



# DECENT WORK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Youth Employment Network

Newsletter, March 2007

## **JYEN Regional Youth Symposium, February 20, 2007**

The Jamaica Youth Employment Network's (JYEN) first regional youth employment symposium was convened at the Jamaica Conference Centre. Over 200 participants were in attendance at the symposium representing youth from various high schools and youth clubs. The symposium objective was to engage youth in a discourse on employment prospects and to recognize the importance of gainful employment. Furthermore, information was provided on available products and services designed to improve enterprise, entrepreneurship and employability skills among Jamaican youth as they prepare to enter the competitive job market.

Jamaica is the first Caribbean Lead Country of the YEN.



*Raymond Pryce (right), President of the JYEN and Alain Fisher, (third right), Enterprise & Business Development Manager*



## **UNIDO/AU High Level Consultative Meeting on Productive and Decent Work for Youth in West Africa in cooperation with YEN and UNOWA in Accra, Ghana, 19 - 20 February, 2007**

A High-level Consultative Meeting on Productive and Decent Work for Youth in West Africa with emphasis on the Mano River Union (MRU) was convened on 19 and 20 February 2007 in Accra, Ghana. The meeting was organized by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) together with the African Union (AU) in cooperation with the YEN and the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA). It serves to inform the upcoming African Union Summit (July, 2007), for which UNIDO is lead agency as it is devoted to industrial development.

In preparation for this consultative meeting UNIDO, YEN Secretariat and UNOWA undertook a mapping study on youth employment initiatives in West Africa. The final draft of this study "Best Practices, Policy Environment, Tools and Methodologies for Youth Employment in West Africa", is available at:

[http://www.unido.org/file-storage/download/?file\\_id=61681](http://www.unido.org/file-storage/download/?file_id=61681)

In the Mano River Union Countries and Côte d'Ivoire, governments and other stakeholders have already conducted assessments, drawn up policy instruments and identified initiatives to address youth

employment, however, the challenge now lies in creating a multi-stakeholder effort to implement what has been envisaged. Concrete political and financial commitments need to be made in order to realize programme objectives.

The UNIDO/AU Consultative Meeting provided the basis for discussions on such multi-stakeholder programme frameworks (including the identification of financing mechanisms). Ministers of Industry and Ministers of Youth of the four countries worked together with Youth Groups, the Private Sector, and multilateral and bilateral actors to find solutions for balancing both demand supply issues related to youth in the labour market. The critical aspect of involving the private sector in programmes that create increased employment opportunities for youth was highlighted.

A specific MRU and Côte d'Ivoire focused Issues Paper was prepared for this meeting and can be found at: [http://www.unido.org/file-storage/download/?file\\_id=61689](http://www.unido.org/file-storage/download/?file_id=61689)

### **A Private Sector Initiative for Youth Employment in West Africa, a project of the Youth Employment Network office for West Africa (YEN-WA)**

With support from the Governments of Sweden and the UK, the YEN Secretariat established the YEN-WA based in Dakar, Senegal in October 2006. The Office mandate includes facilitating national strategies on youth employment, identifying existing programmes and activities to determine synergies, and increasing private sector involvement in initiatives to create youth employment.

The initiative aims to enable the private sector (both domestic and international) operating in West Africa to achieve, through improved coordination and targeting of efforts,

greater impact on the issues of youth unemployment and skills development. These are key challenges affecting both the growth of business and the wider development of the sub-region. It is envisioned that the initiative will be achieved through activities in three broad areas, research and knowledge development, network building and brokering partnerships.

For more information, please contact Mr. Jude Aidoo, Senior Specialist, Youth Employment: [aidoo@un.org](mailto:aidoo@un.org)

### **YEN Secretariat and YEN Youth Consultative Group set to release new Youth Guide**

The YEN Secretariat and YEN's Youth Consultative Group are jointly producing a new publication: *Joining Forces with Young People: A Practical Guide to Collaboration for Youth Employment*. The guide has been designed to facilitate and motivate young peoples' participation in youth employment policymaking.

The Guide continues efforts by the YEN and its youth partners to systematise the substantive and meaningful engagement of young people in the development and implementation of youth employment strategies.

This publication also provides guidance for other stakeholders, primarily governments, on why they should, and how they could engage youth organisations, demonstrating the added value of youth involvement.

We welcome all comments as we seek to finalise this guide in March 2007

A public draft of this guide can be accessed at:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/yen/download/yendraft.pdf>

Comments should be sent to: [YENetwork@ilo.org](mailto:YENetwork@ilo.org)

## Core Partner Activities



### **Commission for Social Development, 7 February, 2007, New York**

The forty-fifth session focused on employment, youth, ageing and disability. The United Nations estimated that some 195 million men and women had been unable to find work in 2006, and that 1.4 billion, half the global workforce, held jobs that did not pay enough to lift them above the \$2-a-day poverty line. Panel discussions addressed macroeconomic policy for full employment and decent work for all; labour mobility; youth and families; good practices for promoting full employment and decent work for all; and ageing. Under the item “emerging issues”, members of the Commission focused on “Youth employment: impact, challenges and opportunities for social development”.

For the note by the UN Secretariat: "Youth Employment: Impact, Challenges and Opportunities for Social Development", E/CN.5/2007/3, please see:

<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/224/94/PDF/N0722494.pdf?OpenElement>

A draft resolution on youth was co-sponsored by Portugal and Senegal to invite the Commission to encourage Member States to involve young people and youth organizations in all aspects of youth development, by consulting youth-led organizations and including youth representatives in national delegations in relevant United Nations forums.

Among other recommendations, the draft resolution would:

- invite all Governments and non-governmental organizations to contribute to the United Nations Youth Trust Fund to accelerate the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth in countries with limited resources.
- ask for the development of a broad set of indicators related to youth.

For the draft resolution please see:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csocd2007/Resolutions/res07.htm>

By the terms of a related text, the Commission supplemented the World Programme of Action for Youth, addressing issues such as:

- the effects of globalization on youth
- youth employment and skills development
- protection of youth from involvement in armed conflict and the reintegration of youth ex-combatants

Statements in support of YEN and its Core Partners were also made at the Commission by countries, including YEN Lead Countries Jamaica and Indonesia, as well as China.

**Jamaica's** statement highlighted the Caribbean Tripartite Employment Forum, which was a special panel on the Jamaica Youth Employment Network (JYEN) established in 2005. Jamaica has advanced in developing the institutional framework for the initiative and targeting the most vulnerable and at risk youth for interventions. Included are youths:

- Residing in rural areas or inner-city communities
- With disabilities
- Living with HIV/AIDS
- Working on the streets
- Out of School

The Government of **China**, in their statement, appreciated the work done by the YEN; they hoped the establishment of the YEN China Office will help promote exchange and cooperation between China and other countries in the field of youth employment. The **Indonesian** Government stated that they, as a YEN lead country, had established the IYEN in 2003 to create networks and partnerships among Governments, employers' organizations, trade unions, youth organizations and civil society groups with the objectives to formulate a set of recommendations on youth employment; to disseminate information on good practices; and to promote and sponsor the creation of jobs for young people. The Indonesian Government has also developed vocational training centres, which provide training in mechanics, automotive, welding, electricity, commerce and entrepreneurial skills.

### **Report of the Secretary-General on the Follow up to the World Programme of Action for Youth**

The Secretary-General's report addresses two areas:

- The progress achieved and the constraints that young people face in relation to their participation in the global economy
- The progress achieved by the Secretary General's Youth Employment Network and an update on the status of national action plans for youth employment, which was prepared by the YEN Secretariat.

For the Report of the Secretary-General on the Follow up to the World Programme of Action for Youth, please see:

<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/611/73/PDF/N0661173.pdf?OpenElement>

### **Speech by Ndidi Nwuneli on Youth Employment**

At the 45th Commission for Social Development, a specific event on youth employment was held, which included Magate Wade, YEN High Level Panellist and Ndidi Nwuneli, a YEN Youth Partner and Founder/CEO of LEAP Africa, who is actively assisting the Government of YEN Lead Country, Nigeria to address youth employment policymaking. Nwuneli made a speech highlighting that despite the appearance of support for youth employment, the reality is that of the PRSPs of 21 African countries, only seven contain macroeconomic goals linked to employment creation, and only 11 have a core section containing an analysis of youth employment. In contrast, over two thirds of the PRSPs focused on the supply side, specifically issues of education and training. Nwuneli highlighted both demand side and supply side successes in Nigeria. She mentioned programmes such as FATE (assisted 1,806 of its participants to establish and operate fast growing businesses) and LEAP (trained over 1,000 Nigerian youth and entrepreneurs). However, Nwuneli pointed out that liberalization could generate more sustainable impact citing the Nigerian ICT sector, whose liberalization has resulted in 10,000 jobs generated directly and 1 million indirectly.

### **UNDESA Guide to Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth**

The UNDESA guide focuses on what Governments can do to fulfil the vision in the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY). It highlights the need for new momentum to be generated towards the design and implementation of youth policies and programmes.

Each section of the guide examines the concept of priority areas, of which one is employment. It looks at mechanisms and specific policies that may enhance the political, cultural and socio-

economic opportunities for youth. The recommendations and ideas contained in the book are inspired by analyses, case studies, lessons learned and good practices documented by a wide range of sources.

To download a copy of the book, please visit:

[http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay\\_guide.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay_guide.pdf).

### **The World Youth Report 2007 to be launched in May**

The World Youth Report 2007 (WYR07) will examine the challenges and opportunities existing for the roughly 1.2 billion youth between the ages of 15 and 24 in the world, and include issues such as:

- Employment
- Education
- Health
- Poverty
- Violence

Five new priority areas include:

- the impact of globalization on young women and men
- use of and access to information and technologies
- dramatic increase in the incidence of HIV infection among young people and the epidemic's impact on their lives
- active involvement of young people in armed conflict
- increased importance of addressing intergenerational issues in an ageing society

For updates on the launch, please see: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/wyr07.htm>



**Global Employment Trends 2007  
Released, 25 January, 2007**

According to the International Labour Office's (ILO) Annual Global Employment Trends, the number of people unemployed worldwide remained at a historical high in 2006 despite strong global economic growth. The ILO's "Global Employment Trends Brief 2007" reported that even though more people are working globally than ever before, the number of unemployed remained at an all time high of 195.2 million in 2006 or at a global rate of 6.3 per cent. This rate was almost unchanged from the previous year.

"The strong economic growth of the last half decade has only had a slight impact on the reduction of the number of workers who live with their families in poverty and this was only true in a handful of countries. In addition growth failed to reduce global unemployment", said ILO Director-General Juan Somavia. "What's more, even with continued strong global economic growth in 2007 there is serious concern about the prospects for decent job creation and reducing working poverty further."

The author of the report, Dorothea Schmidt, says population growth, especially in South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa is putting a lot of pressure on job creation. But, she says demographics are not the only driving force as the aging population also has an impact. "We, of course have this trend in the industrialized economies," said Dorothea Schmidt. "That is one of the reasons why we see more and more migration flows going into these countries. We also already see it in East Asia where we have relatively no labor force or population growth rate and we already see that especially China is getting to a point where they have to deal with a shortage of labor." To solve this problem, Schmidt says China must train its growing youth

population in the skills needed to develop the country.

Other findings in the report include trends on youth unemployment. Unemployment hit young people (aged 15 to 24) the hardest, with 86.3 million young people representing 44 per cent of the world's total unemployed in 2006.

For more information please see:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/global.htm>



**The World Bank and UNFPA's consultation on Youth and PRSPs Washington D.C, 24 - 26 January, 2007**

The World Bank and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) hosted an expert consultation on Young People in Poverty Reduction Strategies: Investing in the Next Generation. The UN Division for Social Policy and Development/ DESA was joined by youth representatives from Malawi, Sweden and Tanzania to present its work in relation to *Tackling Poverty Together (TPT): the Role of Young People in Poverty Reduction Strategies*. The purpose was to identify opportunities to include young people's issues in PRSPs. Furthermore, the workshop provided inputs for developing an inter-agency tool kit to include young people's issues in PRSPs.

The PRSPs, which are a condition for debt relief under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative as well as for concessional loans from the World Bank, are prepared by governments through a participatory process involving civil society and development partners, including the World Bank and the UN. This participatory process provides the

opportunity for young people to voice their concerns and be included in the PRSP.

For more information about youth engagement and this meeting, please see:

<http://groups.takingitglobal.org/YouthandPRSPs>.

## News from Partners

### **“Participation of Youth as Partners in Peace and Development in Post-Conflict Countries”**

Held 14 to 16 November 2006 in Windhoek, Namibia, and convened by the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa in partnership with UNDESA, this Expert Group Meeting aimed to critically analyse the complexity and gravity of the challenges youth face in post-conflict situations in Africa. The core objective was to devise specific strategies and mechanisms to include youth as central stakeholders in rehabilitation, reconciliation, and rebuilding of war-torn communities, and contributing to sustainable development in their countries.

The main outcome of the meeting was a set of policy recommendations to promote the productive inclusion of youth in society and their participation as partners in post-conflict peace building and conflict-prevention efforts

For the Aide Mémoire, please see:

[http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/namibia\\_aidememoire.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/namibia_aidememoire.pdf)

### **The Kilimanjaro Initiative, Tanzania, 24 February, 2007**

The main objective of the Kilimanjaro Initiative is to encourage young people to have self-belief and to assist in

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providing opportunities that will enable them to take on a constructive role in their communities.

The Kilimanjaro Initiative has gathered the support of a number of UN agencies, the Kenyan and Tanzanian authorities, the United Nations Federal Credit Union (UNFCU), and other public/private organizations at the local and national level.

As a key feature of its activities, the initiative organizes an annual ascent of Mount Kilimanjaro. Various stakeholders, including young people and representatives of the private and public sectors are brought together in an attempt to show how sport can build a community. In addition to creating a very positive spirit of change, the Kilimanjaro Initiative raises funds for projects highlighted by UN-HABITAT's Safer Cities programmes in Kenya and Tanzania. These projects focus on the role youth groups, with their local knowledge, skills and practical experience can play towards the physical, economic and social development of their communities.

The 2007 climb will focus on youth empowerment, especially unemployment, and encouraging them to become agents of change.

For more information, please see:  
<http://www.kilimanjaroinitiative.org>

**International Conference on National Youth Policy (ICNYP), Vienna, 11-14 December, 2006**

"Youth Participation, Governance and Democratic Citizenship" was organised by ICNYP in cooperation with the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Security, Generations and Consumer Protection, and the Union of European Youth / Young European Federalists.

For four days, young people, youth politicians and researchers from forty

nations discussed strategies to improve young people's participation. The Austrian Federal Minister of Social Security, Generations and Consumer Protection, Ms. Haubner, highlighted the importance of the participation of young people in politics. Independent of different national and cultural challenges and ideals, the goal is to develop common quality concepts for the participation and inclusion of young people in the democratic system.

For results of the working groups, please see: International Council on National Youth Policy

**Youth Business International (YBI) receives support from the Loomba Trust  
14 March, 2007**

The Loomba Trust has committed to support the scaling up of YBI support to young female entrepreneurs in three of YBI's Youth Business Programmes (YBPs), namely B'Yeah! (Bangladesh), Hambantota Youth Business Trust (Sri Lanka) and Kenya Youth Business Trust.

Each YBP will commence its programme activity in March 2007 and in total the plan is to support over 160 new entrepreneurs within a two year period with attendant outreach and training. Following the successful launch of this programme activity, YBI and the Loomba Trust hope to establish a multi-year partnership that will enable the support of a number of YBPs around the world.

This is a significant grant for these programmes and an important development in YBI's efforts to raise resources in specific support of women entrepreneurs.

[www.theloombatrust.org](http://www.theloombatrust.org)  
[www.youth-business.org](http://www.youth-business.org)



## Spotlight on Youth: A Youth Leader



**Emmanuel Edudzie**, a young and energetic youth leader in Ghana, is at the forefront of youth action for the Millennium Development Goals. Starting as the West African Focal Person for the *UNEP AEO-for-Youth project*, Emmanuel was elected to the *UNEP Youth Advisory Council* in 2003. As Coordinator of the *Youth Caucus of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD)*, he was responsible for coordinating the input of young professionals from every region of the Globe into the Commission's work

Currently studying for an MA in Governance and Sustainable Development at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana, Emmanuel spends a lot of his time working as Coordinator of the YES Ghana Country Network. YES Ghana is a network of youths and youth-serving organisations, with a mission to support and promote policies and initiatives that help youth succeed in becoming life-long learners, productive members of society, and self-sufficient citizens. Specific projects undertaken under Emmanuel's leadership include:

- The MDG Youth Watch Project – raises awareness among young people about the MDGs, generates consensus among them to take pivotal role in the national processes towards achieving the goals, and builds the capacity of youth to “watch” government policies from a youth perspective.
- The Career Development Programme – supports Ghana's Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS-II) commitment to human resource development by increasing employment opportunities for young people.
- The YouthBuild Project – provides youth in northern Ghana with an opportunity to earn productive and sustainable livelihoods through environmentally sustainable income-generation activities on organic cotton farming for commercial purposes

Emmanuel championed the establishment of the Ghana MDG Youth Platform, which now represents the voices of young people across the country on the MDGs and national development. He has been instrumental in lobbying the government to become a Lead Country of the YEN.

The United Nations Division for Social Policy and Development recently honoured Emmanuel for “outstanding efforts in support of the work of the United Nations Programme on Youth at the national level”. Moreover, he was recently appointed “Youth Spokesperson for the Millennium Development Goals” at a ceremony held at the UN headquarters. Emmanuel's work nationally and internationally truly qualifies him as an inspiring global youth leader.

## News from Youth

### The European Scout Committee and MEP's network will hold its 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting to discuss Youth Employment, 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2007

The European Scout Region is committed, through a unique education model of (non-formal education) to facilitate positive participation of young people. There are 1.2 million young people in forty countries in the European Scout Region. The aim of the meeting is to raise an informal discussion about youth employment and the problems related to this issue. Within the EU 17.9% of 25 year olds are unemployed; mobilising this group is key to European socio economic viability.

### Liberia Youth Group YOCADS



*Stand Up Action Against Poverty Program observed on October 15, 2006 by UNDP-Liberia, the youth organization Youth for Community Academic and Development Services (YOCADS) and other civil society organizations. The photo was taken during YOCADS' MDGs Club workshop.*

## Yen Associates and News from Lead Countries

**As highlighted in the November, 2006 newsletter, under a YEN-Canadian CIDA partnership agreement, 8 young Canadians have been placed in eight YEN Lead countries as YEN Associates for a period of seven months. The profiles of each YEN Associate have been presented and this issue will feature updates from the YEN Associates following the lead country updates.**

Ms. Sofia Jadvaji (Sri Lanka)  
Ms. Robyn Agoston (Namibia)  
Ms. Nermeen Mouftah (Egypt)  
Mr. Mohamed Sultan (Senegal)  
Ms. Robyn Davis (Brazil)  
Ms. Rachel Gottfried (Rwanda)  
Mr. Trafton Koenig (Azerbaijan)  
Ms. Amrit Atwal (Jamaica)

### Azerbaijan

Last year the Ministry of Labour in Azerbaijan developed a National Action Plan on Employment as the operational component of the already-adopted National Employment Strategy. Currently the NAPE is awaiting Presidential approval, which is expected to come in the first quarter of 2007 and mark the beginning of several new initiatives. The Plan highlights the importance of education and continuous-learning, as well as the need to involve social partners in the implementation of both preventative and curative policies to address the needs of youth entering the labour market for the first time.

The Ministry of Labour has also been developing a strategy to eliminate child labour in Azerbaijan, particularly in the agriculture sector. Towards this end a conference was held, bringing together employers, trade unions, governmental bodies and several international organizations to define the challenge and develop common solutions. YEN Associate **Trafton Koenig** took part in

the facilitation of the conference, in addition to drafting a comprehensive report on its outcomes for participants. In the coming months Mr. Koenig will be finalizing a status report on the current situation of youth employment in Azerbaijan.

### **Egypt**

Following the completion of a comprehensive situation analysis of young people in the Egyptian labour market, the Ministry of Manpower and Migration (MoMM) with the support of the YEN Secretariat and the ILO is in the process of identifying policy priority areas which would form the basis of a National Action Plan (NAP) on youth employment. Work will now take place to develop proposed interventions in the areas of macroeconomic policies, education and training reform, enterprise development, labour market policies and programmes, and governance.

YEN associate, **Nermeen Mouftah**, has continued her work within the NAP Secretariat working to ensure effective communication and efficient collaboration between the MoMM and NAP stakeholders, both national and international. She is supporting the ongoing capacity building and development of the Egyptian Youth Consultative Group, the official body endorsed by the Government to represent youth perspectives in the NAP process, to ensure they are fully representative of Egyptian youth. Within the MoMM, she assists in the training of government employees on the NAP process and establishing the Secretariat as a national public information point on youth employment and the NAP initiative.

### **YEN Office for West Africa (YEN-WA), Senegal**

The YEN-WA had recently completed a study (together with UNIDO) on "Best Practices, Policy Environment, Tools and Methodologies for Youth Employment in West Africa".

Assisting Jude Aidoo, the YEN-WA Senior Specialist, YEN associate, **Mohamed Sultan** has worked extensively on The Best Practices study and has been continuing desk research on youth employment initiatives in the sub-region. He is now looking to set up a YEN - WA website to profile and share youth employment initiatives, in association with UNOWA. Furthermore, he has been closely following the security and political issues as they affect or stem from youth in the sub-region, and has been providing reports to UNOWA on such matters.

### **Rwanda**

On December 15 2006, The Ministry of Labour and Employment (MIFOTRA) held a National conference, an important first step in the NAP implementation process. The conference served to showcase the NAP and to discuss the necessary mechanisms and resources needed to ensure its successful implementation. The conference generated numerous recommendations including the creation of a Project Coordinating Unit, a NAP Steering Committee and/or task forces.

There is now improved national understanding on how the Government of Rwanda intends to meet the youth employment challenge drawing on the commitment of a broad array of Rwandan and international stakeholders to support the NAP process. The first step towards implementation is the formal endorsement of the NAP by the Rwandan Cabinet which should take place by March 2007.

YEN Associate, **Mireille Saurette** has replaced Ms. Rachel Gottfried since early January 2007 and has been continuing to develop a NAP implementation strategy. Mireille, based at MIFOTRA recently organized a consultative meeting, chaired by the Minister of Labour with interested Ministries, key donors and youth

representatives to determine a proposed structure and mandate for a NAP Steering Committee. She is now working on developing a proposal for a Project Coordination Unit, which would be based within MIFOTRA and be responsible for coordinating the NAP implementation process. She is also beginning to develop a database of youth employment initiatives

### **Sri Lanka**

December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006 marked the day Cabinet Ministers approved the Cabinet Memorandum for the Youth Employment National Action Plan (NAP). In addition, the following actions were also approved:

- (1) Appointment of a “Cabinet Sub Committee” with the participation of youth employment-related Ministers, headed by the President;
- (2) Establishment of a “Steering Committee” comprised of the respective Secretaries, and other key private and non-governmental stakeholders; and
- (3) Establishment of the “Youth Employment National Secretariat” as the working arm for the Youth Employment Steering Committee to facilitate the implementation of the Youth Employment NAP.

Furthermore, there was a Cabinet reshuffle within the Government in February 2007, which led to all youth-related agencies, including YEN, to be placed within the scope of the Ministry of Youth Affairs. The other institutions within this Ministry include: National Youth Services Council (NYSC), Youth Corps, Youth Cooperative Ltd, Youth Welfare Fund and Tharuna Aruna (Graduate Programme).

YEN Associate, **Sofia Jadvaji**, is continuing to work on the Social Communication Project, and YEN and ILO are in the first stage of the process in planning for a TV show that addresses youth employment issues in the country.

Sofia has also been assisting the YEN office in updating the YEN-SL website and initiating a YEN-SL newsletter. The newsletter has been uploaded to the YEN-SL website, [www.yensrilanka.org](http://www.yensrilanka.org), which is being further updated and re-designed.

### **Namibia**

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture (MYNSSC), the YEN portfolio in Namibia has gained substantive recognition in the past few months among youth employment stakeholders. This is a result of recent efforts by the Ministry to engage with national and international stakeholders concerning the Youth Employment Network, through the gathering of information related to the YEN and the NAP process. Capitalizing on this mounting interest, the MYNSSC in partnership with the core YEN partners, key national stakeholders and the YEN Secretariat, are in the process of planning the “National Symposium on Youth Employment” scheduled to take place in mid-April. The Symposium is intended to revitalize the National Action Plan formulation process, building on past efforts of the Employment and Training desk of the MYNSSC. Moreover, the Symposium will be the first time Namibian stakeholders have been brought together on this scale to discuss youth employment issues as well as their contribution to the National Action Plan. Special consideration and efforts will be given to the inclusion of youth in the Symposium and the entire NAP creation and implementation process.

YEN Associate, **Robyn Agoston**, has been working within MYNSSC to support their efforts in solidifying the YEN and the NAP process in Namibia. She has conducted many individual meetings and interviews with youth employment stakeholders, both in the capital Windhoek, and all around the country, including with the Prime

Minister Honorable Nahas Angula. Ms. Agoston also has had the opportunity to attend the Office of the Special Advisor to Africa's "Youth In Africa" Conference, and the UNDESA's Commission for Social Development's 45<sup>th</sup> Session (focusing on youth and employment), allowing her to draw on the various regional and international expertise of fellow colleagues working on youth employment issues. She continues to apply these experiences to the planning and organization of the National Symposium on Youth Employment, and all of her efforts relating to the YEN in Namibia.

## Other Lead Country News

### Mali

The Government of YEN Lead Country Mali launched a national Youth Employment Programme (PEJ) in 2004 with a National Agency for the Employment of Youth (APEJ) and a National Youth Employment Fund (FNEJ) being key outcomes of this programme. Building on these developments and a 2005 YEN/ILO financed study "Unemployment and conditions of work for youth in Mali" the ILO is now taking the lead in supporting the Government to develop a National Action Plan on youth employment. With the assistance of the French Development Cooperation a new partnership project with the Government will seek to support the creation and ongoing functioning of a multi-stakeholder technical committee tasked with developing and implementing Mali's NAP.

### Syria

"Know About Business" (KAB) is an ILO programme that is being implemented in Syria through the SHABAB Project in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. KAB consists of training materials for entrepreneurship education. Its

objective is to provide students in the pre start-up stage with information aimed at developing entrepreneurial skills, and to provide the knowledge required not only to establish their own business but to work productively in SMEs.

The pilot phase of the KAB curriculum was launched on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2006 in 19 secondary schools (academic and vocational) and intermediate institutes. 20 students (age 17) were chosen from each indicated school or institute on a voluntary basis where they come in to attend the programme. A first Assessment Workshop was held 20-21 December 2006.

## Related Issues

### **The General Assembly adopts a landmark Disability Convention, 13 December 2006**

The General Assembly adopted a landmark disability convention, the first human rights treaty of the twenty-first century and one that dramatically impacts the lives of around 650 million people worldwide living with disabilities. For youth with disabilities, the Convention marks a historical opportunity for the voice of youth to have an impact, as each country ratifying the Convention embarks upon implementation of the Convention's principles and incorporation of its guidelines into national structures.

For the full text of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the six official languages of the United Nations, please see:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/convtexte.htm>.

## Calendar

### **Water and Youth**

First Annual Meeting

Buenos Aeries, Argentina

12-14 April 2007

<http://www.waterandyouth.org/>

### **Young Entrepreneurs in Africa**

15 April 2007

For more information, please contact  
paul.wambua@unhabitat.org

### **8th Annual Global Yth Service Day**

20-22 April 2007

<http://www.GYSD.org>.

### **Act! Speak! Build! Youth Week**

16-22 April 2007

<http://www.habitat.org/youthprograms/intl/default.aspx>.

### **First regional Convention on the Rights of Youth (In Spanish)**

[http://www.oij.org/ant/convencion\\_2005.htm](http://www.oij.org/ant/convencion_2005.htm)

### **African Development and the Next Generation: Towards a Research Agenda**

(The Open University)

16-17 May 2007, Milton Keynes, UK

<http://www.open.ac.uk/idc/news/current/africandevconf.html>

### **Young People in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: From Policy to Action**

(The World Bank)

21-25 May 2007, Rome, Italy

### **Addressing youth employment problems**

2-11 July, 2007

The International Training Centre in Turin is organizing a course to facilitate the design of employment, labour market and training policies addressing youth employment. To this end, the course follows the three stages of the policy cycle, i.e. problem analysis, policy design and policy implementation and monitoring. It is primarily targeting government officials involved in the design and implementation of employment policies, members of employers' and workers' organisations, vocational training institutions and youth organisations. It will be held in 3 languages: English, Spanish and Arabic.

For more information please contact

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### **Press round up**

#### **08-02-2007**

International Herald Tribune

Young people increasingly unable to get foothold in economy, according to U.N. analysis

#### **10-02-2007**

Kashmir Times, India

Employment crisis, working poverty hit youth hard

#### **02-02- 2007**

Nieuwsbank, Netherlands

Youth Employment Emerging Issue on Commission Agenda

#### **01-03-2007**

UN Daily News

UN Grants Sierra Leone \$35 million to fund projects in the areas of youth employment from the UN's new Peace Building Fund

#### **07-03-2007**

Asian Journal, USA

ILO: Up to 2.5M young women seeking work as maids prone to abuse

#### **08-03-2007**

Business Mirror, Philippines

Women entrepreneurs start young

#### **14-03-2007**

Bangkok Post, Thailand

Government needs to help young Thais hit potential

**We welcome both feedback and contributions. We would like to hear from you at [YENetwork@ilo.org](mailto:YENetwork@ilo.org) and encourage you to share this Newsletter with colleagues and friends**