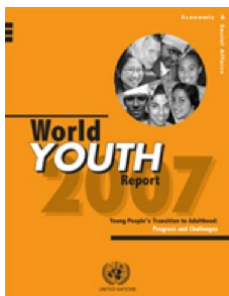


Press Release

“CONGO Committee of Youth NGOs presents United Nations World Youth Report 2007”



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](#), which was presented in Geneva on 3 April 2008 by the CONGO Committee of Youth NGOs. Ms. Patience W. Stephens, Team Leader and Focal Point for the United Nations Programme on Youth, presented the report to representatives of international youth organisations and UN agencies.

Young people between the ages of 15 and 24 now constitute 18% of the world's population and 25% of the working-age population. Today's generation of young people is on the whole also the best educated generation of youth in history and yet their ability to grow into adulthood is being hindered by poverty and unemployment.

"The problem of unemployment", declares Ms. Stephens, "is not due to a lack of education, but mainly to the tightening of the labour market".

Ms. Stephens highlighted the issue of migration which, in all regions, is seen as a window of opportunity, and yet this very fact also contributes to much of the social exclusion that young migrants face in their host countries. "Young people will do anything and everything to complete their transition into adulthood, which, in extreme cases, could put their life in danger or put them in conflict with the law." In Africa, the seeming predisposition to take part in armed conflict should be seen both in the light of very limited opportunities open to young people, as well as a problem of social integration.

Gender inequality continues to impact negatively on the lives of girls and young women, as reflected in higher unemployment rates, higher HIV infection rates and more young women being affected by poverty.

Ms. Stephens also said that the current generation is a generation of volunteers and both governments and communities must harness this potential power of youth volunteerism if the Millennium Development Goals are to be achieved.

The CONGO Committee of Youth NGOs is chaired by WOSM and the World Alliance of YMCAs.

Note to the editors:

The main goal of the Committee of Youth NGOs is to strengthen the position of youth, youth NGOs and NGOs working with youth in the UN, and to facilitate co-operation and exchange of information between youth and NGOs about the UN and the different NGOs present.

CONGO Committee members:

World YWCA - World Alliance of YMCAs - World Organization of the Scout Movement - World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts - International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies - European Youth Forum - International Federation of Medical Students Associations - International Young Democrat Union (IYDU) - Women's World Summit Foundation - International Confederation of Free Trade Unions - Youth (ICFTU) - International Federation of Liberal Youth (IFLRY) - International Young Catholic Students / International Movement of Catholic Students (JECI-MIEC/ Pax Romana) - World Council of Churches / youth committee (WCC) - World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) - AIESEC International - Lutheran World Federation - ATD Quart Monde

United Nations Programme on youth

The UN programme on youth is the focal point on youth within the United Nations. It aims to build an awareness of the global situation of young people, as well as to promote their rights and aspirations. The programme also works towards greater participation of young people in decision-making as a means of achieving peace and development.

It is part of the Social Integration Branch, which falls within the Division for Social Policy and Development of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) in the United Nations Secretariat.

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Resources:

www.un.org/youth

www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/wyr07.htm

www.ngocongo.org

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