GUIDE to the Implementation of the World Programme of Action for YOUTH

UNITED NATIONS

Department
of
Economic
and
Social
Affairs

GUIDE to the Implementation of the
World Programme of Action for

Recommendations and ideas for concrete action for policies and programmes that address the everyday realities and challenges of youth.

YOUTH

UNITED NATIONS

DESA

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat is a vital interface between global policies in the economic, social and environmental spheres and national action. The Department works in three main interlinked areas: (i) it compiles, generates and analyzes a wide range of economic, social and environmental data and information on which Member States of the United Nations draw to review common problems and to take stock of policy options; (ii) it facilitates the negotiations of Member States in many intergovernmental bodies on joint courses of action to address ongoing or emerging global challenges; and (iii) it advises interested Governments on the ways and means of translating policy frameworks developed in United Nations conferences and summits into programmes at the country level and, through technical assistance, helps build national capacities.

FOREWORD

While many comprehensive publications provide a deeper under-standing of the obstacles and challenges lived by youth, this Guide offers practical ideas and recommendations for concrete action to the people who make and carry out legislation, policies and programmes that affect the everyday realities and struggles of young people. Investing in youth means a commitment not only to their improved well-being and livelihood but also to the economic, social and cultural development of future generations. Failure to make such investments can result in steep societal costs. Yet, few countries adequately recognize the needs of youth and devote to them the sustained attention required to fulfil the vision of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY).

The year 2005 brought both the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the WPAY by the United Nations General Assembly and the five-year review of implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The conjunction of those two milestones pointed out the special need for new impe-tus to be given to the design and implementation of youth policies and programmes at all levels. When appropriate policies, legislation and programmes are in place—and matched with adequate resources and investment—the economic, social and human development of a generation will more likely be realized.

Today's youth number over one billion, or 18 per cent of the people inhabiting the Earth. Even though society depends on youth for its continual renewal and prosperity in many ways, the policy-making process does not reflect this. The WPAY encourages governments to be more responsive to the aspirations and needs of youth for a better world. It also recognizes that young people in all countries are both a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation. The empowerment of youth depends on and reinforces the empowerment of society at large. This Guide focuses on what governments, at every level, can do to further the vision laid out in the World Programme of Action for Youth.

The recommendations and ideas contained herein are inspired by analyses, case studies, lessons learned and good practices documented by a wide range of sources. They are geared towards fostering an atmosphere where a young person may assert his or her iden-tity and pursue new interests and acquire knowledge and skills. Readers should note that the policies detailed in the Guide are not to be interpreted as a perfect recipe for all coun-tries, all youth or all situations. Nonetheless, even though the circumstances, difficulties and culture of youth differ across and within borders, the target audience of this Guide is united by the same ultimate goal: a peaceful and safe society of healthy individuals with productive skills who can enjoy full and effective participation in work, family and community life.

FOREWORD

The United Nations has long recognized that the imagination, ideals and energy of young men and women are vital for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. The nature and quality of young people's lives, as well as a country's future social and economic development, depend largely on how well young people navigate the transitional period from a protected childhood to an adulthood of self-determination.

While some of the recommendations contained in this Guide may be considered "quick wins", others can only be implemented effectively with long-term commitment and recognition by governments that improving the lives of youth is a forward-looking process that itself requires cooperation, institutional support and vital partnerships across society and across the different spheres of governance. It is my hope that the Guide to the Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth will help governments everywhere pave the way for youth opportunities, empowerment and inclusion.
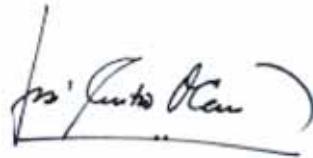
José Antonio Ocampo
Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs

Overview & Key Messages

The General Assembly has called on governments to base initiatives regarding youth on the agreed international strategy—the **World Programme of Action for Youth** (WPAY). This Guide focuses on what governments, at every level, can do to fulfill the vision enshrined in the WPAY and acknowledges a need for new impetus to be given to the design and implementation of youth policies and programmes.

This Guide organizes the 15 priority areas of the WPAY into three clusters that reflect the challenges youth encounter across borders and cultures: Youth in the Global Economy, Youth and Their Well-Being, and Youth in Civil Society. It is important to note that the sections of the World Programme of Action for Youth are interrelated and are dependent on each other.

While there are many publications that provide a deeper understanding of the lives of youth, this Guide provides recommendations and ideas for concrete action for the people who make and carry out policies and programmes that affect the everyday realities and struggles of youth. Each section moves from briefly examining the concept of each priority area and how it is experienced by youth to mechanisms and specific policies that may enhance their political, cultural and socio-economic opportunities, enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and their overall quality of life. For each priority area of the WPAY, policies and programmes are framed as detailed responses to the most relevant "how to" questions; this format was chosen because it would have the most practical resonance with policy makers.

Readers should note that the ideas and recommendations contained in this Guide are not to be interpreted as fit for all countries, all youth, or all situations. Local circumstances should always be taken into account.

The target audience of this action Guide is: government ministries, parliamentarians, agencies that serve youth, and local and regional governments. In addressing this audience, it also refers to the role of the main stakeholders, such as civil society, the media, the private sector, parents, the international community and, of course, youth themselves, and therefore underscores the need for partnerships to carry out the projects and programmes presented herein so that the WPAY is more than a global statement of intent and a standard for action.

The following key policy messages form the foundation of the recommendations contained in this Guide:

- Recognize, address and respond to youth as a distinct but heterogeneous population group, with particular needs and capacities which stem from their formative age;

- Build the capabilities and expand the choices of young people by enhancing their access to and participation in all dimensions of society;

- Catalyze investment in youth so that they consistently have the proper resources, information and opportunities to realize their full potential;

- Change the public support available to youth from ad-hoc or last-minute to consistent and mainstreamed;

- Promote partnerships, cooperation and the strengthening of institutional capacity that contribute to more solid investments in youth;

- Support the goal of promoting youth themselves as valuable assets and effective partners;

- Include young people and their representative associations at all stages of the policy development and implementation process; and

- Transform the public perception of young people from neglect to priority, from a problem to a resource, and from suspicion to trust.

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Part I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

◼ How is youth defined?

Youth generally refers to the transition period from childhood to adulthood. Though variations exist in the circumstances, difficulties, and culture of young people around the world, the physical, psychological, intellectual and emotional changes are universal. The United Nations and this Guide define youth as all people aged 15 to 24 years old, though each country may define youth according to its unique situation. For the purposes of this guide, "youth" and "young people" are used interchangeably.

◼ What is the World Programme of Action for Youth?

The World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) is a blueprint for national action and international support to foster conditions and mechanisms to promote improved well-being and livelihood among young people.

The WPAY covers fifteen priority areas: education, employment, poverty and hunger, the environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure-time activities, health, girls and young women, HIV/AIDS, information and communications technology, inter-generational issues, armed conflict, the mixed impact of globalization, and the full and effective participation of youth in society and in decision-making.

In each of these areas, the Programme looks in depth at the nature of the complex challenges and presents proposals for action. The WPAY thus seeks to assist governments in responding to the aspirations and demands of youth for a better future for all.

These priority areas are interrelated and intrinsically linked. For example, juvenile delinquency and drug abuse are often direct consequences of insufficient opportunities for education, employment and participation. Education for girls and young women can delay the age of marriage and first birth, thus decreasing maternal mortality. Investing in one area affects other areas of the programme of action as well thereby creating a multiplier effect in the lives of young people. United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has urged Governments to take the World Programme's recommendations seriously, and to work together with young people for its implementation.

The WPAY's 15 priority areas are grouped into three clusters of issues in which young people grow up and become active members of their societies. Taken together, the clusters form a comprehensive environment for young people, despite differences in cultures, societies and communities. The three clusters are described as: (a) youth in the global economy, including the issues of hunger and poverty,

education, employment, and globalization; (b) youth and their well-being, encompassing the priority areas of health, drug abuse, girls and young women, delinquency, conflict and HIV/AIDS; and (c) youth in civil society, related to concerns of information and communication technologies, environment, leisure, participation in decision-making and inter-generational relations.

Youth in the Global Economy

Poverty and hunger: Over 200 million young people, or 18 per cent of all youth, live on less than one dollar a day, and 515 million on less than two dollars a day. Data on income poverty do not accurately capture the situation of youth. Youth experience poverty not only through financial limitations, but also through limitations in access to public services and non-fulfilment of, and a lack of protection of fundamental human rights. Poverty is inextricably linked to a lack of access to or control over resources, including land, skills, knowledge, capital and social connections. Without these resources, people have limited access to institutions, markets, employment and public services. Hunger and malnutrition remain among the most serious and intractable threats to humanity, often preventing youth and children from taking part in society.

Education: Though progress has been achieved in enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education, challenges still remain. Many parents in developing countries are still unable to send their children to school because of local social and economic conditions. A paucity of educational opportunities persists for girls and young women, migrants and refugees, displaced persons, street children, indigenous youth, young people in rural areas and young people with disabilities. Though the current generation of youth is the best-educated so far, the quality of education and its capacity to prepare young people for the labour market are major concerns.

Employment: Despite the fact that youth are receiving more years of education, youth unemployment has increased to record levels and youth are two to three times as likely as adults to be unemployed. The youth unemployment rates are highest in sub-Saharan Africa and in the Middle East and North Africa regions. The difficulties young people face in finding suitable employment with a decent income are compounded by other problems including illiteracy, insufficient training and the difficult transition from school to the job market.

Globalization: Youth are perhaps best able to adapt to and make use of new opportunities offered by globalization. Though some parts of the world have seen unprecedented growth as a result of the integration of economies and societies, the benefits of globalization are unbalanced. Negative and positive trends characterize globalization's impact on youth employment opportunities and on migration patterns. Globalization has also led to deep changes in youth culture and consumerism, and in new manifestations of global youth citizenship and activism.

Youth and Their Well-Being

Health: Health problems of young people include the lack of safe and sanitary living environments, malnutrition, risk of infectious, parasitic and water-borne diseases, the consumption of tobacco, and unwarranted risk-taking and destructive activity resulting in injury. In many countries, there is a lack of information and services available to help youth understand their sexuality and prevent the spread of HIV. Although early pregnancy has declined in many countries, its dangers and potential complications are still of concern.

HIV/AIDS: Ten million young people currently live with HIV/AIDS, mostly in Africa and Asia. Poverty, the lack of essential information to protect themselves, stigma, access to education and gender inequality are just a few of the elements that fuel the vulnerability of youth. Young women and girls are particularly at risk and disproportionately serve as caregivers when families and communities are devastated by HIV/AIDS.

Youth in armed conflict: Despite the international legal framework to protect minors and prevent their engagement in conflict situations, youth are still recruited as combatants, or forced labour, and young women and girls are vulnerable to being targeted for sexual violence or exploitation. While most youth avoid engaging in violence (even in conflict prone areas), young people are both the victims and perpetrators in times of insecurity and instability. Whatever their role, exposure to conflict can deprive young people of educational, social, economic, and socialization opportunities.

Drug abuse: There has been an unprecedented increase in drug abuse and addiction among youth worldwide, mostly in recreational settings. The consequences of drug abuse are widespread and range from violence to accidents and injury. Intravenous substance abuse raises the risk of communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS and hepatitis.

Juvenile delinquency: Delinquency committed by youth continues to be perceived as a threat to society. However, most young offenders do not commit violent crime but participate in less serious offences such as graffiti, petty theft, or nuisance behaviour. There are myriad elements that may fuel youth delinquency ranging from economic downturns and high unemployment to early exposure to violence in their communities or in the family.

Girls and young women: Equal access to higher education and labour markets continues to be a concern in some countries, while negative stereotypes of women continue to be perpetuated. With limited access to justice, social services or law enforcement to address the issue, gender based violence continues to invade every economic level and social strata; its persistence threatens the ability of women and girls to live without fear and pursue their dreams in a safe and secure environment.

Participation in decision-making: The past decade has seen a growing recognition of the importance of youth participation in decision-making. Greater involvement of youth in the home, school and the community not only benefits their socio-economic environment but also builds their own capacity and contributes to their personal growth. The voices and participation of youth are vital to the implementation of the WPAY as a whole.

Information and communication technology: The proliferation of ICT that has accompanied the process of globalization has presented both opportunities, particularly in the areas of participation, employment and education, as well as challenges for young people. Though youth in many countries make up the majority of users of internet technology, there are still disparities in access between urban and rural youth, between young women and men, as well as within and between countries.

Leisure: The last decade has seen a growing recognition of the role of leisure time in the promotion of social inclusion, in defining young people's identities, and in exploring their culture. Leisure time should not just be an element in the lives of privileged youth as this time enhances personal growth and the well-being of communities. Many youth devote their time to volunteering, educating their peers, and making a difference in their societies.

Environment: Young people have demonstrated a consistent concern and often have proved to be leaders advocating for the environmental integrity of their communities. Knowing that the quality of their environment is vital to their health and opportunity, youth have highlighted sustainable development at the local, national, and international levels and have initiated the adoption of sound environmental practices.

Inter-generational relations: In the context of global ageing, the share of youth in the world's total population is gradually shrinking while the share of those over 60 grows. Youth development today should increasingly be viewed as integral to the welfare of older generations as, by 2050, 8 in every 10 older persons will be living in a developing country (compared with 6 in every 10 in 2005).

How did the World Programme of Action for Youth come about?

The United Nations has long recognized that the successful passage to adulthood of young women and men is vital for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. This was acknowledged in 1965 by the Member States of the UN 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 call by the UN General Assembly for the observance of the 1985 International Youth Year: Participation, Development and Peace drew international attention to the important role young people play in the world, and, in particular, their potential contribution to development and the goals of the United Nations Charter.

That same year, the General Assembly also endorsed the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth, focusing on young people as a broad category comprising various subgroups, rather than a single demographic entity. 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 of youth into the next millennium. It did this by adopting an international strategy—the World Programme of Action for Youth—to address more effectively the problems of young men and women and to increase opportunities for their participation in society.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Why this action Guide?

The World Programme of Action for Youth encourages governments to be more responsive to the aspirations and needs of youth to usher in a better world. Young people in all countries are both a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation. Recognizing and addressing the special needs of young people and their right to enjoy fundamental human rights and freedoms will influence current social and economic conditions and the livelihoods and well-being of future generations.

There is a need for new impetus to be given to the design and implementation of youth policies and programmes at all levels. While there are many publications that provide a deeper understanding of the obstacles and challenges to improving the lives of youth, this guide provides recommendations and ideas for concrete action for the people who make and carry out policies and programmes that affect the everyday realities and struggles of youth. However, readers should note that the ideas and recommendations contained in the guide are not to be interpreted as fit for all countries, all youth, or all situations. Local circumstances should always be taken into account.

For whom is this Guide written?

The General Assembly has called on governments to base initiatives regarding youth on the agreed international strategy of the World Programme of Action for Youth. The target audience of this action guide is: government ministries, parliamentarians, agencies that serve youth, and local and regional governments.

In addressing this audience, the Guide also refers to the role of the main stakeholders, such as civil society, the media, the private sector, parents, the international community and, of course, youth themselves.

How is this Guide organized?

This Guide seeks to improve the situation of young people and enhance their participation in various dimensions of society. It is based on the agreed upon actions in the WPAY and is divided into the three clusters that reflect the challenges youth encounter across borders and cultures. It is important to note that the sections of the WPAY are interrelated and are dependent on each other.

The content of each section of text moves from examining the concept of each priority area and how it is experienced by youth, to methods and specific policies that can enhance the enjoyment of rights, opportunities, and the quality of life of young men and women. For each area of the WPAY, the most relevant "how to" questions are asked and then responded to in detail; this format was chosen because it would have the most practical resonance with policy makers.

Though most of the actions and recommendations are directed towards governments, their design, implementation and evaluation are all dependent on the participation of other stakeholders, chiefly: youth, civil society, the private sector, parents, United Nations agencies and donors and the international community. Thus it is important for all these actors to read the action guide as investing in youth calls for cooperation, institutional support and vital partnerships across society and the different spheres of governance.

This book draws from many guidelines, tools, standards, and research developed by the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions, as well as the input of youth. As some areas will be more of a priority depending on the local context, sources listed at the end of the text can guide those who wish to explore particular issues in more detail.

ABOUT YOUTH POLICY AND PROGRAMMES

Why is investing in youth important?

Investing in youth is a highly strategic and cost-effective answer to the development challenges of today, including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Information on the current investment in youth is scattered and dispersed; sometimes it is hard to pin down as data on funding and spending is typically divided into the two categories of children and adults while interventions may lack continuity. However, we do know that investing in youth is a commitment not only to their well-being but to the economic, social and cultural health of communities everywhere.

Today's global youth population, ranging in age from 15 to 24 years, is over one billion strong, or 18 per cent of the people inhabiting the earth, and the majority of these young men and women live in developing countries. The challenges are clear: 200 million youth live on less than US$1 a day, 130 million are illiterate, more than 10 million live with HIV, and 95 million are unemployed. However, United Nations
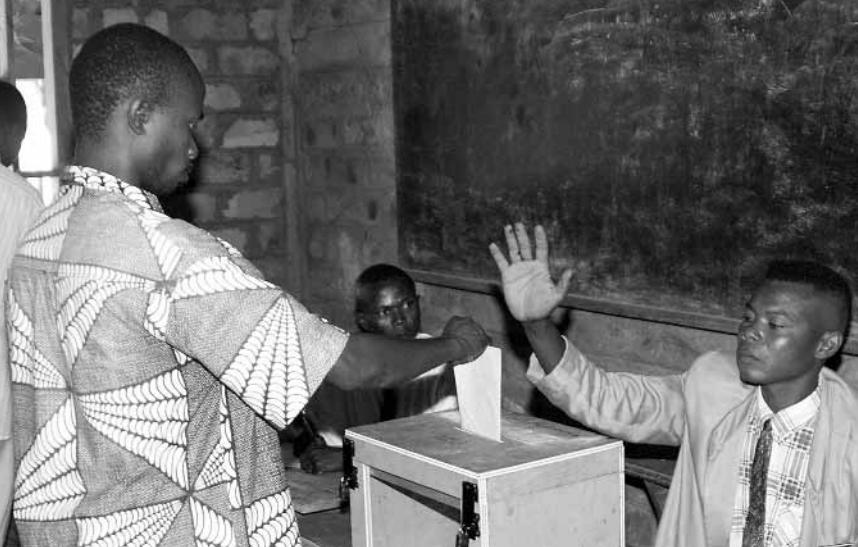
Member States and United Nations Agencies increasingly recognize the importance of investing in youth. This Guide supports the call to scale up the investment in youth so that they have the proper resources, information and opportunities to realize their full potential.

How can sound programmes for youth promote and respect their rights?

A combination of factors is required to create an enabling environment for the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth. First, it starts with ensuring the full enjoyment by young people of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It also requires that government take effective action against violations of these rights and freedoms and promote non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity and for the various religious and ethical values, cultural backgrounds and philosophical convictions of young people, equality of opportunity, security and participation of all young women and men.

The social development of young people can be viewed from a rights-based perspective. The human rights framework at large, ranging from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on the Right to Development to a large number of International Labour Organization conventions dealing with labour standards related to young persons, contains ample evidence of the concern expressed by the international community for the rights of young people. The rights of young women and men to education, employment and health have been declared in a variety of international instruments and programmes of action; the needs of specific groups of youth, such as urban youth, rural youth, students, young workers and youth with disabilities have also been articulated. The right to development is an essential component of the youth development process and is directly related to the other rights mentioned above.

When designing policies that affect the lives and experiences of youth, the following elements of the rights-based approach should be kept in mind[1]:

● Express linkages to rights

● Accountability and rule of law

● Empowerment

● Participation and inclusion

● Non-discrimination and attention to vulnerable groups

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[1] More about this rights-based approach is available at: http://www.unhchr.ch/development/approaches-04.html

While some human rights obligations call on government to refrain from doing things that impinge on the rights of individuals, many others claim that governments should take positive steps such as *protecting* vulnerable people and *providing* services that go beyond legislative measures. However, this process of prioritizing and developing new programmes can be difficult in settings with severe resource constraints. Often, devoting resources to one area necessarily implies sacrificing in others. However, it is also vital to remember that not every policy or programme requires great investments as some of the most successful can be low-cost, targeted initiatives.

Thus, whatever the stage of a country's development, there are always steps that can be taken immediately. One approach enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights calls on governments to take measures "to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Covenant..."[2] This call acknowledges that there may be limited physical, human and financial resources for programmes and activities, but at the same time recognizes the importance of the rights framework and the process and partnerships needed to move forward towards achieving the full spectrum of rights. Setting benchmarks in relation to these obligations is useful because they can be tailored to a specific context while holding firmly to a foundation of these universal rights, their indivisibility, and the responsibility to monitor their fulfillment.

Why should there be a national youth strategy?

A national youth strategy represents a vision that helps to ensure public engagement, sets the rules of the game and defines clear roles for the vital participation of all levels of government as well as other necessary actors. (See Part II for a description of the roles of those who take part in the process of implementing the WPAY.) The formation, articulation and implementation of this strategy should be an inclusive process to establish high levels of participation, to create a general consensus on the vision, and most importantly, to take into account the needs of youth.

One way to integrate and carry out such a strategy is through mainstreaming. Countries should consider mainstreaming youth into national policy agendas to bring issues important to young people, especially those that have often not received the visibility they deserve, into relevant core planning and decision-making processes. Many issues that are vital to youth have suffered from a chronic lack of attention, and mainstreaming works to consistently raise awareness among the public and policy makers. Mainstreaming can serve as an effective tool in strengthening the collection of data across sectors and can also include opinions and views that have remained on the periphery or have been previously excluded altogether from the policy dialogue. Serving to increase the responsiveness of government to the needs and challenges of youth, mainstreaming can highlight these issues in programmes, budgets, laws, and throughout the policy formation process.

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[2] see article 2(1) ICESCR

What are the ten steps in designing effective youth policy?

Many countries have established youth policies, using the World Programme of Action for Youth as a guide. In this process, it is imperative to note that the WPAY mentions that governments and youth organizations should promote an "active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes". In the process of formulating any youth policy, specifically a national plan, governments and other stakeholders may consider the following guidelines:

1. Participation for an inclusive process: involve and empower all stakeholders right from the beginning in the design, implementation and evaluation of youth policy. The participation of youth, NGOs, all related government departments and levels, as well as United Nations agencies can contribute to the success of the policy. The participation of these actors facilitates the creation of a policy that best fits the needs and capacities of youth as a distinct population group, and helps to foster support and understanding of the policy objectives, which are necessary for the implementation.

2. Know the situation and conduct a needs analysis: make profiles of the development situation of young people in your country. The priority areas for youth development contained in the WPAY could serve as a means for organizing this analysis. As the design of youth policy should aim at ensuring the full enjoyment by young people of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, these principles should also inform the analysis of the situation of youth. To sketch an accurate picture of the situation to influence youth policy, it is vital to open a meaningful dialogue with youth on the questions that affect their lives, from the initial planning stages of policy through monitoring and evaluation. In conducting a needs analysis, it is important to make distinctions according to age, sex, rural/urban, education level and family income to identify the most vulnerable groups and to set priorities accordingly. Frequently, data on funding and spending is divided into the two categories of children and adults; tracking the financial resources devoted specifically to youth can improve the impact of the investment.

3. Define vulnerable groups: as part of the needs assessment and situation analysis, determine what groups of youth live in vulnerable situations created by either current circumstances, political conditions or long histories of social exclusion and discrimination. The WPAY and international standards of human rights apply to all people equally, but to meaningfully commit to this principle, policy makers should determine if there are youth who are invisible to existing services or whose needs are not reflected in the national youth policy itself. In some cases, ignoring these groups can impede national economic growth in the long run. Capturing the situation of vulnerable youth can sometimes require expanded data collection.

4. Understand your resources: know what you have and what you need to invest in youth by making a profile of the available and the needed resources in the country that are specific to youth. Resources may include policies, programmes and financial means of the government, NGOs, youth organizations and private initiatives, as well

as existing networks, expertise and legal frameworks. Resources also describe the time and energy of different institutions and branches of government devoted to youth. Defining resources also involves examining less tangible elements such as factors which hinder access to services such as poor information, unaffordability, and the trust between youth and service providers. Above all, resources are determined by budgetary allocation. It is necessary to compare the actual needs of young people to the stock of available resources and to make sure costs of policy are taken into account in local and national budgets.

5. Establish a <u>budget</u> allocated for implementation of youth policy: even though youth policy is a cross-sectoral development field that requires action within several departments, ministries and agencies, it is central that the established lead agency have a specific budget for youth policy implementation that can distributed by responsible actors. Failing in this role may lead to a loss of motivation from all the actors, including youth groups, involved in designing and drafting the vision of the youth policy.

6. Learn from past <u>experience</u>: study past successes and failures. Knowledge of what works should be documented and a repository of good practices established; good practices are ways of doing things that have proven effective in one situation and may have applicability in another. Many governments have developed successful policies and run a variety of youth development projects. This research and expertise should be made available to all parts of government. The exchange of experiences can reach beyond the scope of government and may also include civil society and youth organizations.

7. Develop a clear <u>vision</u> to implement youth policy: develop a national action plan based on the needs of youth and the available budget. The national plan or youth policy should be known and understood on the national and local levels to create the necessary political and societal commitment. National policies and programmes may need to be translated to the regional and/or local level, and directed to the specific needs of youth in that area. Establishing and maintaining communication channels improves relationships with beneficiaries and with those who are implementing the policy. These channels can facilitate dissemination of information, but they also exist as a two-way street; experiences from 'the field' can enrich a government's understanding of the situation of youth. Political commitment is also necessary to successfully adopt and enact a national youth policy. Advocacy and outreach are necessary to inform citizens of new programmes and of existing legislation that affect their well-being.

8. Create an <u>institutional structure</u> conducive to implementation of youth policy: establish a lead agency (or focal points in different government ministries) as part of an effective structure to coordinate youth policies. Youth development implies a cross-sectoral approach. A lead agency creates coherence between implemented policies and programmes and ensures coordination between departments and

ministries; for example, some programmes may require the collaboration of the ministries of justice, education, and labour. The agency can be a ministry or a department within a ministry with an aim of coordinating the activities on youth matters in order to secure the effective integration of youth policy into national development planning.

9. Engage in <u>partnerships</u> for action: though most youth-oriented policies are led by governments, their design, implementation and evaluation are all dependent on the participation of other stakeholders, chiefly: youth, civil society, the private sector, parents, and sometimes UN agencies and donors, and the international community. Cooperation, institutional support and partnerships contribute to forming more solid investments in youth. Partnerships should be guided by the goal of promoting youth themselves as valuable assets and effective partners. See Part II for more information on partnerships.

10. Increase knowledge and design better programmes through <u>monitoring and evaluation</u>: redefine goals and objectives according to new trends and needs in young people's lives and according to the achievements and shortcomings of existing programmes. Monitoring may be defined as the routine tracking of priority information about a programme and its intended outcomes, while evaluation is the set of activities designed to determine a programme's effect or value. Youth can benefit from participating in these exercises. Specific questions related to the needs and aspirations of youth should be included in population censuses or national surveys. In addition, qualitative indicators concerning perceptions, attitudes and aspirations could be developed through special surveys and studies. ●

The Need for

COP8 MOP3

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ference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity · 3rd Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

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This Document 'CONTAINS' OUR FUTURE

PARTNERSHIPS

THE NEED FOR PARTNERSHIPS

Only with the commitment of governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental entities at the national, regional and international levels, will the World Programme of Action for Youth be "more than a global statement of intent and general standard for action." (A/RES/50/81 13 March 1996). Political leadership is intrinsic to the process of marshalling support for partnerships that work to fulfil the vision of the WPAY and carry out the projects and programmes presented in this Guide.

The strategies for implementation of the WPAY discussed here should be led by government but are designed to engage all stakeholders. Governments are responsible for the safety and health of their citizens and should ensure that actions are comprehensive and far-reaching with effective coordination among the relevant actors. Sustained government involvement in youth development should complement the capacity of other actors, such as civil society organizations involved in youth programmes, to avoid duplication, fragmented actions or initiatives with insufficient capital or human resources.

Inclusive policy planning to implement the World Programme of Action for Youth requires more than just consultation with young people and other relevant stakeholders. Governments should consider reforming structures and institutions so that policy makers can maintain communication with national and local actors and establish the means to engage communities and listen to their views. When looking at institutional reform it is necessary to refrain from simply tacking youth on to existing efforts. Profound change for youth is dependent on altering organizational frameworks.

Before launching a programme or designing a policy affecting youth, it is necessary to clearly identify the roles of all who will take part in the process. Choosing the leaders and groups that are important in implementing a certain aspect of the WPAY, whether they are parents, civil society, the private sector or a specific ministry, is an important first step toward creating effective policies for youth. Although the selection of principal actors in policy making may differ across contexts, these partners play critical roles in addressing the concerns and challenges of young people.

All principal partners overviewed below have a role in the actions and recommendations discussed in Parts III through V of this Guide.

Parliamentarians

Parliamentarians and other elected officials are leaders in society. They have the mandate, moral obligation and public trust to act in the interests of their constituents and they bear a special responsibility to set examples that spur others into action, especially young people. They enact laws, mediate conflicting interests and engage in

debate to establish priorities. Legislative control over national resources and the power to set agendas and determine budgets needed to secure progress underscore the imperative of political leadership.

National legislation accompanied by adequate funding with the corresponding rules and administrative measures are needed to implement the WPAY. There is often a discrepancy between the many commendable policy initiatives and the financial capacity to implement them. At other times, financing is adequate and districts are without the human resource capacity for programmes or materials for service provision. Legislators should be aware of the potential shortcomings that come in many forms which, in effect, can detract from the positive intent of legislation. It is both useful and necessary to overcome capacity deficits through partnerships with the private sector or civil society, community leaders, and young people themselves.

Many governments now actively promote decentralisation as part of their policies and development programmes through new legislation and the augmentation of local powers. However, this transfer of responsibilities is not always met by the necessary local resources or training. Even when the resources are present, the capacity to deliver might not be there. Parliamentarians and government ministries therefore have a vital role to play in providing a supportive national framework to encourage and enable both regional and local authorities to efficiently administer policies that are responsive to the challenges and aspirations of youth.

Government Ministries and Agencies

Government ministries and agencies carry the ultimate responsibility for administering policies and programmes that affect youth. To do this, they must develop tools to support data collection, opinion polls and other reporting systems on youth and the fulfillment of their rights and opportunities. Their research capacity and ability to conduct needs assessments and to monitor and evaluate the impact of existing legislation and policies are essential to effective programmes. It is also important for government ministries and agencies to have the structures in place to translate a national youth policy to the local and regional levels (governments should consider the establishment of a Ministry of Youth).

Ministries often do not administer programmes that focus specifically on young people; instead, youth are mainstreamed into generalized planning. When youth are addressed in planning, it is sometimes assumed that the benefits will trickle down to them when a whole community is targeted. In order to promote societies that are fully inclusive of youth, ministries are responsible for determining the most appropriate course of action, such as deciding whether a mainstreamed or more targeted approach will yield the best results. Relevant issues important to young people that may merit targeting include: the incorporation of rural youth into employment/training programmes, addressing the prevalence of young women in the informal sector, and increasing the opportunities for young women in higher education.

Government funding, channelled through ministries, can be limited by mandates, a lack of funds, human resources, or expertise. When there doesn't seem to be a government agency with the appropriate qualifications to successfully carry out a specific project or programme, it may be necessary to explore agreements with the other actors who possess the appropriate expertise or to create inter-agency collaboration. For maximum impact and to guarantee equality of access to services, commitments to strengthen and expand the coverage of institutions should be considered in the cost of programmes and legislation.

Important to both a parliamentarian's and a ministry's ability to set and carry out good programmes and policies is the establishment of mechanisms to engage youth and their organizations and to listen and be responsive to their views. This process should be conducted with equity in mind. If for example, a youth advisory board is set up by the Ministry of Health to guide positive messages and outreach strategies, the youth selected should represent a cross-section of the country's youth.

Governments should also bring together the relevant stakeholders and ensure that young people's needs are met either by government agencies, through partnership, or by others, such as civil society or the private sector.

Local Government

Local governments are closest to the neighbourhoods and communities in which their citizens live and are often the most visible to youth. They therefore have an indispensable role in fostering the inclusion of young people into society.

Local governments are immediately responsible for upholding the rights of youth, ensuring community cohesion, a healthy environment, a good quality of life, and sustaining social and economic development. Local governments must provide political leadership and a vision for the future for both individuals and civil society organizations. They need to encourage the participation of youth not just in municipal policy making but also at the family, school and local community levels.

Locally elected officials and administrators sometimes tend to work in isolated spheres. To remedy this and raise their awareness, they should consistently engage with youth groups and those who have everyday interactions with youth, such as social workers, teachers, and health care providers, with the aim of addressing needs and improving the provision of services. This process can also serve to help evaluate the services in terms of their specific impact on the lives of youth and to increase the transparency of funding and decision-making.

Though many policy prescriptions are generated locally, some are universal and emanate from international treaties and covenants. These international agreements have implications for local governments. Compliance may require regulations, law enforcement, and the provision of services and activities designed to prevent discrimination.

■ Youth

Youth participation is crucial to fulfilling the vision of the WPAY and should be seen as a process through which young people influence and share control over the decisions, plans and resources that affect them. Involving young people in this process is empowering to them though it is up to the other stakeholders, who often act as gatekeepers in policy formation, to involve youth and youth organizations in the interventions that affect their lives.

There are different levels of youth participation. The higher the level of participation, the more control, influence and responsibility young people will have on their lives and the future of their communities. There is a difference between ad-hoc and structural participation. Ad-hoc refers to one-time participation in a certain project or conference, while structural participation represents a more continuous involvement over a longer period of time. There is also a difference between direct and indirect participation. Direct participation implies direct contact with the decision-making person or body. Indirect participation refers to having one's opinion represented by someone else, for example by a youth council or youth parliament.

Young people can decide on which level, and in what ways, to participate, although the choice may be dependent on the willingness of the level of government or organization and its representatives to listen to youth. Ideally, local and national governments, as well as ministries, should support young people in their endeavours to obtain resources and to meaningfully participate in youth empowerment programmes and in the formation and implementation of youth policy. With this in mind, a critical first step in the implementation of the World Programme of Action is the expansion and regularization of effective channels of communication between non-governmental youth organizations and local and national governments.

Empowering young people means allowing them to make informed decisions that affect their lives. Empowerment is more than the opportunity to influence policy; it is a process of capacity building that includes and often requires access to education, employment, health, and resources. If youth are encouraged and given the tools to fully participate in society, they will become more knowledgeable about their rights, more responsible citizens, and often more self-confident. Young people should be given the platform to take an active role in addressing key questions, such as what capacity deficiencies exist that are preventing effective local development and good governance. Enhancing opportunities for youth participation builds their skills and knowledge base and also serves to better cultivate policies that affect their lives.

■ Parents and Caregivers

Parents and caregivers (including extended family) play many roles in young people's social networks. Despite many ongoing changes in the structure of families as an institution, parents remain vital for the socialization of children. Parents are also educators and can fulfill this role by openly discussing issues and concerns with their children.

The dialogue they conduct with their children should be a two-way street where youth feel comfortable to speak with their parents without fear. Parents also have the power to direct the behaviour, capacities and intellectual and emotional character of their children. The investment of parents and caregivers in youth, in terms of time and resources spent on their general care, is not limited to early childhood and their influence should not be underestimated; despite the independence of youth, they often inherit their parents' perceptions of the world.

Parents transfer physical assets (such as capital or a home) as well as intangible qualities, such as their values, to their offspring. Ideally, they are engaged in the process of the human development of youth throughout their lifetimes. When their children are youth, parents can serve as educators and can reinforce messages their children learn in the classroom by openly speaking about health concerns, relationships and social behaviour. When young people may be at risk, parents and caregivers should know when and how to intervene.

Youth are sometimes parents themselves. These young parents are more likely to earn a lower or more erratic income than their older counterparts. This experience may cause them to postpone or cut short their own education or invest less in that of their children. However, sufficient support for young parents can interrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Media

Media help us to understand and interpret the world, communicate with one another, and participate in public life. According to the WPAY, governments should, to the extent consistent with freedom of expression, encourage the media to ensure widespread dissemination of information on issues that affect youth with the aim of raising their awareness. For example, in many areas of the world, media campaigns have shown striking successes in providing young people with vital HIV prevention information. Day-to-day contact with accurate and independent reporting is part of the informal education of young people.

National and community media is crucial to the infrastructure of public life and, when shaped by factual information and high quality research, truly represents the public interest. Often, issues important to youth are absent from reporting even though media continue to target youth in terms of advertising and entertainment. New media such as the news outlets on the Internet have, however, proved to be powerful in increasing the visibility of youth in policy making, representing diverse viewpoints, facilitating youth connectivity around the world and creating innovative youth-owned communications. As youth are not passive consumers of news, the media enhance the ability of youth to enter a national discussion and be active members of their society.

Civil Society

Civil society comprises the multitude of associations around which society voluntarily organizes itself. Independent from the State, it represents a wide range of interests and ties, from ethnicity and religion to shared professional, developmental and leisure pursuits, and to issues such as environmental protection and human rights.

Either membership-based or formed to produce a public benefit, civil society includes women's groups, business associations, elders, religious leaders, intellectuals, community associations, cooperatives, NGOs and, of course, youth organizations —associations set up and managed by individuals in the age bracket that defines youth in a specific country—which make up a vital part of civil society. Youth organizations themselves engage in a unique dialogue where they learn from their peers, share information, and act collectively.

Civil society can be a force for scrutiny of government or the market, can mitigate conflict, and inspire policies for change with the power to mobilize and inform. Existing separately from organs of the government, military, or the private sector, civil society plays an indispensable role in developing an overall system of enabling mechanisms to fulfill the vision of the WPAY. The three general functions of civil society may be summed up as: articulating citizens' interests and demands, defending citizens' rights, and directly providing goods and services.[3]

Of particular relevance to policy makers, civil society enjoys strong ties to the community and often has the trust of marginalized or at-risk youth. Having such roots at the local level is a key strength of civil society organizations. However, while these organizations can be effective partners, government in some areas are leaving too much of the responsibility of providing basic social services to civil society. While successful collaboration has contributed to the development of youth, few civil society organizations have the national scope, structure or resources to take over large-scale responsibilities from the State.

Private Sector

Youth are an integral part of the private sector either as consumers, employees of large cooperatives, corporations or small family-owned businesses, or as entrepreneurs and innovators themselves. With its own set of resources and expertise, an innovative private sector develops distribution links, provides needed products and services, creates employment and stimulates income growth; it can also integrate young people into the labour market, develop infrastructure and bring information technology to young people. More and more, the private sector, with its interest in a healthy, well-educated population of consumers and workers living in a stable society, is engaging in partnerships that touch on every area of the WPAY to support national development.

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[3] For more information on partnerships with civil society see: United Nations Development Programme (2002). Sourcebook on Building Partnerships with Civil Society Organizations. New York: UNDP.

■ The International Community

The international community refers to the nations of the world and their inter-governmental associations. While it plays multiple roles in the lives of youth, an essential role for the international community is cooperation in promoting conditions conducive to the implementation of the World Programme of Action at all levels. According to the WPAY, translating proposals for action into specific plans, targets and law will be influenced by national priorities, resources and historical context, though governments can be assisted, at their request, by regional and international organizations. The exchange of good practices among countries can be useful, especially for countries that have few resources, share a common culture, or whose youth experience similar social and economic challenges.

Specialized agencies of the United Nations and regional commissions are encouraged to promote the WPAY through the "incorporation of its goals into their plans, to undertake comprehensive reviews of the progress achieved and obstacles encountered, and to identify options to further regional level action."

International donors need to ensure that development assistance programmes provide sufficient flexibility and coherent policies to support both national and local governments in adopting a framework for the implementation of the WPAY. However, one current gap lies in the limited resources devoted to youth-headed organizations. In assessing how much aid relates to youth, donors should scale up outreach to these youth-driven initiatives. ●

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Part III

YOUTH
in the

GLOBAL
ECONOMY

YOUTH IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

POVERTY AND HUNGER

Even with the unprecedented growth in world incomes and unparalleled improvements in global standards of living in recent years, extreme poverty still plagues the lives of millions of youth with almost half of the global youth population living on less than $2 a day. In addition, youth experience poverty not only through financial limitations but also through limitations in access to public services such as clean water, adequate transportation, health care, and education.

Young people are, in general, often overlooked in poverty eradication policies and therefore it is important to note that current data on poverty estimates do not accurately capture the experiences of youth. One reason for this incomplete picture is a static definition of poverty, typically measured in terms of household income or expenditures. This definition tends to focus on persistent poverty among the long-term poor often caused by entrenched structural, social or economic factors such as location or access to education or health care. This kind of poverty is usually measured in household surveys but may miss many young people.

Instead, youth poverty is often situational and prone to short-term fluctuations. The setbacks that may occur in adolescence (defined as ages 10 to 19) or young adulthood should be kept from pushing young people into a more intractable chronic poverty. Setbacks are common when one is struggling to develop a steady source of livelihood, find full time work or support young children. A more dynamic definition of poverty that captures the lifestyle fluctuations common among young people is, of course, difficult to measure but provides a more thorough understanding of youth poverty and can, in the long run, better inform policy makers. Thus, there is a need for more quantitative and qualitative research on poverty among youth to better illustrate their experience.

The following definition may more accurately reflect poverty as lived by contemporary youth:

> *Poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or a clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal and fragile environments, without access to clean water and sanitation.*[4]

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[4] Statement for Action to Eradicate Poverty, adopted by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) in May 1998.

Another dimension of poverty involves hunger, which is more amenable to measurement, including the manner mentioned in the second target of the Millennium Development Goals (the first is reducing the proportion of those who earn less than $1 a day by half by 2015). This target calls for the reduction by half, of those who suffer from hunger, measured by the prevalence of underweight children and the proportion of a country's population below a minimum level of dietary energy consumption. Data on underweight children is an important indicator in its own right as a measure of child nutrition and also serves to complement income poverty estimates. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates in 2004 that there were 160.1 million undernourished young people.

One may also examine poverty on the basis of the non-fulfilment of basic human rights. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."

Strategies should aim at helping youth manage the risk of poverty in their lives. For policy makers, this means having up-to-date information on who are the most vulnerable youth and who are likely to fall further behind as they get older. This information is integral to designing long-term poverty reduction strategies and to allocating resources, boosting access to essential services, supporting community social networks and addressing the root causes of exclusion.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) need to better reflect this broader view of poverty. Of the 31 PRSPs completed between May 2002 and September 2003, 17 give major attention to youth in their action plans focusing mainly on education and employment. However, only six PRSPs have specifically identified youth as a group in poverty. Why is it important to regard youth as a major cross-cutting issue in the PRSPs? Simply put, piecemeal or single programme interventions are not likely to deliver the range of benefits that an integrated approach can.

Little more than half of the PRSPs in this time period were drafted with the consultation of young people. PRSPs informed by the views and ideas of poor youth not only have a better chance to reflect a more integrated approach based on local, regional and national assessments of the specific challenges lived by poor youth, but also have a better chance of effectuating lasting progress.

Why focus specific policies on rural and urban youth?

Rural youth face higher levels of poverty than their urban counterparts with a difference in living standards that may be marked by severe deprivation of shelter and sanitation. Poverty rates reach as high as 70 per cent in some rural areas particularly among small farmers or landless families in developing countries. Rural youth still trail

urban youth in school enrolment and educational attainment with significant but narrowing disparities by gender. In recent years, the lack of opportunity in rural areas has caused migration to the urban centres. Young people have always been significantly represented in rural to urban migration flows often causing overcrowding in urban schools and stress on service provision. The average age in cities in comparison to rural areas will become lower over the next generation. Young migrants are most likely to settle in slums or other overcrowded and hazardous settlements. Thus, urban poverty is partly the result of the interplay between rural deprivation and urban decline. Though the global population currently is split roughly in half between rural and urban areas, there has been a decline in resources on the national and international levels devoted to rural and agricultural development. In addition to education and training, youth must receive support and access to resources to enable them to become active partners in rural development. For rural youth it is particularly important that this support highlights the link between home, school and the community.

The World Programme of Action for Youth places a strong emphasis on rural development, support for urban youth in marginal sectors of urban centres, reducing the disparities between urban and rural youth, and on actions to make farming and agricultural life more attractive so that young people take an active role in agriculture and food security.

How can government improve the lives of young people from rural areas?

- Strengthen the organizations which serve them, especially those that address health and education.

- Improve the quality of education so that it is held to the highest national and international standards.

- Incorporate the use of distance and e-learning so that rural youth are not sidelined.

- Initiate a broad approach to education that includes programmes that target older youth who have left school at a young age to work in agriculture.

- Include an explicit agricultural growth strategy with a role for youth in mainstream poverty reduction efforts.

- Use the rural or agricultural environment to enhance and provide context to learning.

- Promote the provision of agricultural credit schemes.

- Provide information on how to increase agricultural productivity.

- Facilitate the movement of new technologies beyond urban centres to mitigate feelings of rural social and economic isolation.

■ How can government improve the lives of young people from urban areas?

- Include poorer youth who reside in slum or peripheral areas in programmes that target the urban youth labour market; access to jobs and services in urban environments for this population may also entail payments for public transportation.

- Facilitate access to financial institutions so that poor and low-income youth can save, access credit, accumulate assets and have the option to send money back to relatives in rural areas.

- Count urban youth that live in peripheral areas, overcrowded buildings and illegal settlements so that official poverty statistics do not under-cut urban poor youth. Those no longer living with their families risk being overlooked and excluded from poverty reduction measures.

- Identify risks and disadvantages that are specific to urban youth.

- Improve access to sanitation and clean water in slums.

- Strengthen access to education and health care, especially through building the capacity of the institutions that serve seasonal migrants or those who reside in peripheral urban areas who might have weak family ties.

- Consider the leisure needs of young people in the processes of urban planning in order to ensure the availability of open green spaces for sports and recreation.

EDUCATION

Education is a basic human right and helps one realize his or her human potential. It forms the knowledge and competencies that allow one to thrive at home, in the work place and throughout one's lifetime. The right to education is one that all children and youth, including those caught in natural and human-made emergencies, must be able to access. Youth who drop out of school are more vulnerable to poverty, abuse, HIV/AIDS, hazardous labour, and living in the street and are less likely to acquire the skills needed for the labour market. While education enhances opportunities, it also promotes critical and creative thinking, problem solving skills, informed decision-making, self-esteem, teamwork, and language skills and is a precondition for community participation, food security, healthy lifestyles and peaceful societies.

UNESCO estimates that some 120 million youth are presently engaged in tertiary studies worldwide. However, universal access to education is often threatened in poorer communities or in the most rural areas where there are inadequate schools; 113 million children are not in school and over 130 million are illiterate.

Though the current youth population is the most highly educated and trained group ever, they are still viewed as risks both by employers and mainstream financial institutions and also experience a difficult transition from school to the workplace.

In many developing countries, university degrees are often conferred in disciplines that are less expensive to teach such as the social sciences, while cuts in areas such as engineering and technology cause some high tech jobs to remain unfilled. Even though borders have largely eroded and despite a more global consciousness, many educational institutions have retained a local or national orientation.

The curricula of many training programmes often do not reflect the current labour demands; thus the acquisition of additional skills may involve extra costs to employers, thereby dimming the prospects of youth. As the economy and the global labour market are constantly in flux, training should not be viewed as a one time investment to supplement studies or only take place at the beginning of one's working life. Skills need to be constantly upgraded and expanded to suit the contemporary job market. Thus the education and training system also needs to reflect such transformations.

What characteristics of youth training programmes are helpful in creating more opportunities for youth?

- Flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of the workplace

- Links with the labour market and employers

- Internship programmes through partnerships with local businesses

- An emphasis on personal development and career planning

- On-the-job training and work-study programmes

- Inclusion of those who work in the informal economy or those who have never been employed

- Entry requirements that permit informal workers and people from historically disadvantaged groups to participate and benefit

- Opportunities for mentoring and the exchange of information among peers

- Vocational guidance that does not discriminate against or stereotype young women

How can government strengthen the links between young people and employers?

- **Train skilled guidance and vocational counselors so they may provide information on the nature of employment paths as well as wages and working conditions.** In many countries, regardless of income level, women are often steered towards household-related or low-skilled jobs that are characterized by low status or little pay, according to the ILO. Well-trained guidance and vocational counsellors may be helpful in reducing this type of stereotyping so that young women may pursue life-long learning and real career development.

- **Expand the number and capacity of job centers to improve the dissemination of labour market information so that young people will be better equipped in choosing a career path.** Job placement and training are usually local matters assumed by the state or non-governmental organizations; without adequate funding, these centres will not be able to efficiently serve young people or reach out to the poorest youth.

- **Partner with the private sector to identify high-demand skills.** While more youth are attending school and staying in school longer, the labour market would absorb more graduates if it had stronger links to the educational system. Such partnerships can work to inform the school and training curriculums and resource distribution channels according to the demands of major employers.

- **Provide social protection schemes to help poor youth cope with periods of unemployment and unexpected shocks due to such events as economic setbacks, natural disasters, or conflict.** Youth are often the first to be let go in a recession and the last to be hired in more flush times. Extending and improving the quality of social protection and providing coverage in the informal economy can prevent youth poverty and cushion youth experiencing livelihood fluctuations. Governments and donors can also support innovations such as co-operative insurance schemes or grain storage that work to hedge against risk.

- **Support establishing training programmes linked with certain sectors that may lead to full-time permanent employment**. To allay the fears of employers concerning the potential inexperience of youth, successful completion of on-the-job training, where a youth can receive a stipend, may be rewarded with a contract and a competitive salary. Otherwise, there should be a clearly defined relationship with emerging labour market demands and current occupational require-ments. As a result of monitoring these demands, government may control the quality and the type of service. As training alone does not create jobs and can come at significant cost, the training curriculum should also take into account the intended clientele and the economic conditions.

- **Create scholarships for girls and young women to work and study in areas where historically women have been under-represented.** Often, young women will need extra incentives to pursue studies in a male-dominated field. Without many role models in such fields, scholarships and mentoring programmes will open up new areas for women and fuel their confidence and ambitions.
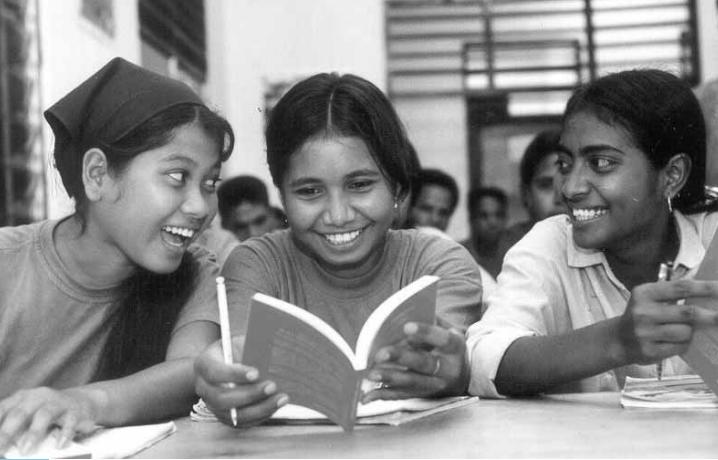
In areas where a relatively high percentage of female youth had only a primary education, needing to help the family, lack of money for school and also marriage were cited as the main reasons girls stopped attending school. However, studies clearly indicate that the education of girls boosts household income in the long run and helps improve the quality of life for the whole family. The multiplier effect of educating girls is clear when the results of efforts to get more girls into school, for longer durations, demonstrate dramatic improvements in the development of a community as a whole.

How can government help youth, especially girls and young women, attain a higher level of education?

- **Consider the redistribution of resources to meet girls' and young women's specific educational needs.** Access to schooling involves more than just initial enrolment. Often times there are structural problems such as the lack of separate bathrooms for girls, not enough chairs or desks for girls or the school is not a safe place for them. School books often need to be updated as they do not contain positive representations of women or women are absent from the materials altogether.

- **Ensure that young mothers finish their education by allowing and encouraging them to return to school after the birth of a child.** This goal may be facilitated by providing childcare programmes and transportation assistance to those with few resources and by alleviating the pressure felt by pregnant girls to drop out of school. The educational system should not enforce a rigid policy of age of entry corresponding to a certain class or grade; flexible age of entry has shown that young people will enter the system at an older age without any previous schooling or may re-enter the system after time away.

- **Provide incentives to families to make sending all children to school a worthwhile proposition.** In some areas families cite opportunity cost as a central reason for not sending children to school; without youth at home, work that contributes to the family's economic well-being will not be completed. Poor families with children may be offered financial incentives or guaranteed provision of other valuable resources if their children consistently attend school.

- **Raise and enforce the legal age of marriage.** So that girls are not forced to marry and stop attending school, the legal age for marriage should be raised and enforced in all parts of a country. Raising the legal age also serves to lessen the chance of forced marriage to men many years senior to the girls. The legal age for boys to marry is often higher than the age for girls by a few years; the minimum legal age for marriage should be the same for all persons.

- **In marginalized areas or in areas marked by chronic poverty, institute school feeding programmes.** Meal programmes are of particular benefit to girls because they are more likely than boys to suffer from poor nutrition which can harm cognitive development. Periods of hunger can impair one's ability to concentrate and cause young people to repeat grades or drop out. These programmes can also serve as an incentive to send children to school even when there is a high demand for labour in the home or in agricultural areas.

- **Make efforts to ensure the safety of girls and young women and protect them from sexual harassment that may dissuade them from continuing their studies.** A feeling of insecurity among girls and young women can lead them to drop out. In addition to simple measures like enclosing the school yard with a fence or wall, security can be provided in a number of ways to reassure both students and parents. Where there are few girls in school, they can be ridiculed or tormented by male teachers or boys, an environment that should not be tolerated. Resources also need to be devoted to recruiting and training more female teachers in areas where teaching is still a male-dominated profession so that girls and young women feel more comfortable in the classroom.

- **Promote to parents the value of education with media campaigns in areas with low school attendance and raise public awareness of the dangers of trafficking for labour or sexual exploitation.** Often, it is desperate circumstances or the lure of a promise of lucrative work in another area that causes a family to send away young men and women. Parents, caregivers and youth should be alerted to the potential dangers, exploitation and false promises of the clandestine industry of job brokers, travel agents and intermediary agents.

- **Consider adjusting the schedule and hours of the school day in some areas to be sensitive to local needs.** The school schedule may be altered to allow girls and boys in rural areas to fetch water in the morning or perform other domestic chores before the start of the school day. In some contexts, school may also break mid-day on market day so youth and teachers are not frequently absent.

Non-formal Learning

It is important that efforts be made to reach youth who have dropped out of the formal education system before acquiring basic literacy and math skills and provide them with education or training that will enhance their life skills and employability. Governments are encouraged to establish systems to ensure the recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning for young people. Such a move would acknowledge the value of knowledge and experience gained outside of the traditional learning environment, and would demonstrate the importance of integrating formal and non-formal learning in one's overall education.

Effective non-formal education programmes target youth who have never been to school. These opportunities represent a second-chance for youth who have spent much of their childhood at work or in dangerous settings and may serve as a force for their inclusion in the mainstream labour market.

■ Learning about HIV/AIDS in the Classroom

Non-Formal Education—A Second Chance
Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)

The non-formal primary education programme of BRAC, the largest NGO in Bangladesh, clearly demonstrates how an institution can adapt to fill local needs, in this case, education, life skills and poverty reduction for those traditionally outside formal schooling. How does this programme fill a niche? While teaching the same material as mainstream schools, it targets a separate population: adolescents and older children (70% female) in densely populated rural areas characterized by high rates of dropout. BRAC provides numeracy and literacy skills to adolescents in over 27,000 community schools who had dropped out of schools and were unlikely to return. The result is a programme with comparatively higher retention rates.

Because poverty is identified by Bangladeshi parents as a major reason for their children dropping out or not enrolling in the formal schools, the program is designed so that parents incur practically no direct costs for sending their children to BRAC schools. Books and supplies are provided free, uniforms are not required, school hours are varied to fit with the cycles of domestic and agricultural needs, and schools are located in close proximity to the student's homes. Though the total number of hours is fixed, schools in different regions, to ensure consistent attendance, have different school year schedules as a result of consultations with parents. In addition, the curriculum and learning materials are gender sensitive and inclusive of children from ethnic minority groups as well as children with disabilities. New learning materials are developed, tested and updated on a continuous basis.

Gaining the consent and support of communities and parents did, however, prove challenging at first, particularly the effort to insist that girls and boys who are under the age of 20 must be able to learn and enjoy their adolescence.

The programme is a success due to BRAC's intimate links with the community in a country where less than 40% of children ever start school. Of those who complete the four year programme, 95% of students pass the exam for entry into the fourth grade of official primary school. Through partnership with BRAC and the government of Bangladesh, major funding comes from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

Source: World Bank, www.braceducation.org

HIV/AIDS represents a huge challenge to many countries, and the classroom is an appropriate setting as a first line of defence against its spread. Schools and teachers can address HIV/AIDS prevention as part of a comprehensive life skills programmes established as a core part of the mainstream curriculum. These programmes offer young people gender-specific information on HIV and on the steps they can take to prevent the infection's spread. Programmes that promote life skills for healthy living train them to analyse situations critically, challenge gender stereotypes, communicate effectively and make responsible decisions. These skills are of crucial importance to young women as it is more difficult for them to negotiate safe sex and they are more easily infected with HIV during sex than young men. Life skills programmes can also incorporate instruction on health, hygiene and nutrition, all elements that, when compromised, can compromise the immune system and increase vulnerability. According to UNAIDS, in 2006 less than 50 per cent of young people had meaningful access to comprehensive HIV/AIDS information and services—the goal set in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted by the General Assembly in 2000 was 90 per cent by this time. The classroom presents a captive audience; integrating vital information on prevention into the classroom environment is one way to help meet this goal.

■ Why is it important to learn about HIV/AIDS in the classroom?

- Raise awareness about HIV/AIDS-related stigma, discrimination and human rights violations

- Challenge myths, taboos and prejudices through open discussion and accurate information

- Empower youth so that they are able to avoid risky behaviour

- Convey positive images and messages that portray people living with HIV/AIDS as possessing the right to lead full and productive lives

- Establish a space where youth may engage in dialogue about relationships, HIV/AIDS, and their rights through peer-to-peer education

- Disseminate information so that people are more likely to seek counselling, testing, treatment and support

■ What is the effect of education on HIV/AIDS prevention?

In addition to school-based programs that specifically focus on HIV/AIDS, recent studies confirm that better-educated people have lower rates of infection. A study of 15 to 19 year-olds in Zambia found a marked decline in HIV-prevalence rates among those with a medium to higher level of education but an increase among those with a lower educational level.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), levels of unemployment among young people are two to three times higher than among the adult population. Though youth represent one quarter of the working age population between the ages of 15 and 64, they made up half of the total 191.8 million people out of work worldwide in 2005. The bleakest pictures are in sub-Saharan Africa, where the share of youth unemployment reaches as high as nearly 80 per cent of total unemployment in some countries, and also in Western Asia and North Africa.

In comparison to older workers, the difficulties for youth rest largely on a lack of experience, lack of voice, a tough transition from school to the job market, and the obstacles to those not already employed posed by labour protection regulations. Despite a high level of education in the historical context, the current youth population is still viewed as a risk both by employers and mainstream financial institutions. Moreover, the line between unemployment and employment has blurred with the growth of the informal economy and intermittent or part-time jobs, which rarely lead to stable work or social protection coverage. Many young people work in casual jobs in this gray area. The existing vocational education and training programmes do not adequately reflect current labour demands, leaving jobs in some sectors vacant or out of reach to youth. Thus one key issue to be addressed is the imbalance between the supply of young people and the demand for their labour.

The psychosocial impact of low economic prospects or chronic unemployment should not be underestimated. Youth unemployment can lead to marginalization, social exclusion, frustration and low self-esteem—characteristics that can, over time, translate into behavior that imposes a significant burden on society.

The problems facing youth are not only a challenge for the personal development of young people but for the preservation of national and regional stability. During a February 2005 open debate in the Security Council regarding security issues in West Africa, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan underscored this point by commenting, "Youth unemployment levels are shockingly high, and the accompanying desperation carries a real risk of political and social unrest in countries emerging from crisis, and even in those that are currently stable."

In the Millennium Declaration adopted by the General Assembly in September 2000, heads of State and governments resolved to "develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work." The United Nations, together with the heads of the World Bank and the International Labour Organization, launched the Youth Employment Network (YEN) to pursue this goal. This initiative has created four strategies for youth employment:

- Employability of young people through investing in training and education

- Entrepreneurship

- Employment creation

- Equal opportunities for men and women

It should be clearly noted that in all regions the challenges for young women to find work are steepest. Overall, the female unemployment rate is significantly higher than the male rate; the regions where the female rates showed the most differentiation with those of men were Latin and America and the Caribbean and the Middle East and North Africa. Better jobs for women not only result in the transfer of financial resources over time but also translate into improved family welfare, the reduction of child labour and a better point from which to confront gender inequities.

Macroeconomic Policies for Employment Growth

Economic growth alone does not always aid the plight of youth. To specifically affect the circumstances of special groups, more attention needs to be paid, according to the World Youth Report 2003, to "increasing the employment intensity of economic growth especially in the most rapidly expanding sectors of the economy." Putting employment at the center of macroeconomic policy signals a responsibility for the fate of youth. The problem of unemployed and underemployed youth will not be solved by focusing on the supply side of labour alone.

What are some guiding principles regarding youth employment policy?

- Ensure equal remuneration for equal work.

- In accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the ILO's Core Labour Standards, focus on abolishing the worst forms of child labour and establish a minimum age for employment that is not below the age of completion of compulsory schooling.

- Do not apply reduced minimum wage rates to youth as a means to encourage hiring—this does not usually increase demand.

- Do not soften or weaken the system of worker protection standards and regulations as a tool to facilitate the integration of youth.

How can government best form the institutional arrangements to monitor the needs of the labour market and create more jobs for youth?

- **Integrate youth policy, and particularly youth employment policies, into a variety of areas such as education, health and justice in order for there to be a significant impact on employment growth.** Governments can set up a consultative body or task force to forge a comprehensive youth employment policy to include the views and aims of multiple ministries and agencies. For example, Poland and Austria have recently merged the Ministries of Labour and Social Policy with the Ministry of Economy to coordinate better economic and employment policies and create more jobs.

- **Conduct an assessment of past policies on youth employment, specifically the number and nature of new vacancies for youth per year**. In association with youth and civil society, it is important to concentrate on actions to increase employment intensity. Consultation with youth organizations and young people will be helpful in the process of exploring different policy options at different stages of decision-making.

How can government promote an expanding demand for labour that benefits young people?

- **Make it easier for enterprises to be created, operate smoothly, and grow by hiring more young people through a simplification of the regulatory environment.** In many areas, there are numerous and expensive steps and burdensome waiting periods for attaining the required licenses to create and run a business; many of these steps rarely serve a clear purpose. With the definition of decent employment in mind, the process can be streamlined and made less costly, while preserving transparency, so enterprises are able to train and hire more youth.

- **Assess and identify new societal needs through an assessment of the unmet social demands.** For example, challenges in housing, nursing care, AIDS care, and urban revitalization may be met through the implementation of training and local initiatives to fill these gaps. The ageing of the population in some areas will generate a significant demand for home care and skilled nurses.

- **Invest in public works programmes to use surplus labour for projects that may include upgrading infrastructure and improving irrigations systems, schools or health centers.** Though often part of a temporary poverty relief plan, the employment creation effects of public works can enhance the labour market in the long run in addition to improving local infrastructure that would otherwise not be achieved with private investment. These projects can also stimulate local economies through the demand for tools, equipment, and materials. According to the ILO, public works programmes are a particularly good entry point into the labour force for youth, especially for young women, and also serve as an opportunity for governments to demonstrate the practical application of labour standards. Clearly, public works projects require resources that are often scant within the tight budgets and the heavy indebtedness of poorer developing countries. However, with external donor support and the restructuring of debt, governments can launch these labour intensive projects and make a significant investment in the long-term productive power of their countries.

- **Target sectors that have the capacity to create productive jobs; some sectors even have profound linkage effects on the growth of other sectors.** Policies may target youth by identifying and focusing on sectors that employ a significant percentage of young people, such as information and communication technologies.

Public Works Projects—Senegal

Agence d' Exécution des Travaux d' Intérêt Public (AGETIP) was launched in 1989 by the government of Senegal, with the support of the World Bank and the African Development Bank, to provide short-term employment to a growing number of unemployed youth. The central mandate of the programme was to sub-contract, coordinate and supervise the execution of construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of urban infrastructure and to facilitate the provision of essential services. During the first four-year phase, AGETIP enabled the creation of about 80,000 jobs by subcontracting 416 components of public works projects to small-scale entrepreneurs. Largely addressing urban issues such as the deterioration of infrastructure, mounting social unrest and under-employment, AGETIP quickly expanded to over 3,200 projects contributing to the creation of 350,000 short-term jobs annually and 6000 permanent positions. Similar programmes have been launched in Burkina Faso, Benin, Chad, Togo, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger with the support of their development partners.

Source: Sarr, M. (2000). Youth Employment in Africa: The Senegalese Experience, Background Paper No. 3, UN-ILO World Bank Meeting on Youth Employment, UN Secretariat, New York. See also: http://www.agetip.org/

Some of the preceding recommendations are contained in The Secretary-General's High-Level Panel report of the Youth Employment Network that drew up guidelines to assist in the preparation of the national reviews and action plans on youth employment. The guidelines also encourage Member States to involve youth organizations and young people in this process. The full guidelines are available at: http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/yen/download/guidelines.pdf

The Informal Economy

In some countries it is estimated that only 5 to 10 per cent of new entrants into the labour market can be absorbed by the formal economy, leaving the bulk of new jobs to be generated by the informal economy, sometimes referred to as a "necessary survival strategy". In fact the ILO estimates that 93 per cent of all jobs available to young people in developing countries are in the informal economy. In a sense, these young people are "forced" into a type of entrepreneurship where there is often little respect for the rights and legal protections of workers and where youth often work for long hours with little job security and low pay. Wages in the informal economy are estimated to be 44 per cent below the formal economy while the working conditions are generally more perilous and social protection is inadequate, at best.

Though some parts of the informal economy arise because people wish to evade business regulations and their enforcement, attaining the proper licenses, or paying taxes, most gravitate to jobs in the informal economy due to the existence of few, if any, other choices.

What is decent work?

According to the ILO, decent work is characterized by:

- Respect for rights in the workplace
- Pay that represents a liveable wage
- Availability of social protection programmes and schemes
- Safety and security at work
- Voice that includes the ability to take part in decisions that may affect workers
- Opportunities for training and the upgrading of skills

How can government, in addition to expanding opportunities in the formal economy, address the challenges presented by the informal economy in the short and longer term?

- **Promote decent work along a continuum that goes from the informal end of the economy to the formal.** The continuum can be made more fluid through a broadening of minimum wage laws which only cover a small percentage of those in the informal economy. By including piece rates in minimum wage laws, for example, more categories of wage workers are included in such laws.

- **Ensure that those in the informal economy can enjoy the full spectrum of rights and legal protections.** Information and training for young people in the informal economy are also necessary so that they are aware of their rights and obligations. It is difficult to extend social coverage to informal workers due to the inherent limitations in raising revenues and collecting contributions from workers with minimal earnings and a general absence of a direct employer-employee relationship. Efforts to extend social security protection to informal workers are growing; in India, for example, there is an initiative to tax the aggregate output of designated industries in order to finance benefits for all workers in those industries.

- **Confirm that the definition of "worker" in legislation applies to those in the informal economy.** Often the definition of "worker" entails benefits and entitlements, specifically social protection programmes. According to the ILO, only one-third of the world's people have any type of social protection. A more inclusive definition of "worker" will contribute to more efficiently extending benefits.

- **Support and provide information on training for young people involved in informal economy activities.** Strict entry requirements to training programmes often represent barriers that discourage or restrict informal workers and people from historically disadvantaged groups from participating and benefiting. These restrictions should be removed so that youth can increase their knowledge and skills, specifically in relation to new technologies. Additionally, an expansion of the number and capacity of job centers will better serve young people in informal economy jobs. By changing the means of seeking work, one can also raise the quality of work that is found.

- **Consider setting up an inter-Ministerial coordination team or task force that allows the government, workers and employers to articulate their interests.** It is necessary to create a structural arrangement that welcomes the input of organizations of informal workers, including trade unions and informal female workers, in drafting employment-related legislation. As women dominate the informal economy, it is necessary to include a female presence on all sides of the discussion.

- **With the goal of social inclusion, pay special attention to those that are more likely to be discriminated against such as young women, those who speak a minority language, or persons with disabilities.** Certain groups encounter substantial barriers to moving upwards along the continuum to the formal economy. Governments and ministries should provide guidelines and mandate training for inspectors to identify discriminatory practices.

- **Strengthen the capacity of NGOs in the informal economy providing services such as HIV/AIDS education to groups at high risk.** Service delivery in the informal economy can be augmented through closer partnerships with non-governmental organizations, many of which already have strong ties in this area.[5]

What can government do to expand economic opportunities for youth?

- Volunteering and Youth Service Programmes

- Microfinance

- Promoting Youth Entrepreneurship

Volunteering and Youth Service Programmes

Youth service programmes may play a role in mitigating a sense of uncertainty among employers, and allow youth to provide for their basic needs while acquiring skills. To ensure that young people possess the appropriate skills, youth service programmes also have a place as part of larger "pre-labour" market policies that can boost the mobility and human development of youth. Though the meaning and application may differ from country to country, the International Association for National Youth Service defines national youth service as "an organized activity in which young people serve others and the environment in ways that contribute positively to society". While not a solution to mass unemployment, programmes in various countries and regions serve to highlight young people as an important resource that can be effectively deployed to meet social, political and economic objectives.

Most youth service programmes provide some formal training to all participants and about half offer a mentoring component. Self sufficiency, increased productive capacity and employability of participants after completion are a few economic signs of a successful service programme while studies of some programmes have documented positive psycho-social effects. But it is also important to look at the impact on the communities themselves and the organizations with which youth work; some programmes have attempted to foster unity and narrow ethnic cleavages in cases of diversity or ethnic strife. Youth service is one method of targeting a vulnerable group whose unemployment contributes to high levels of poverty.

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[5] Many of the recommendations in this section are derived from the 2002 ILO Report on Decent Work in the Informal Economy. More information is available at: www.ilo.org/public/english/ standards/relm/ilc/ilc90/pdf/rep-vi.pdf

Considering that employment is commonly treated as a passive outcome of other policies, national service can be a part of an explicit policy aimed at improving labour absorption and can be linked to a national youth policy, if one is in place. While the adoption of social and macroeconomic policies to help stimulate growth and increase the demand for labour is indispensable, youth service programmes can, in the interim, provide lifelong skill advancement for participants, needed services for the communities in which they serve, and embed volunteerism as a societal norm.

Though such policies reflect the political will of governments to recognize the importance of youth, there is a danger of the use of young people as political pawns. It is important for youth participating in any service programme not to be branded as "messengers" of a regime or a party. Thus the success of any programme that is subsidized by the government is largely dependent on good governance.

Microfinance and Youth Entrepreneurship

Microfinance, the provision of small loans, savings accounts, microinsurance and transfer services, has been hailed as a vital part of the development equation. By its very nature, microfinance serves poor and low-income people. Microfinance institutions are therefore a significant part of the infrastructure necessary for development. Adding to the survival toolkit of poor and low-income youth (often first to feel the impact during times of crisis) who seldom have access to the full range of basic services, microfinance connects this population, with little or no assets, to productive capital. The impact of microfinance on poverty reduction has been measured in terms

of several dimensions, such as improved income, employment and household expenditure, and reduced vulnerability to economic and social shocks. Just as determinants of social development are hard to isolate, so are the cross-cutting effects of access to financial services. Fortunately, the conclusions that may be drawn provide some meaningful insight into the ways microfinance allows young people to meet their basic needs, earn money to improve their lives and guard against unexpected shocks.

Yet barriers to starting small and micro-enterprises do exist. In many nations, the formal banking system is not responsive to the needs of aspiring young entrepreneurs, as young people often lack collateral and may be viewed as a greater risk. This gap needs to be filled in order to foster sustainable access for young people. According to the Youth Employment Network, government and private sector assistance in the creation of new businesses should be a major focus of policy discussions.

Youth Driven Service and Entrepreneurship: South Africa—Umsobomvu Youth Fund (UYF)

Though political citizenship is now a reality in South Africa, the Umsobomvu Youth Fund (UYF) seeks to make "economic citizenship" also a reality. The UYF is a national agency established in 2001 by the government of South Africa that identifies non-governmental organizations and private sector partners to implement projects for unemployed youth that would benefit both the young people and the entire community. The key components of this programme are service, structured learning and exit opportunities.

Over a period of 12 to 15 months, youth participate in activities concerning the development of infrastructure, primary health, education, business, municipal food gardens, and care for high-risk children. Acknowledging that volunteering does not always change one's economic predicament, participants in the programme receive a stipend and participate in projects that are designed to serve as a pathway to economic opportunity. To qualify, partnering organizations not only have to focus on developing the skills of youth, but also on identifying employment or entrepreneurial activities which young people could sustain after the project. Through a mentor programme where youth may receive assistance drafting a new business plan, the entrepreneurship part of UYF makes financing available to young people through collaboration with mainstream financial institutions. As a funding agency, Umsobomvu ensures that each project or business plan complement specific development objectives. Targeted at young people between the ages of 18 and 35 from previously disadvantaged communities, the UYF is consistently trying to expand a comprehensive database covering skill building, entrepreneurship programmes, potential employers, career guidance and health issues that will expand the quality and reach of service delivery. This South African initiative is set to expand with a newly adopted national Youth Service Policy Framework.

Sources: Foley, P. (2003). Youth Service for Employment: The Umsobomvu Youth Fund Initiative in South Africa. Chapter 13 in *Enquiry*. Global Service Institute (GSI) and Volunteer and Service Enquiry Southern Africa. www.youthportal.org.za/

It should be noted that microfinance is not just for entrepreneurship. For example, loans can also enable a young person to attend university, whether the money is for tuition or housing during this time, or to meet health care needs. According to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, "higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit," and not according to one's ability to pay. With access to a range of financial tools, young people can invest according to their own priorities, such as school fees, health care, business, nutrition or shelter, and plan for their futures.

In general, it appears that clients who participate in microfinance programmes on a continuing basis eventually realize better economic outcomes than non-clients. For instance, in terms of income poverty, there is evidence that access to credit has given many poor people the means to increase, diversify and protect their sources of income. In addition, microfinance institutions in many parts of the world have reported improved food expenditures and employment opportunities among their clients. Access to microfinance has also been found to promote increased expenditures on education and related improvements in health among poor clients and, in this respect, it can enhance human capital in the long term. While it is not a panacea to poverty, it has transformed not only people's perceptions of the poor but also their role in the development process.

It is important to note that entrepreneurship may not be the right path for all youth; in some cases, grants, infrastructure improvements or education and training programmes are more effective. It should be conveyed to youth that starting a business at any point in life involves risk; thus, from the policy maker's point of view, entrepreneurship programmes targeting youth should be conceived with the aim of improving the quality of this type of work through building appropriate skills and providing necessary resources.

Why is microfinance a good way to target young women?

Through microfinance, many women have become active participants in economic activities. Furthermore, as a result of microfinance and the enabling role it plays, women own assets, including land and housing, play a stronger role in decision-making, and take on positions of leadership in their communities. Some areas have witnessed a positive shift in values and expectations that affect women's role in society. However, in other cases, women's successful businesses have only added to their burden. Though women may make significant amounts of money through their work and their economic activities, this does not always translate into more power in the home; they often work in the market all day and then come home to the same domestic and family responsibilities that are not shared among the male members of the household. Thus empowerment is not always straightforward and should not be assumed to be an automatic outcome of microfinance programmes.

What are some elements of financial services that benefit young people?

- Young people have access to the credit, savings, remittances, and micro-insurance products that are available to the general population.

- All financial institutions in the country permit poor women to take out loans in their own name or have sole title on savings accounts.

- Financial institutions offer products tailored to young people, specifically young women.

- Students are able to access appropriate financial services for education needs such as tuition savings or school loan plans.

Microfinance means constructing financial systems that serve the needs and demands of poor people. This is a multi-dimensional process that involves the determined efforts of many actors.

How can governments facilitate financial sectors that benefit young people with a range of financial services?

- Governments can ensure that the formal banking system serves the needs of youth in areas such as furthering their education, business creation, and purchasing a first home.

- Governments can set up mentoring and training or business proposal writing programmes for youth entrepreneurs with a special focus on helping their enterprises grow in a manner that creates employment for others.

- As some financial sectors may not be mature enough to support institutions that reach out to women or young people, governments may help with targeted assistance, such as training or seed funding, to better integrate these people into the economic landscape.

Governments themselves should not be involved in the costs and pricing of financial products (except to provide the legal and regulatory structures that make it possible for financial institutions to decide their own pricing). However, it is generally agreed that the role of governments can easily complement the work of donors, social investors and civil society.[6]

[6] For more information on the constructive but limited role of government in microfinance and its relationship to other actors to facilitate competition and market entry, see: CGAP Donor Brief No. 19: "The Role of Governments in Microfinance" (June 2004).

Globalization is not a new phenomenon. Economic, political and social realities in one part of the world have always had some effect on the lives of individuals of another region. Though economic integration based on trade and capital flows has been going on for centuries, what is new is the increased pace and more dramatic reach of globalization. This phenomenon is largely due to an increased demand for labour in developed countries, ease of movement of both people and capital, lower costs of transportation and advanced communication causing people to be more aware of opportunities outside of their home countries.

Globalization has had an impact on youth employment opportunities and migration patterns, and has led to profound changes, from a growing youth culture and consumerism to global youth citizenship and activism. Though some parts of the world have seen unprecedented growth as a result of the integration of economies and societies, many developing countries are still facing profound challenges to experiencing the benefits of globalization.

While globalization itself is not a policy, its course does depend on institutions, laws, programmes and policies and also affects the values, voice and opportunities of young men and women. Thus there are certain measures that may be taken to expand the benefits and ensure a fairer globalization. While many elements of this Guide focus on the effects of globalization, ranging from ICT to employment, this section will focus specifically on young people and migration.

Globalization underscores the nexus of youth employment opportunities and migration patterns. Today, in developed countries, there is an average of 142 young entrants (ages 20-24) to the labour force for every 100 persons about to retire; in 10 years, there will be a deficit of young workers with 87 young persons for every 100 who leave the labour force. In the developing world, the situation is in stark contrast: developing countries today have 342 young persons for every 100 persons aged 60 to 64. Employment creation and the absorption of a larger number of young workers is a global problem as the strong excess will continue to fuel a trend of migration.[7]

Young Migrants

Young migrants represent a varied and heterogeneous group, including youth entering other countries through legal and illegal channels, trafficked youth, seasonal migrants, second and third generation migrants who were born in the country, international students, and young people fleeing conflict.[8] Lured by the promise of a job and a better life, along with sometimes unrealistic expectations, youth represent roughly

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[7] Report of the Secretary General on International Migration and Development (A/60/871).

[8] For more information on the rights and welfare of migrant workers and members of their families, see the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

15 per cent of total migrants (the total is estimated at 191 million).[9] Dissatisfaction with local conditions, pressure on natural resources and few prospects may drive the desire to migrate from either rural to urban areas or to another country. In some areas, the desire to move is quite strong and pervasive. According to the Arab Human Development Report 2003, 51 per cent of youth expressed this desire to pursue a life outside their home country.

Whatever the reasons contributing to the desire to migrate, the movement of young people is not without significant risk. Some youth are subject to trafficking through a clandestine industry of job brokers and intermediary agents who promise fortunes to be made in other countries. Undocumented young migrants almost always have no legal protection, live or work in harmful conditions, and earn little money. They are often invisible to the provision of social services or are not recognized in any national youth policy. With few options and a fear of deportation or retaliation, many young migrants have no one to turn to and live without any avenues for recourse in the case of abuse or exploitation. Due to a geographic imbalance in services and opportunities, youth often migrate from rural to urban areas. When rural livelihoods become unsustainable, these failures can have far-reaching effects with an influx of youth applying new pressures on urban areas.

Brain Drain

According to a 2005 World Bank study entitled, "International Migration, Remittances and the Brain Drain", college educated workers from poorer countries are leaving in large numbers. Researchers found that a quarter to almost half of the college-educated nationals of Ghana, Mozambique, Kenya, Uganda, Nicaragua, and El Salvador are living in OECD member countries. For Haiti and Jamaica, the number rises to more than 80 percent. In contrast, less than 5 percent of the skilled migrants of the larger countries of the developing world—India, China, Indonesia and Brazil—emigrate from their country of origin.

Though high skilled migration is not without its benefits to the individual, it may have negative consequences on the home country's economy. In the long term and with the promotion of circular migration, returnees may bring new ideas, approaches and international networks with them, benefiting not only themselves but society at large.

In order to address some of the concerns related to the migration of youth, young people need to have viable alternatives and incentives to remain in their countries. This means addressing root causes such as poverty or lack of opportunity, and by doing so, seeking to redress the inequalities between nations. It also requires that young people are provided, through education and skills training, with the knowledge and confidence to become successful participants in the labour markets of their own countries so that these countries are not deprived of innovators and institution builders.

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[9] See estimate based on the average age composition of the 10 largest immigration countries; based on data provided by the United Nations Statistics Division. Also see Report of the Secretary General on International Migration and Development (A/60/871).

The Effect of Migration and Remittances on Youth at Home

Not all youth migrate but even those who stay at home may reap the benefits of the mobility of family members. Family bonds across borders can become economic bonds that significantly impact the development of human capabilities. Recent evidence shows migration and remittances can reduce poverty of recipient households, increase investment in human capital, reduce child labour and raise child education, and have a limited effect on entrepreneurship. In some areas, particularly Latin America and the Caribbean, about one-quarter of all families receive remittances.

For a growing number of countries, remittances have surpassed official development assistance (ODA) in volume and now constitute the second largest source of financial flows after foreign direct investment (FDI). Compared with other sources of capital that can fluctuate depending on the political or economic climate, remittances remain relatively stable and actually tend to increase in more turbulent times. Most important for the lives of youth, standards of health and levels of education are areas most affected by remittances, and are often cited as strong motivators to migrate. Health and education spending has durable long-term effects on decreasing youth vulnerability at the household and community levels.

Though remittances have recently earned a prominent role in the policy agenda, remittances should not be seen as a replacement for sound national and international policies to enhance peace and development and address inequalities. Moreover, migration should not only be seen as the transfer of work or services to another geographic region, but as support to poor or low income people in their efforts to develop human capacity and provide for fundamental everyday needs. Remittances must be better measured and further integrated into development strategies.

Why might migrant youth have special vulnerabilities?

Migration is sometimes accompanied by the breakdown of traditional social networks, which can weaken cultural and community coping mechanisms, but in other ways it may empower youth to take on new roles. With respect to education, young migrants have to adapt to a different curriculum and language. Economically, young migrants may leave old jobs, connections, and recognisable experience or credentials behind, forcing them to find a job in an unfamiliar job market. Additionally, there are problems of physical and psychological health of young people associated with migration. On the other hand, youth are often best suited for coping with and adapting to the migration process because of their resilience, flexibility, energy, passion, and comparatively fewer attachments. In many cases, young migrants are an indispensable part of the host country's work force.

How can sending governments ensure that young migrants are treated on a fair and equal basis?

- **Inform potential migrants about the risks and benefits involved in migrating to another country.** Many migrants are insufficiently prepared for their migration experience abroad, making them easy prey to human trafficking, extortion and bankruptcy, often caused by steep payments made to recruiters or intermediary agents in order to migrate. Accurate, realistic and practical information on travel costs, recruitment agency fees, salaries, health insurance, paid sick leave, unemployment insurance and pensions, housing, schooling, and investment options should be provided in an impartial manner. Potential migrants should be presented with comprehensive information so that they may make up their own minds about the costs and benefits of the migration experience.

- **Educate potential migrants.** Highly skilled migrants tend to have a more successful migration experience than their low-skilled counterparts. Potential migrants should therefore have the opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge which are useful in their destination country. For example, relevant government ministries, NGOs or community centres can organize introductory language courses and cultural and civics courses dealing with relevant topics such as an overview of the judicial and political system and cultural norms and customs in the receiving country.

- **Open up avenues for migrants to transfer money cheaply and securely and to invest their savings at home.** Remittances play a central role in the economies of many sending countries. Legal, cheap and speedy transfers contribute to the economic empowerment of migrants and their families. Governments should not require bureaucratic hurdles, such as the verification of legal residency, for nationals living abroad to send money home.

- **Promote circular migration.** The so-called brain drain can be turned into a brain-gain if brain circulation takes place whereby a constant stream of returnees brings new ideas, approaches and international networks with them, benefiting not only returnees personally but society at large. One example is the case of young Indian IT specialists who gain work experience in more advanced countries for a few years and then return to either join an Indian IT company or set up their own IT business. Young migrants in particular may reap great benefits from living in another country temporarily and applying experiences gained abroad at home. Governments should consider facilitating productive economic linkages with the sending country, such as direct investment and productively absorbing and using the skills of returned migrants. More quantitative and qualitative research needs to be carried out to measure the exact impact of circular migration on sending countries.

How can receiving governments ensure that young migrants are treated on a fair and equal basis?

● **Create an agency or ombudsman for migrants within the relevant ministry to receive and investigate possible complaints and injustices faced by migrants.** The agency or ombudsman will provide a channel for young migrants to report abuse, such as the denial of wages or restrictions on freedom of movement or ability to change employers; it should also have a mandate to investigate the employers and living conditions of migrant workers. Governments should ensure that young migrants can log their complaints with somebody who is trained to deal with the special circumstances young migrants face such as racism or discrimination. The ombudsman or agency can share their insights with relevant ministries and agencies to improve public services for young migrants and, more generally, help to improve the public's perception of young migrants.

● **Develop a range of innovative approaches to deal with the specific integration needs of young migrants.** It is imperative to identify and utilize migrant youth capacities, to involve them in decision-making, and to tap their creativity, energy, and drive. Youth have to be successfully integrated into the education system and the labour market in order to participate fully in life. The Ministry of Education can implement programmes which will assist migrant youth in following the curriculum with initiatives, such as after school home-work assistance or special introductory classes for migrants to learn the language and fill any knowledge gaps. Governments can bring together the employment agencies, youth NGOs and prospective or actual employers to improve the employability and training of young migrants. Language courses tailored for young migrant workers at easily accessible locations are often effective means to integrate young migrants successfully into society.

● **Eliminate any restrictions on unionization of migrant workers.** Collective bargaining can yield increased salaries, more rights for workers, better working conditions, improved health care service and pensions, among other things. It also reduces the risk for young migrants to fall prey to exploitation by unscrupulous employers or recruiters. Unions can offer young migrants support and guidance so they become more aware of their rights and are less likely to be exploited. In the age of globalization, the bureaucratic barriers for migrants to join unions must be lowered. It is often a challenge for unions to find ways to recruit migrant workers. Increasingly, member-ship restrictions for migrant workers, including those working without legal permission, are waived as migrants are recognized as a vital part of the labour force.

- **Promote circular migration.** Circular migration has been encouraged by labour market segmentation where labour migrants perform jobs that nationals may not want to take on. Often, they are replaced by migrant workers from their own village and, after a few years, may return as temporary migrant workers. Migrant workers wishing to visit their families should not be discouraged from interacting with their country of origin through restrictions or entrance and exit levies. Also, authorized migrants are more likely to visit family and friends (and return after these visits) if they do not fear entanglements at the border. ●

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& *YOUTH* their Well-Being

YOUTH AND THEIR WELL-BEING
HEALTH

During this critical phase of their lives, young people are faced with questions about health and safety. Investment in services and support for youth will help them deal with physical and emotional changes.

The major causes of youth mortality are HIV/AIDS, violence and injuries. Health concerns of children, such as a sanitary living environment, malnutrition, infectious, parasitic and water-borne diseases, and tuberculosis are also relevant to youth. Although early pregnancy has declined in many countries, major causes of female youth mortality and injury, especially among the 15-19 age cohort, are complications from pregnancy and self-induced abortion. Young people suffer from chronic diseases too, such as asthma and diabetes, which are being diagnosed with increasing frequency in Europe and the United States. These conditions may also affect the social and intellectual development of youth; for example, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, asthma is one of the leading causes of school absenteeism and hospitalization in the United States. Basic environmental rights are vital to the health and opportunities of youth. The effects on this generation of youth born and brought up in environments with contaminants in the air, water, and food underscore the interconnection between environmental protection and health policy formulation. To combat the negative trend of environmentally-related diseases in young people, decision-makers should be aware of up-to-date research related to the nature and burden of chronic diseases, as such conditions may also increase the risk of developing other serious health complications over time.

Comprehensively addressing the health and well-being of young people involves ensuring access to health services that treat both mental and physical health, lowering the incidence of teen pregnancy through reproductive and sexual health education, and discouraging the use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. As behaviours that begin in adolescence can shape one's future, life skills-based education is also an important component of this comprehensive strategy. "Life skills" education seeks to give youth the ability to handle real life situations and avoid high risk behaviours, especially those involving behavioural choices related to relationships, health, sex and drugs. Youth often tend to downplay the risks associated with certain activities and stress their feelings of invincibility. Without complete and accurate information, these feelings make them less likely to take precautions to protect their health. Thus, programmes should provide non-judgmental support for youth to make intelligent and informed choices to avoid unwarranted risk and destructive activities (such as driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol), resulting in unintentional injuries inflicted upon themselves or others.

Some youth have often been critical of donor or government policies that have been formulated based on misconceptions or certain behavioural expectations regarding youth; these policies often do not address what many young people feel are their

real needs. Youth have also reported that available programmes often do not address the use of condoms or provide other information on sexually transmitted infections (STIs), despite evidence showing that condoms do not increase sexual activity in general or the number of partners of young people. Programmes may also fail to acknowledge that youth may experiment with drugs or alcohol.

Moreover, young people often do not access information and services due to fear of discrimination or stigma, which in some contexts can affect access to employment or education. Such fears can be quelled through safe and confidential "youth-friendly" health services and through political leadership that challenges these perceptions.

To challenge and redress any form of discrimination or abuse due to health status, government should identify, assess, and analyze barriers, and reduce inequalities in the provision of basic health services. Though youth may be considered a target population in health policy, there is an absence of health services that address the needs of youth. Challenges to ensuring a high standard of health are steepest where infrastructure and resources to provide basic human needs, such as clean water and basic health care, do not exist.

What are youth-friendly health services?

- Services that empower girls and young women to make decisions in relation to their sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, violence and discrimination. Education should also promote the understanding and respect of young men for those decisions.

- Counseling and practical help for young people relating to their reproductive health, including confidential testing and treatment of STIs, access to contraceptives, family planning assistance and HIV/AIDS prevention messages with the aim of decreasing youth vulnerability to disease, unwanted pregnancies and high-risk behaviours.

- Facilities and services that are available and accessible—both physically and economically—to all youth, without discrimination and provide them with the knowledge and skills they need to lead a healthy lifestyle.

To fully implement youth-friendly health services, it is necessary to encourage and provide incentives for medical and health specialists to be trained in this area. The right to health requires that functioning public health and health care facilities and services are staffed with well-trained professional health personnel. Facilities should assess the youth-friendliness of their services and create a plan to implement specific improvements.

How can government improve the health and well-being of youth?

- **Provide evidence-based information that is comprehensive and inclusive of young people.** Messages need to be tailored according to their specific needs, cultural context, vulnerability, and level of sexual activity. Messages and campaigns should be accurate, evidence-based and should not support perpetuating HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

- **Fulfill the right to health care by ensuring that clinics and health centres are convenient for youth and do not discriminate.** Conduct a review of laws and policies to guarantee that health care or medical treatment is not restricted based on age, gender or marital status. Do not require girls and young women to be accompanied by a male guardian to access health services. Accessibility is primarily determined by distance, time and cost. Health services are often concentrated in urban areas while sparse in rural regions and in locations of marginalized or out-of-school youth. Mobile health centres are effective in reaching marginalized communities. Increasing the numbers of these mobile centres should be part of a long-term plan of expanding coverage and sustaining youth-friendly health services.

- **Involve young people, including youth living with HIV/AIDS, in the design of health education and outreach materials.** Only with youth participation can a real demand for health services be increased. In many countries, segments of the population who report illness do not seek care. Ministries can create a youth advisory board to tailor messages to young people of varying religions, cultures, and sexual orientations so that young people do not feel shame or feel ostracized when seeking care or treatment. Policies need to recognize youth as a heterogeneous group with diverse needs.

- **Focus public education campaigns on parents as well as youth.** Parents are also educators and can reinforce messages their children learn in the classroom by openly discussing health concerns and social behaviour with their children. As many parents have everyday contact with their children, they should be encouraged to inform their children about the adverse effects of drug and alcohol abuse and tobacco addiction. Parents and caregivers themselves should be made aware of the symptoms of depression and suicide warning signs, and know when and how to intervene.

- **Ensure the inclusion of out-of-school youth who may miss some of the institutionalized, school-based health programmes taking place in the classroom.** School benefits children beyond the acquisition of knowledge; there is also a link between education and safer sexual behaviour and better personal hygiene. Thus the 120 million school age children, who are out of school and often at higher risk of ill health, should be reached through alternative channels. These youth can be reached through places of non-formal or agriculture-based education, through radio programmes, or at places where they spend their leisure time.

- **Consider conducting an analysis of the effect of user fees on access to health care for poor and low income youth.** Young people often do not seek care because of distance to facilities and lack of financial resources for services or transportation. If evidence confirms that user fees inhibit access to care, especially for those living in poverty and other disadvantaged groups, then their introduction or retention may be inconsistent with the right to health and governments should consider the options of eliminating or dramatically scaling them back to expand access to services.

- **Enact and enforce legislation prohibiting female genital mutilation wherever it exists.** To eradicate this practice that is harmful to girls both physically and psychologically, governments should support non-governmental, religious and local community organizations that conduct vigorous outreach for its elimination. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) states that: "In a number of countries, harmful practices meant to control women's sexuality have led to great suffering. Among them is the practice of female genital cutting, which is a violation of basic rights and a major lifelong risk to women's health" (para 7.35).

The reproductive health needs of both young women and men have largely been ignored by existing health information and services. This gap leaves young women and men without the level of maturity needed to make informed and responsible choices. Having children early is an impediment to the improvement of women's social and economic position in all parts of the world; it can also be an obstacle to the prosperity of the community due to the limitation of their education. In addition to the impact on young women, early motherhood also adversely affects the quality of life of their children.

The connection between healthy youth and social and economic benefits cannot be overstated. It is clear that investments in youth health will improve the general health of the population in a country, thus enabling social and economic development.

Meeting the health needs of youth also reduces maternal mortality. Strong policies that create an enabling environment for young people to access information and services are necessary for young people to protect themselves from HIV and to plan the size of their families.

How can government promote the sexual and reproductive health of young men and women?

- **Eliminate any policies that prevent young people under 18 or unmarried youth from using reproductive health services including requirements for parental consent.** These policies disregard the fact that young people under age 18 are often married and/or have children by that age. While men should be involved in reproductive health and be encouraged to share responsibility in matters related to family planning and parenting, women and girls should be able to discuss their health status with a health care professional without fear or shame.

- **Support youth-based organizations and initiatives that disseminate information on sexual and reproductive health.** Support can include the capacity building of young people in the areas of programme design and research and data collection, or the financing of peer to peer education to reduce unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (having an untreated STI significantly increases the risk of HIV infection). The media are also a source identified by young people as effective in conveying information and messages concerning positive behaviour.

Cooperating for Reproductive Health

In 1998, a groundbreaking Free Maternity Law, guaranteeing free maternal health care to pregnant women and their newborns, free contraceptives, access to family planning for women ages 15 to 45 and health care for children up to five years of age, was passed by the parliament in **Ecuador**. In order to make the law and its components known, the National Council on Women (CONAMU), a government agency, established Users Committees (known as Comite Usuarias) throughout the country. These Committees consist of seven to ten members, both women and men, elected by their communities to monitor the application of the law in their counties and to bring all public health facilities into compliance. The committees also inform women of their rights, educate medical staff about the provisions of the law and see that women who have not received the appropriate level of care from individual doctors or hospitals have legal recourse.

In response to the dearth of health services devoted to the reproductive health needs of adolescents, **Uganda** started a participatory process that led to the formation of the Programme for Enhancing Adolescent Reproductive Life (PEARL). PEARL aims to enhance the reproductive health of Ugandan adolescents by providing appropriate counselling and services. To ensure sustainability, PEARL calls for young people and community leaders to take a leading role in implementation efforts.

Cambodia also took a significant step to address adolescents' special needs by issuing guidelines instructing service providers not to discourage adolescents and unmarried clients from coming to service delivery points and to take special care of them.

Where governments have been reluctant to address adolescents' sexuality and reproductive health needs, non-governmental organizations have attempted to fill the gap. However, governments and NGOs can work successfully hand-in-hand in addressing adolescent reproductive health issues. Government-NGO cooperation exists in **Morocco**, where the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Moroccan Family Planning Association developed an innovative programme to educate youth about reproductive and sexual health. In youth clubs in five regions, adolescents create their own songs, drama, and puppet shows on topics like family planning, sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, communication, and family life and sex education; the best are performed at national festivals.

In the **Philippines**, male peer counselors are trained to advocate that married men practise or support family planning; this approach was adopted after research found that many husbands prevent their wives from practicing family planning.

Source: UNFPA

- **Primary health care and family planning facilities should offer the widest achievable range of safe and effective family planning methods for young men and women.** While safeguarding access to existing women's services, it is necessary to emphasize partnership and incorporate men's health services into general reproductive health. If family planning and preventive health programs focus exclusively on women, they are forced to take on a disproportionate burden for reproductive health and family size. Contraceptives should not be given only to married couples.

HIV/AIDS

According to UNAIDS, every minute four young people aged 15 to 24 become infected with HIV. Though young people account for over half of new infections, they also represent the greatest hope for turning the tide of the epidemic.

AIDS affects people during their most productive years, weakening families, communities, and slowing economic growth all over the world through the depletion of human capital. When young people's rights are not respected, their defence against the epidemic is weak. Thus the protection of human rights is essential to prevent the spread of the epidemic.

Women ages 15 to 24 are 1.6 times as likely to be HIV-positive as their male counterparts according to the UNAIDS Epidemic Update 2005. Seventy-five per cent of young people living with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa are female. These facts indicate serious gaps in the response to protect youth, especially young women, from HIV/AIDS.

Why is it important to scale up prevention, care and treatment for youth?

The vast majority of young people lack information and services to protect themselves from HIV. Illustrating a lack of knowledge among youth of their vulnerabilities, a recent UNICEF study found that up to 50 per cent of young women in high-prevalence countries did not know the basic facts about HIV/AIDS. The high infection rates are also due to ineffective prevention strategies that do not address gender inequality or the epidemiological realities of the epidemic.

Current prevention strategies do not always fit young women's realities. Surveys have shown in some parts of the world as many as 24 per cent of girls report their first sexual experience to be marked by coercion. UNAIDS director Peter Piot has commented that one approach, what is known as the ABC approach (Abstinence, Be Faithful, and Use Condoms), is sometimes inadequate in settings where gender inequality is pervasive because it does not address the difficulties encountered by women in negotiating condom use and in choosing when, and with whom they have sex. Women also have limited power to negotiate safe sex when they are married at a young age to much older men or are engaged in cross-generational relationships. Without prevention strategies that fit the realities of women's lives, young women become more vulnerable to HIV.

The epidemic has declined in situations where youth are aware of their vulnerabilities and know how to protect themselves, and where they have taken leadership roles to speak out about HIV/AIDS. The General Assembly agreed that by 2010 at least 95 per cent of young men and women aged 15 to 24 should have access to the information, education and services necessary to develop the life skills required to reduce their vulnerability to HIV infection. Young people's knowledge of HIV/AIDS can be verified through nationally representative youth population surveys that measure the ability of youth to identify prevention methods and the ways in which HIV is transmitted.

■ How can government fill the gaps in HIV/AIDS prevention for youth?

- **Support universal HIV/AIDS education.** Incorporating AIDS education into the classroom can help ensure widespread coverage, though studies show that it is not included in all school curricula. Every school should provide HIV/AIDS education in a life skills based context to help youth communicate better and negotiate difficult situations. Teacher training is integral to this process. Successful programmes have been the result of collaborations between Ministries of Education and Ministries of Health. For example, public schools in New York City are required by law to teach students a minimum of six lessons annually. HIV/AIDS education should also reach beyond the classroom; in the Democratic Republic of Congo, there are six postage stamps dedicated to AIDS prevention messages. Four of the six are directed at youth and are part of a "delayed debut campaign" that urges delaying sexual activity and using condoms.

- **Ensure that HIV/AIDS prevention programmes take gender inequalities into account.** Current prevention programmes often do not have their desired effect because they assume an idealized world in which everyone is equal and free to make empowered choices and because they ignore inequalities that shape people's behaviours and limit their choices.

- **Develop gender-sensitive and youth-friendly health and social services.** These services should include voluntary and confidential counseling and testing, condom distribution, sexual and reproductive health services, drug and alcohol use prevention and counseling, and referrals for specialized counseling. Access to good services will allow young people to determine their HIV status and encourage them to adopt safe behaviors whether or not they are infected.

- **Support the protection of youth at higher risk of HIV, such as injecting drug users (IDUs), migrants and those involved with commercial sex work, by providing accurate information about HIV transmission and alternative means of living.** In some countries, over half of infected young people are injecting drug users; policy makers can tailor campaigns and outreach to prevent HIV transmission among these populations. Creative programmes targeting vulnerable out-of-school youth must also be included in the national plan. In some areas, married adolescent girls are a vulnerable population and have high rates of unprotected sex compared to sexually active unmarried girls underscoring the need to include married youth in HIV prevention.

- **Guarantee that condoms are available free of charge to young people and develop a national strategy to increase access.** Condom use may be promoted with health and life skills education. With education about HIV transmission, sexually active young people are more likely to use condoms and reduce their number of sexual partners. The design of prevention programmes should recognize that many young people are sexually active and should equip them with the tools necessary to protect themselves. Young people also need the support of their families to make informed decisions and sound reproductive choices.

- **Give youth the opportunity to reach out and inform their peers.** Peers can play a significant role in helping each other make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health. Young people are often the most efficient at reaching their peers with positive messages; however, their activities must be informed and strengthened by adult cooperation. The protection of young people may be enhanced through their participation.

The face of AIDS is different in every country, and all governments must employ a multi-sectoral national strategy complemented by appropriate financing plans to address the root causes of young people's vulnerability. With the right information, support, care, and treatment, people with HIV/AIDS have a better chance of living vigorous and productive lives.

How can government better care for people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS?

- **Scale up high-impact food and nutrition interventions.** Food is the primary necessity for sustaining life, but food becomes even more vital for people infected with HIV/AIDS. Good nutrition is the first line of defence in warding off the debilitating effects of the disease. While it is no substitute for drug therapies, nutritious food can help people infected with HIV stay healthier, longer so that they may be productive members of their communities. Enshrined in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, which emerged from the UN General Assembly Special Session in 2001, is the call to integrate HIV/AIDS care, prevention, and treatment into development and poverty reduction strategies.

- **Minimize the risk of young women transmitting HIV to their babies through the provision of free antiretroviral treatment and through guidance to new mothers and fathers about safe feeding habits.** Many HIV-positive young women are aware of the risks of breastfeeding, but infant formula is financially out of reach or the stigma of not breastfeeding is too great.

- **Promote and strengthen family and community-based care for vulnerable youth and orphans affected by HIV/AIDS.** To achieve this, it is important to prevent the institutionalization of youth, and provide ways to keep siblings from being separated. The majority of orphans are adolescents and they should have equal access to education and receive the support they need to stay in school through, for instance, financial support for uniforms and books where necessary or the abolition of school fees.

- **Monitor and review school policies and practices concerning enrolment among AIDS-affected youth.** This population should include orphans and youth who have family members who are ill. At the policy level, governments should create links between ministries of education and national human rights commissions to develop a strategic plan for preventing systemic discrimination in access to education for AIDS-affected youth. Ministries of education should also consider appointing a focal point on HIV/AIDS who has expertise with AIDS-affected young people, reaching out to youth, and integrating HIV/AIDS education into the general curricula.

- **Develop or reform laws and public policies to protect people living with HIV/AIDS and their families from any discrimination or abuse, including policies that secure their inheritance, property, land, education and employment rights.** As part of this effort, school officials should be restricted from barring children from school for actual or perceived HIV status, the status of their parents, or difficulty meeting expenses or administrative requirements.

Young women also suffer disproportionately from the epidemic in that they bear the burden of caring for people living with HIV/AIDS. When programming and funding decisions are made, the work involved with this type of care is unpaid and is uncounted. AIDS makes the effects of poverty more acute and can often exacerbate the inequalities that frequently are a root cause of poverty. Poverty in areas of high prevalence may prove to be lethal if there are few to no economic opportunities or where there are unequal property and inheritance laws. For example, even though they may understand the risks, young women may still engage in risky behaviours such as sex in exchange for money or food. Thus, youth who are economically self-sufficient are less vulnerable to HIV. In addition to legislative reform and gender equality legislation, access to education and employment can mitigate the desperation felt by people affected by the epidemic and can provide additional choices so that dangerous decisions are not made and gender-based abuses that fuel the spread of HIV/AIDS are not committed.

Young people, especially women and girls, often become caregivers or heads of households when adults are sick; they are also often without the tools or legal recourse to guard against the economic shocks associated with AIDS in their households such as those caused by the costs of funeral expenses or medical care. This is especially true in rural communities that experience the burden of care. However, youth who are in school are often forced to leave when affected by HIV/AIDS due to additional household expenditures. As their time is absorbed by care duties, youth's opportunities to advance their education, achieve some financial independence through income generation, or build skills can fade.

How can government help youth cope with caregiver roles and alleviate the socio-economic and human impact of the epidemic?

- **Prohibit the application of customary law or local practices that undermine women's rights, specifically property rights that affect their assets.** In some countries, women over 18 remain legal minors even after marriage, reducing women's economic security. The lack of enforcement of young women's property and inheritance rights may leave young HIV/AIDS survivors and caregivers destitute.

- **Provide food and income subsidies, as well as guidance on making wills and ensuring youth's well-being on the death of one or both parents.** Actions should always enforce opportunities for youth to stay in school, even when a family is in distress. Other mechanisms that may buttress economic stability at the family level include tax relief and grants for community-based orphan care. Rural areas should not be sidelined in these efforts as many city dwellers return to their villages of origin when infected with HIV.

- **Give economic and social support to families and caregivers as well as support for improving home- and community-based care.** Options for resolving care issues include: cooperative day care and nutritional centres that assist caregivers with their workload, nutritional and educational assistance for orphans, home care for people living with or affected by HIV, labour sharing and cooperative income-generating projects.

- **Set out clearly, in law and policy, the rights and responsibilities of all individuals and organizations caring for youth affected by AIDS.** National AIDS commissions should include representatives from civil society as well as people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA).

GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

Without gender parity in such key areas as education, health and employment, the goals of the World Programme of Action for Youth will not be achieved or sustained. As such, the WPAY calls on governments and youth organizations to promote an "active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes". While the situation of young women and girls relating to their rights and development has been discussed within the context of all the other areas of this action guide to the WPAY, this section on the situation of women and girls focuses on the elimination of gender-based violence; in short, the security of women and girls to fulfil their dreams and live full and productive lives *without fear.*

Most gender-based violence is perpetrated by men against women, specifically by intimate male partners behind closed doors. Young women exposed to violence experience traumatic effects that have a lasting impact on their futures, extending for years after the abuse is committed.

The majority of cases of violence against women and girls go unreported. If women are aware of their legal rights and know how to access services that will protect them, they are more likely to report violence and abuse. Simply outlawing abuse is not enough; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) requires states to take "all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women." One way to prevent abuse is to ensure that in law and in policy women and men have the same rights to seek separation, divorce or annulment of a marriage. It is often these discriminatory laws and customs that prevent women from seeking help in an abusive relationship or reporting abuse.

As violence against women invades every economic level and social stratum, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the subject has called for the development of strategies to respond to violence against women at the national, community and

individual levels. Though progress has been made in establishing gender-based violence as a human rights concern, more attention needs to be devoted to improving both health and legal services for women who have experienced violence.

However, young women sometimes do not view the justice system as a viable option for addressing issues such as domestic violence. Crowded courts and unnecessary or unofficial fees conspire to create insurmountable obstacles to having women's cases heard. A young woman's economic situation should not be a factor in her ability to access justice.

The management of cases of violence against women by hospitals and by law enforcement is deeply flawed and many incidents do not receive the attention of the judiciary. Sometimes when cases are reported, hospitals do not report incidents to police and police do not encourage or facilitate medical attention.

A state's responsibility to protect women from non-discrimination extends to ensuring "public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity" to take "all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise." The 1993 General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) set forth ways in which governments should act to prevent violence and to protect and defend women's rights.[10] DEVAW holds states responsible to "exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetrated by the state or by private persons". Thus state actors along with private actors are to be held accountable when they perpetrate violence against women and girls.

How can government scale up protective services for victims and eliminate violence against women?

- **Take steps to enact and enforce laws that make domestic abuse illegal and treat rape, including rape within marriage, as a crime deserving severe punishment.** According to the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, legislation shall clearly state that violence against women in the family and violence against women within interpersonal relationships constitute domestic violence, a serious crime that will not be tolerated or go unpunished.

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[10] According to General Assembly Resolution 48/104, violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but is not limited to: (a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation; (b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution; and (c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

- **Establish family protection units in all police districts and recruit and train more female police officers.** Often law enforcement does not treat domestic violence as a crime or fails to report it as a gender based offense; these practices render police records inaccurate in measuring prevalence. Police should be trained and sensitized to address domestic violence not as a private matter of the home but as a crime capable of being prosecuted and punished by law. They should also encourage women to seek a medical examination in the case of injuries and help to locate alternative accommodations for her and her children if the perpetrator is a husband or partner.

- **Create and publicize a toll free hotline where women can access referrals to shelters and arrange for free transportation to shelters.** A well publicized number is a lifeline to safety where victims are confined by violence itself and the threat of violence, and should be integrated into resources and websites frequently used by female youth and young families. Trained hotline workers or volunteers should be able to brief young women on their options; if women are aware of their rights, they are more likely to file reports on violence and abuse.

- **Remove barriers to the effective prosecution of gender-based violence cases by training police and hospital staff to gather and preserve evidence.** The collection of physical evidence is critical to prosecuting cases of violence against women. When women are aware that these structures are in place, they are more likely to report abuse and seek care and safety.

- **Governments must articulate a comprehensive national program to provide post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to all sexual violence survivors free of charge as part of broader protocol and documentation guidelines for health care facilities treating sexual violence.** When the prevalence of HIV is high in the community, the likelihood of being exposed to HIV from a sexual assault increases. As part of a package of care that includes counseling, PEP is taken for 30 days starting within 72 hours of an assault to reduce the possibility of HIV transmission from an HIV-positive attacker. Measures need to be taken to ensure its availability and accessibility to all young women. The guidelines in South Africa cover both public and private health facilities; some universities also voluntarily provide PEP.

- **Develop a programme of action to reduce or remove the significance of bride price or dowry.** This enduring custom of the payment of a bride price upon marriage often acts as a mechanism that tightens men's control over women and property. Bride price acts as a form of bondage to many women and can be a major contributing factor to domestic violence. These transactions also prevent young brides from exercising power to negotiate safe sex in marriage or to leave abusive relationships. In addition to education and economic empowerment, governments can redefine bride price as an optional marriage gift and prohibit refunds that prevent women from leaving abusive relationships.

It is during the younger years that most substance use begins. If a person has not begun to use alcohol, tobacco or an illicit substance during this period, it is unlikely he or she ever will. Young people in almost all countries tend to use these substances to a greater extent and in riskier ways than do older people, and this behavior can result in significant problems in the short and long terms.

Sometimes young people, in an effort to assert their independence, will experiment with a range of ideas, products and lifestyles. Research in developed countries has found that the early initiation of alcohol use is associated with a greater likelihood of both alcohol dependence and alcohol-related injury later in life. Studies also show that in the United States and in several European countries the levels of drinking among young women have started to match or even surpass those among young men. The use of all types of drugs has risen sharply in Eastern Europe and Central Asia since the 1990's. In developed countries, drug use is associated with all income levels, while in developing countries it is generally linked to those with greater financial resources. While efforts to reduce the supply of drugs have met with limited success (beyond having the effect of ensuring that prices do not decline), it is imperative to shape people's perception of drug use from an early age. Prevention is a continuing process that needs to be reinforced at different stages in the development of children and adolescents.

What are some underlying factors that cause youth drug abuse?

- Girls often are induced to use alcohol and other drugs to become or stay slim, manage stress, appear mature, be popular with peers of both sexes, or escape overwhelming problems.

- Young people may use drugs due to feelings of low social worth resulting from a lack of opportunities for gainful employment and activities which provide recreation and skills development.

- Drug use has been integrated into some youth sub-cultures; this is especially dangerous given the recent trend of the globalization of youth cultures.

Multi-faceted strategies are the best way to approach issues as complex as drug abuse. Ideally, interventions should combine knowledge building and behaviour change with health promotion, self-esteem enhancement and peer pressure resistance skills.

Prevention strategies should foster and enhance individual strengths to develop resilience factors that protect individuals in stressful situations and environments, providing specific skills for resisting peer pressure to use drugs. It is also important to offer young people accessible and low-cost opportunities to meet, cultivate an appreciation for the arts, play sports and take part in other challenging activities that develop self-confidence. Some parents fear that safety-oriented discussions of drugs that cover topics ranging from the dangers of driving under the influence to mixing substances may lead to experimentation; however, knowing the risks can help youth follow a safe and productive path into adulthood.

How can government prevent and decrease drug use among youth?

- **Provide education and awareness programmes for youth, parents, teachers, social workers and others who work directly with young people.** Ensure that parents, social workers and teachers have the capacity to provide assistance, referrals, and information to prevent harmful activities. Like sexual and reproductive health messages, prevention activities should be integrated into the school curriculum. As youth have become skeptical of scare tactics, peer-to-peer education, where youth inform other youth of the hazards of drug abuse, is often an important addition to more traditional methods of providing education. When facilitated by trained and knowledgeable staff, focus-group discussions are a particularly effective format for young people to obtain information from other youth. Repeated exposure is most likely to result in behaviour change.

- **Reduce the demand for drug use, including alcohol and tobacco, through media campaigns.** Youth, just like others, are greatly influenced by the mass media and popular culture. The glorification of drug use, as is sometimes the case in some counter-cultural groups and in the portrayal of musicians and other celebrities, can often be a powerful influence. Equally, the portrayal of drug abuse as not cool and harmful can be equally powerful if presented as such by influential figures. Therefore, it is important to forge coalitions of celebrities and role models to join in that effort. Part of this prevention effort should include tighter restrictions on the marketing of alcohol and tobacco so they do not appeal to the curiosities of youth.

- **Ensure that prevention and treatment programmes include high-risk populations.** As mass media campaigns might have difficulty reaching higher-risk youth, they may need more extensive and geographically flexible interventions. It is important to bring drug abuse prevention to the streets and to discos, places where prevention messages are most needed and where these high risk youth congregate. Governments can partner with local non-governmental organizations that often have the trust of at-risk youth and populations that engage in potentially dangerous behaviors. Additionally, agreements between ministries of health or local health departments and nightclub owners can facilitate on-site outreach by trained youth, social workers, or health professionals. Youth involvement in the design and development of this strategy is crucial to its success.

- **Consider heavy taxation on alcohol and tobacco products and the passage and enforcement of minimum drinking age laws.** Youth are very sensitive to price fluctuations, and the manipulation of the cost of harmful substances has had an effect on abuse. To avoid the dangerous mixture of drinking and driving, provide youth with taxi vouchers or coupons for use on weekends in areas where there may be little public transportation.

- **Train youth leaders to set examples and promote healthy lifestyles.** 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 the training of youth leaders in communication and counselling skills.

How can government better treat and reduce the dependency of youth who abuse drugs?

- **Explore viable alternatives to imprisonment and reforms in the juvenile justice system that address addiction and dependency.** The consumption of drugs is traditionally considered a crime and is often punished with imprisonment. However, the incarceration of young drug users may not always be the most appropriate response. Prisons tend to be places where offenders are punished rather than rehabilitated to disengage from dependency on drugs. Governments should consider alternatives to incarceration, especially for youth who have not been found guilty of violent crime or other drug-related crimes. These alternatives include community service, enforced attendance in education and rehabilitation programmes and reparation where the offender is ordered to make amends with the victim of the crime.

Needle Exchange Programmes (NEP) for Injecting Drug Users

HIV/AIDS among injecting drug users was previously viewed as a limited phenomenon, affecting injectors and their immediate sexual partners without having an effect on a more generalised spread of the virus. However, recent studies have proven this view incorrect. Globally, it is estimated that 5%–10% of all HIV infections are attributable to injecting drug use, mostly via the use of contaminated injection equipment. According to the July 2005 United Nations World Drug Report, in many countries of Europe, Asia, the Middle East and the Southern Cone of Latin America, the use of non-sterile injection equipment has remained the most important mode of HIV transmission, accounting for as much as 80% (Russia) of all reported infections. Acknowledging this link between what has been labelled "twin epidemics" is key to shaping measures to prevent HIV in this high risk group which is mostly made up of young people. The provision of clean needles for injecting drug users reduces the damage to the young user as well as to his or her social network, and lessens the public health impact of substance abuse and HIV on society at large. In addition to curbing the spread of infectious disease, these services can also help prevent overdoses, provide treatment referrals and methadone substitution, and increase exposure to services that may impact behaviour change.

To enhance the success of NEPs in stemming the spread of HIV and other infectious diseases, it is also necessary to decriminalize the possession, distribution, and sale of syringes. While some might object to these programmes due to an expectation of increased drug use, studies have shown needle exchange programmes have neither increased the amount of drug use by the clients of these programmes nor changed overall community levels of drug use. To complement sites of needle exchange, barriers should be reduced or eliminated to allow for the availability of sterile syringes in pharmacies. Successful NEPs require the coordination of many actors at different levels including drug control agencies, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, local police and in some cases, the donor community. In the case of Kyrgyzstan, information sharing was crucial to the process as government officials went on study tours to learn about NEP in the Netherlands and Romania, and subsequently welcomed partnerships with NGOs and donors.

Funding for NEPs has been unstable but should be scaled up in light of the economic toll of the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic. Consultation with affected communities that raise concerns should be undertaken before an NEP is launched.

Source: Wolfe, Daniel (2005). *Pointing the Way: Harm Reduction in Kyrgyz Republic.* Bishkek and New York: Harm Reduction Association of Kyrgyzstan and Open Society Institute.

School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley and the Institute for Health Policy Studies, University of California, San Francisco (1993). The public health impact of needle exchange programs in the United States and abroad: summary, conclusions and recommendations. Retrieved April 21, 2006, from http://www.caps.ucsf.edu/publications/needlereport.html.

- **Create guidelines and standard minimum rules to assist national and local authorities in law enforcement and prison systems in the initiation of treatment and rehabilitation services.** Such actions constitute 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, in addition to the squandered human capital and personal tragedies which result from drug dependence and criminal behaviour. In the medium term, programmes that seek to break a cycle of dependence may have an effect on lowering drug-related crime. Incarcerated youth who are drug dependent should be targeted as priority candidates for treatment and rehabilitation services and should be segregated as appropriate.

- **Provide health services and care to current users that do not require total abstention before the provision of assistance.** The primary logic behind such services is to increase the drug user's exposure to qualified professionals thus increasing the likelihood of behaviour change and ultimately the abstention from drug use. It is also important for authorities to provide other drug users with assurances that they need not fear arrest when informing emergency services or the police of overdose victims, thus enabling witnesses to assist overdose victims and prevent the unnecessary loss of life.

- **Support the provision of assistance to recovering users to socially reintegrate them into the community.** Governments should provide recovering drug users incentives and assistance to facilitate their reintegration into society. Services should include assistance in finding adequate housing, gainful employment and education. Programmes should include roles for families and communities to reinforce positive lifestyles in the stages of recovery.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Young people constitute one of the most criminally active segments of the population. It should be noted that many young offenders do not commit violent crime but participate in less serious offences such as shoplifting, graffiti, or nuisance behaviour that is sometimes labelled as "anti-social". Policy makers should bear in mind the varying degrees of legal and social norms violated by young people and that eventually most young people will desist from criminal and deviant activity.

There is seldom one simple reason for the increased tendency towards criminal behaviour; however, inequality, especially horizontal inequality (disparities between groups), increases its likelihood. Another risk factor is the inability of a growing number of countries to fully integrate youth into society, especially in terms of employment. A higher level of education is usually correlated with a lower likelihood of delinquency, but this can change in environments of economic downturns and high unemployment, especially in urban areas. Juvenile offenders have often been exposed to violence in their childhood. Youth faced with bleak prospects, difficult circumstances and feelings of injustice, can feel isolated and may turn to violent behaviour. However, it should be noted that socio-economic status is not the only risk determinant.

The United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, also known as the Riyadh Guidelines, assert that prevention of youth delinquency is key to reducing the overall crime rate in society.

■ How can government prevent youth delinquency?

- **Ensure equality of opportunity among youth in education and employment.** While poverty alone may not create or aggravate conflict, youth may experience strong resentment and be more inclined to engage in illegal activity when they experience inequality, feel frustration and perceive a gap between what they have and what they believe they deserve or what others have.

- **Provide mentors to act as role models for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds.** Mentor programmes pair screened adult volunteers with youth from troubled backgrounds to foster self-esteem, guidance, trust in adults and friendship. Interviews with the youth and his or her parent help to facilitate a good match with a volunteer and allow a case worker to track the relationship and the progress of the youth over time. Research indicates that youth who participated in one U.S. mentor programme, Big Brothers Big Sisters, were much more likely than the control group to have better relationships with family and peers and less likely to initiate alcohol use.

- **Conduct training sessions on violence, including gender-based violence, in local schools.** Instilling an intolerant attitude toward violence and reinforcing positive social orientation can act as a buffer against delinquent behaviour. As an exercise in setting standards, youth should be included in defining school policies related to all forms of violence.

- **Provide free psychosocial support to young people living with the effects of violence.** Juvenile offenders have often been exposed to violence within the family. In order to prevent this violence from becoming learned behaviours, programmes should teach youth with difficult childhoods how to communicate and build relationships free from violence. As there is a high correlation between juvenile delinquency and alcohol and drug abuse, these services can also help youth cope so they do not adopt these destructive habits or addictions.

- **Whenever possible, involve parents in any interventions targeting youth delinquency.** Successful interventions can help parents improve their "life skills" and help them deal with everyday issues such as work stress, depression, marital conflict, housing, and money matters. To become better equipped to manage these common life issues, interventions should provide training on how to nurture and communicate effectively with their children and how to parent more effectively.

- **Empower local youth groups to take part in improving their own communities.** Juvenile delinquency is largely a group phenomenon; however, the propensity of youth to identify strongly with peer groups can be channeled into more positive activities to reinforce the link between low crime rates and social inclusion and to promote respect for the law. Increases in after-school youth programs have allowed youth to participate in more constructive activities and stay off the streets.

Access to Guns

The circulation of small arms has an incalculable toll on health, security, education, and economic development. In his 25 July 2005 report on assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted that small arms and light weapons pose a "complex and multifaceted challenge to international peace and security, social and economic development, human security, public health and human rights, among others". According to UN Habitat, youth homicide rates can be up to three times higher than national homicide rates in some parts of Latin America, illustrating how youth are central to the increase in violence in the region. Stricter regulations could make guns more difficult for youth to obtain and facilitate law enforcement efforts to combat gun-related crime.

How can government prevent unsupervised youth access to guns?

- Explore enacting bans on all handguns to civilians or certain cheap models that are attractive to youth.

- Consider the establishment of effective means of marking and tracing firearms.

- Establish consumer product requirements so that guns are equipped with safety features such as trigger locks. These features could make guns more difficult for youth to fire, and technology may soon allow guns to be "personalized" so that only authorized owners may fire them.

- Strengthen government licensing procedures to ensure that the firearms industry operates within a legitimate framework and only has relationships with legitimate law-abiding dealers.

- Develop a system where buyers undergo background checks and obtain a safety license before the purchase of a firearm.

- Call for restrictions on the number of guns that can be purchased in a one-month or one-year period.

Rehabilitation and Alternatives to Detention

Rather than relying on punitive measures, it is possible to institute community-based approaches that promote social inclusion and strengthen the overall well-being of youth. According to the Beijing Rules, "whenever possible, detention pending trial shall be replaced by alternative measures, such as close supervision, intensive care, or placement within a family or in an educational setting or home."

As youth delinquency usually begins with non-violent or petty offences, this behaviour can be corrected through community or family environments. Any commission or ministries involved in juvenile justice should serve as advocates for youth. Most delinquency interventions are driven by referrals from the police or local courts. Thus the cooperation and partnership of community and social service agencies as well as civil society are essential to the success of youth rehabilitation. To facilitate fluid and effective referrals or sentencing procedures, it is necessary to establish judicial and police units specialising in youth issues to deal with the background and alleged crime of each youth and reintegrate the individual.

Article 10(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (1990) should also be part of the international standards incorporated into national legislation.

How can government provide rehabilitation services and programmes for youth?

- **Guide juvenile delinquents who have left school to education or employment programmes that focus on skills building or enhancing self-esteem and confidence.** This process requires work with individual youth, their families and communities. Providing marketable skills training and facilitating their entry into the workforce are necessary components of rehabilitation programmes. Such programmes may require coordination between the Ministries of Labour and Education as well as the Ministry of Justice.

- **Use a probationary period for new offenders to target high-risk youth with a range of services such as supervised retreats, community-based sanctions, mentoring and counselling.** Art and photography classes, or other means for self-expression can complement community service requirements of youth probation. Services should be provided based on the individualized needs of youth.

- **Consider alternative forms of youth justice that fit with the local culture and community.** Such programmes can serve to instil respect for the law, provide reconciliation for the victim and the accused, and teach forgiveness. They can also address the fundamental problem leading to the criminal activity.

- **Conduct an assessment of detention policy and practice and examine how they relate to the rehabilitation of youth.** To ensure the safety of young people, ensure that juveniles alleged to be or found to be delinquent shall not be detained or incarcerated in adult jails or correctional facilities. Specialised courts and/or procedures and measures applicable to youth, such as efforts to minimize the time a youth must await trial, should be part of a plan to protect the rights of young offenders. Potential remedies might include revisions in criminal procedures or building the capacity of key actors in the justice system to deal effectively and fairly with youth offenders. Efforts to reform the juvenile justice system in Thailand involved a partnership among the Office of the Attorney General, a subcommittee on law reform, the Department of Public Welfare, the National Youth Bureau (NYB), child and youth NGOs and UNICEF; all the key players in the juvenile justice system, including social workers, family court judges, prosecutors and police, received training and guidance to adapt to the new system.

- **Engage in capacity building to provide a continuum of services for youth.** A minimum of six months of follow-up is integral to ensuring the non-repetition of juvenile crime and to divert youth from further involvement in the criminal justice system. To achieve the desired outcome, probation monitors or parole officers should be recruited and trained to work effectively with youth.

Palau—Restorative Justice for Young Offenders

In Palau's Restorative Justice Programme, a young offender and the victim meet face-to-face with members of the community with the aim of reaching an agreement where the offender will complete a set of restorative actions. These actions, performed within a year of agreement, can include community service, service to the victim's family, or payment of a fine. Both parties have to agree to participate after the Ministry of Justice has referred the case to Restorative Justice. All participants at the conference, including the offender and the victim, determine the appropriate terms to provide restoration for the victim and society. With serious consequences for non-compliance of the agreed terms of the settlement, the programme provides an opportunity for the accused and the victim to identify and acknowledge the delinquent behavior and to address the problems associated with the offense.

Source: UNICEF at http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/Justice_for_Children_Detention.pdf

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YOUTH IN ARMED CONFLICT

Youth face distinct risks in situations of armed conflict and post-conflict. They are more likely than young children to: be recruited into fighting forces; become targets for sexual violence; need and lack reproductive health care; contract sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV; head households; be forced to generate a livelihood for themselves and others; and miss out on education opportunities. Male and female youth may face all of these risks, but females are often particularly at risk and face distinct consequences. At a critical time of transition from childhood to adulthood, youth affected by armed conflict are forced to take on enormous responsibilities rapidly, with little preparation or support. Failure to support these young people at this critical juncture in their lives poses increased threat to them and their societies, which depend on them for immediate survival and future development.

Despite the upheaval of war, young people do not lose their rights to protection embodied in the full range of humanitarian and human rights standards. Several international agreements offer explicit protections, including the Geneva Conventions, the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the International Labour Organization Convention 182 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Youth who are under the age of 18 have particular protection from forced recruitment into fighting forces in ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and through the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. Both prohibit the forced or compulsory recruitment of children under the age of 18 into fighting forces and set standards of practice for both state and non-state actors. The CRC also provides for the psychosocial recovery of children affected by war, rehabilitation and full rights for the disabled, family reunification and other support for children separated from caregivers in war and more. All States that have not already done so should ratify the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. There is no universal protection for youth 18 years of age and older from compulsory recruitment into state forces. Standards of humanitarian practice also rarely make explicit reference to the rights and needs of youth.

Why do some youth engage in conflict?

International attention to youth and armed conflict has tended to focus on the involvement of young people in fighting forces. In reality, very few youth engage in violence during armed conflict compared to their overall number in society. Most youth seek constructive ways to cope with their circumstances instead of turning to violence. However, those that do become involved have a major impact on their entire societies as they struggle with the devastation of war. Both males and females may become involved in government or rebel fighting forces. Some choose to join, believing in a cause or because they lack other options to care for themselves; they may find meaning, sustenance and protection among fighting groups. Others are forced. Both males and females may play a variety of roles, including as combatants, cooks, spies and messengers. Females may also be sexually enslaved and sustain dangerous pregnancies, and males may be forced to rape. Despite tremendous abuses they may suffer, including loss of their lives, those who survive their experiences in fighting forces also learn many coping skills that—with appropriate support and opportunities—could be transformed into useful life skills following demobilization.

What conditions contribute to an environment that prevents youth from engaging in conflict?

Among many other things, educational and vocational opportunities for youth can decrease the risk that young people will be recruited into fighting forces. Educational measures emphasizing dialogue and skills in crisis prevention and peacebuilding can also help prevent armed conflict. Supportive family and community structures are also critical to protecting young people from manipulation and exploitation. Special attention is needed to youth-headed households, particularly those headed by females, and orphaned and separated youth.

Periods of stability may be the most opportune to influence youth to resist participating in armed conflict, but preventive strategies are also urgently needed during armed conflict. In these times, youth, community leaders and others can identify recruitment risks and develop prevention strategies. They may involve ensuring schools, youth centers, market places and transit routes are safe. Any recovery and reintegration efforts should concentrate on promoting youth capacities and should take place in an environment that fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of youth.

How can government, in partnership with humanitarian and development groups, support youth reintegration?

- **Support education, including vocational and other skills training, to help youth become self-sufficient and avoid further abuses.** All youth affected by armed conflict cite education in a variety of forms as critical to their well-being. Learning opportunities are needed during and after armed conflict and should maximize the development of critical life skills. Skills learned during conflict help prepare young people and their communities for transition. Older youth are particularly in need of skills to generate a livelihood. These programmes can help provide alternatives to engaging in armed conflict and increase youth protection. They are particularly important to female youth, who often face greater barriers to education and less access to resources overall than males. Gender- and age-specific programming is needed to ensure the special needs of both females and males are appropriately addressed. Youth heads of household, orphaned and disabled youth also need targeted approaches. Similarly, education and livelihood opportunities for former youth soldiers provide immediate alternatives to armed conflict. However, like those for other young people with special needs, such support should not be provided in ways that increase their stigmatization and must be part of comprehensive, multi-sectoral approaches supporting youth protection and development.

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- **Incorporate provisions concerning youth, including former child soldiers, into peace agreements.** Youth are important agents of social change and have central roles to play in reconstruction, peacebuilding, the development of participatory democracies and the achievement of positive outcomes of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programmes. Including youth in the mediation process as well as the agreements themselves enhance their implementation. DDR programmes and peace agreements must also ensure that gender divides are thoroughly addressed, as well as the special needs of disabled young people. Female youth involved in fighting forces require targeted support to ensure they are not left out of DDR programmes and that their special health and reintegration needs are met. They may, for example, face different challenges than males returning home with children and without the possibility of marriage or livelihood and face increased risks of sexual violence and exploitation. Females may also be neglected in civic participation programmes supporting youth leadership. Likewise, disabled young people face enormous barriers to ensuring their health and well-being. Targeted funds and approaches are also needed to ensure their rights are fulfilled within wider programming efforts for and with youth.

- **Implement programmes to trace and reunite separated youth with their families and other caregivers.** Children and youth may be without family or other caretakers during and/or after armed conflict. Children alone are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation and require assistance to trace and reunify with family when possible. Youth who are 18 or over do not necessarily receive support reunifying with family. Increased attention is needed to assist those youth who may want to receive more support to find family or return home but who do not qualify for this support in adult track DDR programmes. The safe return home or relocation to other places of displaced youth should be viewed as central to reconstruction and security efforts.

- **Support community-based approaches to the reintegration of former youth soldiers.** Healing and community reconciliation initiatives should be adapted to local settings with the goal of psychosocial reintegration of the individual and a durable peace for the community. At times, traditional rituals may be needed to help individuals, families and communities heal. Support should emphasize unmitigated community acceptance and the assumption of a new identity and accepted role for the former soldier.

- **Target young men and women affected by conflict in HIV prevention and treatment programmes.** Although there is no one-to-one relationship between the spread of HIV and armed conflict, several risk factors are often exacerbated by armed conflict. For example, sexual abuse, increased poverty and decreased access to health services in many settings can increase the risk of contracting HIV. Multi-sectoral approaches to HIV prevention and AIDS mitigation, such as those outlined in the Interagency Standing Committee Guidelines for HIV/AIDS Interventions in Emergency Settings, should be implemented by humanitarian stakeholders, including peacekeeping forces if present.

- **Engage youth affected by war in media and public information work to enhance their protection and development, as well as peacebuilding.** Youth are effective communicators about the issues that affect their lives and should be engaged in designing and implementing programmes that target their peers. Media work can focus on issues ranging from health and safety to social reintegration and civic action. The TA Radio programme in Sierra Leone seeks to inform the ex-soldiers about options that are part of the reintegration process. It also provides a forum where this population can discuss issues affecting their lives.

● **Ensure youth issues and leadership are mainstreamed into all ministerial and local government approaches to reconstruction.** Often the issues of particular populations are addressed primarily by one government ministry. For example, a Ministry of Gender and Social Affairs might be the locus of policy action for children and women. Youth issues that cut across these categories and many others, including economic development, are often overlooked completely or relegated to a Department of Youth with limited influence over cross-cutting governmental policy and action. Post-conflict governments must take strong action to ensure youth are not marginalized from political processes and that those with explicit responsibility for supporting youth have full cooperation across ministries and local governmental structures. Action to engage youth as essential civil society, reconstruction and development partners should be supported. If a national youth strategy does not exist, engage youth in developing one, as well as policies and programmes that immediately support their well-being and ownership of the political process. ●

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YOUTH in Civil Society

YOUTH IN CIVIL SOCIETY

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Too often, youth are left out of the processes that shape their futures. Participation is part of the process of the empowerment of young people. Nevertheless, societies often do not view young people as indispensable contributors to policy formulation, evaluation and implementation. In recent years, some governments have taken significant steps in promoting a place for youth in decision-making. Greater involvement of youth in the home, school and the community will not only benefit their socio-economic environment but also their own capacity and personal development. Participation must be seen as a means and an end. Active and informed participation by young people is not only consistent with, but also demanded by, the rights-based approach discussed in Part I because the international human rights normative framework affirms the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs. Without the voices and participation of youth, the vision of the World Programme of Action for Youth cannot be achieved.

■ Why is youth participation important?

Though youth participation itself can cost time and money in the short run, the process will result in activities that are based upon issues facing youth and upon their understanding of problems and will be therefore more relevant to the needs of their generation. Their participation can lead to better targeting of benefits to youth, the group that can best identify the impact of specific laws and policy. It can also help to secure the sustainability of activities as youth, as primary stakeholders, will be more invested in their momentum. Types of participation range from consulting and consensus building, to partnership, evaluation and management.

Youth participation in policy formation can help to highlight the link between public spending (budgets) and youth development, to sensitize people in ministries to the concerns of young people, and to monitor progress in fulfilling the WPAY. In addition to influencing budgets so that they reflect the needs of youth, young people can also help to reform institutions that affect their lives. Institutions should provide mechanisms for youth to participate in deliberations on policy and to help guide and set priorities within such discussions. Youth should be engaged not just with governments or in policy-making but in all aspects of society, setting the stage for their continued participation throughout adulthood.

■ What conditions help provide a good environment for youth to meaningfully participate in society?

- Freedom to organize without restriction, prejudice or discrimination (freedom of association).

- The ability to meet regularly without impediment (right of assembly).

- The freedom to say what they want without fear of intimidation or reprisal (freedom of expression) and to stay informed (right to information). With improved access to information, young people can make better use of their opportunities to participate in decision-making.

- The ability to receive support from, and collaborate with, other segments of civil society and the media.

■ How can government facilitate the capacity building of youth organizations?

- Allow youth organization to open bank accounts.

- Provide space for student councils in all universities and secondary schools to represent the interests of students.

- Provide safe and convenient meeting spaces for youth.

- Facilitate national and international cooperation between youth organizations.

What does it mean to describe good governance for youth participation? It means that youth derive a sense of empowerment from their participation in the decision-making process. While youth participation can be praised, it has to be actively promoted and thus it involves different approaches and methods.

■ How can government promote and include youth in government and policy formation?

- **Give young people increased access to the decision-making process and policy implementation at the local level.** Many youth do not see a connection between politics and their daily realities; however, this does not mean that they are not interested in their futures. A process of building trust may be initiated when young people have increased access to the decision-making process. Young people can emerge from such exposure with increased self-esteem, better communication skills and better knowledge about their communities and effective leadership. Such opportunities are likely to arise in community-level activities, and youth are more likely to flourish within an institutional framework of representative local government. Thus, one element of the decentralization of government and a deepening of democracy is the institutionalization of opportunities for youth.

- **Offer civic education in schools for young people to learn about their rights and responsibilities as citizens.** Research has shown that most youth have a strong desire to actively engage with their communities but know little about the decision-making process. By knowing more about the political system, young people will be better equipped to identify, support and monitor the elections of candidates who press for economic progress, social justice, and peace.

- **Assess the organizational structures of institutions so that youth may play a role in their core functions.** Young people's role should not be limited to that of bystanders or advisors. Institutional reform allows youth to participate on a consistent basis and not only in ad hoc or project-based activities. Organizations at every level have felt the pressure to change their structure at some time; adapting government structures to facilitate the participation of youth should be seen as part of the progress of their transformation over time. Ministries can appoint a focal point who is consistently accessible to youth organizations. However, participation itself can become over institutionalised and become a part of the bureaucratic routine. Being conscious of this possible outcome can serve to avoid complacency.

- **Explore the creation of national youth parliaments and local youth councils as mechanisms to include youth in the decision-making process.** Some local governments have recognized these forums as permanent statutory bodies that guide the development of policies by serving as a resource for civil servants and legislators. They have also traditionally served as major channels for the cooperation and exchange of information with national governments. Networks of local youth councils can foster exchange between different cultures and regions of a country as well.

- **Include youth representatives in national delegations to the General Assembly and other relevant United Nations meetings.** Youth delegates enrich the debate and policy dialogue and strengthen existing channels of communication and cooperation between governments and young people. An open and transparent selection process should target a diverse array of youth organizations and include youth in the decision-making process itself. Selected youth should receive a briefing before their arrival so they are familiar with the procedures and work of the UN. Support for youth delegates should continue upon return to their home country—this support should help leverage their experience so that their role as a representative of their country in an inter-governmental forum may inspire other young people and have a continuing impact. Information for governments on how to bring young people as delegates to UN headquarters is available at: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/youthrep.htm

- **Promote the accessibility of elected officials to youth.** Elected leaders should be encouraged to keep "office hours", through an established minimum per month, designated specifically for an exchange with youth representatives and youth organizations. Young people may hear the leader's proposals and hear feedback and offer avenues for follow-up to keep lines of communication open. As part of this effort, leaders should also participate in interviews with youth media.

- **Facilitate the input of youth in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process.** Though donors and the United Nations advocate for country ownership of the PRSP process, this should not be interpreted narrowly to mean ownership on the part of the government alone. The strategy has to be owned by all relevant stakeholders within the country, including youth. Little more than half of the PRSPs to date were drafted with the consultation of young people. Being better informed by the views and ideas of poor youth can lead to a more integrated approach based on local, regional and national assessments of the specific challenges lived by poor youth.

- **Conduct a survey on the voter participation rates of eligible youth and launch campaigns to increase young voter participation among identified inactive youth.** Voting is one powerful sign of youth connectedness. Though much of the information gathered on voter participation reflects national averages, disaggregated data from these national statistics can be helpful in reaching out to youth who are not participating.

Organizations made up primarily of young people have specific needs. For example, they often face difficulties accumulating resources. To address this challenge, they should have access to financial services to open bank accounts. So that youth civil society can flourish, youth should be regularly permitted to use city premises, such as schools or meeting halls, to meet.

Youth at the United Nations

At the sixtieth General Assembly, Member States:
Welcomed the participation of youth representatives in national delegations, and urged Member States to consider being represented by youth representatives on a continuing basis during relevant discussions in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, bearing in mind the principle of gender balance. (A/RES/60/2, para. 9)

The underlying principle of youth participation in the work of the United Nations is that it leads to better policy and programmatic responses to the problems facing young people today. Not only do youth delegates enrich the debate and policy dialogue, they strengthen existing channels of communication and cooperation between governments and young people. Youth may participate in the general work of their Missions through attending a range of meetings, receptions, and informal negotiations and by providing assistance in monitoring general debates and drafting reports. Very often they liaise with youth representatives from other countries to exchange information and build upon their experiences. They may be invited to speak at various side events or panel discussions organized by their Mission, the United Nations Secretariat, or non-governmental organizations.

Missions should provide a briefing to youth delegates before their arrival to discuss and determine their role in the delegation. The selection process is frequently overseen by the government authority directly responsible for youth (e.g., Ministry of Education, Department of Youth and Sport, Ministry of Cultural and Social Affairs, or equivalent) or is delegated to a National Youth Council. The name of the selected delegate is then transmitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (or equivalent) and later to the country's Permanent Mission to the United Nations. It is also helpful to inform the United Nations Programme for Youth, so that the youth delegate can be appropriately directed to resources and supported in understanding the work of the United Nations.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Youth are often trailblazers when it comes to new technologies. They also learn and adapt quickly, and are hungry for information. With youth at the forefront as users and also as providers, information and communication technology (ICT) has the ability to transform people and communities. There is also a clear role for ICT in achieving global youth priorities such as education, employment, and the engagement of young people in civil society. However, while ICT plays a significant role in youth culture and has become a significant driver of development, its promise remains out of reach for many youth, especially those in the developing world.

Shared access to ICT increases its impact; thus, addressing disparities in access is the most pressing issue today. Governments should evaluate inequalities in access that exist between urban and rural youth, and between young women and men, and develop national strategies to overcome this "digital divide" in each country. These plans can decrease the number of information-poor youth.

■ Why are information and communication technologies important to the empowerment of youth?

Using ICT to Enhance Education and Youth Employment

ICT has the capacity to enhance the educational experience of both students and teachers in a manner incomprehensible to past generations. ICT can be used in schools to improve the quality of education and better prepare youth for the demands of the information society. Technology as a tool and a medium has made the learning environment more interactive and has brought an expanded array of subjects to more students in more places. Young people with IT skills are making the work force more knowledgeable and therefore making the youth labour market more attractive.

Beyond the classroom, ICT can also improve the dissemination of labour market information so that young people will be better equipped in choosing a career path. More and more youth are utilizing online websites, both commercial and government-run, dedicated to career resources, job searches and training. Youth have proven to be both business and social entrepreneurs using technologies ranging from mobile telephones to email, to instant messaging, radio, TV and computers. While ICT reduces distances and generates new markets for creating opportunities for young entrepreneurs, youth are creatively using technology to invigorate local economies and address the needs of their communities.

Using ICT to Enhance Youth Engagement and Participation

Access to technologies is spreading rapidly and has proven to be an effective tool for development with its ability to foster the sharing of information and opportunities for youth to express their ideas and opinions. With young people in many areas as the principle users of computers, communications technology and new media have challenged traditional forms of engagement. New technologies have been a force for advancing youth participation in civic activities and youth organizations are using

technology and the media to expand their networks, raise funds and build the membership of their organizations. Internet technologies are increasingly serving as hubs for the communication, identity formation and social networking of youth. Youth across borders have used ICT to discuss the challenges they face, find common causes and act collectively.

With a great deal of content emanating from young people, one of the most salient observations of youth internet use is the power they have in this medium to share ideas and express themselves. Simple ways to produce content and instantly disseminate information have created conditions favourable to outlets for creativity, avenues for knowledge building, new expressions of citizenship and new forms of advocacy and mechanisms to connect to others. While there is clearly a distinct culture among youth on the Internet, youth are also creating strong links with their school, community, teachers, government and the workplace. Accessing information through the internet is a phenomenon that also is observed in developing countries.

At the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis, participants affirmed their commitment "to empowering young people as key contributors to building an inclusive Information Society" and to "actively engage youth in innovative ICT-based development programmes and widen opportunities for youth to be involved in e-strategy processes."

How can government use information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance education and employment for youth?

- **Facilitate the introduction of IT systems into all universities as well as primary and secondary schools.** The Ministry of Education should include ICT in curriculum development and teacher training. It should not simply be presented as a new subject, but mainstreamed so that youth can conduct research to embrace the amount of information available and transform it into knowledge. Developing such an infrastructure, commonly referred to as a "schoolnet", cannot be achieved without the participation of multiple ministries as well as private sector partnerships. The far-reaching impact of these projects usually exceeds the mandate of one ministry alone. Professional development of staff should complement the physical integration of IT in schools; workshops should focus on using the Internet to enhance teaching, on schoolnet communities and on better preparing youth for the job market.

- **Target skill building and job training in the technology sector.** Such policies automatically target youth by focusing on a sector that employs a good percentage of young people and has a profound linkage to the growth of other sectors creating new jobs where youth are viewed as desirable employees.

- **Integrate new technologies beyond urban centres to mitigate feelings of rural social and economic isolation among youth.** In remote areas, there may not be sufficient market incentives to establish the connectivity of rural youth; thus, an extra investment by the government or the international community is needed so that wireless technology can greatly improve upon the communications infrastructure. The internet can also be used to incorporate distance and e-learning so rural youth have access to educational and vocational training. Technology can also import libraries to classrooms that do not have access to books, thereby decreasing urban-rural gaps in the quality of education.

- **Provide opportunities and training in e-commerce to enhance the growth of youth- owned and operated business.** E-commerce can open up livelihood opportunities for young people and provide them with markets for their goods and services that they would not otherwise have. Without relocating, young entrepreneurs as well as independent artisans can reach information, suppliers, and more customers.

- **Improve the educational prospects of low-income students by providing them and their families with home computers**. The younger generation has been busy teaching the old to use emerging technologies; computers in the home can enhance this trend of inter-generational learning. For students without proficiency with computers, youth and their parents may be invited to the school for training programmes that can increase parental involvement in their children's education, help students become more engaged in their own learning, and use computers in the home.

- **Ensure that young women and people with disabilities have equal access to ICT training.** If these groups have the skills to access ICT, they are less likely to suffer further social exclusion. As female youth are often steered away from technical sectors in choosing career paths, the Ministries of Labour and Education should develop initiatives to inform female youth about opportunities in the field of ICT. Programmes that target traditionally disadvantaged groups may be part of a larger effort for social inclusion in development. ICT literacy should be seen as part of the effort to foster a contemporary definition of citizenship.

Schoolnets

"Schoolnets" promote the development of knowledge societies by connecting schools to the Internet, building connections among students, teachers and schools, sharing information and resources and supporting e-learning in online, networked environments.

Governments should articulate a rationale for the use of ICTs in education that is linked to national economic and social development objectives. Enabling conditions or components for "schoolnets" include sufficient computers with good connectivity, a financial commitment for sustainability, ongoing technical support, and a receptive educational environment where teachers are willing to learn and adapt to new methods and means in the classroom. Support for ICTs in education by political and educational leadership is also key to the effective delivery and success of the project.

Though the goals of national-level schoolnets are similar across countries, their organizational structures exist in many forms. For example, in some cases, providers of connectivity and educational services are separate.

Where the education system is not already changing in response to new needs, schoolnets should consider promoting broader educational system change as a component of the programme.

Australia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand have established national schoolnets. More information is available about their country experiences at:
http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ict/e-books/SchoolNetKit/SchoolnetKit.pdf

Source: UNESCO Schoolnet Toolkit (2004).

How can government facilitate the contribution of ICT to youth participation in society?

- **Use ICT to advance youth participation in government and decision-making through encouraging all elected members of parliament and ministries to maintain information on their accessibility to youth on the world wide web.** Public information improves the quality of leadership and governance and enhances public trust so that the needs and aspirations of all segments of society, particularly those of young people, are met. What has, in some areas, become known as "e-government" works to make local and national government and the provision of services more efficient and more accountable in delivering better outcomes for people. It also can provide a modality for two-way communications or "internet discussions" between authorities and youth. This objective can only be a reality if digital content is consistently developed and updated.

- **Provide accurate and up-to-date information on government resources and programmes for youth on the internet.** Many youth regard the internet as the primary source for information on anything from leisure activities to health. For some, it is the first place they look when they want to access reliable information. It is also the first place they post information and communicate when seeking to raise awareness about issues important to them. Accurate information on issues important to youth, such as health and employment, can have the effect of increasing the use of available services.

- **Give youth a prominent role in any national ICT task forces or inter-ministerial bodies that develop ICT national strategies.** On the international level, youth were one of the most organized and successful stakeholder groups in the World Summit for the Information Society; on the national level they should have a role in drafting national strategies to design and incorporate ICT into education and job training.

- **Provide incentives for television and radio stations to broadcast youth-produced programming a set number of hours per week.** New technologies can be harnessed as an outlet for youth expression and as a way for youth to influence other youth. When young people themselves are involved in the production of journals, or radio and television programmes, they are often more accessible to their peers and more user-friendly.

YOUTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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. Many youth have responded to this challenge by making sustainable development a key element in the programmes of youth organizations throughout the world. Young people have worked with traditional and new media to influence their peers and disseminate potentially behaviour-altering messages concerning the environment. In addition to their intellectual contribution and their ability to mobilize support, they bring unique perspectives that need to be taken into account.

The connection between the health of young people and the environment is clear. Access to clean water, sanitation, the right to housing in safe areas that are not contaminated by garbage dumps and factories, and access to basic cooking fuel and energy sources have an impact on the lives of youth. One result of poor air quality is the growing prevalence in young people of chronic conditions such as asthma. The belief that chronic diseases afflict only the elderly or that they arise solely from engaging in risky behaviour (and not due to environmental contaminants) is incorrect and also expensive in medium and long-term planning.

During recent years, governments have strengthened the concept of sustainable development and the linkages between poverty, the environment, and natural resources. For example, access to clean water in or near the home affects access of female youth to education. Under international human rights law, water is implicitly and explicitly protected as a human right; it is regarded as an integral component of the right to life, to an adequate standard of living, to health, to housing and to food. Access to water is explicitly protected under the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the 1989 Convention on

the Rights of the Child. There are many dimensions of the right to clean water essential for the development of young people, from food security and nutrition to sanitation and health to housing.

Giving attention to the environment and sustainability also means promoting energy conservation, decreasing carbon emissions and other contributors to climate change, or ensuring proper reuse and recycling of consumer materials—all areas where youth have shown leadership.

Why are youth well suited to design, implement, monitor and create awareness around environmental policies?

Youth have demonstrated that environmental action starts in the local community. Many schools have environmental clubs or science clubs that focus on the preservation and use of renewable resources, and through these youth have gained experience and knowledge in environmental projects and advocacy. Increasing the participation of youth in environmental protection depends on strengthening opportunities for young people to participate in the decision-making of government-supported organizations and NGOs.

Youth have initiated lifestyle changes that reflect sound environmental practices. For example, due to political action and public education campaigns, recycling has become universal in many societies and part of everyday life within a generation. In some areas, environmentally-friendly habits that aim to protect water sources have also become integrated into day-to-day behaviour. Youth are at the stage of life when environmentally-friendly habits are shaped.

What is environmentally sustainable development?

Environmentally sustainable development is the management and conservation of natural resources, and the orientation of technological and institutional change to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability to meet future needs. These efforts work to conserve land, water, plant and animal resources, in an environmentally non-degrading, economically feasible and socially acceptable manner. Embedded in this definition is a vital role for youth.

Recognizing that youth will bear the consequences of current environmental policies, how can government support and mobilize youth in environmental protection and sustainability?

- **Mainstream environmental education into school curricula. The UN General Assembly proclaimed 2005-2014 as the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.** To achieve visible gains from environmental education, countries should develop a role for youth. Integrating environmental education into school curricula, and offering training programmes to teachers on the environmental aspects of their subject-matter may enable them to educate youth concerning environmentally-friendly behaviour.

- **Initiate programmes to promote youth participation in tree planting, forestry, combating desert creep, waste reduction, eco-tourism, recycling and other sound environmental practices.** The participation of young people and their organizations in such programmes can provide good leadership training and encourage awareness and action. Waste management programmes and eco-tourism in particular may also represent potential income-generating activities.

- **Increase production and encourage widespread dissemination of informational materials illustrating the global dimensions of environmental protection, its origins and the interrelated effects of environmental degradation.** Part of this awareness raising effort should include the creation of an awards programme to recognize young people for projects which demonstrate their commitment to the environment.

- **Prioritize support for local projects that improve water availability and build capacity at the community level.** The costs of inadequate access to water and basic sanitation are steep, especially for girls and young women. Lack of adequate access to water affects their privacy, dignity, health and hygiene and represents an economic burden for the country as a whole. The time and energy of young women and girls devoted to carrying water long distances translates into lost opportunities for education or paid work.

■ How can government enhance the role of youth in designing good environmental policies?

- **Consider the establishment of a task force that includes youth and youth-led organizations to develop educational and awareness programmes specifically targeted to the youth population on critical environmental issues.** Such a task force should use formal and non-formal educational methods to reach a broad audience. National and local media, non-governmental organizations, businesses and other organizations may assist in these task forces.

- **Appoint a youth focal point or advisory committee in the Environmental Ministry.** Chapter 25 of Agenda 21 calls for the active participation of youth from all parts of the world in all relevant levels of decision-making processes because it affects their lives today and has implications for their future.

- **Support the spread of environmentally sound technologies in developing countries and in countries in transition, and train youth in making use of such technologies in protecting the environment and conserving resources.** These initiatives require cooperation among different areas of government and partnership with the private sector as well as the sharing of good practices and successful initiatives. Specifically, the WPAY invites United Nations organizations and governments of more technologically advanced countries to help spread the use of environmentally sound technologies.

YOUTH AND LEISURE TIME

Many young people complain that there is not enough for them to do in their communities outside of school or work, or that they do not have the means to explore their chosen interests. Other youth have little or no leisure time due to obligations as caregivers, or cannot find the time with cumbersome work and school schedules.

Resources must be allocated to meet the leisure and recreation needs of young people as this time should be viewed as a right rather than a luxury to be earned or reserved for more privileged youth. Though "leisure" may imply a casualness of purpose, many youth already devote their time to volunteering either in service-oriented organizations, educating their peers, or engaging in activism thus making a tangible difference in their community

What is it important to support the leisure activities of youth?

Leisure time gives young people the chance to define and understand their identity, explore their culture and learn more about the world around them. Where the leisure needs of youth are not met, there is a greater chance that they will engage in high-risk activity that threatens their well-being. High levels of youth unemployment and the rising costs of higher education highlight the need for leisure time activities to be viewed in the context of the personal growth and the development of their communities. Leisure time contributes to the development of human and social capital as time to expand skills sets and social networks. The leisure needs of youth must be considered in urban planning and rural development so that a range of constructive voluntary

opportunities are built into their landscape. Due to misperceptions of the role of leisure in a young person's life, initiatives and spaces for leisure are often the first to get cut when budgets get tight. However, the elimination or under-funding of extracurricular or recreational programmes can endanger the physical, emotional and social well-being of youth.

■ How can government support leisure-time activities for youth?

- **Facilitate the development of partnerships between community/ government and youth groups so youth can engage in volunteer work and serve their community.** The commitment and contribution of youth who spend their unstructured time volunteering often goes un-praised. Recognizing the efforts of youth can further promote and support this constructive and collaborative use of their time. Local governments should also provide vouchers for public transportation for youth to travel to sites where they are volunteering their time.

- **Integrate areas for sports, recreation, and cycling into urban and suburban development plans.** Sports contribute not only to one's health and a positive self-image, but can also serve as a platform for inclusion. Adults should be encouraged to coach youth leagues and serve as role models in sportsmanship.

- **Facilitate access to public buildings such as schools or theatres for youth to hold meetings, pursue creative interests and carry on leisure-time activities.** The provision of space is particularly important for areas with high population density where youth may be living in close quarters. Facilities for youth should also be maintained to sustain the activities of youth over time.

- **Develop leisure activities and sports teams for youth with disabilities.** Youth with disabilities need to access opportunities to develop their physical fitness and gain self confidence. Disabled youth may require specialized transportation to facilitate their participation in sports and the arts.

- **Create a special fund to be administered by an umbrella of youth organizations to finance local cultural and enrichment activities for youth.** In some areas, funding for sports receives the bulk of resources earmarked for youth leisure activities. While the value of sports is universally recognized, art and cultural organizations and institutions provide programmes open to all and should not be short-changed.

INTER-GENERATIONAL ISSUES

In the context of global ageing, the share of youth in the world's total population is gradually shrinking. By 2050, eight of every ten older persons (age 60 and over) will be living in developing countries. Thus, youth development will increasingly be viewed as integral to the welfare of older generations. Investing in youth can initiate a powerful virtuous cycle of development that can both dramatically affect the lives of poor youth and promote growth and stability over generations.

Inter-generational aspects of poverty play a major role in youth education and youth employment. If parents have decent work, there will not be the economic stress and pressure that often forces parents to take children out of school to contribute to the family's day-to-day survival. Poverty experienced in youth, marked by inadequate shelter, poor health, and low educational attainment, is most often linked to parental poverty. Addressing the health, education and employment needs of young people can generate additional income and opportunities for both individuals and communities that may fuel human development as well as national growth. The success and opportunities of youth also contribute to the foundation for a secure and independent old age in the form of savings, pensions, social security and health care. Thus effective youth policy can, in turn, make older persons less dependent with better means to maintain themselves and their family. A "life course" approach to policy, specifically to poverty reduction, emphasizes viewing policies in a way that looks beyond a single age cohort to see how, for example, healthy children and youth translate into a healthy more secure old age.

What is the inter-generational contract?

In some societies, the welfare of the older generations is more a community concern while in others it is a matter that stays within the family; what is universal is the idea that there are certain moral obligations between generations. These relationships are evolving and the role of the state in this regard has also been changing. However, what remains is the importance of ensuring that no generation lives at the expense of the other, highlighting the need for strong ties, or social cohesion, among generations. With global life expectancy increasing, the ratio of young to old will decline raising issues about the socio-economic impact of this trend.

In addition to well-documented demographic shifts, family and community networks are under strain due to shifting responsibilities and economic requirements; for example, HIV/AIDS has disrupted family life and created a generation of orphans, young caregivers, grandparents caring for their adult children and altered pathways of socialization. Even outside the context of the AIDS epidemic, it should be noted that the flow of resources among generations is multi-directional. For example, in many cases the elderly transfer resources to their adult children regardless of a country's stage in the development process. In South Africa, with universal pensions for older

people, there is evidence that recipients use these funds for the benefit of the whole family reducing poverty and elevating the economic status of the family (as well as increasing consumption of local goods); thus, in this case, resources directed at one age group may indeed be utilized to help multiple generations, thereby underscoring the message of interdependency. Dependency or retirement should not be seen as an absolute state as older persons continue to contribute to family and society in reciprocal arrangements.

The inter-generational contract does not only encompass the generations within a family but also the relationship between workers and retirees. The ability of government to respond to these changing needs and mounting social demands in the face of rising costs will affect the well-being of both youth and older generations.

Youth participation is key to communication and understanding between generations. Partnerships among generations are also vital to achieving the priority areas of the World Programme of Action for Youth. For example, one of the central actions in stimulating youth employment is the promotion of entrepreneurship. However, young people are less likely to have business experience or be aware of the legal or regulatory requirements to start a business. At the same time, they may have a propensity to innovate and take risks. Successful initiatives may be inspired by established private sector ventures and veterans of the business world who can help refine business plans and offer expertise to those who are just starting out.

Culturally, every society conveys the message that young people can learn both skills and values from the older generations. Policies should promote this exchange of knowledge as it should be viewed as social capital that is necessary to support the inter-generational contract.

■ How can government support inter-generational cohesion?

- **Set up a database of local businesses who want to share their skills and knowledge either through the provision of internships or mentoring programmes for young people.** As part of the policy to help small and medium-sized enterprises grow, assistance to young people may be provided through a commitment of older persons (either retired or part of thriving businesses) that goes beyond limited ad hoc help to the provision of ongoing mentorship and expertise. While youth can greatly benefit from these strong relationships, established businesses may also gain. The relationship may be reciprocal; young people, with a solid command of new technologies, can transfer their mastery in a manner that serves to upgrade any outdated systems used by older generations, exposing them to needed information.

- **Encourage school and public library inter-generational programmes which provide services (such as tutoring, leisure activities, and sharing of books, ideas, hobbies) that benefit youth and older people.** For increased social cohesion, young people should be given more chances to interact with older people through community, social, and volunteer programmes.

- **Provide support to young people who are caregivers.** Some youth have to take care of children, and at the same time, tend to the needs of parents or grandparents. Policies should aim to limit their time away from gainful activities, such as school or training. Where applicable, additional training or support groups can build capacity while direct compensation programmes can lessen the burden of young people caring for people living with HIV/AIDS.

- **Establish partnerships between youth organizations and local and national government to promote mentorship programmes.** Mentorship is particularly useful to young women who may lack the confidence or skills to navigate traditionally male-dominated career tracks. While mentorship is not a substitute for necessary structural reforms designed to achieve equal opportunities for women and men, mentorship projects may equip young women with leadership and communication skills that they are not able to acquire through school or the workplace. Established programmes have had an effect beyond the individual being mentored; the mentor also typically gains knowledge of the challenges and perceptions of young people. ●

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Annex

As stated in the introduction of this Guide, please note that since the adoption of the World Programme of Action for Youth in 1995, on the occasion of the Programme's ten-year anniversary in 2005, the General Assembly decided to add the following priorities (A/RES/60/2): the mixed impact of globalization on young women and men; the use of and access to information and communication technologies; the dramatic increase in the incidence of HIV infection among young people; the active involvement of young people in armed conflict, both as victims and as perpetrators; and the increased importance of addressing inter-generational issues in an ageing society. Previously, these five new concerns were presented in the World Youth Reports of 2003 and 2005, and were noted by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/133.

The above mentioned five new priorities will be elaborated at the Commission for Social Development in 2007. Below please find the Resolution on the 10 priorities areas.

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/50/728)]
50/81. World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

The General Assembly,

Recognizing that young people in all countries are both a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation,

Bearing in mind that 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,

Acknowledging that young women and men in all parts of the world aspire to full participation in the life of society,

Recognizing that the decade since the observance of International Youth Year: Participation, Development and Peace has been a period of fundamental political, economic and socio-cultural change in the world,

Acknowledging the contribution that non-governmental youth organizations could make in improving dialogue and consultations with the United Nations system on the situation of youth,

Recalling its resolution 45/103 of 14 December 1990, in which it requested the Secretary-General to prepare a draft world youth programme of action towards the year 2000 and beyond,

Recalling also its resolution 49/152 of 23 December 1994 on the International Youth Year, in which it requested the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-fourth session to consider further the draft world programme of action for youth towards the year 2000 and beyond,

Having considered the report of the Economic and Social Council[1],

1. Adopts the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, annexed hereto, as an integral part of the present resolution, including the ten priority areas identified therein, namely, 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;

2. Invites Governments, with the support of the international community, non-governmental organizations and the public and private sectors, as well as youth organizations in particular, to implement the Programme of Action by undertaking the relevant activities outlined therein;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-second session, through the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council, on the progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action, taking into account the promotion of integrated reporting;

4. Invites Member States, once again, to include, whenever possible, youth representatives in their delegations to the General Assembly and other meetings of relevant United Nations bodies, with a view to stimulating the participation of young women and men in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

91st plenary meeting
14 December 1995

Preamble
&
Statement of Purpose

■ PREAMBLE

1. 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 socio-cultural changes. These changes will inevitably affect at least the first decade of the twenty first century as well.

2. 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

3. 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.

4. 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

5. 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.

6. While the peoples of the United Nations, through their Governments, international organizations and voluntary associations, 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,[2] 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.

7. 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.

8. 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;

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,[3] the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action adopted by the World Summit for Social Development in March 1995,[4] and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in September 1995;[5]

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

9. 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.

10. 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 socio-cultural circumstances.

11. 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.

12. 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

13. 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.[2] 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.

14. 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.

15. 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,[6] the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights,[7] the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,[3] the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development,[4] and the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women.[5]

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. Each of the ten 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.

19. The ten 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.

20. 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.

■ Education

21. 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.

22. 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.

23. 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.

24. 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

Improving the level of basic education, skill training and literacy among youth

25. 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.

Cultural heritage and contemporary patterns of society

26. 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.

Promoting mutual respect and understanding and the ideals of peace, solidarity and tolerance among youth

27. 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.

Vocational and professional training

28. 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 opportunities and the ability to adjust to changes in labour demand.

Promoting human rights education

29. 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.

Training for enterprise programmes

30. 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.

Infrastructure for training youth workers and youth leaders

31. 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.

32. 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.

■ Employment

33. 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, indigenous youth, migrant youth and minorities warrants urgent attention, bearing in mind the prohibition of forced labour and child labour.

34. 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

Opportunities for self-employment

35. 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.

Employment opportunities for specific groups of young people

36. 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.

Voluntary community services involving youth

37. 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 inter-generational 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.

38. 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.

39. 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.

Hunger and poverty

40. 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 socio-cultural 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.

41. 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

Making farming more rewarding and life in agricultural areas more attractive

42. 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.

43. 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.

Skill-training for income-generation by young people

44. 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 pro-grammes 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.

Land grants for young people

45. 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 dissemi-nate information about national experience with land-grant and settlement schemes for use by Governments.

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

Cooperation between urban and rural youth in food production and distribution

47. Non-governmental organizations should organize direct-marketing groups, including produc-tion 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.

Health

48. 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 envi-ronment, 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.

49. 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 preg-nancies and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

Proposals for action
Provision of basic health services

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

51. 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 care[8] 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.

52. 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).

53. 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.

Development of health education

54. 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.

55. 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.

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

56. 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,[3] 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,[4] and in the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action for the Fourth World Conference on Women,[5] 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-deter-

mination 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 child-bearing 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.

57. Governments should develop comprehensive sexual and reproductive health- care 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.

HIV infection and AIDS among young people

58. 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.

Promotion of good sanitation and hygiene practices

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

Prevention of disease and illness among youth resulting from poor health practices

60. 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.

61. 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.

Elimination of sexual abuse of young people

62. As recommended by the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,[7] the International Conference on Population and Development,[3] the World Summit for Social Development[4] and the Fourth World Conference on Women,[5] 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]

Combating malnutrition among young people

63. 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.

■ Environment

64. The deterioration of the natural environment is one of the principal concerns of young people world wide 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

Integration of environmental education and training into education and training programmes

65. 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.

66. 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.

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

67. 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.

68. 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.

Strengthening participation of youth in the protection, preservation and improvement of the environment

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

70. 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.

Enhancing the role of the media as a tool for widespread dissemination of environmental issues to youth

71. 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.

72. 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.

▮ Drug abuse

73. 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.

74. 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, 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.

75. 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.

76. 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

Participation of youth organizations and youth in demand reduction programmes for young people

77. 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.

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

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

79. The World Health Organization, associations of the medical, paramedical and pharmaceutical professions and pharmaceutical corporations and medical faculties 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.

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

80. 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.

81. 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.

82. 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 the 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.

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

83. 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.

84. 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.

85. 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.

■ Juvenile delinquency

86. 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

Priority to preventive measures

87. 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 administrative 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.

Prevention of violence

88. 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.

89. 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.

Rehabilitation services and programmes

90. 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.

■ Leisure-time activities

91. 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

Leisure-time activities as an integral part of youth policies and programmes

92. 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.

93. 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.

94. 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.

Leisure-time activities as elements of educational programmes

95. 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.

Leisure-time activities in urban planning and rural development

96. 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.

Leisure-time activities and the media

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

■ Girls and young women

98. 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,[5] the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,[3] the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights[7] 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

Discrimination

99. 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.

Education

100. 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.

Health

101. 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.

Employment

102. 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 of the Rights of the Child[11] 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.

Violence

103. 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.

Full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making

104. 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.

105. 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.

106. 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

107. 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.

MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

108. 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.

109. 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 socio-cultural resources necessary to ensure that the Programme is implemented efficiently and effectively.

110. 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.

111. 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.

National level

112. 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.

113. 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.

114. 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.

115. 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.

Regional cooperation

116. 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.

117. 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.

118. 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.

119. 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.

120. 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.

International cooperation

121. 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.

122. 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.

123. 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.

124. 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.

125. 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.

Data collection and dissemination of information

126. 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.

127. 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.

128. 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.

129. 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.

Research and policy studies

130. 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.

131. 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.

132. 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.

Planning and coordination

133. 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.

134. 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.

Technical cooperation, training and advisory services

135. 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.

136. 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.

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

138. 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.

139. 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.

Outreach and partnership among specialized constituencies

140. 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.

141. 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.

142. 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.

143. 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.

Notes

[1] A/50/3 and Add.1 and 2.

[2] See A/40/256, annex.

[3] *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.

[4] A/CONF.166/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[5] See A/CONF.177/20, chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[6] *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.

[7] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

[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.