

UN YOUTH FLASH
Service of the United Nations Programme on Youth
May 2006

WELCOME to the UN Youth Flash, a service of the UN Programme on Youth, keeping you informed about the work of the UN on youth issues. We encourage you to forward the Youth Flash to people in your network. Below you will read more on:

- News from UN Headquarters in New York
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The UN Youth Flash in a newsletter format can be read on-line at:
English: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/flash.htm>
French: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/french/flash.htm>
Spanish: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/spanish/flash.htm>

News from UN Headquarters in New York

>> Uniting the World Against AIDS

The 2006 follow-up meeting to the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS takes place from 31 May – 2 June at the United Nations. The main focus of this High-level meeting is to review progress achieved in realizing the commitments set out in the Declaration and how its targets may be reached. Specific parts recognize the vulnerability of young people to HIV infection and establishes time-bound targets for 2005 and 2010. Preceding the 2006 UNGASS +5 Review Meeting, youth will participate in a two-day capacity-building workshop to prepare delegates to contribute meaningfully to the proceedings (see <http://www.youthaidscoalition.org>). For more information on the Review visit: <http://www.unaids.org/aidsmeeting2006/>.

>> Commission for Sustainable Development Concludes its 14th Session

The two week session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) concluded on 12 May. Major groups are increasingly recognized as a key players with an important role as partners in the WSSD follow-up, and the CSD continues to explore innovative formats for their participation. Children and youth have a voice at the CSD, as they are considered a major group. Young people are called upon to contribute to the CSD process by sharing their practical experience, case studies, best practices, obstacles and constraints experienced and lessons learned. Visit the CSD web site at: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/>. Also find out more about the work of the CSD Youth Caucus at CSD14 at <http://www.youthcaucus.net>.

>> 5th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Concludes

This year's two-week session ended on 26 May. The theme was "The Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples: Re-defining the Millennium Development Goals". During this session, the Programme of Action for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People was launched. The Forum encourages the active participation of young people in their work and also recommends the full participation of young people at local, national and international levels. The Indigenous Youth Caucus

prepared and presented a statement on their issues to the Forum. Contact catherine@terarawa.co.nz for more information on the Indigenous Youth Caucus. For documents and details of the Forum, please visit: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/session_fifth.html

>> Capacity Building Workshop on "Youth Development in Africa", 27-29 June 2006

Within the context of technical cooperation activities aimed at strengthening national capacities in the field of social policy, experts on youth issues will speak to representatives from Governments and NGOs and discuss major youth development challenges in Africa. The Youth Development in Africa workshop will provide participants with increased knowledge and skills to develop policies and programmes that respond to the needs of young people in relation to poverty, employment, education, health, including HIV/AIDS, youth participation in decision-making and young people in situations of armed conflict. For more information, please visit: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/tc_addis06.htm.

>> Prepare for International Youth Day – 12 August 2006

If you haven't already, begin preparing for International Youth Day 2006! This year's theme is: "Tackling Poverty Together", which seeks to include young people in the fight against poverty and harness their creativity and enthusiasm. Youth around the world are encouraged to organize activities highlighting the impact of poverty on their lives and to work to strengthen their role in poverty reduction efforts. For more information on how you can commemorate the day, please visit our web site at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/iyd2006.htm>.

Highlights from UN Agencies around the world

>> World Food Programme: Walk the World 21 May 2006... the World Walked!

From New Zealand to China, across Europe and Africa, and over to the Americas: people *Walked the World*. The whole world came together the 21st of May for over 400 walks in more than 100 countries. Visit www.FightHunger.org to get news from all the Walks and find the latest story about a walk in your area. Send in all of your photos and stories about the Walk you attended to team@fighthunger.org!

>> UN Study on Violence against Children Begins Consultations

The UN Secretary-General commissioned a Study on Violence against Children. From 23 - 26 May, young people from around the world came together in New York City to begin work on drafting the child-friendly materials of the UN Study on Violence Consultation Report. The Study also uses a discussion board to get ideas and quotes from young people about how real action can be taken to prevent and end violence against children. Every day, UNICEF's Voices of Youth posts reports from the consultation written by youth delegates themselves. Visit the Forum and follow the discussions and give your input at <http://www.unicef.org/voy/discussions/forumdisplay.php?f=81>.

>> Rural Voices of Youth

UNICEF's Voices of Youth is proud to announce "Rural Voices of Youth", a project started by a member in Nigeria to reach out to young people in his community without Internet access. Visit the Voices of Youth website to find out more about his visits to rural communities to discuss water and sanitation, conflict, the Millennium Development Goals and intergenerational dialogue: http://www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction_1115.html.

>> Development of a National Youth Policy in Cambodia

Within the framework of the World Program of Action for Youth to the Year 2000, post-conflict Cambodia is presently in a process of formulating its national youth policy and strategic action plan. The UNESCO Office in Cambodia, in cooperation with UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF, provides support to the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport in enhancing policy dialogues among all stakeholders. The Cambodia's National Youth Policy mainly aims at achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Education For All (EFA) goals, and particularly in line with the government policy on poverty reduction. For more information, please contact phnompenh@unesco.org.

>> UNESCO Contest Promotes Youth Driven Action on Communication

The UNESCO Office in Lima along with UNAIDS and two Peruvian NGOs Calandria and Eduhcasalud are currently organizing a regional youth contest on HIV/AIDS Communication projects on the theme of "Más Derechos, Menos Prejuicios" (More Laws, Fewer Prejudices). The contest seeks to promote youth-driven action on communication, information and awareness-raising in both public spaces and the media. For more information, please visit <http://www.jovenesfrentealsida.net>.

>> Young people and Education for a Culture of Peace

UNESCO and other partners are working actively towards fostering a culture of peace in partnership with young people in Burundi. They organized an awareness-raising campaign in schools, aimed at testing and evaluating a participatory methodology for life skills training and peace education. More than 1,000 students have so far participated in this initiative. Please contact y.matuturu@unesco.org for more information.

>> Children and Youth Make Their Presence Felt at Biodiversity Meeting

Children and youth played an active role at the eight ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity(<http://www.biodiv.org>), which was held in Curitiba, Brazil, from 20 to 31 March 2006. The strong presence of children and youth representatives was welcomed by the new Executive Secretary to the, Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif. He met with many of them over the course of the meeting and highlighted their concerns in his opening address to the High Level Ministerial Segment. Read his message to children and youth at the earlier "Mission-Durable" Youth Conference in Montreal, Canada: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/speech/2006/sp-2006-02-17-youth-en.pdf>

Feature: Changing Families: Chances and Challenges for Young People Today

Briefing Notes on Youth is a new awareness-raising activity from the United Nations Programme on Youth. The primary purpose of the Briefing Notes is to provide information on an issue from a youth policymaking perspective. It is hoped that it would also be a catalyst to promote further research and stimulate the debate on youth issues. Also available on our web site is the briefing note on *Youth Living with Disabilities*.

The primary role of the family is to (re)produce society, either biologically, socially, or both, according to theoretical definitions from the fields of sociology and anthropology. Thus, a family produces and creates society in terms of socio-cultural aspects. It ideally also provides a stable and secure social environment for the individual development of all family members. The family also has an economic role, which is strongly related to its socio-cultural function. A family, in its nuclear form, can be described as "a group of people linked by marriage, legally or customarily regulated, and their dependents, based on either

consanguinity or adoption." In fully understanding the situation of young people, major consideration must be given to the family contexts in which they live.

There are 1.2 billion young people between the ages of 15-24 in the world today that are affected by the transformation in family structure and dynamics caused by changes due to globalization, rising migration, an ageing of society and HIV/AIDS. These changes have an impact on core functions of the family, such as primary socialization. Seen from a variety of cultural, social and political perspectives, the structure of families differ widely, across the globe. However, the structure of families is changing globally. A shift from extended to nuclear families, as well as an increase in the number of one-person households and the emergence of new forms of unions in some countries has become evident during the past years. Furthermore, falling fertility rates, migration, and an increase in divorce rates are responsible for smaller-size households. Also, remarkably recognizable in all the regions of the world, they have fewer children; in some regions, the fertility rate decreased by almost 50%. Furthermore, particularly for women, the age at first marriage has increasingly risen (to between the mid to late twenties in the developed regions, and to between the early to mid twenties in other regions of the world).

When taking a closer look at the effects that changing families have on young people, we see that issues of "family" and "youth" are strongly interrelated. Changes in the structure of families influence young people's lives, as well as create new opportunities. Also, the decisions young people make about their own lives have an impact on how families evolve. Furthermore, this interrelation needs to be considered as multi-dimensional. On one hand, the changing landscape can be interpreted as challenging the ability of families to fulfill basic functions of production, reproduction and socialization, as well as meeting the needs of family members for health, nutrition, shelter, physical and emotional care, and personal development, which has a major impact on young people. On the other hand, the dynamics of changing families can lead to new opportunities with regard to education, participation and employment, especially for youth in developing countries and particularly for girls and young women.

Although they may provide love and nurturing, families in poverty often lack the resources to provide safe environments, education and healthcare for their children. Without these advantages young people may find it more difficult or even impossible to escape poverty. Youth who build families of their own at an early age may likewise not be able to provide their children with an adequate socio-economic support system. This can lead to an "intergenerational transmission of poverty". During the period, sexual and reproductive health issues are an important youth concern. Since almost half of all new HIV infections are among young people, it is important to create an awareness and the necessary knowledge to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS - particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, young people living in households with members infected by HIV, are forced to take on new roles and responsibilities in their families, such as caring for infected children/siblings and parents.

The ageing of societies needs to be acknowledged as a fact, which is often interpreted as a disadvantage for young people. It is increasingly important to promote strong intergenerational communication and relations through policies that identify common policy objectives across generations and programmes that support the natural intergenerational solidarity that exists in most families.

Youth issues can be better understood by an analysis of the situation of families to be able to respond to emerging challenges and changes in society. Policies and research addressing youth should consider the influence of family and reflect the changing family context.

The complete Briefing Note on Youth, *Changing Families: Chances and Challenges for Young People Today* also discusses the issues within the framework of the World Programme of Action for Youth, and is available on our web site at:
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/library.htm#briefingnotes>.

Calendar of Youth Events

NB: Some events are open for participation by invitation only

>> **31 May 2006: World No Tobacco Day 2006**

Nowadays, tobacco companies continue to expand with new variants of cigarettes. They reassure health-concerned smokers by offering along with their new products the illusion of safety. They continue to take their old and new customers to more insidious levels of deception by promoting and selling new products disguised under healthier names, fruity flavours or more attractive-looking packaging. Are young people specifically targeted by tobacco companies? Find out more about how you can make a difference:
<http://www.who.int/tobacco/communications/events/wntd/2006/en/index.html>

>> **5 June 2005: World Environment Day**

World Environment Day, commemorated each year on 5 June, is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action. The theme selected for 2006 is Deserts and Desertification. The Day's agenda is to give a human face to environmental issues; empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development; promote an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues; and advocate partnership which will ensure all nations and peoples enjoy a safer and more prosperous future. World Environment Day is a people's event with colourful activities such as street rallies, bicycle parades, green concerts, essays and poster competitions in schools, tree planting, as well as recycling and clean-up campaigns. Find out more at <http://www.unep.org/wed/2006/>.

>> **19-23 June 2006: World Urban Forum**

Vancouver, Canada. The theme of the Third Session of UNHABITAT's World Urban Forum is "Our Future: Sustainable Cities - Turning Ideas into Action". The World Urban Forum gives the various stakeholders a common platform to discuss urban issues in formal and informal ways and come up with action-oriented proposals to create sustainable cities. More information is available at: <http://www.unhabitat.org/wuf/2006>. Prior to the Forum, youth organizations will meet from 16-18 June for the World Urban Youth Forum. For more information, please visit: <http://www.eya.ca/wuf>.

>> **International Youth Day – 12 August 2006**

This year's theme is: "Tackling Poverty Together". For more information on how you can commemorate the day, please visit our web site at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/iyd2006.htm>.

>> **13-18 August 2006: XVI Toronto International AIDS Conference 2006**

The 2006 XIV International AIDS Conference will focus on the promises and progress made to scale-up treatment, care and prevention. Conference sessions and activities will be designed to engage all delegates in dialogue about strategies to meet these shared goals. More information is available at: <http://www.aids2006.org>. The AIDS 2006 Toronto Youth Activities Programme is working in collaboration with the Toronto Youth Force in planning all

youth related Conference activities and programmes. Find out more about participating at <http://www.youthaidscoalition.org/activities.html#label4>.

>> 31 October - 1 November 2006: UN Global Youth Leadership Summit, UNHQ

Organized by the UN Office for Sport for Development and Peace, the UN Global Youth Leadership Summit aims to link youth with the MDGs, using sport, peacebuilding, and culture as entry points. The event will include two youth delegates – one male, one female - from each of the 191 Member States of the UN. For more information, please visit <http://www.unyouthsummit.org> or contact Karima.Zerrou@undp.org

On the Internet

>> New Publication on Youth and Violent Conflict

The United Nations Development Programme's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) released its report "Youth and Violent Conflict: Society and Development in Crisis?". The report represents a first step to build substantial knowledge on this issue as a basis for policy development and programmatic responses. It reviews existing analytical and policy frameworks, provides an initial mapping of relevant programming efforts put in place by UNDP and partner organizations, and advances preliminary recommendations for the way forward. To download a copy of the report, please visit: http://www.undp.org/bcpr/whats_new/UNDP_Youth_PN.pdf

>> Water and Sanitation in Schools

The youth delegates from the 2nd Children's World Water Forum, March 2006, are committed to continuing the work they started in Mexico this year at the 4th World Water Forum. Join them in an upcoming discussion about water and sanitation in schools, and how you can help make a difference. For more information, please see: <http://www.unicef.org/voy/discussions/forumdisplay.php?f=100>.

>> Help Chinese youth stop the spread of HIV

Beginning in May 2006, UNICEF Voices of Youth will be hosting a discussion moderated by the first ever group of Chinese Youth Ambassadors to find ways to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS in China. Lend them your support, experience, and recommendations! For more information on the discussion entitled "Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS" please see: <http://www.unicef.org/voy/discussions/forumdisplay.php?f=106>

>> Investing When it Counts

Although they are at a formative and resilient stage of life, very young adolescents (ages 10-14) are often overlooked by policies and programmes. This guidance document and toolkit begin to address the lack of research and attention to this important subgroup of young people by compiling new data-gathering approaches, tools, and methodologies. The methodologies described in the guide are useful primarily for discovering which very young adolescents are most vulnerable, what their needs are, and whether they are being reached by existing programmes. Download a copy via the Internet at: <http://www.unfpa.org/publications/detail.cfm?ID=283>

Contact information

UN Youth Flash is a service of the UN Programme on Youth, of the Division for Social Policy and Development, within the Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) at the United Nations Secretariat in New York.

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