

UN YOUTH FLASH

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Best wishes for the New Year 2009!

WELCOME to the UN Youth Flash, a service of the United Nations Programme on Youth to keep you informed about the work of the UN on youth issues. You are encouraged to use and forward the information below to other networks. This update is prepared with input from UN offices, agencies, funds and programmes. UN Youth Flash can also be read on-line at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/flash.htm>.

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FEATURE: Social integration and youth at the Commission for Social Development

Next month, from 4-13 February the Commission for Social Development will meet at United Nations Headquarters in New York, to discuss issues on social integration and its relation to poverty eradication and full employment. The meeting of the Commission is an annual event following up on the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995, where social integration featured as one of the main themes. Social integration can be described as the process of building the solidarity, capacity and institutions needed to create an inclusive society, where all groups enjoy equal rights, access to basic services and opportunities for participation.

The general perception of youth is that of a vibrant generation with an abundance of opportunities ahead of them. This perception, however, fails to recognize the very real threat of social exclusion that young people face. While socio-economic backgrounds, gender, migrant status, disabilities, sexual orientation and religious beliefs are factors which can lead to social exclusion of all age groups, youth may face a double discrimination because of their age.

Education has been identified as one of the key mechanisms promoting social integration, as equal access to quality education can help to ensure that everyone has the same opportunities in life. However, only an average 65 per cent of the world's eligible youth are enrolled in secondary school. Access to education proves to be a great obstacle for the 85 per cent of youth living in developing countries, where secondary school enrolment falls as low as 32 per cent. Therefore, for the majority of these young people, the thought of a university degree is a distant dream, as even access to secondary education provides a challenge.

In a recent consultation with its members, the Global Youth Action Network (GYAN) found that the access to higher education is considered to be a key area in promoting youth development. During the consultations, a participant from a developing country noted: "How fair of a society do we live in, when intelligent and capable people are left unrecognized [and] limited in their choices because they have no university degrees, and so they become marginalized, discriminated against, unemployed, poor and hungry?" There are far too many barriers that young people have to overcome to obtain a college education, therefore limiting their opportunities to realize their career goals and aspirations.

The lack of access to education often leads to difficulties for young people to obtain decent work. Young people are, on average, three times more likely than adults to be unemployed, and often get stuck in a cycle where they cannot get a job without work experience. Young girls and

women, especially young mothers, often face a double discrimination in the labour markets. In addition, the relative disadvantage of youth in the labour market is more pronounced in developing, than in developed, economies. Policies and programmes that assist young people in the transition between education and employment are needed, and resources are required to ensure that they are properly implemented.

The focus on social integration at the Commission for Social Development presents an opportunity to consider the benefits of recognizing and including young people as equal partners in decision-making. The youth presence at the Commission has increased in recent years, as young people and youth-focussed NGOs actively participate. Some Governments have chosen to include young people in their official delegations. By attending the Commission, young people can promote increased youth participation in decision-making and draw greater attention to youth issues, therefore promoting a positive and dynamic perception of what young people are capable of achieving. By involving youth in planning and decision making processes, policies and programmes on education, employment and other issues are much more likely to reflect their needs and aspirations. An inclusive society, by definition, will be developed by considering and involving all groups in decision-making.

For more information and relevant documents about the Commission, please visit: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/csocd47.htm>. This contribution to the UN Youth Flash was prepared by Vidar Ekehaug, Program Manager, Global Youth Action Network (<http://www.youthlink.org>).

NEWS FROM UN OFFICES

(Find out more about the work of United Nations system organizations on youth issues at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/agenda.htm>).

ESCWA – WPAY workshop on promoting national youth policies

The Population and Social Policy Team of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) organized a workshop in Beirut last month, entitled "Strengthening national capacities in responding to the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY)". The workshop aimed to identify, assess and analyze the general, technical, institutional and circumstantial challenges faced by member countries in their efforts to formulate national youth policies and strategies, as well as to enhance the capacity of national counterparts in preparing national monitoring reports on youth on progress in implementing the WPAY. This workshop concluded with recommendations addressed to country representatives, Governments and ESCWA. Participants also agreed on a template to be followed in the preparation of national reports on youth. The workshop paves the way for the forthcoming Expert Group Meeting on "Reinforcing Social Equity: Integrating Youth in the Development Process" to be held later this year. More information: shakoori@un.org.

OHCHR – Call to end using young girls as domestic workers in Nepal

The United Nations has urged Nepal to end the practice of sending young girls from indigenous families to work in private homes, where they risk being exploited, and to ensure justice for those who have been abused as well as search for those who have gone missing. The practice – known as Kamalari – is outlawed in Nepal, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal (OHCHR-Nepal) noted in a news release issued in the capital, Kathmandu. However, despite a September 2006 Supreme Court order on the implementation of an existing law that prohibits child exploitation, including the Kamalari system, no concrete steps have been taken to end the practice and adolescent girls from poor Tharu families continue to be subjected to it. More information:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=29477&Cr=Nepal&Cr1=Human+rights>.

UN – Upcoming Commission for Social Development to feature youth issues

The 47th session of the Commission for Social Development will meet at UN Headquarters from 4-13 February 2009. This year, the Commission will also discuss youth issues and will have before it the Report of the Secretary General on the Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth: progress and constraints with respect to the well-being of youth and their role in civil society (A/64/61-E/2009/3). The report addresses the progress achieved and the constraints that young people face in relation to their role in and contribution to civil society as well as the progress and challenges faced in ensuring their well-being. The report also proposes goals and targets for monitoring the progress of youth in the priority areas of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY). Youth delegates in Government delegations and representatives of youth NGOs will attend meetings of the Commission. Parallel to the session of the Commission, a number of youth related side-events will be held, which include a discussion on measuring youth development, a panel discussion on volunteering, children and youth: the right to participate, an interactive dialogue on climate change solutions, and a pre-session briefing for youth delegates and youth NGOs. More information: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/csocd47.htm>.

UN – Youth and Poverty Reduction Strategies: e-Learning course

From January to March 2009, the Technical Cooperation Unit of the Division for Social Policy and Development at DESA and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are hosting the second "Youth & Poverty Reduction Strategies" e-Learning course. The course is being offered as part of the "Tackling Poverty Together (TPT): The Role of Young People in Poverty Reduction" project. It will involve over 150 young people from eight countries, namely Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Sweden, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. Topics covered in the course include assessing demographic trends and social priorities, gathering and analyzing data and information, prioritizing and costing different programme alternatives, preparing and tracking budgets, and monitoring impacts and outcomes. The e-course requires participants to work together along with mentors and peer assistants to develop an outcome activity that applies the knowledge and tools gained throughout the course. For more information: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/TPT.htm>.

UNESCO - Workshop to help formulate national youth policy in Lebanon

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) office in Beirut recently invited the Lebanese press to a workshop on formulating national youth policy. The workshop, entitled "Role of the Media in the National Youth Policy Formulation in Lebanon" aimed to sensitize the media on the importance of having a national youth policy. Participants were encouraged to suggest measures the Lebanese media could adopt to enhance the visibility of youth-policy formulation and enhance the participation of concerned stakeholders. Furthermore, 15 workshops will be held across Lebanon where stakeholders will discuss youth participation in all sectors of society. More information: http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=1&article_id=98320.

UNESCO - Brazil Youth Agenda – Guidelines for Development

UNESCO Office in Brazil signed a cooperation agreement with the National Youth Secretariat entitled "Brazil Youth Agenda: Guidelines for Development" to consolidate the National Youth Policy in Brazil. The guidelines create the conditions for formulating, planning, coordinating, integrating, and executing action at federal, state, municipal and civil society levels, to ensure opportunities for the full development of youth. The Secretariat works to promote public policies for youth in Brazil and Governmental actions to be implemented, nationwide. The main beneficiaries of the agreement are public managers at all levels who will be trained to follow up, monitor and evaluate youth policies; researchers and academic institutions; and young people participating in youth-oriented programmes. More information: Mrs. Marlova J. Noleto (marlova.noleto@unesco.org.br) or <http://ww.brasilia.unesco.org>.

UNESCO - Open schools promote social inclusion

UNESCO Office in Brazil, with financial support from the Vale Foundation, launched the Open School Collection to share UNESCO's knowledge and accumulated eight-year experience in the

creation and implementation of the "Open Schools Programme: education and culture for peace". The Programme was launched by UNESCO in 2001 and adopted by the Brazilian Ministry of Education in 2004 as a public policy entitled "Open School: education, culture, sport, and work for youth". It aims at opening public schools on weekends to offer sport, cultural and leisure activities as a means of social inclusion to vulnerable children and youth. More information: Mrs. Marlova J. Noleto (marlova.noleto@unesco.org.br) or <http://ww.brasilia.unesco.org>.

UN-HABITAT – Update on Opportunities Fund for Youth-led Development

During the 21st Session of the UN-HABITAT Governing Council in April 2007, a landmark resolution was adopted that called on the Executive Director to establish a special fund to help young people living in poverty. Over the past year the Youth Empowerment for Urban Development programme has undertaken to implement the Governing Council decision to establish the Fund. Within the programme, the intended output is to establish and operationalize the "Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-led Development", to ensure an enabling environment created for pro-poor investment in youth in developing country cities with particular focus on employment creation and income generation. The Operational Policies and Procedures for the fund have been finalized. **The call for proposals is expected to start in February 2009.** More information: Paul.Wambua@unhabitat.org

UN-HABITAT – Safer Cities – Partnerships

UN-HABITAT together with the UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) recently hosted a joint programme promoting an integrated approach to urban safety and youth. The main components of the programme included Sports for Safe Neighbourhoods; Police-Youth Dialogue; Youth, Social Integration and Inclusive Planning; Adolescent Development and Programming. There has also been joint development of sustainable arrangements (youth-led platform and city to city cooperation) for partnerships, networking and dialogue with key youth partners with global grassroots constituencies under the auspices of Baobab Connections and (SALAIDA) (Background Paper and interactive website for The International Youth Crime Prevention and Cities Summit, Durban, June 2008). In 2009 the anticipated activities include documentation of tools and good practices in the field (youth source book) and identification of regional centres of excellence on Safer Cities including youth crime prevention and youth-led development in Durban and Santiago. More information: Juma.assiago@unhabitat.org.

UN-HABITAT – Projects in Asia on water and sanitation

The South East Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) has developed an assessment protocol for Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) facilities and State of the Human Values in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education HVWSHE in Schools. Several Trainings have been carried out with teachers from South East Asian Countries. Around 500 schools participated in the assessment in nine countries in the South East Asian region. There are other similar programs running in Laos, PDR China, Cambodia, India, Nepal and Pakistan. More information: Andre.Dzikus@unhabitat.org.

UN-HABITAT – Policy Paper on youth and shelter

Urban Youth and Access to Adequate Shelter is a discussion paper which underlines the importance and urgency of addressing urban housing and land reform from a youth-led development focus. It gives an overview of key challenges and interlinked issues that would ensure that young urban residents gain in awareness of their rights to adequate shelter and realize them. Policy principles to move forward the urban youth and shelter agenda are also outlined. More information: Sunita.kapila@unhabitat.org.

UN-HABITAT – Youth Empowerment Programme in Afghanistan

Since its approval in September 2006, the Youth Empowerment Programme (YEP) has served as the turning point in the lives of more than 2,600 youth in six provinces in Afghanistan. Elections have been conducted for the establishment of Local Youth Councils (LYC) in 60 rural and urban

communities within the six provinces and in the process established 120 LYC. 60 boys and 60 girls have received training as well. Each training module is followed by a practical service activity whereby the youth implement concepts learned during the training sessions. The concept of volunteerism is part of the integrated training and one of the modules covered within the training is Youth and Local Governance. The youth have discovered pride and dignity in volunteerism which is essential to the sustainability and for the future of LYCs. These volunteers have organized various events like the International Volunteers' Day, International Peace Day and Community Cleaning Day. Under the Joint National Youth Program (JNYP) the Deputy Minister has encouraged, and called upon, all partners to build on the YEP achievements. YEP-1 has established a technical partnership with UNICEF in the establishment of YIC (Youth Information Center). More information: l.lankatilleke@fukuoka.unhabitat.org.

UNEP/UNICEF - Unite to Combat Climate Change campaign

The campaign serves to unite and empower youth networks through the use of new technologies and conventional means to learn, share knowledge and be engaged in climate change issues and brings together UN system agencies, youth networks and non-governmental organizations. Currently, activities include building a new campaign and social networking webspace for TUNZA (<http://www.unep.org/Tunza/>), encouraging the dialogue on climate change in schools, collaborating with student groups and organizing events to promote youth participation on the issue. This year, the UN is planning a global townhall meeting around climate change in mid-August in Daejeon, Republic of South Korea (UNEP) and a Children's Summit in December in Copenhagen (UNICEF). For more information, please contact Theodore Oben, theodore.oben@unep.org or Gerrit Beger, gbeger@unicef.org.

WFP – Food Force package in Italy

A package based on the World Food Programme's (WFP) educational video game "Food Force" was recently launched in Italy. The package contains fact sheets, lesson plans, and a new children's novel: "Food Force: Heroes against Hunger." Based on three of the characters from the Food Force game, the book tells the story of a WFP mission in the fictional country of Ristanga. Food Force is available in 12 languages, and can be downloaded free at <http://www.food-force.com>. WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency and the United Nations frontline agency for hunger solutions. In 2009, WFP aims to feed around 100 million people in 77 countries. More information: <http://www.wfp.org/english/?n=320>.

WFP – New resource for teachers and students

The World Food Programme has created a dedicated Teacher and Student section on their website. The section contains teaching materials, videos, games, news, events, hunger FAQs, hunger facts, and much more! More information: <http://beta.wfp.org/students-and-teachers>.

WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA - Working together to improve adolescent health

The World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) organized a three-day meeting in Manila last month to share information and discuss national policies and strategies related to adolescent behaviour and health. Experts, primarily from the health sector, from seven countries (Cambodia, China, Laos, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, and Viet Nam) and United Nations regional/country office staff participated. While reproductive health and HIV were prominently featured in examples from countries, other health issues such as substance use and injuries were also discussed. For more information on adolescent health in the Western Pacific Region, see: http://www.wpro.who.int/health_topics/adolescent_health/.

WHO - Searchable violence prevention evidence base

The World Health Organization (WHO) and Liverpool John Moores University's Centre for Public Health launched a new web site highlighting what works to prevent violence. Geared towards policy-makers and violence prevention researchers, practitioners and advocates, the web site marks the first time that information on effective violence prevention programmes is available in

a searchable web-based data base. Among the many resources it offers, the site also includes a searchable data base of abstracts from published studies that measure the effectiveness of interventions to prevent child abuse, elder abuse, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, self-directed violence and youth violence; resources including key publications on violence and its prevention. More information:

<http://www.nwph.net/preventviolence/default.aspx>.

World Bank - Private-public initiative to empower adolescent girls

The World Bank joined Governments and the private sector to launch the Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI) to promote the economic empowerment of adolescent girls in poor and post-conflict countries. This innovative alliance gives girls the skills they need today to become the economic drivers of tomorrow. The AGI is being piloted in Liberia through a partnership between the Bank, the Nike Foundation and the Governments of Liberia and Denmark. It will be expanded in the coming year to include Afghanistan, Nepal, Rwanda, South Sudan and a sixth country to be identified. The initiative provides funding of US\$3 to \$5 million per country, and is a new way for the World Bank to engage with the private sector. More information:

<http://go.worldbank.org/OEC7K1KKT0>.

World Bank – Essay competition encourages anti-corruption in schools

More than 100 young Ukrainians have joined in a United Nations-backed essay competition in a bid to raise awareness of the negative effects of corruption in higher education.

Participants, aged between 15 and 25 years, addressed topics including the effects of bribery on the quality of schooling and whether standardized testing can curb corruption in the admissions process for universities. The contest was sponsored by the World Bank and the non-governmental organization Promoting Active Citizen Engagement in Combating Corruption in Ukraine (ACTION). The jury – comprising representatives of the World Bank, ACTION, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and other groups – selected 14 winners representing the different regions in Ukraine. More information:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=29456&Cr=ukraine&Cr1=corruption>.

YOUTH IN ACTION

Award to promote youth-led development among Arab youth

The King Abdullah Award for Youth Innovation and Achievement (KAAYIA) invites young Arabs to showcase their success stories and the positive impact they have had on their communities. The KAAYIA, under the management of the King Abdullah II Fund for Development, seeks to reward distinguished young leaders throughout the region by providing them with much needed support and recognition. The KAAYIA will provide each award winner with a US\$50,000 grant, which will be allocated for projects, as well as education and training to pursue educational opportunities to enhance their skills and leadership abilities. **Deadline for application: 28 February 2009.** More information: <http://www.kaayia.org>.

Using SMS to address youth unemployment

A new cell-phone based service in the Middle East uses SMS (text messaging) technology to match young people with jobs. Developed with the help of graduate students from Harvard and MIT, young job-seekers can now use their phones to create simple "mini-CVs" that contain data on age, location, skills, education level, and career interests. At the same time, local employers create simple SMS "job ads" through a similar text-message Q & A process. Both sets of data are sent directly from users' phones to a central database. Database matches youth "mini-CVs" with relevant "job ads"—pairing identical information from youth and employers. Users then receive SMS "match" messages—with details about job opportunities or potential staff, along with phone numbers for follow-up. Users can also browse for jobs or staff from their phones. More information: <http://www.souktel.org>.

Young people promote the use of renewable energy in Togo

The NGO Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement, ENDA Tiers Monde, and the Togo Ministry of Mining, Energy and Water in partnership with Friends of the Earth-Norway (NNV) are organizing a "Climate and renewable energy week" that will take place in Lome and Sotouboua, Togo (West Africa), from 6-15 February 2009. This event will promote the use of the diversity of renewable energy products. The event will also include FEEL 2009-Green Energy Exhibition Fair, the Big Eco-Concert, a solar festival at the Beach of Lome, a training seminar and an exchange workshop on the post-2012 climate regime, as well as several other events. More information: E-mail: yvetogo@hotmail.com, or visit <http://www.ong-jve.org>.

PUBLICATIONS

(For UN documents on youth, visit: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/library.htm>).

UNAIDS - Addressing the Vulnerability of Young Women and Girls to Stop the HIV Epidemic in Southern Africa

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the Reproductive Health and HIV Research Unit of the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa convened a technical meeting in June 2008 that brought together regional researchers, representatives of national AIDS councils, Government departments and the Southern African Development Community, and members of the eastern and southern Africa United Nations Regional AIDS Team to reassess why young women and girls living in the HIV hyperendemic countries of southern Africa are so vulnerable to HIV infection. The background technical papers presented in this publication address the current status of the epidemic in southern Africa: age-disparate and intergenerational sex; biological vulnerability; economic empowerment; education; gender-based violence; and knowledge, risk perceptions and behaviour. More information: http://www.unaidsrstes.org/files/Young-women-and-girls_08.pdf.

UNODC - Guide addresses crime prevention in southern Africa and the Caribbean

With homicides, property crime and sexual assault exponentially higher in the Caribbean and southern Africa than the rest of the world, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) released a new handbook entitled "Handbook on planning and action for Crime Prevention in Southern Africa and the Caribbean Regions". The handbook is intended to increase knowledge about levels of crime, successful practices in reducing crime rates in developing countries, and multi-actor crime prevention actions. More information: <http://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/CPhandbook-120109.pdf>.

UNESCO - Report on supporting the educational needs of HIV-positive learners

Children and young people living with HIV in Namibia and Tanzania are not receiving adequate moral support necessary to further their education, according to the first United Nations report commissioned specifically on the learning needs of this vulnerable group. "Supporting the educational needs of HIV-positive learners: Lessons from Namibia and Tanzania" calls for stepping up support for students living with HIV, noting that the extent of the failures of educational institutions in the two countries are being "masked" by gaps in data and a lack of research. It identifies the challenges facing educational institutions who want to respond to the needs of children and young people living with HIV and makes recommendations and guidelines on how best to support them. One of the most striking findings of the report is the pervasive stigma and discrimination faced by children living with the infection. Download a copy of the report at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001786/178601eb.pdf>.

CALENDAR OF YOUTH EVENTS

(Please send us information on major international youth events that do not appear below)

10 February 2009: World Day of Social Justice

The day is to be observed for the first time in 2009. As recognized by the World Summit for Social Development, social development aims at social justice, solidarity, harmony and equality within and among countries. The observance of the day will contribute to the further consolidation of the efforts of the international community in poverty eradication, promotion of full employment and decent work, gender equity and access to social well-being and justice for all. More information: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/intldays/IntlJustice>.

20 February - 1 March 2009: ISFit 2009

ISFit, the 10th International Student Festival in Trondheim, Norway, will be a festival filled with meetings, debates, concerts, ceremonies and a wide cultural programme. About 450 students from all around the world will get together to discuss issues around the theme of Peacebuilding. More information: <http://www.isfit.org>.

5 - 8 March 2009: Belgrade International Model United Nations

Belgrade International Model United Nations (BIMUN) provides students an opportunity to learn more about current international issues and ways to resolve them. The process allows young people to apply basic diplomatic courtesy and further develop their interpersonal, public speaking and negotiation skills. More information: <http://www.bimun-unaserbia.org>.

5-10 May 2009: World Creative Youth Forum (WCYF) 2009

The theme of the Forum is "Education for Sustainable Development". It will focus on Peace and Human Rights, Climate Change, Sustainable Lifestyle, Entrepreneurship, Education and Technology, and Advocacy for Sustainable Development. More information: www.worldcreativeyouthforum.net.

24-26 April 2009: Global Youth Service Day

During Global Youth Service Day, young people from around the world will work to address the needs of their local communities through service and be recognized for their contributions as a part of a global youth service movement. More information: <http://www.gysd.org>.

23-24 April 2009: European University Hunger Summit

Universities Fighting World Hunger: The European Hunger Summit offers an opportunity for students, faculty, and administrators from universities and North American study abroad programmes across Europe to discuss ways to fight world hunger and malnutrition through an international grassroots student movement. More information: <http://www.universitiesfightingworldhunger.org>.

9-14 June 2009: Global Youth Forum in Mongolia

The Forum aims to encourage dialogue among young people to develop mutual understanding and cooperation in addressing global problems. The event is being organized by OYUNLAL-UIILS, a non-governmental and non-profit organization working to promote youth development in Mongolia. Issues covered at the Forum will include environmental protection & climate change, poverty, decent work and unemployment, public health policy and HIV/AIDS, and gender equality. More information: <http://www.oyunlaquils.mn/index.php?ID=7>.

5-7 August 2009: Global Model UN Conference

The UN Department of Public Information will organize the first annual Global Model UN Conference in Geneva, Switzerland from 5-7 August 2009. The event will bring together university-level students from Model UN programmes currently organized around the world. The theme of the conference will be "The Millennium Development Goals – Lifting the bottom billion out of poverty". It will involve youth in all aspects of the planning process and encourage the

organization of new Model UN programmes where they do not exist, serving as a model of best practices. Furthermore, it is expected that the Global Model UN will inspire the next generation of leaders to be involved in national and global issues. More information: <http://www.un.org/gmun>.

31 August – 4 September 2009: World Climate Conference-3

Organized by the World Meteorological Organization, the World Climate Conference-3 (WCC-3) provides the world community with a unique opportunity to address the challenges associated with current climate variability so as to build societal resilience to the imminent effects of climate change. More information: http://www.wmo.int/pages/world_climate_conference/index_en.html.

29-30 September 2009: Global Youth Enterprise Conference

Designed as a participatory learning event, this conference aims to support youth enterprise and entrepreneurship programmes and policies to achieve greater effectiveness around the world. Participants include practitioners, funding organizations, the private sector, academics and youth leaders from around the world who will share best practices, unique approaches, and groundbreaking ideas that help youth develop the necessary skills and opportunities to start their own businesses or seek quality employment. More information: <http://www.youthenterpriseconference.org>.

7 - 18 December 2009: United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP15)

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change entered into force on 21 March 1994. The Convention sets an overall framework for intergovernmental efforts to tackle climate change and recognizes that the climate system is a shared resource whose stability can be affected by industrial and other emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The Convention enjoys near universal membership, with 192 countries having ratified. More recently, a number of nations approved an addition to the treaty, called the Kyoto Protocol, which has more powerful (and legally binding) measures. The Protocol's first commitment period begun in 2008 and ends in 2012. A strong multilateral framework needs to be in place by 2009 to ensure that there is no gap between the end of the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period in 2012 and the entry into force of a future regime. COP15 (Conference of Parties) in Copenhagen is a vital step in this process. More information: <http://www.cop15.dk>.

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