

**WORLD PROGRAMME
OF ACTION FOR**

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**ACTION FOR
YOUTH**

PREFACE

The United Nations has long recognized that the imagination, ideals and energies of young people are vital for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. The Member States of the United Nations acknowledged this in 1965 when they endorsed the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples.

Two decades later, the United Nations General Assembly observed 1985 as the International Youth Year: Participation, Development and Peace. It drew international attention to the important role young people play in the world, and, in particular, their potential contribution to development.

In 1995, on the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, the United Nations strengthened its commitment to young people by directing the international community's response to the challenges to youth into the next millennium. It did this by adopting an international strategy—the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

The World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) provides a policy framework and practical guidelines

for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people. It contains proposals for action, aiming at fostering conditions and mechanisms to promote improved well-being and livelihoods among young people. The WPAY focuses in particular on measures to strengthen national capacities in the field of youth and to increase the quality and quantity of opportunities available to young people for full, effective and constructive participation in society.

In its original form, the World Programme of Action for Youth outlined 10 priority areas to be addressed; however, at the ten-year review of the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, Member States agreed to the addition of five additional issue areas. These were expanded upon in a Supplement, which was adopted in 2007. Together these 15 issue areas and their related plans of action are what is understood to comprise the World Programme of Action for Youth, which guides policy and action in the area of youth development.

This publication was prepared in response to numerous requests by youth non-governmental

organizations, youth policy practitioners and young people for a ready reference to the WPAY, its 15 priority areas and their corresponding proposals for action. It also includes the means for implementation at the national, regional and international levels.

The text of the World Programme of Action for Youth is presented in this publication as it appears in United Nations resolutions 50/81 of 13 March 1996, in its annex containing the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, and 62/126 of 5 February 2008, in its annex containing the Supplement to the WPAY (2007). The publication does not provide the texts of preambular and operative paragraphs of the resolutions, which are not a part of the WPAY. The texts have been reformatted and paragraph numbers have been omitted.

For more information on the World Programme of Action for Youth and the Guide to the Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, as well as information on the work of the United Nations on youth issues, please visit our website at: www.un.org/youth.

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The decade since the observance of International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace has been a period during which the world experienced fundamental political, economic and sociocultural changes. These changes will inevitably affect at least the first decade of the twenty-first century as well.

Young people represent agents, beneficiaries and victims of major societal changes and are generally confronted by a paradox: to seek to be integrated into an existing order or to serve as a force to transform that order. Young people in all parts of the world, living in countries at different stages of development and in different socio-economic settings, aspire to full participation in the life of society.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The World Programme of Action for Youth provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people. It contains proposals for action to the year 2000 and beyond, aiming at achieving the objectives of the International Youth Year and at fostering conditions and mechanisms to promote improved well-being and livelihood among young people.

The Programme of Action focuses in particular on measures to strengthen national capacities in the field of youth and to increase the quality and quantity of opportunities available to young people for full, effective and constructive participation in society.

UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION OF INTENT ON YOUTH: PROBLEMS AND POTENTIALS

The States Members of the United Nations have agreed to work towards achievement of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, inter alia, the promotion of higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development. Young people in all parts of the world, living in countries at different stages of development and in different socio-economic situations, aspire to full participation in the life of society, as provided in the Charter, including:

- a. Attainment of an educational level commensurate with their aspirations;
- b. Access to employment opportunities equal to their abilities;
- c. Food and nutrition adequate for full participation in the life of society;
- d. A physical and social environment that promotes good health, offers protection from disease and addiction and is free from all types of violence;
- e. Human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction as to race, sex, language, religion or any other forms of discrimination;
- f. Participation in decision-making processes;
- g. Places and facilities for cultural, recreational and sports activities to improve the living standards of young people in both rural and urban areas.

While the peoples of the United Nations, through their Governments, international organizations and voluntary associ-

ations, have done much to ensure that these aspirations may be achieved, including efforts to implement the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth endorsed by the General Assembly in 1985,¹ it is apparent that the changing world social, economic and political situation has created the following conditions that have made this goal more difficult to achieve in many countries:

- a. Claims on the physical and financial resources of States, which have reduced the resources available for youth programmes and activities, particularly in heavily indebted countries;
- b. Inequities in social, economic and political conditions, including racism and xenophobia, which lead to increasing hunger, deterioration in living conditions and poverty among youth and to their marginalization as refugees, displaced persons and migrants;
- c. Increasing difficulty for young people returning from armed conflict and confrontation in integrating into the community and gaining access to education and employment;
- d. Continuing discrimination against young women and insufficient access for young women to equal opportunities in employment and education;
- e. High levels of youth unemployment, including long-term unemployment;
- f. Continuing deterioration of the global environment resulting from unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries, which is a matter of grave concern, aggravating poverty and imbalances;
- g. Increasing incidence of diseases, such as malaria, the human immunodeficiency virus and the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), and other threats to health, such as substance abuse and

psychotropic substance addiction, smoking and alcoholism;

- h. Inadequate opportunities for vocational education and training, especially for persons with disabilities;
- i. Changes in the role of the family as a vehicle for shared responsibility and socialization of youth;
- j. Lack of opportunity for young people to participate in the life of society and contribute to its development and well-being;
- k. Prevalence of debilitating disease, hunger and malnutrition that engulfs the life of many young people;
- l. Increasing difficulty for young people to receive family life education as a basis for forming healthy families that foster sharing of responsibilities.

These phenomena, among others, contribute to the increased marginalization of young people from the larger society, which is dependent on youth for its continual renewal.

We, the peoples of the United Nations, believe that the following principles, aimed at ensuring the well-being of young women and men and their full and active participation in the society in which they live, are fundamental to the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond:

- a. Every State should provide its young people with opportunities for obtaining education, for acquiring skills and for participating fully in all aspects of society, with a view to, inter alia, acquiring productive employment and leading self-sufficient lives;
- b. Every State should guarantee to all young people the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other international instruments related to human rights;

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- c. Every State should take all necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against young women and girls and remove all obstacles to gender equality and the advancement and empowerment of women and should ensure full and equal access to education and employment for girls and young women;
 - d. Every State should foster mutual respect, tolerance and understanding among young people with different racial, cultural and religious backgrounds;
 - e. Every State should endeavour to ensure that its policies relating to young people are informed by accurate data on their situation and needs, and that the public has access to such data to enable it to participate in a meaningful fashion in the decision-making process;
 - f. Every State is encouraged to promote education and action aimed at fostering among youth a spirit of peace, cooperation and mutual respect and understanding between nations;
 - g. Every State should meet the special needs of young people in the areas of responsible family-planning practice, family life, sexual and reproductive health, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV infection and AIDS prevention, consistent with the Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development in September 1994,² the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action adopted by the World Summit for Social Development in March 1995,³ and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in September 1995;⁴
 - h. Environmental protection, promotion and enhancement are among the issues considered by young people to be of prime importance to the future

welfare of society. States should therefore actively encourage young people and youth organizations to participate actively in programmes, including educational programmes, and actions designed to protect, promote and enhance the environment;

- i. Every State should take measures to develop the possibilities of education and employment of young people with disabilities;
- j. Every State should take measures to improve the situation of young people living in particularly difficult conditions, including by protecting their rights;
- k. Every State should promote the goal of full employment as a basic priority of its economic and social policies, giving special attention to youth employment. They should also take measures to eliminate the economic exploitation of children;
- l. Every State should provide young people with the health services necessary to ensure their physical and mental well-being, including measures to combat diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS, and to protect them from harmful drugs and the effects of addiction to drugs, tobacco and alcohol;
- m. Every State should place people at the centre of development and should direct their economies to meet human needs more effectively and to ensure that young people are active participants and beneficiaries in the process of development.



DEVELOPMENT SETTING

In 1995, the world youth population—defined by the United Nations as the age cohort 15-24—is estimated to be 1.03 billion, or 18 per cent of the total world population. The majority of the world youth population (84 per cent in 1995) lives in developing countries. This figure is projected to increase to 89 per cent by 2025. The difficult circumstances that people experience in many developing countries are often even more difficult for young people because of limited opportunities for education and training, viable employment and health and social services, and because of a growing incidence of substance abuse and juvenile delinquency. Many developing countries are also experiencing unprecedented rates of rural-urban migration by young people.

Apart from the statistical definition of the term “youth” mentioned above, the meaning of the term “youth” varies in different societies around the world. Definitions of youth have changed continuously in response to fluctuating political, economic and sociocultural circumstances.

Young people in industrialized countries comprise a relatively smaller proportion of the total population because of generally lower birth rates and longer life expectancy. They comprise a social group that faces particular problems and uncertainties regarding its future, problems that relate in part to limited opportunities for appropriate employment.

Young people in all countries are both a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation. Their imagination, ideals, considerable energies and vision are essential for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. Thus, there is special need for new impetus to be given to the design and implementation of youth policies and programmes at all levels. The ways in which the challenges and potentials of young people are addressed by policy will influence current social and economic conditions and the well-being and livelihood of future generations.

STRATEGIES AND POLICY SPECIFICS

In 1965, in resolution 2037 (XX), the General Assembly endorsed the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples. From 1965 to 1975, both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council emphasized three basic themes in the field of youth: participation, development and peace. The need for an international policy on youth was emphasized as well. In 1979, the General Assembly, by resolution 34/151, designated 1985 as International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace. In 1985, by resolution 40/14, the Assembly endorsed the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth.¹ The guidelines are significant for their focus on young people as a broad category comprising various subgroups, rather than a single demographic entity. They provide proposals for specific measures to address the needs of subgroups such as young people with disabilities, rural and urban youth and young women.

The themes identified by the General Assembly for International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace reflect a predominant concern of the international community with distributive justice, popular participation and quality of life. These were reflected in the guidelines, and they represent overall themes of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond as well.

The Programme of Action also builds upon other, recent international instruments, including the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,⁵ the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights,⁶ the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,² the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World

Summit for Social Development,³ and the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women.⁴

The Programme of Action is drawn from these international instruments generally and specifically related to youth policies and programmes. The Programme of Action is significant because it provides a cross-sectoral standard relating to both policy-making and programme design and delivery. It will serve as a model for integrated actions, at all levels, to address more effectively problems experienced by young people in various conditions and to enhance their participation in society.

The Programme of Action is divided into three phases: the first phase focused on analysis and on drafting the Programme of Action and on its adoption by the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, in 1995; the second phase is concerned with worldwide implementation of the Programme of Action to the year 2000; the third phase, covering the period 2001 to 2010, will focus on further implementation and evaluation of progress made and obstacles encountered; it will suggest appropriate adjustments to long-term objectives and specific measures to improve the situation of young people in the societies in which they live.

Each of the ten⁷ priority areas identified by the international community is presented in terms of principal issues, specific objectives and the actions proposed to be taken by various actors to achieve those objectives. Objectives and actions reflect the three themes of International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace; they are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

The ten⁷ fields of action identified by the international community are education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure-time activities, girls and young women and the full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making. The Programme of Action does not exclude the possibility of new priorities which may be identified in the future.

Implementation of the Programme of Action requires the full enjoyment by young people of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and also requires that Governments take effective action against violations of these rights and freedoms and promote non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, with full respect for various religious and ethical values, cultural backgrounds and philosophical convictions of their young people, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all young women and men.

A. EDUCATION

Although progress towards universal basic education, beginning with literacy, has been impressive in recent times, the number of illiterate people will continue to grow and many developing countries are likely to fall short of universal primary education by the year 2000. Three main concerns regarding current systems of education may be expressed. The first is the inability of many parents in developing countries

to send their children to schools because of local economic and social conditions. The second concerns the paucity of educational opportunities for girls and young women, migrants, refugees, displaced persons, street children, indigenous youth minorities, young people in rural areas and young people with disabilities. The third concerns the quality of education, its relevance to employment and its usefulness in assisting young people in the transition to full adulthood, active citizenship and productive and gainful employment.

To encourage the development of educational and training systems more in line with the current and future needs of young people and their societies, it would be helpful to share experience and to investigate alternative arrangements, such as informal arrangements for the provision of basic literacy, job skills training and lifelong education.

Opportunities for young people to pursue advanced or university education, engage in research or be trained for self-employment should be expanded in developing countries. Given the economic problems faced by such countries and the inadequacy of international assistance in this area, it is difficult to provide appropriate training for all young people, even though they are a country's chief economic asset.

Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are called upon to assist young people from developing countries to obtain education and training at all levels in developed as well as in developing countries, as well as to participate in mutual academic exchanges among developing countries.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

■ 1. *Improving the level of basic education, skill training and literacy among youth*

Priority should be given to achieving the goal of ensuring basic education for all (beginning with literacy),

mobilizing for that purpose all channels, agents and forms of education and training, in line with the concept of lifelong education. Special emphasis should also be given to the reform of education content and curricula, especially curricula that reinforce traditional female roles which deny women opportunities for full and equal partnership in society, at all levels, focusing on scientific literacy, moral values and learning of skills, adapted to the changing environment and to life in multi-ethnic and multicultural societies. The importance of the development of information skills, that is, skills for researching, accessing and using information, and informatics, should be emphasized along with the importance of distance education. Non-governmental youth organizations and educational organizations should develop youth-to-youth programmes for basic education, skills training and literacy. Consideration should be given to developing programmes enabling retired and elderly people to teach literacy to young people. Particular attention should be given to specific groups of youth in distressed circumstances, including indigenous, migrant and refugee youth, displaced persons, street children and poor youth in urban and rural areas, as well as to special problems, including literacy problems, for blind youth and youth with other disabilities.

■ 2. *Cultural heritage and contemporary patterns of society*

Governments should establish or strengthen programmes to educate young people in the cultural heritage of their own and other societies and the world. Governments should institute, in cooperation with non-governmental youth organizations, travel and exchange programmes and youth camps to help youth understand cultural diversity at both the national and international levels, develop intercultural learning skills and participate in the preservation of the cultural

heritage of their own and other societies and the world around them. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in cooperation with interested Governments and non-governmental organizations, is requested to expand international programmes, such as youth camps, by which young people, particularly those from developing countries, with different cultures, may help restore major international cultural sites and engage in other cultural activities.

■ **3. *Promoting mutual respect and understanding and the ideals of peace, solidarity and tolerance among youth***

Programmes aimed at learning peacemaking and conflict resolution should be encouraged and designed by Governments and educational institutions for introduction to schools at all levels. Children and youth should be informed of cultural differences in their own societies and given opportunities to learn about different cultures as well as tolerance and mutual respect for cultural and religious diversity. Governments and educational institutions should formulate and implement educational programmes which promote and strengthen respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms and enhance the values of peace, solidarity, tolerance, responsibility and respect for the diversity and rights of others.

■ **4. *Vocational and professional training***

Governments and educational institutions, in cooperation with regional and international organizations, could establish or enhance vocational and technical training relevant to current and prospective employment conditions. Youth must be given the opportunity to access vocational and professional training and apprenticeship programmes that help them acquire entry-level jobs with growth oppor-

tunities and the ability to adjust to changes in labour demand.

■ **5. *Promoting human rights education***

Governments should ensure that the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, which began in 1995, is adequately observed in schools and educational institutions. In order to make youth aware of their civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, as well their societal responsibilities, and in order to develop harmonious inter-community relations, mutual tolerance and respect, equality between women and men, and tolerance for diversity, Governments should develop human rights education strategies targeted at youth, taking particular account of the human rights of women.

■ **6. *Training for enterprise programmes***

Governments, in cooperation with regional and international organizations, should formulate model training programmes for youth in individual and cooperative enterprises. They are encouraged to establish self-contained enterprise centres where young people may plan and test their enterprise venture concepts.

■ **7. *Infrastructure for training youth workers and youth leaders***

Governments should assess the adequacy of facilities and programmes to train youth workers and youth leaders, including the adequacy of curricula and staff resources. On the basis of such assessments, Governments should plan and implement relevant training programmes. Non-governmental youth organizations should be encouraged and assisted in formulating and disseminating model training courses for use by member organizations.

Interested organizations should investigate possibilities of strengthening international youth worker

and youth leadership training, with priority given to accepting participants from developing countries. In cooperation with concerned organizations that provide training opportunities for youth, including internships and volunteer programmes, establishment of an inventory of such programmes could also be explored.

B. EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment and underemployment among youth is a problem everywhere. It is, indeed, part of the larger struggle to create employment opportunities for all citizens. The problem has worsened in recent years because of the global recession which has affected developing countries the most seriously. The disturbing fact is that economic growth is not always accompanied by growth in employment. The difficulty of finding suitable employment is compounded by a host of other problems confronting young people, including illiteracy and insufficient training, and is worsened by periods of world economic slow-down and by overall changing economic trends. In some countries, the influx of young people into the employment market has brought with it acute problems. According to estimates of the International Labour Organization, more than one hundred million new jobs would have to be created within the next twenty years in order to provide suitable employment for the growing number of young people in the economically active populations of developing countries. The situation of girls and young women, as well as of young people with disabilities, refugee youth, displaced persons, street children, indigent youth, migrant youth and minorities, warrants urgent attention, bearing in mind the prohibition of forced labour and child labour.

The crisis of youth unemployment deprives young people of the opportunity to secure independent housing or the accommodations necessary for the establishment of families and participation in the life of society. Advances in

technology and communications, coupled with improved productivity, have imposed new challenges as well as new opportunities for employment. Young people are among the most severely affected by these developments. If effective solutions are not found, the cost to society will be much higher in the long run. Unemployment creates a wide range of social ills and young people are particularly susceptible to its damaging effects: the lack of skills, low self-esteem, marginalization, impoverishment and the wasting of an enormous human resource.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

■ 1. *Opportunities for self-employment*

Governments and organizations should create or promote grant schemes to provide seed money to encourage and support enterprise and employment programmes for young people. Businesses and enterprises could be encouraged to provide counterpart financial and technical support for such schemes. Cooperative schemes involving young people in production and marketing of goods and services could be considered. The formation of youth development banks could be considered. The Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives is encouraged to develop models for cooperatives run by youth in developed and developing countries. Such models could include guidelines for management training and training in entrepreneurial techniques and marketing.

■ 2. *Employment opportunities for specific groups of young people*

Within funds designated to promote youth employment, Governments should, as appropriate, designate resources for programmes supporting the efforts of young women, young people with disabilities, youth returning from military service, migrant youth,

refugee youth, displaced persons, street children and indigenous youth. Youth organizations and young people themselves should be directly involved in the planning and implementation of these programmes.

■ **3. *Voluntary community services involving youth***

Where they do not already exist, Governments should consider the establishment of voluntary service programmes for youth. Such programmes could provide alternatives to military service, or might constitute a required element in educational curricula, depending on national policies and priorities. Youth camps, community service projects, environmental protection and intergenerational cooperation programmes should be included among the opportunities offered. Youth organizations should be directly involved in designing, planning, implementing and evaluating such voluntary service programmes. In addition, international cooperation programmes organized between youth organizations in developed and developing countries should be included to promote intercultural understanding and development training.

■ **4. *Needs created by technological changes***

Governments, in particular those of developed countries, should encourage the creation of employment opportunities for young people in fields that are rapidly evolving as a result of technological innovation. A subset of the employment data compiled by Governments should track the employment of youth into those fields marked by newly emerging technologies. Measures should be taken to provide ongoing training for youth in this area.

Special attention should be paid to developing and disseminating approaches that promote flexibility in training systems and collaboration between training institutions and employers, especially for young people in high-technology industries.

C. HUNGER AND POVERTY

Over one billion people in the world today live in unacceptable conditions of poverty, mostly in developing countries, particularly in rural areas of low-income countries in Asia and the Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and the least developed countries. Poverty has various manifestations: hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments; and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterized by a lack of participation in decision-making and in civil and sociocultural life. Poverty is inseparably linked to lack of access to or loss of control over resources, including land, skills, knowledge, capital and social connections. Without those resources, people have limited access to institutions, markets, employment and public services. Young people are particularly affected by this situation. Therefore, specific measures are needed to address the juvenilization and feminization of poverty.

Hunger and malnutrition remain among the most serious and intractable threats to humanity, often preventing youth and children from taking part in society. Hunger is the result of many factors: mismanagement of food production and distribution; poor accessibility; maldistribution of financial resources; unwise exploitation of natural resources; unsustainable patterns of consumption; environmental pollution; natural and human-made disasters; conflicts between traditional and contemporary production systems; irrational population growth; and armed conflicts.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

■ **1. *Making farming more rewarding and life in agricultural areas more attractive***

Governments should enhance educational and cultural services and other incentives in rural areas to make

them more attractive to young people. Experimental farming programmes directed towards young people should be initiated and extension services expanded to maintain improvements in agricultural production and marketing.

Local and national Governments, in cooperation with youth organizations, should organize cultural events that enhance exchanges between urban and rural youth. Youth organizations should be encouraged and assisted in organizing conventions and meetings in rural areas, with special efforts to enlist the cooperation of rural populations, including rural youth.

■ **2. Skill training for income generation by young people**

Governments, in cooperation with youth organizations, should develop training programmes for youth which improve methods of agricultural production and marketing. Training should be based on rural economic needs and the need to train young people in rural areas in techniques of food production and the achievement of food security. Attention should be given in such programmes to young women, youth retention in rural areas, youth returning to rural areas from the cities, young people with disabilities, refugee and migrant youth, displaced persons and street children, indigenous youth, youth returning from military service and youth living in areas of resolved conflicts.

■ **3. Land grants for young people**

Governments should provide grants of land to youth and youth organizations, supported by financial and technical assistance and training. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Labour Organization are invited to document and disseminate information about national experience with land-grant and settlement schemes for use by Governments.

Governments, consistent with their rural development schemes and with the assistance of international organizations, as appropriate, are encouraged to work with volunteer youth organizations on projects which enhance and maintain the rural and urban environments.

■ **4. Cooperation between urban and rural youth in food production and distribution**

Non-governmental organizations should organize direct-marketing groups, including production and distribution cooperatives, to improve current marketing systems and to ensure that young farmers have access to them. The aim of such groups should be to reduce food shortages and losses from defective systems of food storage and transport to markets.

D. HEALTH

Young people in some parts of the world suffer from poor health as a result of societal conditions, including such factors as customary attitudes and harmful traditional practices, and, in some cases, as a result of their own actions. Poor health is often caused by an unhealthy environment, by missing support systems in everyday life for health-promoting patterns of behaviour, by lack of information and by inadequate or inappropriate health services. Problems include the lack of a safe and sanitary living environment, malnutrition, the risk of infectious, parasitic and water-borne diseases, the growing consumption of tobacco, alcohol and drugs, unwarranted risk-taking and destructive activity, resulting in unintentional injuries.

The reproductive health needs of adolescents have been largely ignored. In many countries, there is a lack of information and services available to adolescents to help them understand their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, and to protect them from unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

■ 1. *Provision of basic health services*

All young people should have access to basic health services in the interest of all and of society as a whole. It is the indispensable responsibility of each Government to mobilize the necessary awareness, resources and channels. These measures should be supported by a favourable international economic environment and by cooperation.

Efforts should be expedited to achieve the goals of national health-for-all strategies, based on equality and social justice, in line with the Declaration of Alma Ata on primary health care⁸ adopted on 12 September 1978 by the International Conference on Primary Health Care, by developing or updating country action plans or programmes to ensure universal, non-discriminatory access to basic health services, including sanitation and drinking water, to protect health, and to promote nutrition education and preventive health programmes.

Support should be provided for stronger, better coordinated global actions against major diseases which take a heavy toll of human lives, such as malaria, tuberculosis, cholera, typhoid fever and HIV/AIDS; in this context, support should be continued for the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS).

Poor health is often caused by lack of information and lack of health services for youth, mostly in developing countries. The resulting problems are, among others, sexually transmitted diseases, including infection with HIV; early pregnancies; lack of hygiene and sanitation, leading to infection, infestation and diarrhoea; genetic and congenital diseases; psychological and mental

diseases; narcotic and psychotropic drug abuse; misuse of alcohol and tobacco; unwarranted risk-taking and destructive activity, resulting in unintentional injuries; malnutrition; and poor spacing of births.

■ 2. *Development of health education*

Governments should include, in the curricula of educational institutions at the primary and secondary levels, programmes focusing on primary health knowledge and practices. Particular emphasis should be placed on the understanding of basic hygiene requirements and the need to develop and sustain a healthy environment. These programmes need to be developed in full awareness of the needs and priorities of young people and with their involvement.

Cooperation among Governments and educational and health institutions should be encouraged in order to promote personal responsibility for a healthy lifestyle and provide the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt a healthy lifestyle, including teaching the legal, social and health consequences of behaviour that poses health risks.

■ 3. *Promotion of health services, including sexual and reproductive health and development of relevant education programmes in those fields*

Governments, with the involvement of youth and other relevant organizations, should ensure the implementation of the commitments made in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,² as established in the report of that Conference, in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit on Social Development,³ and in the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action for the Fourth World Conference on Women,⁴ as well as in the relevant human rights instruments, to

meet the health needs of youth. The United Nations Population Fund and other interested United Nations organizations should continue to take effective steps on these issues. The reproductive health needs of adolescents as a group have been largely ignored to date by existing reproductive health services. The response of societies to the reproductive health needs of adolescents should be based on information that helps them attain a level of maturity required to make responsible decisions. In particular, information and services should be made available to adolescents to help them understand their sexuality and protect them from unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and the subsequent risk of infertility. This should be combined with the education of young men to respect women's self-determination and to share responsibility with women in matters of sexuality and reproduction. This effort is uniquely important for the health of young women and their children, for women's self-determination and, in many countries, for efforts to slow the momentum of population growth. Motherhood at a very young age entails a risk of maternal death that is much greater than average, and the children of young mothers have higher levels of morbidity and mortality. Early childbearing continues to be an impediment to improvements in the educational, economic and social status of women in all parts of the world. Overall for young women, early marriage and early motherhood can severely curtail educational and employment opportunities and are likely to have a long-term adverse impact on the quality of life of young women and their children.

Governments should develop comprehensive sexual and reproductive healthcare services and provide young people with access to those services including, inter alia, education and services in family planning consistent with the results of the International Conference on Population and Development, the World

Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. The United Nations Population Fund and other interested United Nations organizations are to be encouraged to continue assigning high priority to promoting adolescent reproductive health.

■ *4. HIV infection and AIDS among young people*

Governments should develop accessible, available and affordable primary health care services of high quality, including sexual and reproductive health care, as well as education programmes, including those related to sexually transmitted disease, including HIV/AIDS, for youth. Continued international cooperation and collective global efforts are necessary for the containment of HIV/AIDS.

■ *5. Promotion of good sanitation and hygiene practices*

Governments, in cooperation with youth and volunteer organizations, should promote the establishment of youth health associations to promote good sanitation and hygiene programmes.

■ *6. Prevention of disease and illness among youth resulting from poor health practices*

Governments, in cooperation with youth organizations, should promote healthier lifestyles and, in this context, should investigate the possibility of adopting policies for discouraging drug, tobacco and alcohol abuse, including possibly banning the advertisement of tobacco and alcohol. They should also undertake programmes to inform young people about the adverse effects of drug and alcohol abuse and tobacco addiction.

Programmes should be instituted, with the appropriate assistance of the United Nations bodies and organizations concerned, to train medical, paramedical, educational and youth work personnel in

health issues of particular concern to young people, including healthy lifestyles. Research into such issues should be promoted, particularly research into the effects and treatment of drug abuse and addiction. Youth organizations should be enlisted in these efforts.

■ **7. *Elimination of sexual abuse of young people***

As recommended by the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,⁶ the International Conference on Population and Development,² the World Summit for Social Development³ and the Fourth World Conference on Women,⁴ and bearing in mind that young women are specially vulnerable, Governments should cooperate at the international level and take effective steps, including specific preventive measures to protect children, adolescents and youth from neglect, abandonment and all types of exploitation and abuse, such as abduction, rape and incest, pornography, trafficking and acts of paedophilia, as well as from commercial sexual exploitation resulting from pornography and prostitution.⁹ Governments should enact and enforce legislation prohibiting female genital mutilation wherever it exists and give vigorous support to efforts among non-governmental and community organizations and religious institutions to eliminate such practices.¹⁰

■ **8. *Combating malnutrition among young people***

Governments should promote post-primary-school and out-of-school health projects by individuals and youth organizations, emphasizing information on healthy eating practices. School lunch programmes, provision of food supplements and similar services should be available whenever possible to help ensure a proper diet for young people.

E. ENVIRONMENT

The deterioration of the natural environment is one of the principal concerns of young people worldwide as it has direct implications for their well-being both now and in the future. The natural environment must be maintained and preserved for both present and future generations. The causes of environmental degradation must be addressed. The environmentally friendly use of natural resources and environmentally sustainable economic growth will improve human life. Sustainable development has become a key element in the programmes of youth organizations throughout the world. While every segment of society is responsible for maintaining the environmental integrity of the community, young people have a special interest in maintaining a healthy environment because they will be the ones to inherit it.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

■ **1. *Integration of environmental education and training into education and training programmes***

Emphasis should be given in school curricula to environmental education. Training programmes should be provided to inform teachers of the environmental aspects of their subject matter and to enable them to educate youth concerning environmentally friendly habits.

The participation of youth groups in gathering environmental data and in understanding ecological systems and actual environmental action should be encouraged as a means of improving both their knowledge of the environment and their personal engagement in caring for the environment.

■ *2. Facilitating the international dissemination of information on environmental issues to, and the use of environmentally sound technologies by, youth*

The United Nations Environment Programme, in cooperation with Governments and non-governmental youth organizations, is invited to intensify production of information materials illustrating the global dimension, its origins and the interrelated effects of environmental degradation, describing the outcome of initiatives undertaken in developing and developed countries as well as countries with economies in transition. The United Nations Environment Programme is requested to continue its efforts to disseminate information to and exchange information with youth organizations. Governments should encourage and assist youth organizations to initiate and develop youth-to-youth contacts through town-twinning and similar programmes in order to share the experience gained in different countries.

Relevant United Nations organizations and institutions and Governments of technologically advanced countries are encouraged to help spread the use of environmentally sound technologies in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition and to train youth in making use of such technologies in protecting and conserving the environment.

■ *3. Strengthening participation of youth in the protection, preservation and improvement of the environment*

Governments and youth organizations should initiate programmes to promote participation in tree planting, forestry, combating desert creep, waste reduction, recycling and other sound environmental practices. The participation of young people and their organizations in such programmes can provide good train-

ing and encourage awareness and action. Waste management programmes may represent potential income-generating activities which provide opportunities for employment.

As recognized by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the involvement of youth in environment and development decision-making is critical to the implementation of policies of sustainable development. Young people should be involved in designing and implementing appropriate environmental policies.

■ *4. Enhancing the role of the media as a tool for widespread dissemination of environmental issues to youth*

Governments should, to the extent consistent with freedom of expression, encourage the media and advertising agencies to develop programmes to ensure widespread dissemination of information on environmental issues in order to continue to raise awareness thereof among youth.

Governments should establish procedures allowing for consultation and possible participation of youth of both genders in decision-making processes with regard to the environment, at the local, national and regional levels.

F. DRUG ABUSE

The vulnerability of young people to drug abuse has in recent years become a major concern. The consequences of widespread drug abuse and trafficking, particularly for young men and women, are all too apparent. Violence, particularly street violence, often results from drug abuse and illicit drug networks.

As the number of psychotropic drugs increases steadily and their effects and appropriate prescriptive uses are often not fully known, some patients may not be adequately treated and others may become over-medicated. Abuse of prescription drugs and self-medication with tranquillizers, sleeping pills and stimulants can also create serious problems, particularly in countries and regions where distribution controls are weak and habit-forming drugs are purchased abroad or diverted from licit channels of distribution. In this context, the vulnerability of young people raises a particular problem and specific measures are therefore needed.

The international community places particular emphasis on reducing the demand for and supply of illegal drugs and preventing abuse. Supply reduction includes combating international illicit drug trafficking. Drug abuse prevention initiatives range from discouraging people from taking drugs, thus preventing involuntary addiction, to helping those who are abusing drugs to stop doing so. Treatment programmes need to recognize that drug abuse is a chronic relapsing condition. It is essential for programmes to be adapted to the social and cultural context and for there to be effective cooperation between various approaches to treatment. To this end, national initiatives and measures to combat illicit drug trafficking should be fully supported and reinforced at the regional and international levels.

Drug control strategies at the national and international levels consistently emphasize initiatives aimed at reducing drug abuse among young people. This is reflected in the resolutions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and in the demand reduction programmes of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

■ 1. *Participation of youth organizations and youth in demand reduction programmes for young people*

To be effective, demand reduction programmes should be targeted at all young people, particularly those at risk, and the content of the programmes should respond directly to the interests and concerns of those young people. Preventive education programmes showing the dangers of drug abuse are particularly important. Increasing opportunities for gainful employment and activities which provide recreation and opportunities to develop a variety of skills are important in helping young people to resist drugs. Youth organizations can play a key role in designing and implementing education programmes and individual counselling to encourage the integration of youth into the community, to develop healthy lifestyles and to raise awareness of the damaging impact of drugs. The programmes could include training of youth leaders in communication and counselling skills.

Government entities, in cooperation with relevant agencies of the United Nations system, and non-governmental organizations, particularly youth organizations, should cooperate in carrying out demand reduction programmes for illicit drugs, tobacco and alcohol.

■ 2. *Training medical and paramedical students in the rational use of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances*

The World Health Organization, associations of the medical, paramedical and pharmaceutical professions and pharmaceutical corporations and medical facul-

ties and institutions could be asked to develop model training courses and disseminate information material for young medical and paramedical students on the proper handling of drugs and the early identification and diagnosis of substance abuse.

■ **3. *Treatment and rehabilitation of young people who are drug abusers or drug-dependent and young alcoholics and tobacco users***

Research has been undertaken into the possibility of identifying medication to block cravings for specific drugs without creating secondary dependency, but much remains to be done in this area. The need for medical and social research in the prevention and treatment of substance abuse as well as rehabilitation has become more urgent, particularly with the worldwide increase in abuse and addiction among young people. In such research, emphasis should be given to the fact that intravenous substance abuse raises the risk of contracting communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS and hepatitis, arising from the sharing of needles and other injection equipment. The fruits of all such research should be shared globally.

Research on issues such as the medical treatment and the rehabilitation of young drug abusers, including the combination of different types of treatment, the problem of recidivism and the administrative aspects of drug treatment, and the inclusion of students in the relevant faculties in such research, should be encouraged.

In cooperation with the institutions of civil society and the private sector, drug abuse prevention should be promoted, as should preventive education for children and youth and rehabilitation and education programmes for former drug and alcohol addicts, especially children and youth, in order to enable them to obtain productive employment and achieve

independence, dignity and responsibility for a drug-free, crime-free productive life. Of particular interest is the development of treatment techniques involving the family setting and peer groups. Young people can make significant contributions by participating in peer group therapy to facilitate the acceptance of young drug-dependent persons and abusers upon their re-entry into society. Direct participation in rehabilitation therapy entails close cooperation between youth groups and other community and health services. The World Health Organization and other worldwide medical and mental health organizations could be requested to set guidelines for continuing research and for carrying out comparable programmes in different settings, whose effectiveness could be evaluated over a given period of time.

■ **4. *Care for young drug abusers and drug-dependent suspects and offenders in the criminal justice and prison system***

Authorities should consider strategies to prevent exposure to drug abuse and dependence among young people suspected or convicted of criminal offences. Such strategies could include alternative measures, such as daily reporting to police stations, regular visits to parole officers or the fulfilment of a specified number of hours of community service.

Prison authorities should cooperate closely with law enforcement agencies to keep drugs out of the prison system. Prison personnel should be discouraged from tolerating the presence of drugs in penal institutions.

Young prisoners who are already drug-dependent should be targeted as priority candidates for treatment and rehabilitation services and should be segregated as appropriate. Guidelines and standard minimum rules should be prepared to assist national authorities in law enforcement and prison systems in maintaining

the necessary controls and initiating treatment and rehabilitation services. Action along these lines constitutes a long-term advantage to society, as the cycle of dependence, release, repeated offences and repeated incarcerations constitutes a heavy burden on the criminal justice system, quite apart from the wasted lives and personal tragedies which result from drug dependence and criminal behaviour.

G. JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Juvenile crime and delinquency are serious problems all over the world. Their intensity and gravity depend mostly on the social, economic and cultural conditions in each country. There is evidence, however, of an apparent worldwide increase in juvenile criminality combined with economic recession, especially in marginal sectors of urban centres. In many cases, youth offenders are "street children" who have been exposed to violence in their immediate social environment, either as observers or as victims. Their basic education, when they have it, is poor; their primary socialization from the family is too often inadequate; and their socio-economic environment is shaped by poverty and destitution. Rather than relying solely on the criminal justice system, approaches to the prevention of violence and crime should thus include measures to support equality and justice, to combat poverty and to reduce hopelessness among young people.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

■ 1. *Priority to preventive measures*

Governments should give priority to issues and problems of juvenile delinquency and youth criminality, with particular attention to preventive policies and programmes. Rural areas should be provided with adequate socio-economic opportunities and adminis-

trative services which could discourage young people from migrating to urban areas. Youth from poor urban settings should have access to specific educational, employment and leisure programmes, particularly during long school holidays. Young people who drop out of school or come from broken families should benefit from specific social programmes that help them build self-esteem and confidence conducive to responsible adulthood.

■ 2. *Prevention of violence*

Governments and other relevant organizations, particularly youth organizations, should consider organizing information campaigns and educational and training programmes in order to sensitize youth to the personally and socially detrimental effects of violence in the family, community and society, to teach them how to communicate without violence and to promote training so that they can protect themselves and others against violence. Governments should also develop programmes to promote tolerance and better understanding among youth, with a view to eradicating contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and thereby prevent violence.

To prevent violence and crime, the development of social organization, particularly through youth organizations and community involvement, should be fostered by a supportive social policy and within a legal framework. Government assistance should focus on facilitating the ability of community and youth organizations to express and evaluate their needs concerning the prevention of violence and crime, to formulate and implement actions for themselves and to cooperate with each other.

■ 3. *Rehabilitation services and programmes*

Destitution, poor living conditions, inadequate education, malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment and lack

of leisure-time activities are factors that marginalize young people, which makes some of them vulnerable to exploitation as well as to involvement in criminal and other deviant behaviour. If preventive measures address the very causes of criminality, rehabilitation programmes and services should be made available to those who already have a criminal history. In general, youth delinquency begins with petty offences such as robbery or violent behaviour, which can be easily traced by and corrected through institutions and community and family environments. Indeed, law enforcement should be a part of rehabilitation measures. Finally, the human rights of young people who are imprisoned should be protected and principles of penal majority according to penal laws should be given great attention.

H. LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES

The importance of leisure-time activities in the psychological, cognitive and physical development of young people is recognized in all societies. Leisure-time activities include games, sports, cultural events, entertainment and community service. Appropriate leisure programmes for youth are elements of any measure aimed at fighting social ills such as drug abuse, juvenile delinquency and other deviant behaviour. While leisure programmes can contribute greatly to the development of the physical, intellectual and emotional potential of young people, they should be designed with due care and concern so that they are not used as a means for excluding youth from participating in other aspects of social life or for indoctrinating them. Leisure-time activity programmes should be made freely available to young people.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

■ 1. *Leisure-time activities as an integral part of youth policies and programmes*

Governments, in planning, designing and implementing youth policies and programmes, with the active involvement of youth organizations, should recognize the importance of leisure-time activities. The importance given to such activities should be reflected in appropriate funding.

Governments are invited to establish public libraries, cultural centres and other cultural facilities in rural and urban areas, with the aid of international organizations, and to provide assistance to young people active in the fields of drama, the fine arts, music and other forms of cultural expression.

Governments are invited to encourage the participation of young people in tourism, international cultural events, sports and all other activities of special interest to youth.

■ 2. *Leisure-time activities as elements of educational programmes*

Governments, by providing adequate funding to educational institutions for the establishment of leisure-time activities, may accord priority to such activities. In addition, leisure-time activities could be integrated into the regular school curriculum.

■ 3. *Leisure-time activities in urban planning and rural development*

National Governments as well as local authorities and community development agencies should incorporate leisure-time activity programmes and facilities in urban

planning, giving particular attention to areas with a high population density. Equally, rural development programmes should pay due attention to the leisure needs of rural youth.

■ **4. Leisure-time activities and the media**

The media should be encouraged to promote youth understanding and awareness of all aspects of social integration, including tolerance and non-violent behaviour.

I. GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

One of the most important tasks of youth policy is to improve the situation of girls and young women. Governments therefore should implement their obligations under international human rights instruments as well as implementing the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights and other programmes of relevant United Nations conferences. Girls are often treated as inferior and are socialized to put themselves last, thus undermining their self-esteem. Discrimination and neglect in childhood can initiate a lifelong downward spiral of deprivation and exclusion from the social mainstream. Negative cultural attitudes and practices, as well as gender-biased educational processes including curricula, educational materials and practices, teachers' attitudes and classroom interaction, reinforce existing gender inequalities.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

■ **1. Discrimination**

Discrimination and neglect in childhood can initiate a lifelong exclusion from society. Action should be taken

to eliminate discrimination against girls and young women and to ensure their full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms through comprehensive policies, plans of action and programmes on the basis of equality. Initiatives should be taken to prepare girls to participate actively, effectively and equally with boys at all levels of social, economic, political and cultural leadership.

■ **2. Education**

Universal and equal access to and completion of primary education for girls and young women as well as equal access to secondary and higher education should be ensured. A framework should be provided for the development of educational materials and practices that are gender balanced and promote an educational setting that eliminates all barriers impeding the schooling of girls and young women, including married and/or pregnant girls and young women.

■ **3. Health**

Discrimination against girls and young women should be eliminated in health and nutrition. The removal of discriminatory laws and practices against girls and young women in food allocation and nutrition should be promoted, and their access to health services should be ensured in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

■ **4. Employment**

Girls and young women should be protected from economic and related forms of exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous, to interfere with their education or to be harmful to their health or their physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development, in conformity with the Convention

on the Rights of the Child¹¹ and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.¹² Equal access for young women to all employment opportunities should be promoted and their participation in the traditionally male-dominated sectors should be encouraged.

■ 5. Violence

Governments should cooperate at the international level and enact and enforce legislation protecting girls and young women from all forms of violence, including female infanticide and prenatal sex selection, genital mutilation, incest, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, child prostitution and child pornography. Age-appropriate, safe and confidential programmes and support services to assist girls and young women who are subjected to violence should be developed in cooperation with relevant non-governmental organizations, particularly youth organizations, as appropriate.

J. FULL AND EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH IN THE LIFE OF SOCIETY AND IN DECISION-MAKING

The capacity for progress of our societies is based, among other elements, on their capacity to incorporate the contribution and responsibility of youth in the building and designing of the future. In addition to their intellectual contribution and their ability to mobilize support, they bring unique perspectives that need to be taken into account.

Any efforts and proposed actions in the other priority areas considered in this programme are, in a certain way,

conditioned by enabling the economic, social and political participation of youth, as a matter of critical importance.

Youth organizations are important forums for developing skills necessary for effective participation in society, promoting tolerance and increased cooperation and exchanges between youth organizations.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

The following actions are proposed:

- a. Improving access to information in order to enable young people to make better use of their opportunities to participate in decision-making;
- b. Developing and/or strengthening opportunities for young people to learn their rights and responsibilities, promoting their social, political, developmental and environmental participation, removing obstacles that affect their full contribution to society and respecting, inter alia, freedom of association;
- c. Encouraging and promoting youth associations through financial, educational and technical support and promotion of their activities;
- d. Taking into account the contribution of youth in designing, implementing and evaluating national policies and plans affecting their concerns;
- e. Encouraging increased national, regional and international cooperation and exchange between youth organizations;
- f. Inviting Governments to strengthen the involvement of young people in international forums, inter alia, by considering the inclusion of youth representatives in their national delegations to the General Assembly.

K. GLOBALIZATION

Globalization has opened new opportunities for sustained economic growth and the development of the world economy. Globalization has also permitted countries to share experiences and to learn from one another's achievements and difficulties and has promoted a cross-fertilization of ideas, cultural values and aspirations. Globalization has thus helped to connect youth not only to the rest of the world, but also with each other.

At the same time, the rapid processes of change and adjustment of globalization have been accompanied by intensified poverty, unemployment and social disintegration. Threats to human well-being, such as environmental risks, have also been globalized. Some countries have successfully adapted to the changes and benefited from globalization, but many others, especially least developed countries, have remained marginalized in the globalized world economy. The benefits are very unevenly shared, while the costs are unevenly distributed. Globalization should be fully inclusive and equitable. There is a strong need for appropriate policies and measures at the national and international levels to help countries to respond effectively to the challenges of globalization and the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

Many young people, especially in developing countries, remain marginalized from the global economy and lack the capabilities to access the opportunities that globalization offers. Many are restricted by inadequate education, limited skills, unemployment and poverty or are outside the reach of basic information and communication and the goods and services that have become available with globalization.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

■ 1. *Managing the effects of globalization on youth*

The international community should continue to support the efforts of Governments, together with civil society, including youth-led organizations, the private sector and other parts of society, to anticipate and offset the negative social and economic consequences of globalization and to maximize its benefits for young people.

Governments should ensure that access of youth to technical, secondary and higher education is improved and that curricula are adapted to meet the needs of a rapidly changing labour market associated with globalization. The transition from learning to work should also be facilitated.

Governments should foster the conditions that provide opportunities, jobs and social services for youth in their home countries. Efforts should be made to guarantee that young migrants enjoy full respect for their human rights, including fair and equal treatment with others and the protection of law against, inter alia, violence, exploitation and discrimination such as racism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia and cultural intolerance, and access to economic opportunities and social services, as appropriate.

■ 2. *Promoting youth employment and skills development in the context of globalization*

In order to overcome the mismatch between the skills that youth possess and the specialized demands of labour markets shaped by globalization, Governments, with appropriate support from the international community, should provide funding and opportunities in both formal and non-formal education for youth to acquire requisite skills, including through skills development programmes.

At the same time, Governments should promote access to work through integrated policies that enable the creation of new and quality jobs for young people and that facilitate access to those jobs.

■ *3. Establishing ways of monitoring systems to track the effects of globalization on youth*

Governments should assess the extent to which the benefits of globalization are accessible to youth and should design and implement programmes to enable youth to better harness the benefits of globalization.

L. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

Information and communications technology (ICT) and infrastructures are growing in importance as a part of everyday business and interaction. This process can be enhanced by removing barriers to universal, ubiquitous, equitable and affordable access to information, which hinder the bridging of the digital divide, particularly those that impede the full achievement of the economic, social and cultural development of countries and the welfare of their people, especially youth, in particular in developing countries. ICT has enormous potential to expand access to quality education, to boost literacy and universal primary education and to facilitate the learning process itself, thus laying the groundwork for the establishment of a fully inclusive and development-oriented information society and knowledge economy that respects cultural and linguistic diversity.

Youth have a particular interest and ability with regard to modern technology. ICT can empower youth by providing them with the opportunity to overcome the barriers of distance and socio-economic disadvantage. Through the Internet, for example, young people can have access

to information on a range of issues that directly affect them, including health, education and employment. This information can be used to improve the quality of life of youth and their communities. This process can be facilitated if Governments, civil society, the private sector, families, youth-led organizations and other groups work together to open up avenues for a cultural and social exchange among young people. Governments can also capitalize on the interest of the young in ICT to alleviate poverty. For example, youth can become engaged not only in the use of ICT, but also in the development and engineering of locally relevant software design and hardware.

ICT offers new ways to address the needs of youth with disabilities who cannot access traditional sources of information and employment. Vulnerable groups of the population can capitalize on ICT to make a better connection with society and advance their education and employment opportunities.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

■ *1. Making information and communications technology available to all youth*

Governments, supported by the international community, as appropriate, should facilitate access to ICT for all youth, including those in difficult-to-reach areas, such as rural areas, and in indigenous communities. Governments should evaluate inequalities in access that exist between urban and rural youth and between young women and men and should develop national strategies to overcome the digital divide in each country, thus decreasing the proportion of youth who have no access to ICT.

Governments should develop domestic policies to ensure that ICT is fully and appropriately integrated

into education and training at all levels, including in the development of curricula, teacher training and institutional administration and management, as well as in support of the concept of lifelong learning.

Governments, with the support of the international community, should promote and encourage local knowledge systems and locally produced content in media and communications, support the development of a wide range of ICT-based programmes in local languages, as appropriate, with content relevant to different groups of young persons, especially young women, and build the capacity of girls and women to develop ICT.

■ *2. Providing training to facilitate use of information and communications technology*

Governments, in collaboration with relevant actors in the information society, should ensure that young people are equipped with knowledge and skills to use ICT appropriately, including the capacity to analyse and treat information in creative and innovative ways, to share their expertise and to participate fully in the information society. Efforts should be made to provide special training courses for in-school and out-of-school youth to enable them to become conversant with ICT and to facilitate their use of such technologies.

■ *3. Protecting youth from the harmful aspects of information and communications technology*

Governments should strengthen action to protect youth from abuse and to defend their rights in the context of the use of ICT. In that context, the best interests of youth are a primary consideration. Governments should promote responsible behaviour and raise awareness of possible risks for young people arising from the harmful aspects of ICT in order that they may protect themselves from possible exploitation and injury.

Governments, in cooperation with relevant actors in the information society, should strengthen action to protect children and youth from abuse and the harmful impact of ICT, in particular through cybercrimes, including child pornography.

■ *4. Promoting the use of information and communications technology by persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups*

Governments should facilitate the development of ICT capacity for youth, including indigenous youth, youth with disabilities and youth in remote and rural communities.

Governments should initiate the development and use of special technical and legal arrangements to make ICT accessible to all youth, including indigenous youth, youth with disabilities and youth in remote and rural communities.

■ *5. Empowering young people as key contributors to building an inclusive information society*

Governments should actively engage youth in innovative ICT-based development programmes and should widen opportunities for youth involvement in e-strategy processes in a manner that encourages youth to assume leadership roles. The role of youth in creating, repairing, managing and maintaining ICT should also be recognized and encouraged.

Bearing in mind that literacy and numeracy are preconditions for access to and effective use of ICT, Governments should promote opportunities through formal and non-formal channels for young persons to acquire the appropriate knowledge.

ICT should also be used to enhance education, employment and youth participation in the decision-making process. ICT should be used to improve the quality of education and to better prepare youth for the demands of the information society.

M. HIV/AIDS

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is increasingly a problem of youth, especially in parts of the developing world. Governments have noted with grave concern the fact that new HIV infections are heavily concentrated among youth and that there is a lack of information available to help youth to understand their sexuality, including their sexual and reproductive health, in order to increase their ability to protect themselves from HIV infection and sexually transmitted diseases and to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

Young people, especially young women in Africa, face especially high risks of HIV infection. Young people and women are particularly vulnerable to infection owing to their lack of economic and social power and their lack of the capability to decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality in order to increase their ability to protect themselves from HIV infections. They often lack the tools and information required to avoid infection and cope with AIDS. In 2006, women and girls made up 57 per cent of all people infected with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa, where a striking 76 per cent of young people (aged 15 to 24) living with HIV are female.

Although many children orphaned by AIDS have not yet entered the youth age groups, they are at great risk of becoming youth with severe vulnerabilities. They are subject to malnutrition, illness, abuse, child labour and sexual exploitation, and these factors increase their vulnerability to HIV infection. They also suffer the stigma and discrimination often associated with HIV/AIDS and may be denied education, work, housing and other basic needs as a result.

It is imperative that young people continue to have access to evidence and skills-based youth-specific HIV education to enable them to avoid high-risk behaviour. In some regions youth, especially girls, play a key role in caring for HIV/AIDS patients or their orphans. To ensure that young caregivers

stay in school, build their skills and have the chance to generate an income, Governments should provide economic and social support to families that rely on young caregivers as well as support for improving home- and community-based care.

Because youth often lack decision-making power and financial resources, they may be the last to receive treatment if they become infected. Programmes should scale up the provision of treatment as part of the promotion of the highest attainable standards of health.

It is essential for Governments to implement fully the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-sixth special session on 27 June 2001,¹³ and to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the goal to halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. In addition, Governments should implement the commitments dealing with HIV/AIDS reached at all major United Nations conferences and summits, including the 2005 World Summit¹⁴ and the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS held on 2 June 2006,¹⁵ at which Member States committed themselves to scaling up responses directed towards achieving the goal of universal access to comprehensive prevention programmes, treatment, care and support by 2010 and towards achieving the goal of universal access to reproductive health by 2015, as set out at the International Conference on Population and Development.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

■ 1. *Raising awareness about HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment for youth*

Governments should ensure that prevention of HIV infection is the mainstay of national, regional and international responses to the pandemic and should

therefore commit themselves to intensifying efforts to ensure that a wide range of prevention programmes which take into account local circumstances, ethics and cultural values are available in all countries, in particular the most affected countries, including: information, education and communications, in languages most understood within communities and with respect for their cultures, aimed at reducing risk-taking behaviours and encouraging responsible sexual behaviour, including abstinence and fidelity; expanded access to essential commodities, including male and female condoms and sterile injecting equipment; harm-reduction efforts related to drug use; expanded access to voluntary and confidential counselling and testing; safe blood supplies; and early and effective treatment of sexually transmitted infections.

Governments should commit themselves to addressing the rising rates of HIV infection among young people in order to ensure that future generations may be free of HIV infection through the implementation of comprehensive evidence-based prevention strategies, responsible sexual behaviour, including the use of condoms, evidence- and skills-based youth-specific HIV education, mass media interventions and the provision of youth-friendly health services.

Governments should provide access to the highest attainable standards of affordable and youth-friendly health care in order to increase the capacities of young people to protect themselves from the risk of HIV infection, principally through the provision of health care and health services, including for sexual and reproductive health, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,¹⁶ that integrate HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care and include confidential voluntary counselling and testing and involve young people in the planning, implementation and evaluation of those efforts.

Governments should promote initiatives aimed at reducing the prices of antiretroviral drugs, especially second-line drugs, available to young people, including initiatives undertaken on a voluntary basis by groups of Member States based on innovative financing mechanisms that contribute to the mobilization of resources for social development, including those that aim to provide further drug access at affordable prices to developing countries on a sustainable and predictable basis.

In recognition of the fact that HIV/AIDS is increasingly affecting youth in both developed and developing countries, all efforts should be made, in full partnership with young persons, parents, families, educators and health-care providers, to ensure that youth have access to accurate information, education, including peer education and youth-specific HIV education, and services necessary to develop the life skills required to reduce their vulnerability to HIV infection.

Governments should involve young people, including youth living with HIV/AIDS, inter alia, through their respective youth organizations and, as appropriate, with the support of their families, in the decision-making, planning, implementation and evaluation of HIV/AIDS prevention and care programmes.

Governments should ensure that prevention programmes include counselling for those who are infected with HIV in order to ensure that they take appropriate precautions to prevent the spread of the virus and to help them to cope with the effects of living with HIV/AIDS.

■ **2. *Supporting universal HIV/AIDS education, taking gender inequalities into account***

Trafficking in women and girls for prostitution and sexual slavery increases the vulnerability of young women to HIV/AIDS infection and is linked to the

widespread feminization of poverty, sex tourism, sweatshops and other detrimental consequences of globalization. Governments should devise, enforce and strengthen effective youth-sensitive measures to combat, eliminate and prosecute all forms of trafficking in women and girls, including for sexual and economic exploitation, as part of a comprehensive anti-trafficking strategy within wider efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

Governments should include appropriate information in school curricula and non-formal training programmes on the effects of high-risk behaviour, including intravenous drug use, on the transmission of HIV infection.

Governments should give special attention, in all programmes aimed at providing information about and preventing HIV/AIDS among youth, to aspects of gender and to the disproportionate vulnerability of girls and young women.

■ 3. *Legislation and legal instruments to protect vulnerable youth*

Governments should ensure non-discrimination and full and equal enjoyment of all human rights through the promotion of an active and visible policy of destigmatization of children orphaned and made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.

Governments should strengthen legal, policy, administrative and other measures for the promotion and protection of the full enjoyment of all human rights by youth, the protection of their dignity and the reduction of their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS through the elimination of all forms of discrimination and all types of sexual exploitation of young girls and boys, including for commercial reasons, as well as all forms of violence against women and girls, including harmful traditional and customary practices, abuse, rape and

other forms of sexual violence, battering and trafficking in women and girls.

Governments should intensify efforts to enact, strengthen or enforce, as appropriate, legislation, regulations and other measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination and to ensure the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by youth living with HIV, including policies to secure their access to education, inheritance, employment, health care, social and health services, prevention, support and treatment, information and legal protection, while respecting their privacy and confidentiality and developing strategies to combat the stigma and social exclusion connected with the epidemic.

N. ARMED CONFLICT

Development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. The scale of the violence perpetrated against civilians, including youth, in the past couple of decades is extremely worrisome. Armed conflicts have resulted in killings, the massive displacement of people, including youth, and the destruction of communities, which has impacted negatively on their development.

Youth are often among the main victims of armed conflict. Children and youth are killed or maimed, made orphans, abducted, taken hostage, forcibly displaced, deprived of education and health care and left with deep emotional scars and trauma. Children illegally recruited as child soldiers are often forced to commit serious abuses. Armed conflict destroys the safe environment provided by a house, a family, adequate nutrition, education and employment. During conflict, health risks increase among youth, especially young women. Young women and girls face additional risks, in particular those of sexual violence and exploitation.

During conflict, young men and women who are forced to take on “adult” roles miss out on opportunities for personal or professional development. When conflict ends, many of the young people who must make the transition to adulthood while dealing with the traumas of war are at the same time required to adapt quickly to their new roles, often as parents and caretakers of the victims of war. Without services to help them to deal with their situation, youth and young adults may fail to integrate into society.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

■ 1. *Protecting youth under age 18 from direct involvement in armed conflict*

Governments should ensure that children benefit from an early age from education about values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life in order to enable them to resolve any dispute peacefully and in a spirit of respect for human dignity, with tolerance and non-discrimination. Governments should promote a culture of peace, tolerance and dialogue, including in both formal and non-formal education.

Governments should consider, as a matter of priority, the ratification and effective implementation of the Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 (Convention No. 182) of the International Labour Organization.

Governments should take all feasible measures to ensure that members of their armed forces who have not attained the age of 18 years do not take direct part in hostilities and that those who have not attained the age of 18 years are not compulsorily recruited into their armed forces.

Governments should take all necessary measures, in accordance with international humanitarian law and

human rights law, as a matter of priority, to prevent the recruitment and use of children by armed groups, as distinct from the armed forces of a State, including the adoption of policies that do not tolerate the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, and the legal measures necessary to prohibit and criminalize such practices.

Governments should protect young persons in situations of armed conflict, post-conflict settings and settings involving refugees and internally displaced persons, where youth are at risk of violence and where their ability to seek and receive redress is often restricted, bearing in mind that peace is inextricably linked with equality between young women and young men and development, that armed and other types of conflicts and terrorism and hostage-taking still persist in many parts of the world, and that aggression, foreign occupation and ethnic and other types of conflicts are an ongoing reality affecting young persons in nearly every region, from which they need to be protected.

■ 2. *Providing for the reintegration of youth ex-combatants and protection of non-combatants*

Governments should provide opportunities for all youth who have been engaged in active combat, whether voluntarily or by force, to demobilize and contribute to society's development if they seek to do so. In this regard, Governments should establish programmes to provide opportunities for youth ex-combatants to retool and retrain so as to facilitate their employment in economic activity and their reintegration into society, including family reunification.

Governments should take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of children and young victims of armed conflicts, in particular by restoring access of those children and youth to health care and education,

including through Education for All programmes, as well as to put in place effective youth employment strategies to help provide a decent living for young people and to facilitate their reintegration into society.

■ **3. Promoting active involvement of youth in maintaining peace and security**

Governments should encourage the involvement of young people, where appropriate, in activities concerning the protection of children and youth affected by armed conflict, including programmes for reconciliation, peace consolidation and peacebuilding.

O. INTERGENERATIONAL ISSUES

Many aspects of the demographic transition, global economic development and globalization have influenced opportunities for the intergenerational exchange of knowledge, ideas and resources. The increase in lifespan implies that many adults may be able to share knowledge and resources with younger generations over a longer period of time. In recent times, greater longevity has resulted in situations where many older people live for longer periods in some form of dependency on younger generations. On the other hand, trends in globalization and development have resulted in situations where many young people are cut off from their families. In many developing countries and countries with economies in transition, it is the ageing population that is dominant in rural areas owing to the exodus of young adults. Older persons may be left behind without the traditional support of families and even without adequate financial resources. While older persons lose opportunities to receive support from younger members of families, younger persons also lose opportunities to benefit from the knowledge and guidance of older members of their families.

At the family and community levels, intergenerational ties can be valuable for everyone. Individual and family choices, geographical mobility and the pressures of contemporary life can keep people apart, yet the great majority of people in all cultures maintain close relations with their families throughout their lives. These relationships work in both directions, with older persons often providing significant contributions financially, emotionally and in respect of the education and care of grandchildren and other kin, thereby making a crucial contribution to the stability of the family unit.

The weakening of intergenerational connections in the context of ageing societies implies that various needs of youth, children and older persons, which may have been supported through intricate and complex familial relationships, are increasingly not being met and are instead becoming the responsibility of the State or the private sector.

It is therefore incumbent on Governments and relevant sectors of society to develop programmes that renew or restore intergenerational solidarity. Where there has already been substantial erosion of the ability of communities to meet this objective, Governments should intervene to ensure that basic needs for protection are met.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

■ **1. Strengthening families**

While respecting individual preferences for living arrangements, all sectors of society, including Governments, should develop programmes to strengthen families and to foster intergenerational relations.

■ **2. Empowering young women**

Governments should promote greater participation by young women in the labour force, including those living in rural and remote areas, by providing and developing the necessary skills to enable them to find

employment, especially taking measures to eliminate male and female stereotypes, promoting role models and facilitating better reconciliation of work and family life.

■ **3. *Strengthening intergenerational solidarity***

Government and private sector businesses should capitalize on the opportunity to use the experience and skills of older workers to train younger and newer employees.

Governments should promote equality and solidarity between generations, including by offering young people full and effective participation in poverty eradication, employment creation and social integration programmes within their societies.

All sectors of society should be encouraged to develop reciprocity in learning, which provides older persons with opportunities to learn from younger generations.

Where traditional forms of social support have been reduced by migration, globalization and related situations, Governments should work with non-governmental organizations and the private sector to provide assistance and support to older caregivers, especially those providing care for HIV/AIDS orphans, in meeting the needs of their children and grandchildren.

Governments should take steps to strengthen solidarity among generations and intergenerational partnerships through the promotion of activities that support intergenerational communication and understanding, and should encourage mutually responsive relationships between generations.

The full and effective participation of young people and youth organizations at the local, national, regional and international levels is important for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, the promotion and implementation of the World Programme of

Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, and the evaluation of the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered in its implementation, and for support of the activities of mechanisms that have been set up by young people and youth organizations. Governments should encourage their participation in actions and decisions and in strengthening efforts to implement the World Programme of Action, bearing in mind that girls, boys, young women and young men have the same rights, but different needs and strengths, and that they are active agents in decision-making processes and for positive change and development in society.

V

MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Effective implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond will require a significant expression of commitment by organizations and institutions responsible for its adoption and implementation and the involvement of such organizations and especially of youth from all sectors of society. Without such commitment by governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental entities at the national, regional and international levels, the Programme of Action will remain little more than a global statement of intent and general standard for action.

Therefore the development of an overall system of enabling mechanisms is necessary in order for the Programme of Action to be implemented. Such mechanisms should engage, on a continuing basis, the human, political, economic, financial and sociocultural resources necessary to ensure that the Programme is implemented efficiently and effectively.

Implementation of the Programme of Action is ultimately the responsibility of Governments with the support of the international community and in cooperation, as appropriate, with the non-governmental and private sectors. Translation of the Programme's proposals for action into specific plans, targets and law will be influenced by national priorities, resources and historical experience. In this process, Governments can be assisted, at their request, by regional and international organizations.

In implementing the Programme of Action, Governments, youth organizations and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes in accordance with the results of the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit on Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

A. NATIONAL LEVEL

Governments which have not already done so are urged to formulate and adopt an integrated national youth policy as a means of addressing youth-related concerns. This should be done as part of a continuing process of review and assessment of the situation of youth, formulation of a cross-sectoral national youth programme of action in terms of specific, time-bound objectives and a systematic evaluation of progress achieved and obstacles encountered.

Reinforcing youth-related concerns in development activities can be facilitated through the existence of multilevel mechanisms for consultation, dissemination of information, coordination, monitoring and evaluation. These should be cross-sectoral in nature and multidisciplinary in approach and should include the participation of youth-related departments and ministries, national non-governmental youth organizations and the private sector.

Special and additional efforts may be required to develop and disseminate model frameworks for integrated policies and to identify and organize an appropriate division of responsibilities among both governmental and non-governmental entities concerned with youth-related issues. Special and additional efforts could also be directed towards strengthening national capacities for data collection and dissemination of information, research and policy studies, planning, implementation and coordination, and training and advisory services.

National coordinating mechanisms should be appropriately strengthened for integrated youth policies and programmes. Where such mechanisms do not exist, Governments are urged to promote their establishment on a multilevel and cross-sectoral basis.

B. REGIONAL COOPERATION

The activities of the United Nations regional commissions, in cooperation with concerned regional intergovernmental and non-governmental youth and youth-related organizations, are essential complements to national and global action aimed at building national capacities.

Regional commissions, within their existing mandates, are urged to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action through incorporation of its goals in their plans, to undertake comprehensive reviews of the progress achieved and obstacles encountered and to identify options to further regional-level action.

Regional intergovernmental meetings of ministers responsible for youth, in cooperation with the concerned United Nations regional commissions, regional intergovernmental organizations and regional non-governmental youth organizations, can make particular contributions to the formulation, implementation, coordination and evaluation of action at the regional level, including periodic monitoring of regional youth programmes.

Data collection, dissemination of information, research and policy studies, inter-organizational coordination and technical cooperation, training seminars and advisory services are among the measures which can be provided on request at the regional level to promote, implement and evaluate youth programmes.

Regional non-governmental youth organizations, regional offices of bodies and organizations of the United Nations system and regional intergovernmental organizations concerned with youth are invited to consider meeting on a biennial basis to review and discuss issues and trends and to identify proposals for regional and subregional cooperation. United Nations regional commissions are also invited to play an essential role through the provision of a suitable venue and appropriate input regarding regional action.

C. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

An essential role for international cooperation is to promote conditions conducive to the implementation of the Programme of Action at all levels. Means available include debates at the policy level and decisions at the intergovernmental level, global monitoring of issues and trends, data collection and dissemination of information, research and studies, planning and coordination, technical cooperation and outreach and partnership among interested constituencies from both the non-governmental and private sectors.

In its capacity as the subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council responsible for global social development issues, the Commission for Social Development has an important role to play as the focal point for the implementation of the Programme of Action. The Commission is called upon to continue the policy-level dialogue on youth for policy coordination and for periodic monitoring of issues and trends.

Current regional and interregional conferences of ministers responsible for youth affairs in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and Western Asia are invited to intensify cooperation among each other and to consider meeting regularly at the international level under the aegis of the United Nations. Such meetings could provide an effective forum for a focused global dialogue on youth-related issues.

Youth-related bodies and organizations of the United Nations system are invited to cooperate with the above-mentioned conferences. In this connection, the existing ad hoc inter-agency working group on youth should meet annually and invite all concerned bodies and agencies of the United Nations system and related intergovernmental

organizations to discuss ways and means by which they can promote the implementation of the Programme of Action on a coordinated basis.

Effective channels of communication between non-governmental youth organizations and the United Nations system are essential for dialogue and consultation on the situation of youth and implications for the implementation of the Programme of Action. The General Assembly has repeatedly stressed the importance of channels of communication in the field of youth. The Youth Forum of the United Nations system could contribute to the implementation of the Programme of Action through the identification and promotion of joint initiatives to further its objectives so that they better reflect the interests of youth.

■ *1. Data collection and dissemination of information*

Capacities to collect, analyse and present data in a timely and accurate fashion are essential for effective planning and target-setting, for monitoring issues and trends and for evaluating progress achieved in implementing the Programme of Action. Special attention should be directed towards building national capacities and institutions regularly to collect and compile socio-economic data series that are both cross-sectional and disaggregated by cohort. To this end, interested centres and institutions may wish to consider the possibility of jointly strengthening or establishing, in cooperation with the United Nations, networks concerned with collection of data and publication of statistics and to realize thereby greater economies of scale in the development and dissemination of statistics in the field of youth.

Major contributions related to data and statistics in the field of youth are currently being made by the United

Nations. Such contributions include the socio-economic data collection and statistical development activities of the Statistics Division of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis of the Secretariat; the youth policies and programmes information activities of the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the Secretariat; the educational and literacy data collection activities of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; and the youth advisory networks of the United Nations Environment Programme. Concerned bodies and agencies of the United Nations system are urged to explore ways and means of achieving greater coherence in data collection and the publication of statistics. This could include programme planning and coordination on an inter-agency basis. For example, the data bank programme on adolescent health of the World Health Organization is coordinated with the work of the Statistics Division of the Secretariat. Other bodies and agencies of the United Nations system are invited to contribute data in their respective areas of expertise to an integrated socio-economic data bank on youth. For instance, the international drug abuse assessment system of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme is urged to consider including a component on youth and drugs. An inventory of innovative youth policies, programmes and projects could be coordinated and made available to interested users by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. Other topics that could be considered for joint action include juvenile delinquency, runaways and homeless youth.

Public information and communications are equally important in building awareness of youth issues, as well

as a consensus on appropriate planning and action. The bodies and organizations of the United Nations system concerned are urged, as a matter of priority, to review publications currently produced and to identify ways in which these publications can better promote the Programme of Action and areas in which they may need to be complemented through the production of leaflets and posters in connection with special events.

To encourage widespread awareness of and support for the Programme of Action, Governments, non-governmental organizations and, as appropriate, the private sector are urged to consider the possibility of preparing both printed and audiovisual materials related to areas of concern in the Programme of Action. This could be carried out with the assistance of and in cooperation with the United Nations and materials could be disseminated through United Nations public information channels. In addition, young people and youth organizations are urged to identify and plan information activities that focus on priority issues, which they would undertake within the context of the Programme of Action.

■ 2. *Research and policy studies*

Comparative studies on issues and trends concerning youth are essential to the continuous expansion and development of the global body of knowledge on relevant theories, concepts and methods. International, regional and national research centres and institutions concerned with youth-related issues are urged to consider the possibility of establishing cooperative relationships with the United Nations to ensure effective links between the implementation of the Programme of Action and relevant research and studies.

Cooperation in strengthening and improving national capacities for the research, design, conduct and dissemination of relevant studies on the situation of young people is a closely related concern.

A third concern is the improved planning and coordination of the scarce human and financial resources available so that appropriate attention is accorded to initiatives undertaken by young people at all levels, related to priority areas identified in the Programme of Action, to the identification and assessment of issues and trends and to the review and evaluation of policy initiatives.

■ 3. *Planning and coordination*

Using the mechanisms currently available within the United Nations system for planning, programming and coordinating activities concerning youth, interested bodies and organizations of the United Nations system are urged to review their medium-term planning process to give appropriate consideration to reinforcing a youth perspective in their activities. They are also urged to identify current and projected programme activities that correspond to the priorities of the Programme of Action so that these activities can be reinforced throughout the system. Appropriate attention should be directed towards identifying opportunities for joint planning among interested members of the system so that joint action may be undertaken which reflects their respective areas of competence, that is of direct interest to young people or that responds to priority needs of young people in special circumstances.

A complementary mechanism for coordination is provided by the channels that have been developed

between the United Nations and intergovernmental and non-governmental youth organizations. Such mechanisms require appropriate strengthening to enable them to respond better to priorities for action, as identified in the Programme of Action.

■ *4. Technical cooperation, training and advisory services*

Technical cooperation is an essential means for building national capacities and institutional capabilities. Bodies and organizations of the United Nations system that have not already done so are urged to review and assess their range of programmatic and operational activities in the light of the priorities for action identified in the Programme of Action and to reinforce a youth dimension in technical cooperation activities. In this regard, special attention should be directed towards measures that will serve to promote expanded opportunities for international technical assistance and advisory services in the field of youth as a means of building expanded and strengthened networks of institutions and organizations.

There is a need to continue to improve the impact of technical cooperation activities carried out by the United Nations system, including those that relate to youth activities. The United Nations system must continue to assist Governments, at their request, to ensure implementation of national plans and strategies within the national priorities and programmes to support youth activities. As administrative overheads can reduce the resources available for technical cooperation, these should be reduced. National execution should be the preferred modality for the implementation of projects and programmes and, where required,

developing countries should be assisted in improving their national capacities for project and programme formulation and execution.

Countries with economies in transition, when required, should also be assisted in improving their national capacities for project and programme formulation and execution.

The organization, on an inter-agency basis, of missions to review, assess and plan technical cooperation concerning youth, available on request to Governments, represents a specific contribution by the United Nations system to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

The United Nations Youth Fund represents a unique resource to support catalytic and innovative action concerning youth. Programme implementation can be furthered through the Fund's support, in both a technical and a financial sense, of pilot action, studies and technical exchanges on issues concerning youth that encourage the participation of youth in devising and carrying out projects and whose short time frames often make it difficult to obtain needed support from conventional budgeting processes. The capacities of the Fund for innovative action are, however, limited in the light of Programme priorities, and interested Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector are invited to consider the possibility of supporting the activities of the Fund on a predictable and sustained basis. To this end, the parties concerned may wish to consider the possibility of constituting an advisory body at an appropriate level to review the application of the terms of reference of the Fund and priorities and means of strengthening its capacities.

■ *5. Outreach and partnership among specialized constituencies*

A crucial element in implementing the Programme of Action is the recognition that governmental action alone is not sufficient to ensure its success, that rather it should be further complemented by the support of the international community. This process will also require both systematic outreach and partnership among the Programme's many constituencies in both the non-governmental and private sectors.

A critical first step is phased expansion and regularization of channels of communication between the United Nations and non-governmental youth organizations to include representatives of interested private sector organizations. This would build upon the provisions set forth in General Assembly resolution 45/103 of 14 December 1990 concerning the involvement of youth and non-governmental youth organizations in the formulation of the Programme of Action. Youth, youth-related organizations and interested private sector organizations are urged to identify, in partnership with Governments, ways in which they could contribute to action at the local level to implement the Programme, and to the periodic review, appraisal and formulation of options to achieve its goals and objectives.

Implementation of the Programme of Action offers important opportunities to expand technical and cultural exchanges among young people through new partnerships in both the public and private sectors; to identify and test improved ways to leverage public resources, in partnership with the non-governmental and private sectors, to further Programme priorities; and to encourage and jointly plan innovative approaches to critical issues concerning youth.

Relevant voluntary organizations, particularly those concerned with education, employment, juvenile justice, youth development, health, hunger, ecology and the environment, and drug abuse, can further the implementation of the Programme of Action by encouraging the involvement of young people in programme planning and field activities. The Programme of Action can contribute to the work of such organizations because it provides a global policy framework for consultation and coordination.

- 1 See A/40/256, annex.
- 2 *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.
- 3 A/CONF.166/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.
- 4 See A/CONF.177/20, chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.
- 5 *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1 (Vol. I and Vol. I/Corr.1, Vol. II, Vol. III and Vol. III/Corr.1)) (United Nations publication, Sales No.E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex I.
- 6 A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.
- 7 This part of the text is taken from the original World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. After adoption of its Supplement, the World Programme of Action now contains 15 priority areas.
- 8 E/ICEF/L.1387, annex, sect. V.
- 9 *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex, para. 6.9.
- 10 *Ibid.*, para. 4.22.
- 11 Resolution 44/25, annex.
- 12 Resolution 34/180, annex.
- 13 Resolution S-26/2, annex.
- 14 See resolution 60/1.
- 15 See resolution 60/262, annex.
- 16 *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

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