



NGO Relations Youth Initiative

United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, said during his trip to Egypt, that the “most impressive and most moving experience of engaging people was with young people who are really the initiators of driving change” (March 2011).

The Department of Public Information has acknowledged the importance of youth in its work with Non Governmental Organizations, and over the past two years has worked conscientiously to increase its youth activities and allow a more visible participation of youth representatives in its work. The initial step was to ensure that NGO delegations to the Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference had a youth representative participating. Following the successful participation of youth during the 62nd UN DPI/NGO Conference that took place in Mexico in 2009, including the two iconic moments with the Secretary-General, it was decided that the youth participation should be increased, so NGO Relations increased to two the number of registration spots exclusively reserved to youth representatives (aged 18 to 24 years old) in each NGO delegation.

This initiative was also palpable in Australia, where scores of youth representatives, both high-school-aged youth, who participated in a parallel conference, as well as their older University counterparts, who actually attended the UN DPI/NGO Conference, actively focused their work and activities on the issue of global health. These inspiring examples in Conferences abroad have also led NGO Relations to look closely at other opportunities to include young people in its work with civil society.

The NGO Relations cluster offers several opportunities for young people to get involved in the work of our office. Among them:

- Two yearly UN Grounds Passes for the New York Headquarters campus for Youth Representatives (aged 18 to 24 years old)
- One-day Orientation Programme for Youth Representatives
- Increase in youth participation in the weekly Briefings
- Active involvement in the Communications Workshop
- Youth speakers at Briefings, as well as the Closing Ceremony of the Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference
- Youth Subcommittee as part of the Conference Planning Committee:
 - Social media coverage of the Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference on several platforms
 - Student Journalists Programme
 - Two registration spots per NGO exclusively reserved for Youth Representatives to participate in the Conference
- Youth-oriented documents available at the DPI/NGO Resource Centre
- Access to youth-related information events at the UN

We hope that this new focus on youth will provide young people with the unique opportunity to work on an intergenerational level with potential NGO mentors and become more involved in the work of civil society. We also aim to inspire youth to be more involved in volunteering, as we celebrate this year an important milestone, the 10th anniversary of UN Volunteers (IYV+10).