



**For Immediate Release
July 12, 2022**

**United Nations Development Programme and Citi Foundation
Launch Youth Co:Lab Social Innovation Challenge 2022**

Tokyo - The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Citi Foundation announced today that they will continue this year to co-host Youth Co:Lab, a program that supports youth-led social innovation and entrepreneurship to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Youth Co:Lab is now accepting applications to participate in the Social Innovation Challenge Japan 2022, the centerpiece of Youth Co:Lab's activities.

The Social Innovation Challenge Japan 2022 aims to showcase and support the business ideas of young social entrepreneurs and, in turn, unlock the potential of youth and generate more innovative solutions for social issues.

The Social Innovation Challenge is open to applications from high school students to entrepreneurs under 35 years of age and invites a wide range of business ideas focused on achieving the SDGs. This year, following the SDG principle of '*Leave No One Behind*', the Social Innovation Challenge will also shed a spotlight on businesses that help difficult-to-reach members of the community access support and services. In addition to the Excellence Award and Audience Award, which will be determined according to the contest's judging criteria, there will be a *Leave No One Behind Award* this year.

Applications will be accepted until 12:00 noon on Monday, September 26, 2022. The final pitch contest will be held online in November 2022.

In 2021, 78 applicants from Japan and abroad participated in the Social Innovation Challenge Japan 2021, which was held virtually. Nine teams passed the second screening and presented their business ideas to an audience of 200 and a panel of judges.

Details of the Social Innovation Challenge Japan 2022 are available on UNDP Tokyo's website (https://bit.ly/SICJPN2022_EN).

Co-created by UNDP and Citi Foundation, Youth Co:Lab is the largest youth-led social entrepreneurship movement driving the implementation of the SDGs in 28 countries/territories in the Asia-Pacific region. Since its inception in 2017, Youth Co:Lab has supported more than 11,000 young entrepreneurs and helped catalyze the establishment and expansion of more than 1,240

social enterprises. The number of people participating in Youth Co:Lab events has reached around 200,000.

The program was launched in Japan in 2019, with the aim of empowering youth to create new solutions for achieving the SDGs and expanding a youth entrepreneurial ecosystem that supports young entrepreneurs who endeavour to find solutions for social and environmental issues. For this purpose, Youth Co:Lab has actively engaged with the government, civil society, and the private sector.

About Youth Co:Lab:

Co-created in 2017 by UNDP and the Citi Foundation, Youth Co:Lab aims to empower and invest in youth so that they can accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurship. Youth Co:Lab also aims to foster young people's 21st Century skills by offering mentorship support for youth entrepreneurs through the Springboard Programme, and collaborate closely with partners in the social entrepreneur ecosystem.

Further details and ongoing updates on the Youth Co:Lab Japan can be found on UNDP's website and social media: https://bit.ly/YCL_RTO | Twitter: @UNDPTokyo | Facebook: @UndpTokyo

About UNDP:

UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in nearly 170 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

<https://www.undp.org/japan> | Facebook: @UNDP | Twitter: @UNDP

About Citi:

Citi, the leading global bank, has approximately 200 million customer accounts and does business in more than 160 countries and jurisdictions. Citi provides consumers, corporations, governments and institutions with a broad range of financial products and services, including consumer banking and credit, corporate and investment banking, securities brokerage, transaction services, and wealth management.

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About Citi Foundation:

The Citi Foundation works to promote economic progress and improve the lives of people in low-income communities around the world. We invest in efforts that increase financial inclusion, catalyze job opportunities for youth, and reimagine approaches to building economically vibrant communities. The Citi Foundation's "More than Philanthropy" approach deploys the enormous expertise of Citi and its people to fulfill our mission and drive thought leadership and innovation. For more information, visit www.citifoundation.com.

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