting against authoritarian regimes, corruption and inequalities. They are fighting for sustainable development and a better future for current and new generations.

Youth were central actors in shaping the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>2</sup> by setting the priorities for the future they want, with particular emphasis on education, employment, and honest and responsive governments. They play a crucial role as agents for change, and the potential of young people's contributions to sustainable human development must not be ignored.

However, the political representation of young women and men remains limited. They are increasingly demanding more meaningful participation in decision-making processes so they can have more control over how their lives and futures are shaped.

Recent youth mobilizations have demonstrated the capacity of young people to organize, communicate, exercise influence, and to act as a positive force for transformational change. Recognizing the potential of youth, UNDP in 2014 developed its first-ever Youth Strategy (2014–2017), called 'Empowered Youth, Sustainable Future'<sup>3</sup>, which calls on young generations to become more involved and more committed in development processes. Outcome 2 of the Youth Strategy is titled "Enhanced youth civic engagement and participation in decision-making and political processes and institutions". It aims to bolster youth political participation through the promotion of inclusive and effective engagement and participation of youth in planning and decision-making processes and platforms at local, national, regional and global levels that support sustainable development solutions to poverty, inequality and exclusion.

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