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A volunteer delivers a food bag to a child following the imposition of curfews in Karbala, Iraq.

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UNV and UNICEF promote youth-led action for climate resilience in Iraq

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are working closely with the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Iraq to promote civic engagement and volunteering for sustainable development among young people, including for environmental and climate change related issues. An innovative national initiative is being jointly set up to provide young people with access to a wide range of engagement opportunities in different sectors.

The 12th of August marks, every year, a day to celebrate and promote young peoples' voices, actions and initiatives, as well as their meaningful and equitable engagement.

This year's theme, "Transforming Food Systems: Youth Innovation for Human and Planetary Health", highlights the success of global efforts through the meaningful participation of young people.

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In Iraq, the Euphrates and Tigris rivers are currently experiencing drought conditions, resulting in lower river flow and affecting dam storage. The current season is the second driest in 40 years. The country is anticipating a severe drought this summer, following a particularly dry winter and reduced river flow caused by upstream damming programmes by other riparian countries.

Climate change has potential impacts on food security: reduction in wheat production, decrease in surface water storage, drying of shallower wells, and rising water costs. If the dry conditions continue, and the water reservoirs are not replenished, the population will face an acute water shortage for irrigation in the next cropping season.

To mark International Youth Day, UNICEF and UNV organized an event in Fallujah, Anbar district, for young people to meet and lead a discussion on issues around food security in their communities.

The event was attended by Dr Ai Farhan AlDulaimy, Anbar's Governor, and Sheema SenGupta, the UNICEF Representative in Iraq. An online discussion on youth engagement in food security issues, led by young people - including youth volunteers - also took place in the Duhok governorate.

“ As we celebrate young people together with our partners, we must ensure they are heard and included in the decision-making process, by highlighting solutions developed by them to address food security challenges.” -- Sheema SenGupta, UNICEF Representative in Iraq

UNV and UNICEF reiterate calls for decision-makers to address the needs of young people and to work together with them in bringing change to their communities.

To achieve sustainable development for all, we must come together and show our commitment by dedicating resources to the issues affecting youth.

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 13: Climate change](#) [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)