



PRESS RELEASE

Youth voices on tackling poverty to be featured at International Youth Day observance at United Nations Headquarters

New York, 8 August— International Youth Day will be celebrated worldwide on 12 August. This year's theme "Tackling Poverty Together: Young People and the Eradication of Poverty" focuses on a high priority issue for young people globally. Youth organizations will organize activities highlighting the impact of poverty on their lives and the efforts to strengthen their role in poverty reduction initiatives.

As in previous years, the Day will showcase the work of young people while drawing attention to the challenges they face. At UN Headquarters in New York, Youth Day will be celebrated on 11 August in partnership with the International Branch of the New York City YMCAs. The United Nations has been strongly advocating the need to acknowledge and recognize the central role youth play in efforts to end poverty at the global, national and local efforts. Youth testimonials— about their experiences and work towards eradicating poverty— will be the main part of the event. Along with opening remarks, including Secretary-General Kofi Annan's message, performances, poetry reading and a panel discussion with youth speakers will mark the observance.

Young people constitute a significant portion of the population especially in developing countries. While definitive statistics are scarce, estimates indicate that almost one in five young people (18 per cent of the 1,158 million 15 to 24 year olds worldwide) survive on less than US\$ 1 per day; while as many as 45 per cent live on less than US\$ 2 per day. These numbers take on added significance when the many dimensions of poverty are considered: hunger and malnutrition; lack of access to education and other basic services; an increase in disease and illness, homelessness or inadequate housing; unsafe environments, and a lack of participation in decision-making and socio-cultural life.

It is important, experts say, to understand that at the centre of youth poverty is the need to address widespread youth unemployment. Young people between 15 and 24 are a quarter of the world's working population but they make up half its unemployed today. Interventions in the areas of education, health and employment can break the poverty cycle, but without such efforts, poverty will deepen with age and over successive generations.

Also to celebrate Youth Day, on Saturday, 12 August, a citywide basketball tournament will be organized at the Robert Moses Playground between 1 and 4 pm. The City of New York, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Youth and Community Development, Directions for Our Youth, and the National Basketball Association are co-hosting this event.

Several countries are gearing up for their own International Youth Day observances. Youth themselves are the key organizers in many countries, including Italy, Kenya, Mauritius, the United States and others. A number of the events will focus on creating a platform to enable interactive sessions between government members and youth, as a means for youth voices to be reflected in future policies.

The International Youth Day was endorsed by a resolution of the General Assembly in 1999 as a means to promote greater awareness, especially among youth, of the World Programme of Action for Youth.

For more information on the Day's events, please visit:
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/iyd2006.htm>

For media enquiries or interviews, please contact:

Oisika Chakrabarti, Department of Public Information, Tel: 212.963.8264,
E-mail: mediainfo@un.org

For UN Programme of Youth/ DESA, please contact:

Girma Mulugetta, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Tel: 917 367 8009.
E-mail: mulugetta@un.org