



Jayathma Wickramanayake

Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake was appointed as the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth in June 2017 at the age of 26. She is the youngest senior official in the UN and the first woman to hold this position. In this role, Jayathma works to expand the UN's youth engagement and advocacy efforts across all four pillars of the organization's work — sustainable development, human rights, peace and security, and humanitarian action — and serves as a representative of and advisor to the Secretary-General.

In 2019 Jayathma was recognized by Time Magazine as one of the "Time 100 Next: Rising stars shaping the future" and in 2020 she was recognized by Forbes magazine as part of its "30 under 30" list.

Originally from Sri Lanka, Ms. Wickramanayake has worked extensively on youth development and participation, including playing a key role in transforming the youth development sector in her home country. Prior to taking up her post, Ms. Wickramanayake was instrumental in creating the movement for civic and political engagement of young people, especially young women, in Sri Lanka through the "Hashtag Generation" movement. Previously, she advocated for global youth development on an international level including as the first ever Sri Lankan Youth Delegate to the United Nations and as the youth lead negotiator and member of the International Youth Task Force of the World Conference on Youth 2014 where she played a critical role in mainstreaming youth in the Post-2015 Process and in the establishment of World Youth Skills Day.

Ms. Wickramanayake will be participating as a GESDA Diplomacy Moderator in her personal capacity.