

*Upon the request of H.E. Dr. Hamid Al Bayati,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations, and
Chairperson of the Third Committee of the Sixty-First General Assembly of the United Nations,*

We are proud to present the

Report on the Current Situation of Youth Delegates to the UN General Assembly

*Written by the Youth Delegates to the Sixty-First United Nations General Assembly, from
Australia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Jamaica, Malta, Mexico, The Netherlands, Norway,
Romania, Sweden and Switzerland*

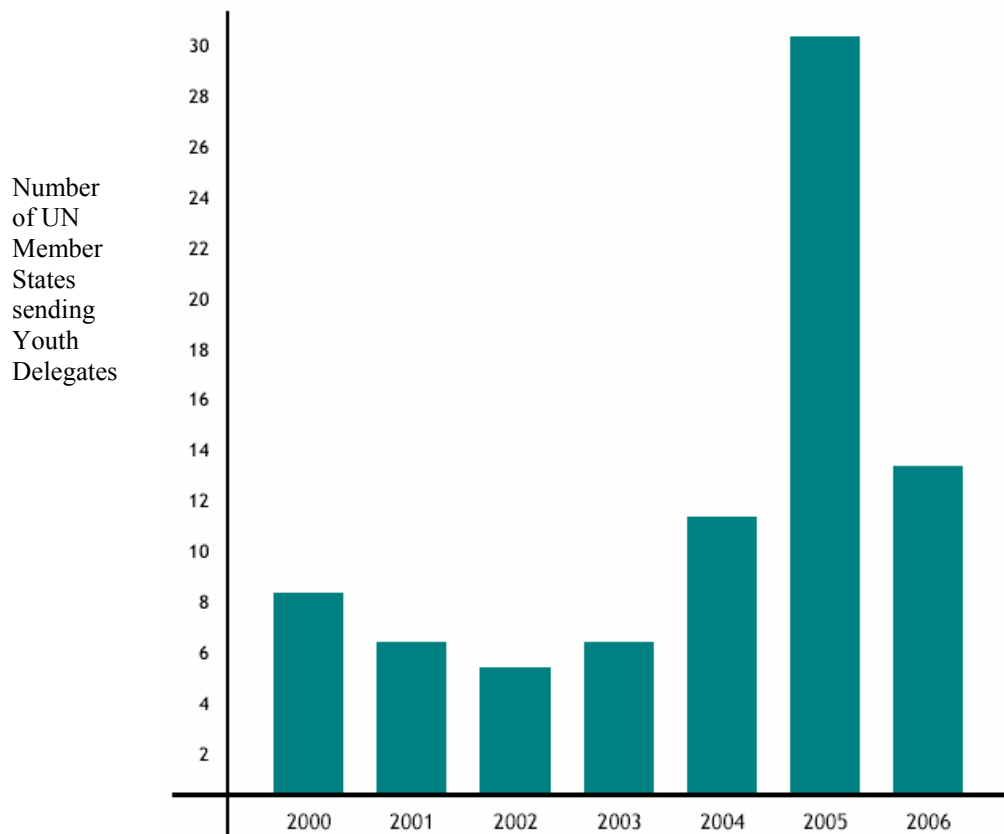
Edited by Christina Apel, Christine M. Cassar, Jan Martin Munz and Maja Rueegg

**United Nations Headquarters
New York, October 2006**

1 Background

Thirty-five years ago, the first youth delegates were included in national delegations to the United Nations. More youth delegates were sent in the 1990s, and in the most recent past an increasing number of Member States have sent youth delegates to the UN General Assembly's Third Committee, with a climax being reached last year at the extraordinary Sixtieth Session.

Youth Delegates to the UNGA since the year 2000



1.1 UN Resolutions Encouraging Youth Participation¹

In 1995, on the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, the United Nations formally strengthened their commitment to Ten Priority Areas directly affecting young people. It did so by adopting the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (WPAY).

One of the priorities of this Programme is to encourage participation of young people in all levels of decision-making. In particular, it invites governments to strengthen the involvement of young people in international fora by embracing youth delegates into their national delegations. (A/RES/50/81, O.C. 107, 1995)

This invitation was renewed several times in subsequent resolutions (52/83, 54/120, 56/117, 58/133, 59/148). In Resolution 60/2², the General Assembly:

- ♦ *Welcomes the participation of youth representatives in national delegations, and urges Member States to consider being represented by youth representatives on a continuing basis during relevant discussions in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, bearing in mind the principle of gender balance (O.C. 9)*
- ♦ *Invites all Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to contribute, inter alia, to the United Nations Youth Fund for the participation of youth representatives in national delegations, in particular from developing countries (O.C. 10)*

1.2 Selection of Youth Delegates

The inclusion of a youth delegate in a national delegation requires governmental commitment to engage in intra-ministerial coordination. Therefore, the selection of a youth delegates varies from one country to another.

In most cases, the process is arranged by a national youth structure that is able to impart knowledge and act as a conduit between the youth delegate and young people in the country. In other instances, the relevant ministry calls for applications and shortlists candidates to be reviewed by representatives of the government and youth organizations.

Once approved by the government, the decision is relayed to the national Permanent Mission to the United Nations.

¹ United Nations Programme on Youth (2005), A Brief Guide to Youth Delegates to the United Nations General Assembly

² 60th United Nations General Assembly - Resolution A/RES/60/2 (2005)

1.3 The Role of the Youth Delegate

The work of the youth delegate differs from country to country.

1.3.1 Before the General Assembly

Prior to departure a youth delegate may:

- ♦ Run workshops on youth and United Nations related topics
- ♦ Conduct consultations with young people and youth organizations
- ♦ Be briefed by the government
- ♦ Research the UN and its proceedings
- ♦ Cooperate with other youth delegates
- ♦ Attend a Youth Delegates' Preparatory Meeting held two months in advance of the Third Committee opening plenary

1.3.2 At the General Assembly

The youth delegate, as part of the official delegation to the United Nations:

- ♦ Provides the national delegation with a young person's point of view
- ♦ Strengthens the legitimacy of the government in representing young people living in their country
- ♦ Gives a statement on behalf of the country in the Third Committee on the Agenda Item on Social Development
- ♦ Collaborates with the permanent mission and reports on the meetings attended to the rest of the delegation
- ♦ Works with other youth delegates in order to raise awareness on youth issues on an international level (through newsletters, side events, and planning future initiatives)
- ♦ Promotes the inclusion of youth delegates in national delegations
- ♦ Learns about the structures and procedures of the UN and national priorities within this international body

1.3.3 After the General Assembly

Upon returning home, the youth delegate:

- ♦ Gives debriefings to relevant ministries and organizations
- ♦ Acts as a multiplier spreading the knowledge and experience with other young people (by running workshops, working on Model United Nations, visiting schools and youth events)
- ♦ Inspires other young people to take a role as active citizens, and to keep the process of youth delegates going
- ♦ Attends the Evaluation Meeting (usually taking place two months after the departure of the youth delegates from the United Nations)
- ♦ Gives recommendations on the selection process, and trains the successive youth delegate

1.3.4 Youth Delegates at Other Meetings

Youth Delegates presently attend and bring a youth perspective to the General Assembly as well as other meetings such as the Commission on Social Development and the Commission on Sustainable Development. The concept of having Youth Delegates can moreover be extended to cover many more meetings, committees and conferences.

2 Challenges and Recommendations

Whilst acknowledging the steps taken thus far by all stakeholders, we reaffirm our own commitment to improving the youth delegates programme. Therefore we believe that it is our duty to share the knowledge we have gained at the United Nations General Assembly to the next generation of youth delegates. We renew our invitation to all Member States to send Youth Delegates to the UN General Assembly.

The culture change required for this will necessitate the commitment of different stakeholders in the process.

2.1 Concerned that:

- ♦ Member States often do not recognize the need to **prioritize youth participation** on a national level, despite written commitment in several UN resolutions
- ♦ Most national governments are unacquainted with the fact that youth delegates can also be **included in delegations to other meetings**, not merely to the United Nations General Assembly

We urge Member States to:

- Support the work of the youth delegates by, for example, hosting side events or receptions
- Include their youth delegates in the Mission's daily work
- Provide an associate expert to the United Nations Programme on Youth, which can be done by individual states as well as by co-sponsoring states.
- Inform and seek the advice of the UN Programme on Youth on their plans to include Youth Delegates
- Following the request of the General Assembly in Resolution 60/2, we ask Governments to contribute to the United Nations Youth Fund so as to make all of the above possible.

2.2 Concerned that:

- ♦ Youth issues are **not a high priority area** in the work of the UN General Assembly or at the UN Secretariat
- ♦ There is a general lack of **distribution and absorption of knowledge** on how countries can start and maintain the process of having youth delegates

We ask The United Nations Programme on Youth to:

- Allocate more resources to the dissemination of information to the Member States on Youth Delegate inclusion, both in the form of printed material as well as through meetings and briefing sessions
- Focus on demonstrating the benefits Youth Delegates bring to national delegations, and the country's political and cultural system

2.3 *Concerned that:*

- ♦ Although there has been significant improvement in recent years, there is still a lack of **coordination between UN bodies** when it comes to matters and initiatives relating to youth
- ♦ There is a deficiency in **economic investment in youth**, including in the United Nations Youth Fund
- ♦ There is a general lack of **human resources** at the Programme on Youth
- ♦ Member States, as well as the International Community, are not aware of the often untapped **resource offered by young people**, including the energy, creativity and innovation

Within the context of the Commission for Social Development

Member States should be aware of the fact that the World Program of Action for Youth will be extended at the next Commission for Social Development in February 2007. It is therefore crucial for Member States to:

- Include Youth Delegates in national delegations to the Commission
- Provide their input into this resolution to ensure its cultural, social and economic appropriateness and sustainability

2.4 *Concerned that:*

- ♦ Member States and the International Community are seldom aware of the benefits youth delegates offer as **multipliers on the common values of the UN**

We ask the Third Committee Secretariat, through the sending of letters, to remind Member States of the importance of young people in:

- National policy-making processes
- National delegations in international conferences
- Updating and enhancing resolutions on youth

We solicit The Third Committee Bureau to:

- Secure sponsors for the 2007 CSocD resolution on youth
- Ensure that there is a separate Third Committee Item on youth
- Make sure that Youth is on the agenda every year

The appointment of a new Secretary-General is an opportunity to broaden the support for youth participation at the United Nations. Mr. Ban Ki-Moon is well-positioned to champion the increasingly strong links between young people and all aspects of the UN's work including peace and security, gender equality, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, human rights, and the reform agenda. We urge Member States to actively support this important work.

3 *Conclusion*

Whilst commending the progress that has been made in the past years, there is concern that this has not been sufficient inasmuch as prioritizing youth within development and national agendas, which has led to further exclusion of young people from society. The recommendations put forward here are meant to improve the mainstreaming process that will lead to a more inclusive society and to young people becoming actors on the national and international stage as a strategic part of society.

Resources:

For information on youth delegates, starting a youth delegates' program, as well as assessing the needs and requirements of youth delegates, please visit:

Youth at the UN – within the United Nations Department on Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

www.un.org/youth

For help or information, contact Julie Larsen on:

youth@un.org

Phone: +1 212 963 2791 / +1 1917366036

Fax: +1 212 963 0111

Address: 13th Floor, 2 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA.

United Nations General Assembly Resolutions and Reports

- 2006 - Commission for Social Development resolution on Youth Employment (E/CN.5/2006/L.3)
- 2005 - General Assembly Resolution on tenth anniversary of WPAY (A/RES/60/2)
- 2004 - General Assembly Resolution on tenth anniversary of WPAY (A/RES/59/148)
- 2003 - General Assembly resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth (A/RES/58/133)
- 2002 - General Assembly Resolution Promoting Youth Employment (A/RES/57/165)
- 2002 - General Assembly Resolution on Youth (A/RES/56/117)
- 1999 - General Assembly resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth (A/RES/54/120)
- 1997 - General Assembly resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth (A/RES/52/83)
- 1995 - General Assembly Resolution on the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (A/RES/50/81)
- 1985 - General Assembly Resolution on the International Youth Year (A/RES/40/14)
- 2005 - World Youth Report 2005: Report of the Secretary-General (A/60/61 & E/2005/7)
- 2005 - Making commitments matter: young people's input to the 10-year review of the World Programme of Action for Youth - Report of the Secretary-General (A/60/156)
- 2005 - Global analysis and evaluation of national action plans on youth employment - Report of the Secretary-General (A/60/133)
- 2003 - Promoting Youth Employment - Report of the Secretary-General (A/58/229)
- 2003 - World Youth Report 2003: Report of the Secretary-General (A/58/79 & E/CN.5/2003/4)
- 2001 - Secretary-General's Report on the Global Situation of Youth (A/56/180)

Other Resources

- World Bank (2007) World Development Report 2007 – Development and the Next Generation
- Ad Hoc Working Group for Youth and the MDGs (2005) Youth and the Millennium Development Goals – Challenges and Opportunities for Implementation
- UNFPA, The United Nations Population Fund (2006) Youth Supplement to the State of the World Population Report 2006 – Moving Young