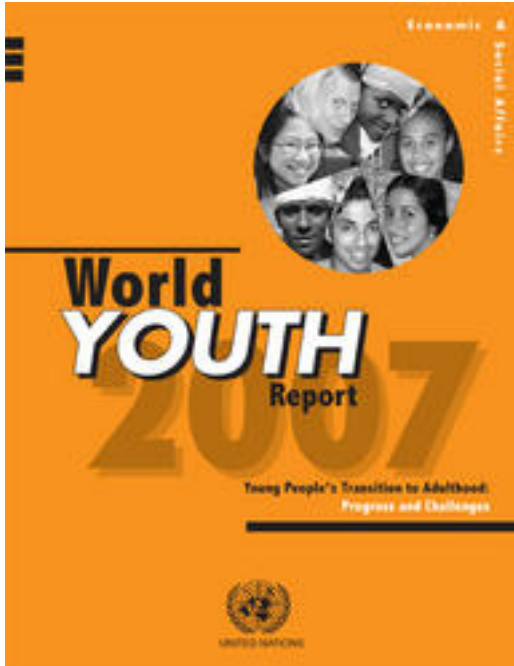




UN World Youth Report launched in Geneva

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Geneva, 3 April 2008 - Youth are a powerful resource for development and are critical actors in the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals. This was one of the key messages of the World Youth Report 2007 presented in Geneva on 3 April 2008 at an event hosted by the CONGO Committee of Youth NGOs which is currently chaired by the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM). The event was also attended by representatives of international youth organisations and UN agencies.

"There has never been a generation that was more likely to volunteer and be involved in community causes than this one," declared Ms. Patience W. Stephens, the Team Leader and Focal Point for the United Nations Programme on Youth, as she presented the United Nations World Youth Report 2007. Unfortunately, volunteering is still a luxury that most young people cannot afford in the world, due to socio-economic difficulties. Volunteering is a window of opportunity for young people to be sensitised to worldwide issues, to become pro-active in them and to set foot in the job market, so it should be further encouraged amongst all layers of the world's population, through financial support for example.

Youth, defined to be people between 15 and 24 years of age, and who make up 18% of the world's population, have more chances at a better education today than ever before. But their transition into the workforce, and therefore into adulthood, is hindered by unemployment and poverty. Ms. Stephens explained that "the problem of unemployment is not due to a lack of education, but mainly to the tightening of the labour market". When going through this transition, young people are more at a risk of making the wrong choices, or of having to migrate, marginalising them socially. Ms. Stephens asked that governments give more educational opportunities to young people and that the transition to the labour market be smoother than it currently is.

The United Nations World Youth Report 2007 also highlighted the importance of non-formal education, drawing attention to the relevance of the Report focuses on issues such as Scouting in the development of young people. Chapter 3 a Scout Gifts for Peace in Benin, where the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Leisure works together with the Scouts to deliver HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns to the community.

The representatives of international youth organisations and UN agencies that were present participated by asking questions and bringing their input on these issues.

Links:

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UN Youth Programme www.un.org/youth

UN World Youth Report 2007 www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/wyr07.htm

