

BACKGROUND PAPER

United Nations Programme on Youth

Interagency Expert Group Meeting on

Goals and Targets for Monitoring the Progress of Youth in the Global Economy

New York, 30-31 May 2007

INTRODUCTION

Today 1.2 billion people worldwide are between the ages 15 and 24, the most ever in history. An estimated 86 per cent of these youth live in the developing countries. Addressing youth development challenges of this youth bulge in the population is a rare opportunity to have a far reaching impact on future generations. To seize this opportunity, there is a need for an affirmative action to lay out a vision and a global agenda for youth development in the form of concrete goals and measurable targets.

The international community has long recognized the importance of youth development and their active participation for economic growth and social transformation. The World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) adopted in 1995 and the follow-up General Assembly resolution 60/2 has identified 15 priority areas of youth development as key to the successful transition of youth to adulthood. In its resolution 60/2 of 6 October 2005, the General Assembly took note of the three clusters of priority areas of the World Programme of Action, *youth in the global economy*, *youth in civil society*, and *youth and their well-being*, presented in the Report to the Secretary General 2005, and requested the Secretary-General to provide the General Assembly at its sixty-second session, through the Commission for Social Development, with a comprehensive report on the implementation of the cluster, *youth in the global economy*.

Following the presentation of that report of the Secretary General (A/62/61 & E/2007/7) to the Commission for Social Development, the Commission at its 45th session in February 2007 requested the Secretary General, in consultation with organizations, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, to identify goals and targets regarding the cluster *youth in the global economy*.

THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR YOUTH (WPAY)

The World Programme of Action for Youth is an important and unprecedented initiative by the international community to recognize the value of youth and to bring the obstacles to their development to the fore. The Programme of Action provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the lives of young people worldwide. It contains proposals for action aimed at fostering conditions and mechanisms to promote improved well being and livelihood among young people.

The fifteen priority areas addressed by the WPAY include Education, Employment, Hunger and Poverty, Health, Environment, Drug Abuse, Juvenile Delinquency, Leisure-time Activities, Special Needs of Girls and Young Women, Participation of Youth in Decision-making, Globalization, Information and Communication technology, HIV/AIDS, Armed Conflict and Inter-generational issues. The WPAY and the supplement adopted by the Commission for Social Development in 2007 identified proposals for action in these priority areas.

The cluster, *youth in the global economy*, which is the focus of this Expert group Meeting, covers the areas of Hunger and Poverty, Education, Employment and Globalization. Proposals for action identified for these four priority areas are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Proposals for Action for the priority Areas in the World Programme of Action

Priority Areas	Proposals for Action
Hunger and Poverty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making farming more rewarding and life in agricultural areas more attractive 2. Skill training for income-generation by young people 3. Land grants for young people 4. Cooperation between urban and rural youth in food production and distribution
Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve basic education, skills training and literacy 2. Foster understanding of cultural heritage and contemporary patterns of society 3. Promote mutual respect and understanding and the ideals of peace, solidarity and tolerance among youth 4. Promote vocational and professional training 5. Promote human rights education 6. Promote training for enterprise programmes 7. Provide infrastructure for training youth workers and youth leaders
Employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote opportunities for self-employment 2. Enhance employment opportunities for specific groups of young people 3. Promote voluntary community services involving youth 4. Provide opportunities in the context of changing conditions created by technological changes
Globalization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manage the effects of globalization on youth 2. Promote youth employment and skills development in the context of globalization 3. Establish monitoring systems to track the effects of globalization on youth

The priority areas and proposals for action have guided the activities of Governments, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders in their efforts to promote youth development. At the national level, WPAY has been instrumental in providing momentum for the formulation and implementation of national youth policies. According to a review of the implementation of the WPAY conducted in 2001, 61 per cent countries have implemented a national youth programme of action while 51 per cent

countries have taken action to implement the WPAY. With the adoption of the WPAY, many countries have also included youth participants in their official delegation to the General Assembly; efforts are underway to encourage the Governments of other countries, especially those from developing countries to send youth delegates to participate in the intergovernmental processes.

These achievements following the adoption of the WPAY are significant. However, the implementation of the WPAY as a global agenda for youth development requires a definition of benchmarks or yardsticks to help in the assessment of progress and constraints in addressing the proposals for action. Concrete benchmarks in the form of specific goals and targets need to be specified. Goals and targets may be viewed as time-bound measurable targets to guide the youth development agenda, provide opportunities to assess national progress in an internationally comparable way, and generate commitment and ownership at both the global and country level.

The absence of such goals and targets leaves the youth development agenda without meaningful quantitative milestones. The best existing example of the value of goals and targets are the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which demonstrate an immense power of quantification, easy recall, and easy comparability across countries.

A similar push is required to expedite the implementation and monitoring of the World Programme of Action for Youth.

OVERVIEW - YOUTH IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

Youth in today's rapidly changing world are better poised than ever before to participate in, and benefit from, global development. However, youth are also facing new and complex challenges amid evolving global economies.

Compared to past generations, youth today are better equipped to take advantage of the growing opportunities in the global economy. The majority of youth around the world is healthy, having survived childhood, which only a few decades ago was associated with considerably higher infant and child mortality. Compared to previous generations, a higher proportion of young people today have completed primary schooling. Youth in many countries have the added advantage of increased access to the media and communication technologies. There is a growing interconnectivity among people across the world, nurturing the realization that the world is becoming — albeit slowly — a true global community. Youth are key links in this process. Furthermore, across the world, young people want to be included in local and global development as important and equal participants, rather than as passive bystanders unable to shape their own future.

Although the present cohort of youth has numerous advantages and assets, it also faces a complex and rapidly evolving economic and social environment where new opportunities coexist with major constraints and obstacles. In many ways, every market in the world is becoming more demanding, and increased competition is affecting the global marketplace and its rules and practices. Forces of globalization often impose constraints

on national policies, and not every country has the means to manage its integration into the global economy and to provide its citizens with social and economic opportunities. Youth often remain in a vulnerable situation and lack the requisite knowledge and skills to adapt to a new economic and social environment. With an uneven distribution of economic growth across and within countries, youth are facing not only the traditional (largely domestic) barriers to their development, but they must also surmount new barriers associated with the changing global economy.

Given the situation, youth issues such as hunger and poverty, lack of education and joblessness are attracting more and more attention worldwide. There is a growing understanding that effective and forward-looking national social and economic policies are essential in addressing these challenges that citizens of many countries, including young people, are facing.

FOCUS OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING:

To contribute to this end, the Expert Group Meeting focuses on the priority areas of the cluster, *Youth in the Global Economy* and aims to set global goals and targets for the four priority areas, Hunger and Poverty, Education, Employment and Globalization.

Of primary concern to the discussion for the expert group meeting is the following question:

What goals and targets can be established to facilitate implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth?

In addressing this question, the meeting may wish to deliberate on the following related questions and issues.

- What has been the past trend globally for youth development in indicators related to the selected sub-areas - - Education, Employment, and Hunger and Poverty?
- For each priority area, what are the three or four sub-areas that affect youth directly?
- What factors have affected progress in these areas and how?
- Are there additional action areas beyond those in table 1 that should be taken into consideration in goal setting in these areas?
- Taking note of the historical trend, what is the best approach to setting goals and targets in each area?
- What are specific regional concerns about setting global targets?
- What should regions and countries do to tailor agreed goals and targets to the country level in order to reflect different starting points for different countries?
- Should the goals and targets be limited by the available data on youth development indicators or are the goals and targets established with the hope that the process of data collection on youth indicators be stimulated?
- How should the challenge of unavailability of youth-related data be tackled?

CHALLENGES

Setting goals and targets in these areas can be a challenging task given the complexities associated with a rapidly changing global economy and the impact it has on youth opportunities and challenges around the world. Understanding these interrelationships is crucial for establishing a long-term vision and developing meaningful targets for youth development.

Although goal and target setting also serves as a way to energize actors in the area of youth development, it is also necessary that the goals and targets identified are realistic. Given the uneven impact of globalization on youth across the world, it is a major challenge to set realistic standardized targets applicable to all the regions based on the current youth situation. For this reason, the group will benefit from the expert experience of participants with regard to what has been achieved in the past and what can be expected in the future. This will enable reasonable quantification of the targets for each goal. For this purpose, trends in some youth indicators are included in annex II.

Goals and targets provide broad guidance to countries and other stakeholders to guide their action. It is acknowledged that differences across countries will require that individual countries define contextually relevant and meaningful intermediate, and perhaps sub-population specific intermediate targets that will enable them to reach the global targets. While using the global goals and targets as a broad mandate, regions and countries may therefore wish to set country-specific targets, which capture the real situation on the ground.

The paucity of youth-specific information and age-disaggregated data is a major challenge. This is a result of past weakness in youth development efforts and weak data collection systems in some developing countries. Data may be particularly lacking for sub groups of youth and in the regions and areas where youth development is challenged the most, such as for rural areas, persons with disabilities, and youth in conflict and post-conflict regions.

The goals and targets to be developed in this Expert group Meeting will be in the “heavy shadow” of the Millennium Development goals. Although the MDG targets are an excellent starting point for setting youth related targets in the four priority areas, and indeed do cover a number of areas that directly affect youth, the goals and targets of the MDGs are framed to capture the needs of all sub-groups of the population.

It is imperative, given the fact that youth are about one-fifth of the world’s population and a major resource for development, that more-specific youth development goals and targets are developed and raised to visibility. Among the priority areas in the cluster – Youth in the Global Economy, education, health and employment are all addressed by the goals of the MDGs. Though youth often experience the worst consequences when investments in these areas are lacking, the targets of the MDGs lack adequate attention to youth specific indicators.

STRATEGY

In addition to addressing the broad questions raised earlier, the Expert Group Meeting will propose specific goals and targets (see dummy Table 2). For each priority area, a goal and selected targets will be identified in working group sessions on Day 2 of the meeting. The meeting will benefit from major inputs from a Preparatory Youth Forum which will take place a day before the Expert Group Meeting. Youth will provide their thoughts and suggestions about goals and targets and their key considerations in arriving at their proposals. The final set of proposed goals and targets will reflect the youth Youth Forum and Expert Group discussions.

Table 2: Proposed Goals and Targets:

Goals	Targets
<u>Globalization:</u>	
<u>Hunger and Poverty:</u>	
<u>Education:</u>	
<u>Employment:</u>	

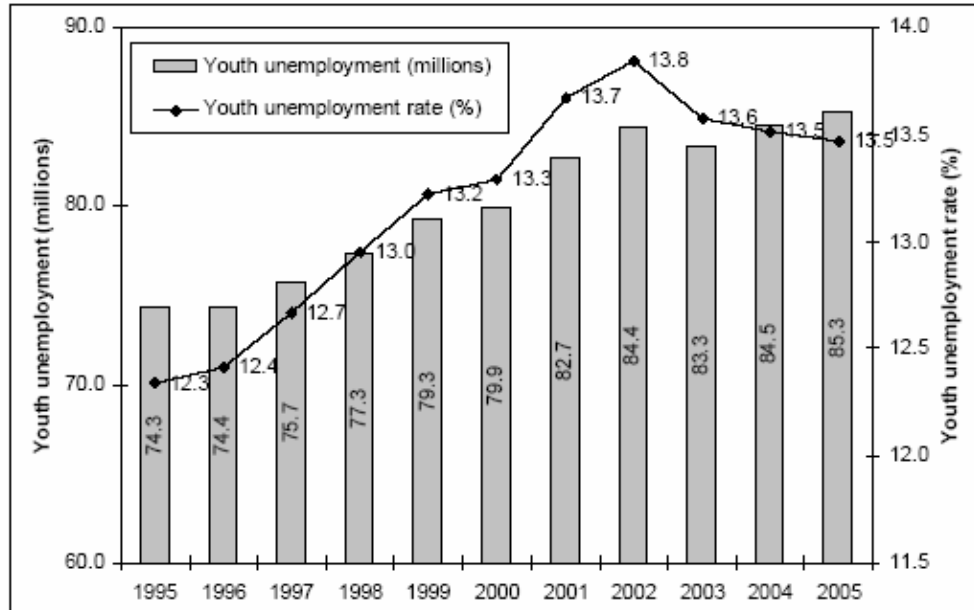
Annex I: Selected Youth Indicators

Indicators	Year	Data	Source
Youth as percentage of total population (World) Less developed countries	2007 2007	1.19 billion 1.03 billion	World Population Prospect Estimates, UN Population Division
Estimated number of youth living in Poverty: a) Less than 1 \$ a day b) Less than 2 \$ a day	2002 2002	200 mill. (18%) 515 mill. (45%)	UN DESA Estimates
Undernourished youth	2004	110.1 mill.	UN DESA Estimates
Youth Literacy Rate	2000-04	88 %	UNESCO
Gross secondary enrolment rate	2004	78 %	UNESCO
Gross tertiary enrolment	1997	88 mill	UNESCO
Youth Unemployment rate	2005	13.5%	ILO
Number of foreign students in OECD countries	2003	2 mill.	OECD and UNESCO estimates

Annex II: Youth Development Trends:

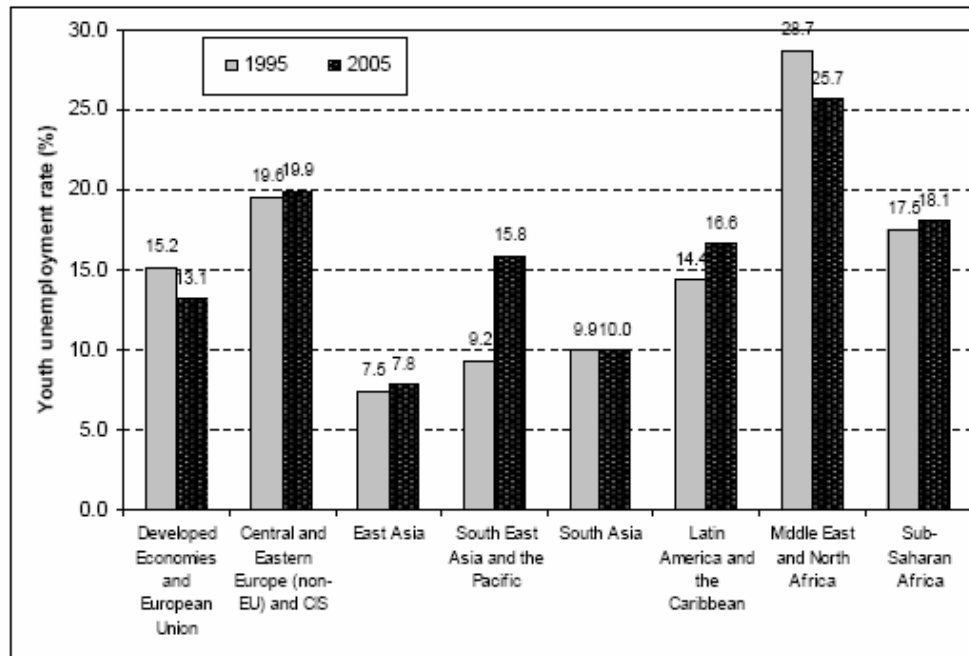
EMPLOYMENT:

Global youth unemployment and youth unemployment rates, 1995-2005



Source: ILO, Global Employment Trends (GET) Model, 2006 (see box 2 for more information).

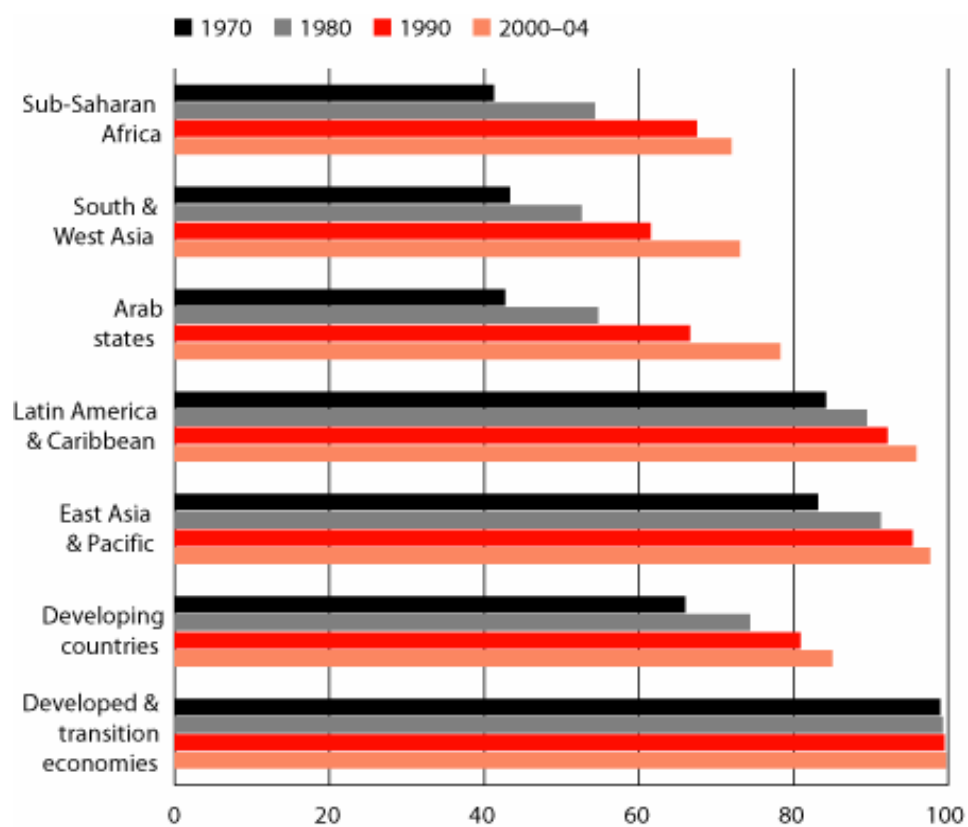
Youth unemployment rates, by region, 1995 and 2005



Source: ILO, Global Employment Trends (GET) Model, 2006 (see box 2 for more information).

EDUCATION:

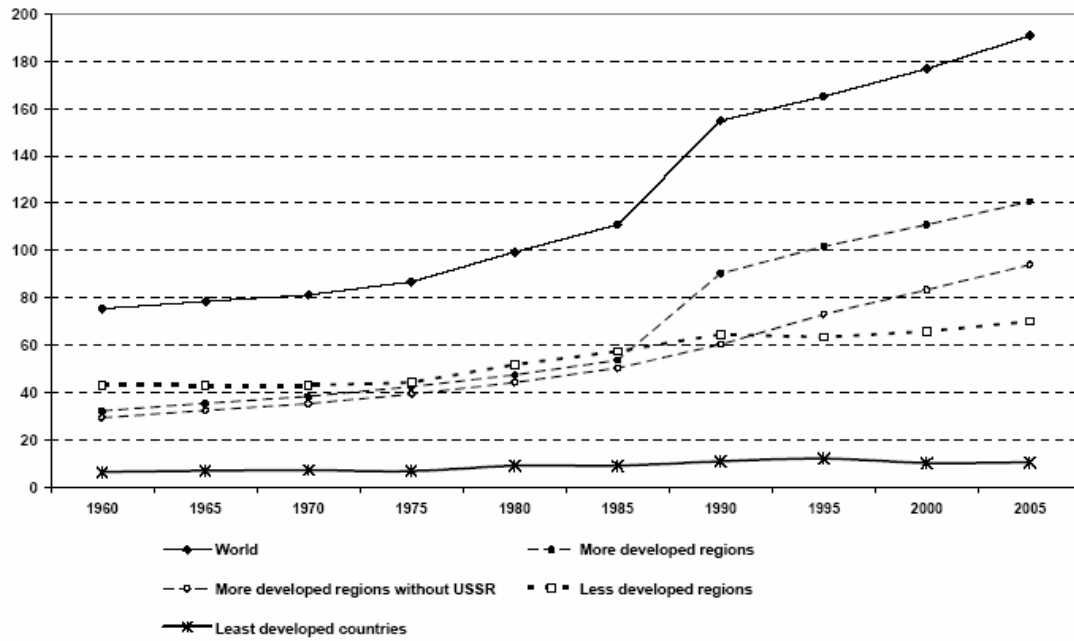
Youth literacy rate (per cent of youth ages 15–24):



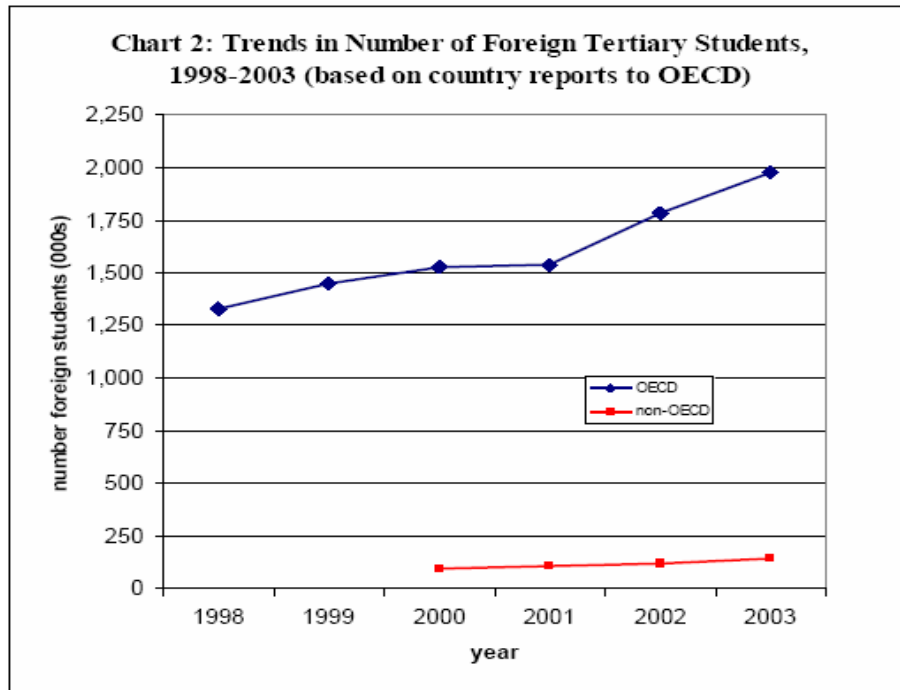
Source: UNESCO

GLOBALIZATION:

Figure I. Trends in the number of international migrants for the world and major development groups, 1960-2005

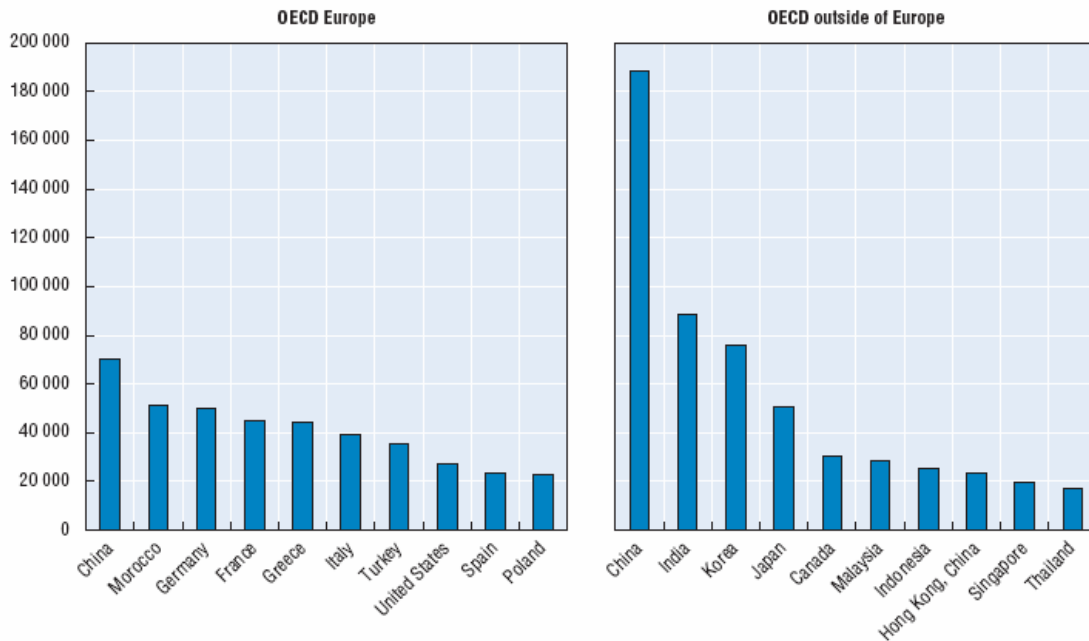


Source: UN Population Division



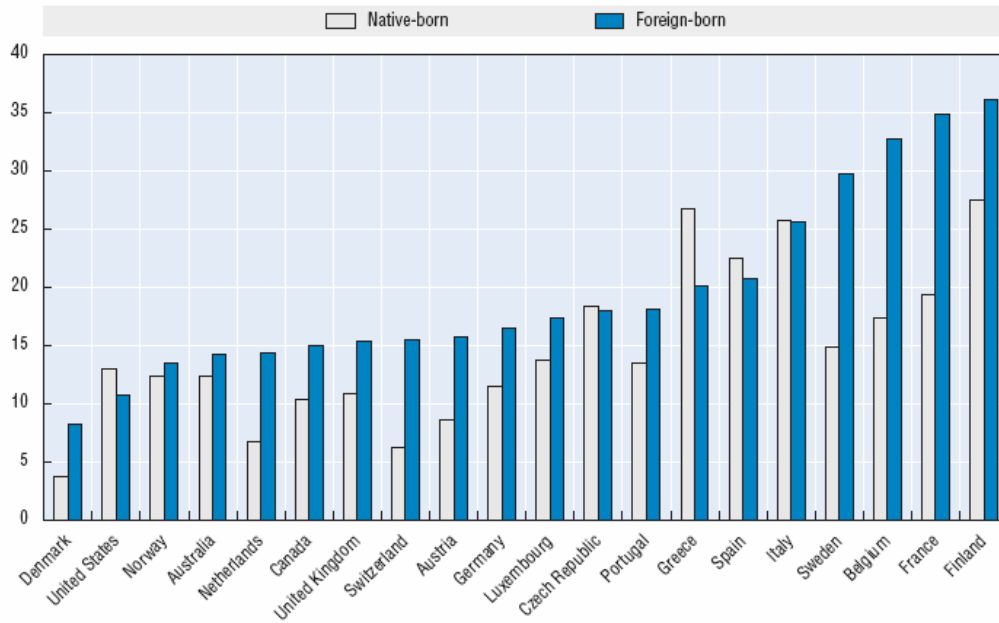
Source: OECD and UNESCO estimates: compiled by Mary M. Kritz, UN, 2006

Chart I.3. International tertiary students in OECD Europe and outside of Europe, by country of origin, 2003



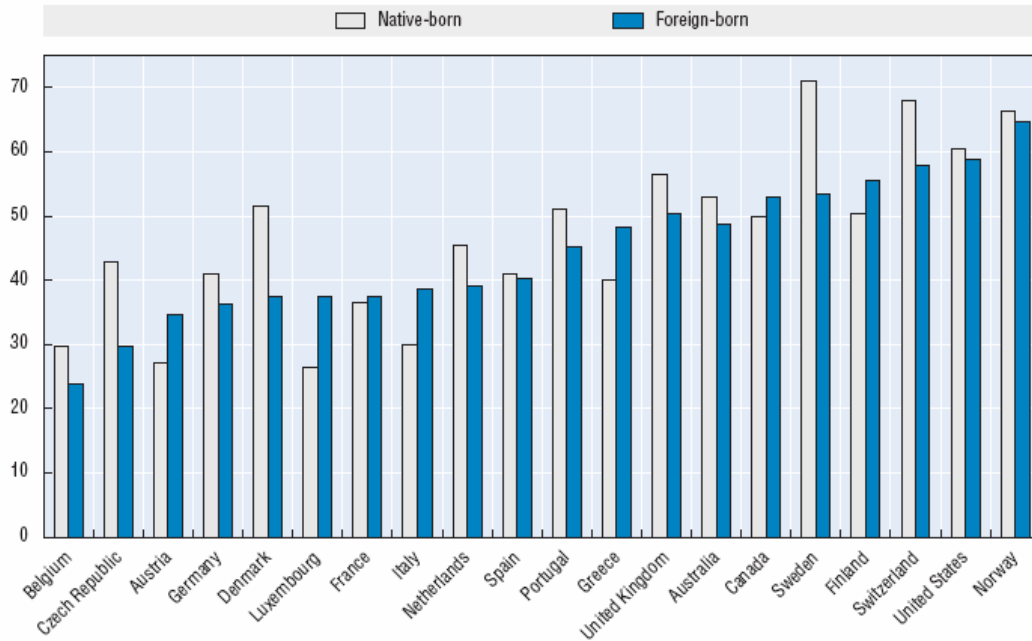
Note: Data include resident foreign students for some countries.
Source: OECD database on Education.

Chart I.6. Unemployment rate of young workers (15-24) by birth status, 2003-2004



Sources: European Union Labour Force Survey (data provided by Eurostat) except for Denmark (Population Register), 2004; Australia: Survey of Education and Work; Canada: Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics; United States: Current population survey March supplement.

Chart I.7. Unemployment rate of older workers (55-64) by birth status, 2003-2004



Sources: European Union Labour Force Survey (data provided by Eurostat) except for Denmark (Population Register), 2004; Australia: Survey of Education and Work; Canada: Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics; United States: Current population survey March supplement.