

## **Interactive Roundtable on the Theme: “Young people: Making Commitments Matter”**

5 October 2005 from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York

### Biographies of Proposed Speakers

#### **Fatoumata Diakhaby**

*Nationality:* Senegalese

Fatoumata Diakhaby lives and studies in Dakar, Senegal. As a student, Fatoumata is not only concerned with her personal future, but also passionately concerned for the future of her country. After her initial involvement with various youth groups such as UNESCO clubs in Senegal, the Synapse Network Center and Youth Employment Summit (YES) Senegal network, she is now mobilizing her energy to serve the Millennium Development Goals in Senegal and in West Africa. Through attending UNDP’s Pan-African Youth Leadership Summit and a meeting to evaluate the World Programme of Action for Youth organized by the Intergovernmental Agency of the Francophonie, her commitment to youth development has kept growing.

Fatoumata has been instrumental in strengthening the entrepreneurial capacity of young people by organizing a leadership academy in Dakar. The academy provides young people with the skills and capacities they need to join job market and/or create or co-create their own businesses. As a follow-up to the academy, Fatoumata is now working with a group a selected youth to provide them with the administrative and technical support that is necessary for the growth of their projects.

Fatoumata has also been active supporting youth in rural areas. In this respect she is coordinating the ICT youth project in Kedougou, one of the remotest and most poverty-stricken areas of Senegal. This project aims at empowering youth to use information technology to create jobs sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their communities. As part of her work on HIV/AIDS, she has traveled throughout Senegal to sensitize and train other youth to be educators in the prevention and management of the spread of HIV AIDS. She considers HIV/AIDS as an issue that concerns us all and believes that HIV testing is very important for youth.

In the framework of her commitment to empower youth, Fatoumata is also very active in the promotion of youth mobility as a response to unemployment and social exclusion. With this belief she joined the *Intersection Nord-Sud* project, which is designed to allow youth in the developing world to meet and exchange experiences with their peers in developed countries.

#### **Danah Dajani**

*Nationality:* Jordanian

Danah Dajani is currently the Director of the Princess Basma Youth Resource Centre (PBYRC), part of the Queen Zein Al-Sharaf Institute for Development since 1997. She is responsible for the strategic planning and overall management of the Centre, including mentorship for a growing group of more than 45 youth volunteers. The centre aims to promote the active role of youth in society and enhance their participation in the development process, providing the opportunity, support and freedom for youth to express their needs and shape new realities for their future.

Danah has also had the opportunity to work on Jordan's National Youth Strategy as a consultant, where her main focus was recreational activities and leisure time. The experience expanded her knowledge base and information on the current situation of youth in Jordan. Additionally, she has also served as a representative to the Higher Council for Youth at the regional level, a governmental body for youth issues.

Danah has an MA in Gender and Development from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, United Kingdom, a MSc. in Social Research and a BSc. in Sociology from the University of Bath.

### **Nguyen Hong Nhung**

*Nationality:* Vietnamese

Nguyen Hong Nhung, whose nickname is Romi, is currently the Millennium Campaign's Asia – Pacific Regional Youth Editor in partnership with the youth-led organization called TakingITGlobal. By establishing a strong network of youth organizations, she has mobilized young people in many countries of the region into actions in awareness of youth development goals. Besides writing articles, soliciting and proofreading articles "Speaking up for 2015" from young writers, Romi has done a lot of communication work and MDG awareness raising activities. She organized a regional open forum: "ASEAN youth and the MDGs" in Singapore in April 2005 and has led several projects promoting the MDG7 – environmental sustainability in Vietnam. She is also the communications coordinator of Vietnam Action Network for Youth, a youth network focusing on the promotion of "Youth voices and participation for development in Vietnam."

Romi also has a long history of voluntary activities. For 12 years she served continuously as student leader at school, initiated and organized a five-week donation campaign for a 16-year old brain cancer patient and was executive coordinator of the Youth Coordination Center of Vietnam, implementing community projects in the suburbs of Hanoi. She is also a freelance reporter for a youth magazine and was editor-in-chief for bulletins in English and Vietnamese. In 2004 she was selected by the Singapore International Foundation as one of the three youngest student leaders in Southeast Asia to become an ASEAN Student Fellow, which enabled her to attend classes at the Singapore Management University and organize many other cultural activities with her fellow students. After winning several competitions in English, Romi has decided to pursue a degree in Linguistics at the Vietnam National University in Hanoi.

### **Andrew Dunkelman**

*Nationality:* American

Originally from Houma, Louisiana, Andrew Dunkelman is a junior majoring in political science at Louisiana State University. He currently serves as the Executive Director of the National 4-H Youth Directions Council, an organization of youth leaders in the 4-H movement – the largest youth organization in the United States. In that capacity, Andrew is charged with providing leadership to the N4-HYDC Leaders Academy, where young people are prepared for roles in civic engagement and leadership.

In 2004, Andrew participated in the World Bank Conference on Youth, Development, and Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the United Nations Consultation on the World Programme of Action for Youth in Coimbra, Portugal in 2005.

Andrew established Operation Cover-Up in 2001, an organization dedicated to skin cancer prevention in children, and over the next four years collected over \$100,000 in materials to distribute to low-income mothers across the United States and Canada while establishing educational programs for recipients. For his work, Andrew has twice been honored with the Prudential Spirit of Community Award, the most prestigious recognition for youth community service in the United States. He was a National Beef Ambassador in 2002, a National Merit Finalist, and was Louisiana's 2003 Student of the Year.

In 2002, Andrew was inducted into the National Kids' Hall of Fame.

### **Renaldas Vaisbrodas**

*Nationality:* Lithuanian

Born in 1981, Renaldas Vaisbrodas has been elected President of the European Youth Forum, the European platform of National Youth Councils and Youth NGOs, gathering 93 organisations.

Vaisbrodas has been active in the youth field since 1996 and has held leadership positions which have provided him with a great expertise on the sector. He has represented youth organisations at both, national and international level dealing directly with institutional actors.

In Lithuania, he has been the President of the School Student Union and worked for the National Youth Council, as International Secretary and Programme Manager. He has been committed as well to the promotion of Baltic Sea Youth Co-operation. At the European level, he has been involved in the work of the Council of Europe, being the Vice Chairman of its Advisory Council.

He has a bachelor degree in International Relations and Political Science and is currently studying a Master in International Communication at Vilnius University.

He speaks Lithuanian, English and Russian.

### **Gabriela Rosalía Pereyra**

*Nationality:* Argentinean

Gabriela Rosalía Pereyra, 20 years old, has worked as a volunteer with Eco-Clubs, a civil society organization, since 2000. In this capacity, she took part in their national meetings and was elected to the Secretariat of Communications of the National body of the organization. Gabriela coordinated the National Newsletter and the electronic communications of Eco-Clubs International (Ecoclubes Internacional) on the National level. At the VI National Assembly of Eco-Clubs, she was elected to be the President of the Eco-Clubs National Meetings. Recently, Gabriela was elected to represent RIE on an international level, responsible for Communication Coordination, Training, and Development of Funds. She currently works providing support and training for Argentina's Eco-Clubs and their 2500 youth members.

Gabriela is currently studying Journalism and has worked in radio and television production. She is very interested in volunteerism and the participation of Latin American youth to create a better

world sustained by peace and solidarity. She believes that with integrity and commitment to our work, and through collaborative efforts, this world can be achieved. Gabriela was born in Charata city, Chaco, Argentina and lived there until the age of 17 when she moved to Rosario city to study Journalism.