

## **UN General Assembly President Jan Eliasson says youth leaders need passion and compassion to meet global development challenges**

### **-- Plans set for United Nations Youth Leadership Summit --**

*United Nations, New York, 1 March 2006* – Youth delegates from Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean agreed yesterday on plans for a unprecedented gathering of youth leaders from 191 UN Member States at a United Nations Youth Leadership Summit in New York in late October 2006 to mobilize their generation to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), using the themes of sport, culture and peace as entry points to reach out to youth worldwide about the goals.

“You need roots in the reality of the tremendous challenges that our world faces and wings to seek imaginative solutions to those challenges,” UN General Assembly President Jan Eliasson told the young leaders. “You also need passion to mobilize your generation in support of the MDGs and the search for peace and compassion for those suffering from poverty and injustice.” Mr. Eliasson also said that he would assist an inter-generational dialogue between global leaders and youth leaders at the Summit.

The planning meeting for the Summit was organized on behalf of the UN system by the UN New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace jointly with the Global Peace Initiative of Women, a New York-based NGO. The Summit will include participation by two youth leaders ages 18 to 30, one young man and one young woman, from each country, who will be nominated by their UN Country Offices on the basis of their experience and commitment. For the past two years, Dr. Djibril Diallo, Director of the UN New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace, and Dena Merriam, founder and convener of the Global Peace of Women, have worked to build the vision and framework for this initiative that will now culminate in an historic summit of young leaders at the United Nations. This planning session in New York was an important step toward the realization of this goal.

Mr. Mohan Lal Mittal, Founder and Chairman of Ispat Group of Companies India and International, traveled specially to attend the meeting as a sponsor. He told the youth delegates that he started his career as a worker making \$10 a month. He urged them to dream of solutions to local and global problems, and said that they must have self-confidence to take on the big challenge of achieving the MDGs. “I see a bright future for the youth of tomorrow,” he said.

Mr. John Gage, Vice President and Chief Researcher of Sun Microsystems, said that the power of information technology can greatly multiply opportunities for Summit outreach and participation. As the technology partner for Summit, Sun is powering the web site and will enhance the global communications dimension of the event.

The Summit received a strong pledge of support from private sector sponsors, including Mr. Mittal, Mr. Gage and Mr. Hiroshi Matsumoto, President of Inner Trip Reiyukai International (ITRI), a Japanese foundation. This major public-private partnership forged by United Nations with global companies will leverage their experience and networks to make the MDGs more achievable.

The three sponsors also agreed to form a Council of Mentors that will bring together prominent international leaders to advise the youth leaders on Summit preparations and implementation of activities decided on at the event, extending to 2015, the target date for achieving the MDGs. The Council is chaired by Mr. Mohan Lal Mittal.

The UN Global Youth Leadership Summit will be the culmination of a series of regional summits held in Africa, in Senegal (2004) and Morocco (2005), in Asia in Japan in 2004, and in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Brazil in 2005. The meeting also discussed arrangements for regional consultations prior to the Global Summit for Europe, the Arab States and North America.

UN agencies will be partners for the Summit, and UNICEF Deputy Director Kul Gautum urged the meeting to consider an expanded “MDGs plus” agenda that puts youth issues at its heart.” Representatives from a number of other agencies also participated in the planning meeting, including the International Labour Organization, (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Youth Programme, and the United Nations University for Peace.

Other partners at the meeting were Mr. Driss Guerraoui, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Morocco; Mr. Aliou Sow, Senegal’s Youth Minister; Ms. Carol Della Pente, Manager of Youth and Educational Outreach for the Canadian International Development Agency; Dr. Cary Goodman, Executive Director of Directions for our Youth, a New York NGO; and Mr. John Yearwood, Treasurer of the National Association of Black Journalists and World Affairs Editor of the Miami Herald.

The youth delegates participating included Ms. Roja Fazaeli, Regional Chair, South and West Asia; Ms. Barbara Hachipuka, Regional Chair, Southern Africa; Ms. Solange Marquez, Regional Chair, Central America and Mexico; Mr. Zied Mhirsi, Regional Chair, Northern Africa; Mr. Vieng Akhone Souriyo, Regional Vice Chair, North East Asia and Mekong; Mr. Geoff Cooper, Regional Vice Chair, Caribbean; Mr. Cedza Dlamini, Youth Delegate, Pan-African Youth Leadership Summit.

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