

Consultative Meeting
World Programme of Action for Youth

New York – February 13-17, 2005

Report of meeting proceedings and recommendations

Background and purpose of meeting

The World Programme of Action for Youth to the year 2000 and beyond, adopted by the General Assembly in 1995, is the primary set of guidelines towards the implementation of effective and relevant youth policies by Member States of the United Nations. It highlights a number of priority areas for national youth policy and provides an effective framework to measure and evaluate achievements since after its adoption.

The year 2005 marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the World Programme of Action for Youth. In its resolution 58/133 of 22 December 2003, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to consider organizing a consultation with youth organizations and youth representatives to evaluate progress made and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the World Programme of Action. In its subsequent resolution A/59/148 of 20 December 2004, the General Assembly also invited the Secretary-General to provide an overview of the inputs gathered from youth organizations as a supplement to his report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.

The review of the global situation of youth will be based on the analysis of developments in the ten priority areas identified in the World Programme of Action, namely: education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure and volunteering, girls and young women, and participation of youth in decision-making. Five new issues of concern to youth identified since the adoption of the Programme of Action were also considered: globalization, information and communication technology (ICT), HIV/AIDS, youth in conflict and intergenerational relations.

The meeting also adjoined with the forty-third session of the Commission for Social Development, during which the Secretary-General's World Youth Report 2005 was presented to Member States and further discussion on the ten-year anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth took place. Participants had the opportunity to observe the session of the Commission and discussions during the consultative meeting were based in part on the analysis presented in the World Youth Report 2005.

The objectives of the meeting were thus as follows:

- To review achievements made in the global priority areas for action on youth, including the five additional issues identified above, from the perspective of young people.
- To consult with young people on ways and means to encourage national level review of the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth; as well as the inclusion of youth representatives in the official delegations to the plenary meetings of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.
- To support the existing work of young people to integrate their concerns and contributions to the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals.

In order to facilitate the discussions, the fifteen topics were divided into three cluster areas, as follows:

- *Youth in a global economy*; education, employment, hunger and poverty, and globalization;
- *Youth in civil society*; environment, leisure, participation, ICT, conflict and intergenerational relations;
- *Young people at risk*; health, drugs, delinquency, girls and young women, and HIV/AIDS.

This meeting was one of two meetings held by the United Nations in support of the tenth year anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth. The first meeting, held in Coimbra, Portugal and gathered 30 youth from around the European Union. During this meeting, 15 youth representatives from around the world representing the diversity of geographical distribution and gender balance, came together to discuss progress made with the WPAY, challenges faced and opportunities for effective future action.

Countries represented were: Cameroon, Canada, Zambia, Australia, Nigeria, Brazil, Iran, Mexico, Egypt, United States, The Netherlands, Germany, United Kingdom, Philippines, and Venezuela.

Some members of this group are also members of the steering committee for the “Youth and MDG” paper which been in the process of creation over several months, and includes the input of close to 800 young people and youth serving organizations. These three days were also spent working on inputting incoming recommendations to the report. The report is hoped to be launched in April 2005 at the 13th Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD).

The following report is divided into the above-mentioned clusters detailing comments on the global situation of youth and the implementation of WPAY and also detailing recommendations to UN members states, youth organisations/ movements and the United Nations. Views of the participants in the consultation were diverse and wide-ranging. This report is not a consensus document, rather it reflects the opinions of youth from five continents who are experts in youth issues at the country and global level.

One general recommendation following from the consultation to the UN and its member states was a need for ‘forward and future thinking’ when dealing with youth issues. Whilst this should not be at the expense of today’s youth, identifying the future needs and challenges of next generation would be prudent in ensuring the next generation of young people are better equipped to deal with the problems that will effect them.

Cluster Number 1

EDUCATION – Para 19-30 World Youth Report 2005

General Comments

- The affordability of quality education is becoming a concern for many youth. The privatization of education and lowering standards of education in the public sector is a concern for many young people today. Private schools and universities are able to Public schools hire less qualified teachers and pay them salaries that are extremely low, affecting the quality of education for many youth.
- The current data with regards to education is mainly focused on school enrollment and not school drop-out rates. This data is of equal importance because it can answer many questions as to reasons why young people leave school and the possible future solutions to solve these issues.

Recommendations

- Education is referred to in the report, both implicitly and explicitly as formal learning. We would like to emphasize that youth also take part in informal and non-formal education. We recommend to the UN that this should be reiterated to acknowledge the practice and potential of such methods of learning.
- Referring to paragraph 32 of the World Youth Report, it was noted that youth are significant actors contributing to the brain drain in the developing world. Many educated youth unable to find work within their national economies seek jobs in developed countries further exacerbating the problem of underdevelopment. We recommend to the UN and its member states that this sector of educated youth must be considered in an analysis of underdevelopment.
- The discussion in development in Education, as well as the MDGs, focuses primarily on Universal Primary Education (UPE), which is absolutely necessary. However, the importance of secondary and tertiary education should also be recognized. We recommend to the UN to further

promote the benefits of secondary and tertiary education in equipping students with the necessary skills for future employment.

- We also recommend that the UN and its member states should place a stronger emphasis on alternative methods of education, for example ICTs and peer led education.
- There are numerous examples of ‘informal’ peer led educational programs that yield great results in the socialization of young people and in developing skills. The member states of the UN should place greater emphasis on such informal education.
- The often quoted statistic that the youth of today are the most educated often detracts attention from other important educational issues. By over-emphasizing quantity, there is a possibility that the quality of education will suffer as a result. There should be an emphasis on quality of education as well as quantity.

EMPLOYMENT/LABOUR Paragraphs 31-36 World Youth Report 2005

General Comments

- The private sector worldwide should be considered an asset and a stakeholder in the education and employment of young people – either through the use of ICTs, internships or mentorships for entrepreneurs.
- When speaking about the value of finding meaningful employment for young people, it would be useful to coin it in the terms of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). For example, in order to work towards achieving the MDG in maternal health, the UN and its member states should provide funds and the necessary framework to train unemployed youth as maternal health care professionals.
- When unemployment is discussed, it tends to be focused on those that are unskilled and unemployed, however many youth are educated and skilled yet still unemployed, underemployed or not employed in their area of study.
- Young people in developed countries enter paid employment later and give more time to their education than those in developing countries.

Recommendations

- We noted that young people are especially vulnerable to exploitation and dangers in the workplace. We recommend to the member states of the UN to comply with internationally agreed standards.
- The idea of youth entrepreneurs presents one of many solutions to youth unemployment. However member states should not consider youth entrepreneurship as the only method. Member states should recognize the importance of providing other solutions to unemployment including programs to facilitate a smooth transition for youth employed in the informal sector to the formal sector.
- The United Nations Programs can also learn from one another in the meaningful participation of young people. We would encourage the UN and its agencies to share knowledge about how they include youth participation in their programs.
- We noted the success of “Social entrepreneurship incubators” (a social enterprise is based on a business structure but addresses a social concern). We encourage the member states to facilitate such incubators in order to address youth unemployment.

POVERTY REDUCTION - Paragraphs 11-18 World Youth Report 2005

Recommendations

- There is a lack of emphasis in the World Youth Report 2005 of the active participation of youth in poverty reduction strategies. Young people have been implementing creative strategies in poverty reduction in their countries. We encourage young people and youth organizations to be active participants and partners in developing poverty reduction strategy.
- We recommend that the UN must develop a global youth development index, following the success of such an index developed by UNESCO Brazil. The UN could build upon this index to include measures such as literacy, the rates of enrolment of students in high school, digital literacy and the marginalization of specific youth groups.

Information Communication Technology (ICT) Paragraphs 108-117 World Youth Report 2005

General Comments

- ICT can fit in many different spheres of the overall cluster of WPAY, both in education and in employment. The group understands the deep impact that the digital age has on young people's socio-economic contexts.
- When speaking about ICT, the question should not rest at the cost of accessing new technologies but at the skills required to meaningfully navigate these technologies and how to include young people in ICT policy on global, national and local levels.
- ICT should also be seen as a powerful tool for youth participation.
- Many young people use the internet but are not aware of the efforts that other youth around the world are doing to effectively utilise ICT for development and this paints a clear picture of the digital divide not just between the north and the south but among young people themselves.

Recommendations

- It is necessary for member states of the UN to create an ICT structure in order to facilitate youth participation.
- It was widely agreed on the urgent need for truly involving youth as contributors for ICT policies, initiatives and programmes at different levels. The existing international bodies, such as the UN ICT Task force and the organizing committees for global ICT events should be encouraged to involve youth more visibly in their "family".
- ICT has played a major role in the mobilisation of young people for global action. We recommend to the member states of the UN and youth organisations to create the necessary environment and to link online initiatives and networks with on ground community based activities.

GLOBALIZATION Paragraphs 100-107 World Youth Report 2005

General Comments

- Young people are concerned with the structural adjustment programs which have an adverse effect on young people's lives including the privatization of water and education. It was further noted that companies are increasingly operating offshore and that to ensure the benefits of globalization are shared equally, such companies should ensure that they engage local staff, focus on technology transfer and therefore build the capacity of the local community. Government's commitment and monitoring to this is essential.
- Globalization has created a consumer culture. This is particularly prevalent in youth. Participants were concerned that this has led to a change in young people's attitudes, as many youth now place greater value on material possession.

Recommendations

- We recommend to the UN and its member states to listen to the views of youth on the current structure of the global economy including gaps between the North and South and other divides perpetuated by the current state of globalization.

Cluster Number 2

ENVIRONMENT Paragraphs 38-41 World Youth Report 2005

General Comments

- The preservation of the environment in many areas continues to be hampered by conflict between the situation of the people and the policies of the government.
- The World Youth Report does not recognise the ability of youth to set-up environmental enterprises.

Recommendations

- We recommend to the member states that youth should be included in policy making processes at the governmental level as well as with NGO's as noted in Point 41 of the Secretary General's World Youth Report 2005.
- We noted that many youth projects related to the environment are focused on information and awareness raising, efforts should be made to build upon this and also ensure that youth are contributing more to the sustainability of the environment in more practical ways.
- We encourage youth participation in developing environmental strategies as well as the creation of youth councils on sustainable development as outlined in the Johannesburg plan of implementation (JPOI).
- The escalating consumption rates of youth have the potential to have a devastating effect on the environment. Youth must be educated through schools and informed through the media.
- We propose a comprehensive approach from the UN to become environmentally sensitive in its own daily work.

LEISURE Paragraphs 42-49 World Youth Report 2005

General Comments

- Youth Organisations are usually volunteer led and the International Volunteer Day serves as a great opportunity for them to showcase their efforts and gain recognition for the work they do in their communities.
- Youth leisure time in some countries is restricted because the education system is increasingly more focused on examination, depriving young people valuable leisure time.
- The amount of time youth can dedicate to leisure time is often dictated by their economic situation.
- Youth volunteerism between the north and south leads to better understanding and solidarity among young people as they learn and experience from inter-cultural exchanges.

Recommendations

- We recommend to the UN and its member states to expand the opportunities they provide for voluntary activities at the national level.
- We recommend to the member states of the UN that volunteerism should be included in education curricula.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION Paragraphs 50-57 World Youth Report 2005

General Comments

- There is a very important need to distinguish between meaningful and active youth participation as opposed to tokenistic youth participation.

Recommendations

- All UN agencies that have youth engagement strategies need to coordinate in order to develop effective and integrated approaches to youth participation.
- We recommend to the member states of the UN to engage youth in policy making processes and to incorporate youth participation in all parts of national programs, not simply limited to youth activities.
- We recommend to the UN and its member states to facilitate youth meetings in order to promote youth solidarity and participation and to enable young people to have a greater role in the international decision making process.
- We encourage the huge diversity of youth organisations to find ways to build partnerships in order harmonise their efforts and work towards a common agenda.

INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS Paragraphs 123-141 World Youth Report 2005

General Comments

- There is a wide generation gap created by armed conflict, HIV/ AIDS and other epidemics. Participants were concerned of the negative impact that this will have on knowledge transfer between generations.
- Cultural stereotypes in Africa have made it difficult for youth organisations to access funding.

Recommendations

- We recommend to the UN and its member states to generate data on this subject and educate people about this emerging problem especially in the developing world.
- We ask the UN and its member states, to recognise the efforts that youth have made towards social change and development.
- The participants noted that the phenomena of ageing leads to increased levels of economic dependency between generations. This is a concern not only for the elderly but also for youth. Young people should be engaged in such debates in their countries.

Cluster Number 3

HIV/AIDS Paragraphs 118-124 World Youth Report 2005

General Comments

- The participants realize that HIV/AIDS affects young people facing HIV/AIDS differently in the North and South.
- HIV/AIDS is not only a health issue but affects all aspects of development.
- Most national HIV/AIDS policies do not consider the effect of the pandemic on youth specifically.
- Young women are at an increasing risk due to cultural norms, sexual exploitation and trafficking that put them at greater risk of infection.
- The exponential increase in travel of peoples between countries and regions has lead to the spread of HIV/AIDS globally.

Recommendations

- We recommend an eminent panel of young people living with HIV/AIDS be created to demonstrate that affected youth can lead fulfilling lives. This would also allow youth to have a greater influence in HIV/AIDS global policy making at the international level.
- Recognising the success of peer lead education in HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention we recommend that member states ensure these programs are supported and where possible replicated.
- Recognising young people with HIV/AIDS are sometimes unable to find gainful employment; member states should ensure social security is available.
- We encourage the UN and member states to learn from African countries that are working on HIV/AIDS prevention by targeting and mobilizing young people. Where possible such programs should replicated.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Paragraphs 79-88 World Youth Report 2005

General Comments

- It was noted that criminalizing drugs and alcohol could be counterproductive by further marginalizing young people and contributing to the poverty cycle.
- Young people join gangs because they feel ostracized and isolated from society. To simply state that gangs are a youth problem does not acknowledge the fact it is a result of the marginalization young people feel in society.
- We are concerned with the status of young people in prisons. Imprisonment severally disrupts their studies and the conditions of many prisons around the world are abhorrent.

Recommendations

- We recommend that Police Departments consider youth as assets in preventing juvenile crime and not as threats. Youth desks should be created to deal with youth cases.

NEW ADDITIONS TO THE CLUSTERS OF THE WORLD YOUTH

Youth and Conflict – paragraph 125 – 132 of the World Youth report 2005

General comments

- Young people are especially vulnerable in conflict zones and post-conflict as in many cases the conflict denies their development and restricts their future opportunities.
- Young people can be affective peacemakers and peacekeepers, however this potential is rarely recognized.
- Young people are also threatened by the consequences of war including unexploded ordinance.

Recommendations

- We ask member states to support the work youth organizations in peace camps in states where they exist and facilitate these initiatives where they do not.
- We recommend that member states include peace education and conflict education in national curricula to promote a peaceful future society.
- We urge member states to ensure young people are not involved in the demining and other operations to clear unexploded ordinance.
- Member states should encourage the potential of youth as peacemakers and peacekeepers. This approach is of particular importance to long-term conflict zones.
- Member states should ensure that specific initiatives are taken to reintegrate former child and youth soldiers into peaceful society.

MARGINALIZATION/ MULTIPLE OPPRESSIONS:

General comments

- The impact and effect of multiple oppressions and marginalization with young people be acknowledged and accounted for in National Youth Policies. These multiple oppressions take into account, but are not limited to:
 - Gender
 - Sexual orientation
 - Indigenous youth
 - Racial, cultural, linguistic minorities
 - Social status such as class systems, birthing rights, etc.
 - Ethnicity, nationality and religion
 - Disabilities
 - Youth in Occupied Territories
 - Youth affected by natural disasters
 - Immigrant, refugee or internally displaced youth.
- We recognized that the different stages of awareness on the issue of sexual orientation range from total denial to a redefinition of societal fabric among people.
- Moreover, the issue of gender and young women was stressed.
- We recognized the increasing of sexual exploitation of girls and young women and in particular hidden domestic violence against them but often can be linked to sexual exploitation and the issue of sexual orientation among youth.
- We enlighten the issue of unsafe and illegal abortions that cause death among young women around the world who take dangerous and unsafe methods to end pregnancies. We understand the highly sensitive issues of this topic, and would like to ask for a referral to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, that requests states to review restrictive abortion laws and to ensure that abortions are safe and accessible where legal.
- We recognize fully that many of these issues fall within national and cultural norms, this was highlighted during the discussion on the sexual orientation. We stressed the need for linking this

issue to the field of human rights, human dignity and the freedom youth have in creating their own identities.

Recommendations

- We stress to member states that the issue of marginalized young people must be taken in account when developing national youth policy.
- We urge member states to adopt and participate in the implementation of the international instruments that address the above mentioned issues.

STRATEGY: Highlighting youth issues through WPAY +10 and the MDGs

General comments (implementation)

- We recognised that young people easily shared experiences, information and knowledge and contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, to improve quality of life and eradicate poverty by creating opportunities to access.
- We recognise that youth issue are little be taken into account.

Key recommendations

- Find the link between development, peace and security and human rights.
- We will that the ten year review of WPAY give to young people the floor to be involve internationally in the decision making processes.
- Youth organizations must be inclusive of all youth caucus (sustainable development, information society, others) and must approach local UN offices.
- They have to show solidarity and cooperation between them as to assist developing countries in the implementation of decision making amongst youth organization.
- We need to pay particular attention to effective participation of youth
- Youth has to develop oriented approaches in establishing national policies.
- Selections of youth representatives as to consider gender balance and politic balance and also the knowledge of the broad system.

General comment

- We state that there is an absence of structure or a lack of validity to the youth structures specially for the South.
- Many current National Youth Councils tend to be focused on the representation of urban youth, while the representation of rural youth are disproportionate and sometimes even non-existent.

Recommendations

- We encourage the creation of independent, transparent et democratized National Youth Councils.
- There should be a concerted effort to monitor and showcase the examples of good council structures and youth governance from many regions of the world. Moreover, there should be an emphasis on the potential of cooperation agreements and international youth council exchanges for best practice sharing and overall diplomatic building between different National Youth Councils.