

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES TO UNGA INFORMATION KIT

This information kit is drafted by the youth delegates to the 59th session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2004.

1981

'Governments should consider the inclusion of youth representatives in their national delegations to the General Assembly'

(Resolution on Communication Between the United Nations and Youth and Youth Organizations, A/36/17)

1995

'Invites Member States, once again, to include, whenever possible, youth representatives in their delegations to the General Assembly'

(World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, A/50/81)

2001

'Reiterates the call made in the World Programme of Action to Member States to consider including youth representatives in their delegations to the General Assembly'

(Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth, A/56/117)

2004

'Urges Member States to consider being represented by youth representatives to address the plenary on this occasion' (referring to the two plenary meetings of the 60th session of the General Assembly devoted to the evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond)

(Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth, A/59/148)

While the role of a youth representative varies within delegations, most youth representatives draft and deliver a statement to the Third Committee on an issue relating to, or of importance to, youth. Youth representatives provide youth input to their delegations in their consideration of agenda items, such as human rights education, the rights of the child and social development. This aspect of the youth representative role is particularly important when the biennial resolution on *policies and programmes involving youth* is discussed.

In addition, the youth representatives work together to promote and further youth participation at the UN. In the past, youth representatives have had input into preparations for the Special Session on Children and several meetings within the UN System such as WSIS. Each year the youth representatives organize a high profile Youth Symposium, with an expert panel to discuss youth issues and youth participation.

Youth representatives participate in the general work of their Missions through attending a range of meetings, receptions, informal negotiations and providing assistance in monitoring general debates and drafting reports. The length of time the

youth representatives are based in New York ranges from eight weeks to three weeks.

On their return from New York, many youth representatives conduct tours of schools and universities and share their experiences with other young people. This serves to educate young people about the UN and international politics, as well as encourage youth to get involved with decision-making processes in their own communities.

It is imperative that young people have a stake in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. Young people face many challenges and problems particular to them and while young people aspire to full participation in the life of society, their voices tend to be marginalized. Young people will live with the consequences of the decisions taken by the international community. Young people also have unique insights that can contribute to the development of more effective solutions to the problems youth, and society as a whole, face.

Young people in all countries are both a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation. By enabling more effective participation of young people we can benefit from their energy, idealism, unique perspectives and innovative and creative ideas. Young people are the experts on the issues that affect them and as such are integral to achieving effective and enduring solutions. By empowering young people to participate more fully in society and decision-making processes, young people become engaged as partners in shaping the world they will inherit and pass on to future generations.

UN Calls for the Inclusion of Youth Representatives

The *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond*, adopted by the 50th General Assembly, is a blueprint for action in a number of key priority areas, including the full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and decision making. The Programme calls upon Member States to:

...include Youth Representatives in their national delegations to the General Assembly and other relevant United Nations meetings, thus enhancing and strengthening the channels of communication through the discussion of youth related issues, with a view to find solutions to the problems confronting youth in the contemporary world.

The General Assembly of the United Nations has subsequently adopted numerous resolutions recommending that young people should be more directly involved in the decision-making processes of Member States and calling for the inclusion of youth representatives in Member States' delegations, as well as other international fora.

Benefits for National Governments

The creation of a youth representative position has the benefit of empowering an often-marginalized sector of society as well as leading to more appropriate and effective solutions to problems facing young people. The existence of such positions is a tangible and very visible demonstration by governments of their commitment to young people. Promoting youth representation and participation in the United Nations General Assembly can inspire young people to take a greater interest in international issues and become more involved in decision-making processes. True representation however can only be achieved when youth organizations and other bodies that represent different youth interests, such as National Youth Councils,

conduct the selection procedure. Youth organizations also play an important role in the feedback, and feed-forward of all the activities of the Youth Delegates. Youth Representatives have demonstrated themselves as of great value to their governments and Foreign Ministries who have benefited from fresh perspectives and valuable expertise.

Youth at the United Nations

The Focal Point within the United Nations that is facilitating a great deal of processes that aim to increase youth participation is *Youth at the United Nations*. The unit aims to enhance awareness of the Global situation of youth and of the rights and aspirations of young people. It works towards greater participation of youth in decision making and development.

The United Nations Programme on Youth is part of the Generational Issues and Integration section, of the Social and Integration Branch, of the Division for Social Policy and Development, of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations Secretariat. Contact info:

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INDIVIDUAL YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAMMES

The Member States that send youth representatives in their national delegations to the United Nations General Assembly have slightly different programmes. The different options that have been adopted so far are listed below. Factors referred to include length of stay, how the youth representatives are chosen, their level of funding and their role in their home countries.

AUSTRALIA

Length of Programme: Each year since 1999.

Number and age of representatives: One delegate, between 15 and 24.

What costs are met: The Australian Government pays for costs of accommodation in New York, the remainder (flights, living expenses, consultation and follow up work expenses) comes from sponsorship which the Youth Representative must obtain themselves through fundraising.

Length of stay: Eight weeks in 1999, 2000, 2001 and six weeks in 2002, 2003 and 2004.

Selection Procedure: Australia wide selection process open to all under 25. The United Nations Youth Association, in conjunction with another youth organizations and the past two Youth Representatives select the Youth Representative through a national application and interview process.

Role while in New York: Provision of youth opinion within the Australian Delegation. The youth representative is based in the Third Committee, and delivers a statement to the Third Committee, including the biennial youth resolution. The Youth Representative lobbies for greater youth participation within the UN system.

Role in Australia: The Youth Representative consults with youth organizations in Australia. On return from New York, the Youth Representative shares their experiences at universities, schools and other gatherings of young people.

For more information: Contact the 2004 Youth Representative at

www.unya.asn.au and youthrep2004@unya.asn.au

AUSTRIA

Length of Programme: One youth rep in 1999 and now in 2004

Number and age of representative: One delegate, between 18 and 25

What costs are met: The Austrian Youth Council pays flight, hotel and daily living expenses.

Length of stay: Two weeks

Selection Procedure: The board of the Austrian Youth Council for International Affairs selects a person, not necessarily delegated through a youth organization, to be Austrian Youth-Rep for one year.

Role while playing in New York: Attending the 3rd Committee, giving statement and lobbying for more youth-reps, further get to know the UN-structure

Role in Austria: On return from New York, the Youth Representative shares their experiences at universities, schools, the youth organizations and among other young people

For more information: Contact the 2004 Youth Representative at ilia.dib@reflex.at or the Austrian Youth Council at bundesjugendvertretung@bundesjugendvertretung.at

BAHAMAS

Length of Programme: First year 2004

Number and age of Youth reps: one delegate

What costs are met: No costs are covered at the moment. Assessment of finances will be reviewed for compensation of future representatives

Length of stay: Until programme is assessed to set schedule for future reps

Selection procedure: A lobby process within the Department of Youth and the Department for Foreign Affairs by Granville Butler III prevailed and he was named the rep for 2004. In future, selection process and term will be determined by Department of Foreign Affairs

Role in New York: The role here in New York is to address the 3rd Committee. It is also to network with other Youth delegates to understand issues affecting the youth in their country and the techniques used to tackle them

Role at home: It is to address the Department of Foreign Affairs on the information gained from the mission. It is to share the information with the youth through radio, school, college and NGO-conferences.

DENMARK

Number and age of reps: Two delegates, between 18 and 30 years old

Length of Programme: Since 1970

What costs are met: Identical to Parliamentary Advisers – airfare, hotel suite and daily allowance.

Length of stay: Two youth representatives attend for a total of six weeks, three weeks each.

Selection Procedure: Candidates send individual applications through their own organizations, who then send nominations to the Danish Youth Council (DUF), an umbrella organization for 74 national youth organizations. DUF is responsible for final selection.

Role while in New York: Delivers youth statement to Third Committee, represents the mandate given by the Danish Youth Council (subject to confirmation by the Danish Foreign Ministry), works to put youth on the agenda of the UN and its institutions and advises the Danish Delegation on youth matters.

Role at home: The Youth Representative facilitates the preparation of the DUF strategy towards the UN in consultation with the member organization of DUF, meets

with a number of UN agencies, promotes the role through the media, reports back to DUF on return and is an active member of the DUF's UN working group.

For more information: The Danish Youth Council, Scherfigsvej 5, 2100 København Ø, Denmark. Phone: +45 3929 8888; www.duf.dk; duf@duf.dk.

FIJI

Length of Programme: First time in 2004

What costs are met: Flight, hotel and daily allowance

Length of stay: one week

Selection procedure: The Department of Youth elects the youth-rep out of a group of politically engaged young people. The decision was made just a week before the trip to New York started

Role while in New York: Attending the 3rd Committee, getting an impression on the UN-structures, holding a speech in the 3rd Committee and lobbying especially with neighbor countries on representation of youth

Role at home: Working together with the NGO's and the Pacific Youth Council to work on a proposal to the government on Youth in the UN

FINLAND

Length of Programme: Since 1997 (selection of the candidate by the National Youth Council (Allianssi)).

What costs are met: Flight, hotel suite and daily allowance.

Length of stay: Two weeks.

Selection Procedure: The National Youth Council coordinates a candidate from one of their member organizations, ministry of Foreign affairs confirms the selection. Youth delegate should be under 26 years, have broad experience of youth related issues and have international experience.

Role while in New York: Mainly in relation to the youth resolution: discusses resolution with youth delegates and government officials and influences Finnish position on youth. Youth delegate works in close co-operation with the permanent mission.

Role at home: Informs Allianssi's member organizations about UN issues, goes to schools, meets with various stakeholders, writes articles, influences Allianssi's UN strategies.

For more information: www.alli.fi, info@alli.fi Youth delegate 2004 Henri Heikura, henri.heikura@ky.hkkk.fi

NETHERLANDS

Length of Programme: 34 years.

What costs are met: Flight, hotel suite and comfortable allowance.

Length of stay: Four weeks.

Selection Procedure: The Youth Representative is selected by the National Youth Council that comprises over 30 Dutch youth organizations. This umbrella organization is responsible for selection and preparation. The selection process is open to all under 26.

Role while in New York: Active in the Third Committee, proposes and drafts the biennial youth resolution. Delivers the Dutch youth statement to the Third Committee. Advises the delegation on other matters – contributing a youth perspective to the delegation's approach. Active in representing and lobbying for the Netherlands.

Role at home: Consulting with youth organizations and youth political parties, reporting back to over 30 youth organizations and youth political parties, establishing a tour of schools speaking about the Millennium Development Goals,

holding a UN information day open to all youth, reporting back to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, actively participating in the National Youth Council's international political committee and participating in the Dutch delegation to the Commission on Social Development.

For more information: www.jeugdraad.nl; email info@jeugdraad.nl. Youth delegate 2004, Karsten H. Sprenger, karstensprenger@jeugdraad.nl

NORWAY

Length of Programme: About 30 years.

What costs are met: Lump sum government payment to cover flights, modest accommodation and incidentals.

Length of stay: Two youth representatives (one male, one female) attend for a total of six weeks, three weeks each.

Selection Procedure: The National Youth Council selects both youth representatives. There is a tradition that one of the representatives comes from a youth political party (a different party from year to year) and the other representative comes from a Norwegian youth organization.

Role while in New York: Delivers a statement to the Third Committee and active within the Third Committee. Although a full member of the delegation, the Youth Representative retains some quasi-independence in terms of being able to represent the views of their National Youth Council. This is a reflection that to some extent the National Youth Council defines the Norwegian delegation's position on youth as the foreign department largely adopts the youth statement written by the Council as the official Norwegian position.

Role at home: Consulting member organizations of the Norwegian Youth Council, reporting back to member organizations, and taking part in the work of the Norwegian Youth Council's Committee on International Politics.

For more information: www.ungnett.org, Hedda Haakestad, hedda@umeu.no

SURINAM (in 2003)

Length of stay: 3 weeks

Selection Procedure: The selection was done through the Ministry of Foreign affairs.

Role while in New York: Full participation in the Third Committee, presents a statement on youth to the Third Committee.

Role at home: Advocate for youth on a regional and National Level. Organise seminars and workshops on youth related issues.

For more information: Contact the Surinam Youth rep at: sharva_lalji@hotmail.com.

SWEDEN

Length of Programme: This is the sixth time since 1985.

What costs are met: Airfare, hotel suite, allowance.

Length of stay: one delegate stays for three weeks

Selection Procedure: The National Council of Swedish Youth Organizations chooses the youth delegate from nominations received from member organizations

Role while in New York: Delivers statement in the Third Committee, including on the youth resolution and is active within the Third Committee.

Role at home: Consultations with member organizations of the Swedish Youth Council (which provides the basis for the Youth Representative's statement), reporting back to Swedish Youth Council and member organizations on how youth

issues are addressed at the UN and increasing young people's attention to and knowledge of the UN.

For more information: adam@lsu.se

SWITZERLAND

Length of Programme: since 2003

What costs are met: Airfare and hotel suite and credit for parallel programme back home.

Length of stay: 10 days; the period of the negotiation with regard to the Youth resolution.

Selection Procedure: The National Youth Council selects 5 youth delegates. They prepare together the work for in New York and the follow up.

Role while in New York: Since it is the first year, the exact tasks are still to be established.

The youth rep is actively involved in the process of describing the job description. The main task this year was participating in the negotiations with regard to the Youth resolution.

Role at home: Represent the interest of youth organization in Switzerland and advises the Swiss delegation on issues concerning youth. Reports back to the Youth organization in Switzerland, on the development of youth issues at the UN.

For more information: International Policy Office of the Swiss Youth Council:
www.sajv.ch, www.youthrep.ch

OTHER MEMBER STATES

A number of other Member States have in the past included Youth Representatives in their Delegations, however we do not have detailed information on their programmes. These Member States include:

- Bangladesh
- Ethiopia
- Greece
- India
- Jamaica
- Turkey