

Briefing for Member States and Permanent Observers on the Secretary-General's Five-year Action Agenda related to youth, pursuant to resolution 51/1 entitled "Policies and programmes involving youth" adopted at the fifty-first session of the Commission for Social Development

29 April 2013, 10 am – 12 pm, ECOSOC Chamber

Presentation by the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth

Overview of Issue

Today's generation of youth, the largest the world has known, offers an unprecedented opportunity for innovation and development. Yet, too many young people, some of whom are highly educated, have no immediate prospects, are disenfranchised from the political, social and development processes in their countries and are therefore distrustful of institutions and leaders. Prospects are even dimmer for marginalized youth living in disadvantaged conditions who are particularly vulnerable to being recruited and victimized by criminal groups.

The vast majority of youth live in developing countries and about half (600 million) live in countries affected by conflict, crisis and fragility and lack access to education, vocational training and employment opportunities.

General Assembly and SG Actions

In recognition of the importance of addressing youth issues, a High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Youth was held in 2011 at UNHQ. In the outcome document adopted at the High-Level Meeting, Member States requested the Secretary-General to prepare a comprehensive report that evaluates the achievements and shortcomings of ongoing UN programmes related to youth and to make concrete recommendations on how to improve them. Member States also requested recommendations on how to more effectively address the challenges hindering the development and participation of youth. This report was submitted to the fifty-first session of the Commission for Social Development just a couple of months ago.

In response to the General Assembly's request, the Secretary-General has made working with and for young people a priority of his five-year action agenda. He is calling upon the UN to deepen and expand the youth focus of existing programmes, with a particular focus on employment, entrepreneurship, education, political inclusion, citizenship and protection of rights which are central to the World Programme of Action for Youth that was adopted by the General Assembly in 1995.

To help advance this agenda, the Secretary-General appointed me as Envoy on Youth. I began working as the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth in mid-Feb.

Mandate

In my role as Envoy on Youth I will work to address the needs of youth around the world by:

- Collaborating with the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD) in developing and implementing the United Nations Youth-SWAP (which was recently approved by the CEB) and serving as a global advocate for it;
- Encouraging the development of mechanisms for young people to participate in the work of the United Nations; and,
- Encouraging governments to develop youth engagement strategies.

Funding of Envoy's Office

The Envoy's office is based in DPI's Outreach Division and funded through financial contributions from Member States.

The Secretary-General wrote to all Member States on 14 February, 2013 requesting financial support for the establishment of my office with extra-budgetary funds. The estimated cost for four years will be between \$8-9 million which includes costs for six posts, including myself, as well as travel expenses for a UN Panel on Youth to advise me.

We thank the generosity of the Member States that have committed funds that have allowed us to reach about one-third of what we need for the first year. I look forward to discussing with you on an individual basis to see how we can raise the remaining funds that are needed.

The Executive Office of the Department of Public Information has set up an account with an existing Trust Fund to receive and administer the funds covering the activities of my office and the Youth Panel.

UN Panel on Youth

The Secretary-General will establish an informal advisory Youth Panel which I will call upon for support in raising awareness and promoting dialogue on youth empowerment and development. It should be a small, informal, non-compensated group that serves as a resource on an "as-needed" basis.

We are still in the process of developing our plans for a UN Panel on Youth. A list of candidates will be submitted to the Secretary-General for him to consider. Ultimately the decision will be made by him.

Work Plan

In a recent meeting with the Secretary-General, he approved my Work Plan and fully endorsed it during the ECOSOC Youth Forum which took place on 27 March in New York.

It is guided by the World Programme of Action on Youth. My priorities within the Work Plan are guided by the Secretary-General's Five-Year Action Plan Agenda. It is based on four key elements: Participation, Advocacy, Partnerships, and Harmonization.

First of all, in relation to the **Participation** priority area, the main goal is to increase youth accessibility to the UN by establishing mechanisms for the UN to engage youth

at the international, regional and national levels. I aim to open many channels of communication between youth-led organizations and the UN, as well as to enhance youth access to information related to the UN's work on youth.

I will also reach out to more governments to participate in the UN Youth Delegate Programme. The new UN Volunteers Youth Initiative is also an important programme I will advocate for.

In terms of **Advocacy**, I aim to promote stronger youth participation in setting, implementing and evaluating the various development frameworks, particularly a youth-friendly Post-2015 Development Agenda and to increase international awareness and attention to youth issues.

With regard to **Partnerships** I aim to engage Member States, the private sector, academic institutions, media and civil society, including youth-led organizations in the UN programmes on youth and facilitating multi-stakeholder partnerships on youth issues. I will coordinate closely with Member States to further support youth issues and to reinforce a youth perspective in relevant resolutions.

Finally, with regard to the goal of **Harmonization**, I aim to work as a catalyst to enhance the coordination and harmonization of youth programming among UN agencies and the communications and the flow of information between UN agencies and youth. The actions toward this goal will include promoting the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, working closely with the IANYD and supporting the establishment of inter-agency networks at the regional and national levels. My appointment coincides with the adoption of the first ever System Wide Action Plan on Youth by the UN Chief Executives which you will hear more about in a few minutes and I will support its implementation. This was an important development which would allow joint programming and coordination among agencies while boosting support for youth issues and the youth agenda.

I specifically look forward to building a close working relationship with Member States and seek on your kind support in moving the youth development agenda forward.

Activities during first quarter of appointment

My first task since being appointed has been to work closely with the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD).

My first mission was in Dakar, Senegal where he attended the "Global Meeting on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda" and most recently just came back from trip that included a High Level Meeting on energy in Norway, the Arab Development Forum in Jordan and the Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting in Papua New Guinea where he gave the keynote speech on "Young People at the Centre of Sustainable Development.

Thanks

I wish to thank the Department of Public Information and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for the support they have given me.