

# **NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT POLICY REFERENCE MANUAL**

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**VOLUME I**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE  
Information Booklet Series I**

**GLOBAL THINKING RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT**

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## The Economic Development Institute

"The essence of the knowledge is, having it, to apply it; not having it, to confess your ignorance. Ignorance is the night of the mind, but a night without moon or star".

Confucius.

"It is not the degree that makes a great man; it is the man that makes the degree great"

Nicoli Machiavelli.

The Economic Development Institute under the theme **Global Thinking Research** was established in 2001. We are group of past students of the University of the West Indies living in and outside Jamaica. We came to the realization from when we were on the Mona Campus that in the **Information Age** we live in, successful people are those who have access to information. We formed a group to share in this **New Way of Thinking** and found it fruitful to our endeavours . Unfortunately, we had to restrict our information bases in many cases as our lecturers and tutors deemed it fit to remain in a vacuum of limitation with regards to the evolution of the **New Information Paradigm**. We were clearly ahead of our time. We have developed this new product called the **Information Booklet Series (which there is a need for)**, the product provides **information on topical issues** in the areas of Management, Sports, Information Technology, Public Administration, Information and Communication, Economics, Economic Development, Social Development, Legal Education, Industrial Relations at competitive prices. We have kept it simple so that all can understand and appreciate. As such, we do not regard them as theses on the chosen areas and they do not seek academic recognition, however they do meet WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization) Standards. We hope you will find the following informative and instructive and as usual your comments would be appreciated.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The last decade 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.

Young people represent agents, beneficiaries and victims of major societal changes and are generally confronted by a paradox, seeking 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.

This national programme for Youth provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people in Jamaica. It contains proposals for action to the year 2008, aiming at achieving the objectives of the UN Youth policy objectives and at fostering conditions and mechanisms to promote improved well being and livelihood among young people in Jamaica.

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

## UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION OF INTENT ON YOUTH: PROBLEMS AND POTENTIALS

The States' Members of the United Nations have agreed to work towards achievement of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

inter alia, the promotion of higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development.

Young people in all parts of the world, living in countries at different stages of development and in different socio-economic situations, aspire to full participation in the life of society, as provided in the Charter, including:

- (a) Attainment of an educational level commensurate with their aspirations.
- (b) Access to employment opportunities equal to their abilities.
- (c) Food and nutrition adequate for full participation in the life of society.
- (d) A physical and social environment that promotes good health, offers protection from diseases 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 sporting activities to improve the living standards of young people in both rural and urban areas.

While the people of the United Nations, through their international government organisations 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, 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

industrialised countries, which is a matter of grave concern, aggravating poverty and imbalances.

- (g) Increasing incidence of diseases, such as malaria, the Human Immunodeficiency Virus and the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), and other threats to health, such as substance abuse and psychotropic substance addiction, smoking and alcoholism.
- (h) Inadequate opportunities for vocational education and training, especially for persons with disabilities.
- (I) Changes in the role of the family as a vehicle for shared responsibility and socialization of youth.
- (j) Lack of opportunity for young people to participate in the life of society and contribute to its development and well-being;
- (k) Prevalence of debilitating disease, hunger and malnutrition that engulfs the life of many young people.
- (l) Increasing difficulty for young people to receive family life education as a basis for forming healthy families that foster sharing of responsibilities.

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

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.

The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action adopted by the World Summit for Social Development in March 1995,

and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in September 1995.

(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 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 great measures to eliminate the economic exploitation of children.
- (l) Every State should provide young people with the health services necessary to ensure their physical and mental well-being, including measures to combat diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS, and to protect them from harmful drugs and the effects of addiction to drugs, tobacco and alcohol.
- (m) Every State should place people at the centre of development and should direct their economies to meet human needs more effectively and to ensure that young people are active participants and beneficiaries in the process of development.

## DEVELOPMENT SETTING

In 1995, the world youth population - defined by the United Nation 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 is often even more difficult for young people because of limited opportunities for education and training, viable employment and health and social services, and because of a growing incidence of substance abuse and juvenile delinquency. Many developing countries are also experiencing unprecedented rates of rural-urban migration by young people.

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

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

Young people in all countries are both major human resources for development and key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation. Their imagination, ideals, considerable energies and vision is essential for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. Thus, there is special need for new impetus to be given to the design and implementation of youth policies and programmes at all

levels. The ways in which the challenges and potentials of young people are addressed by policy will influence current social and economic conditions and the well being and livelihood of future generations.

## STRATEGIES AND POLICY SPECIFICS

In 1965, in resolution 2037 (XX), the General Assembly endorsed the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding among the People. 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. The guidelines are significant for their focus on young people as a broad category comprising various subgroups, rather than a single demographic entity. They provide proposals for specific measures to address the needs of subgroups such as young people with disabilities, rural and urban youth and young women.

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

This 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, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, 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.

This Programme of Action is drawn from these international instruments generally and specifically related to youth policies and programmes. This 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.

## PRIORITY AREAS

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 inter-linked and mutually reinforcing.

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 full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making. The Programme of Action does not exclude the possibility of new priorities which may be identified in the future.

Implementation of this Programme of Action requires the full enjoyment by young people of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and also requires that Government 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 our young people, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all young women and men.

### ***Education***

Although progress towards universal basic education, beginning with literacy, has been impressive in recent times, the number of illiterate people will continue to grow and many developing countries have fallen short of universal primary education. Three main concerns regarding current systems of education may be expressed. The first is the inability of many parents in developing countries like Jamaica 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, displaced persons, street children, young people in rural areas and young people with disabilities. The third concerns the quality of education, its relevance

to employment and its usefulness in assisting young people in the transition to full adulthood, active citizenship and productive and gainful employment.

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

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

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

### *Proposals for action*

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

Priority should be given to achieving the goal of ensuring basic Education for all (beginning with literacy), mobilizing for that purpose All channels, agents and forms of education and training, in line with the Concept of lifelong education.

Special emphasis should also be given to the reform of education content and curricula, especially curricula that reinforce traditional female roles, which deny women opportunities for full and equal partnership in society, at all levels, focusing on scientific literacy, moral values and learning of skills, adapted to the changing environment. The importance of the development of information skills, that is skills for researching, accessing and using information, and informatics should be emphasized along with the importance of distance education.

Non-governmental youth organizations and educational organizations should develop youth-to-youth programmes for basic education, skills training and literacy. Consideration should be given to developing programmes enabling retired and elderly people to teach literacy to young people. Particular attention should be given to specific groups of youth in distressed circumstances, including indigenous, migrant and refugee youth, displaced persons, street children and poor youth in urban and rural areas, as well as to special problems, including literacy problems, for blind youth and youth with other disabilities.

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

Government should establish or strengthen programmes to educate young people in the cultural heritage of their own and other societies and the world. Government should institute, in cooperation with non-governmental youth organisations, 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 organisations, should be requested to expand international programmes, such as youth camps, by which young people, particularly those from developing countries, with different cultures, may help restore major international cultural sites and engage in other cultural activities.

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

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

### **4. Vocational and professional training**

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

## **5. Promoting human rights education**

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

## **6. Training for enterprise programmes**

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

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

Government 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, Government should plan and implement relevant training programmes. Non-governmental youth organizations should be encouraged and assisted in formulating and disseminating model-training courses for use by member organizations.

Interested organizations should investigate possibilities of strengthening international youth worker and youth leadership training, with priority given to accepting participants from developing countries.

In cooperation with concerned organizations that provide training opportunities for youth, including internships and volunteer programmes, establishment of an inventory of such programmes could also be explored.

## **B. Employment**

Unemployment and underemployment among youth is a problem everywhere.

It is, indeed, part of the larger struggle to create employment opportunities for all citizens. The problem has worsened in recent years because of the global recession which has affected developing countries the most seriously. The disturbing fact is that economic growth is not always accompanied by growth in employment. The difficulty of finding suitable employment is compounded by a host of other problems confronting young

people, including illiteracy and insufficient training, and is worsened by periods of world economic slow-down and by overall changing economic trends. In some countries, the influx of young people into the employment market has brought with it acute problems. According to estimates of the International Labour Organization, more than one hundred million new jobs would have to be created within the next twenty years in order to provide

suitable employment for the growing number of young people in the economically active populations of developing countries. The situation of girls and young women, as well as of young people with disabilities, warrants urgent attention, bearing in mind the prohibition of forced labour and child labour.

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

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

### *Proposals for action*

#### **1. Opportunities for self-employment**

Government 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.

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

Within funds designated to promote youth employment, Government should, as appropriate, designate resources for programmes supporting the efforts of young women, young people with disabilities, street children. Youth organizations and young people themselves should be directly involved in the planning and implementation of these programmes.

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

Where they do not already exist, Government should consider the establishment of voluntary service programmes for youth. Such programmes 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.

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

Government, 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 Government should track the employment of youth into those fields marked by newly emerging technologies. Measures should be taken to provide ongoing training for youth in this area.

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

### ***C. Hunger and poverty***

Over one billion people in the world today live in unacceptable conditions of poverty, mostly in developing countries, particularly in rural areas of low-income

countries in Asia and the Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. 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.

Hunger and malnutrition remain among the most serious and intractable threats to humanity, often preventing youth and children from taking part in society. Hunger is the result of many factors: mismanagement of food production and distribution; poor accessibility; maldistribution of financial resources; unwise exploitation of natural resources;

unsustainable patterns of consumption; environmental pollution; natural and human-made disasters; conflicts between traditional and contemporary production systems; irrational population growth; and armed conflicts.

### *Proposals for action*

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

Government should enhance educational and cultural services and other incentives in rural areas to make them more attractive to young people.

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

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

## **2. Skill-training for income-generation by young people**

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

## **3. Land grants for young people**

Government 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 should be invited to document and disseminate information about national experience with land-grant and settlement schemes for use by Government.

Government, consistent with their rural development schemes and with the assistance of international organizations, as appropriate, should be encouraged to

work with volunteer youth organizations on projects which enhance and maintain the rural and urban environments.

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

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

#### **D. Health**

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

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

## *Proposals for action*

### **1. Provision of basic health services**

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

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

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

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

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

## **2. Development of health education**

Government should include, in the curricula of educational institutions at the primary and secondary levels, programmes focusing on primary health knowledge and practices. Particular emphasis should be placed on the understanding of basic hygiene requirements and the need to develop and sustain a healthy environment.

These programmes need to be

developed in full awareness of the needs and priorities of young people and with their involvement.

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

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

Government, 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, 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, and in the Beijing Declaration

and the Platform for Action for the Fourth World Conference on Women, 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 in Jamaica should be encouraged to take effective steps on these Issues where possible. The reproductive health needs of adolescents as a group have been largely ignored to date by existing reproductive health services. The response of societies to the reproductive health needs of adolescents should be based on information that helps them attain a level of maturity required to make responsible decisions. In particular, information and services should be made available to adolescents to help them understand their sexuality and protect them from unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and the subsequent risk of infertility. This should be combined with the education of young men to respect women's self-determination and to share responsibility with women in matters of sexuality and reproduction. This effort is uniquely important for the health of young women and their children, for women's self-determination and, in many countries, for efforts to slow the momentum of population growth. Motherhood at a very young age entails a risk of maternal death that is much greater than average, and the children of young mothers have higher levels of morbidity and mortality. Early 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.

Government 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 in Jamaica are to be encouraged to continue assigning high priority to promoting adolescent reproductive health.

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

Governments should develop accessible, available and affordable primary health care services of high quality, including sexual and reproductive health care, as well as education programmes, including those related to sexually transmitted disease, including HIV/AIDS, for youth.

Continued international cooperation and collective global efforts are necessary for the containment of HIV/AIDS.

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

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

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

Government, 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. They should also undertake programmes to inform young people about the adverse effects of drug and alcohol abuse and tobacco addiction.

Programmes should be instituted, with the appropriate assistance of the United Nations bodies and organizations concerned, to train medical, paramedical, educational and youth work personnel in health issues of particular concern to young people, including healthy lifestyles. Research into such issues should be promoted, particularly research into the effects and treatment of drug abuse and addiction. Youth organizations should be enlisted in these efforts.

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

As recommended by the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, and bearing in mind that young women are specially vulnerable, Government 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.

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

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

### **E. Environment**

The deterioration of the natural environment is one of the principal concerns of young people 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*

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

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

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

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

The United Nations Environment Programme, in cooperation with Government and non-governmental youth organizations, should be 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 should be requested to continue its efforts to disseminate information to and exchange information with youth organizations. Government should encourage and assist youth organizations to initiate and develop youth-to-youth contacts through town-twinning and similar programmes in order to share the experience gained in different countries.

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

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

Government and youth organizations should initiate programmes to promote participation in tree planting, forestry, 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.

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

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

Government 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.

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

#### **F. Drug abuse**

The vulnerability of young people to drug abuse has in recent years become a major concern. The consequences of widespread drug abuse and trafficking, particularly for young men and women, are all too apparent.

Violence, particularly street violence, often results from drug abuse and illicit drug networks.

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

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

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

## ***Proposals for action***

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

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

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.

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

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

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

Research has been undertaken into the possibility of identifying medication to block cravings for specific drugs without creating secondary dependency, but much remains to be done in this area. The need for medical and social research in the prevention and treatment of substance abuse as well as rehabilitation, has become more urgent, particularly with the

world-wide increase in abuse and addiction among young people. In such research, emphasis should be given to the fact that intravenous substance abuse raises the risk of contracting communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS and hepatitis, arising from the sharing of needles and other injection equipment. The fruits of all such research should be shared globally.

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

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

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 world-wide medical and mental health organizations could be requested to set guidelines for continuing research and for carrying out comparable programmes in different settings, whose effectiveness could be evaluated over a given period of time.

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

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

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

Young prisoners who are already drug-dependent should be targeted as priority candidates for treatment and rehabilitation services and should be segregated as appropriate. Guidelines and standard minimum rules should be prepared to assist national authorities in law enforcement and prison systems in maintaining the necessary controls and initiating treatment and rehabilitation services. Action along these lines constitutes a long-term

advantage to society, as the cycle of dependence, release, repeated offences and repeated incarcerations constitutes a heavy burden on the criminal justice system, quite apart from the wasted lives and personal tragedies which result from drug dependence and criminal behaviour.

### **G. Juvenile delinquency**

Juvenile crime and delinquency are serious problems all over the world. Their intensity and gravity depend mostly on the social, economic and cultural conditions in each country. There is evidence, however, of an apparent world-wide increase in juvenile criminality combined with economic recession, especially in marginal sectors of urban centres. In many cases, youth offenders are "street children" who have been exposed to violence in their immediate social environment, either as observers or as victims.

Their basic education, when they have it, is poor; their primary socialization from the family is too often inadequate; and their socio-economic environment is shaped by poverty and destitution. Rather than relying solely on the criminal justice system, approaches to the prevention of violence and crime should thus include measures to support equality and justice, to combat poverty and to reduce hopelessness among young people.

### ***Proposals for action***

#### **1. Priority to preventive measures**

Government 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.

## **2. Prevention of violence**

Government 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. Government should also develop programmes to promote tolerance and better understanding among youth, with a view to eradicating contemporary forms of related intolerance and thereby prevent violence.

To prevent violence and crime, the development of social organization, particularly through youth organizations and community involvement, should be fostered by a supportive social policy and within a legal framework.

Government assistance should focus on facilitating the ability of community and youth organizations to express and evaluate their needs concerning the prevention of violence and crime, to formulate and implement actions for themselves and to cooperate with each other.

## **3. *Rehabilitation services and programmes***

Destitution, poor living conditions, inadequate education, malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment and lack of leisure-time activities are factors that marginalize young people, which makes some of them vulnerable to exploitation as well as to

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

### **H. Leisure-time activities**

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

#### ***Proposals for action***

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

Government, 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.

Government should be 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.

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

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

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

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

Government as well as local authorities and community development agencies should incorporate leisure-time activity programmes and facilities in urban planning, giving particular attention to areas with a high population density. Equally, rural development programmes should pay due attention to the leisure needs of rural youth.

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

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

## ***I. Girls and young women***

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

### ***Proposals for action***

#### **1. Discrimination**

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

#### **2. Education**

Universal and equal access to and completion of primary education for girls and young women as well as equal access to secondary and higher education should be

ensured. A framework should be provided for the development of educational materials and practices that are gender balanced and promote an educational setting that eliminates all barriers impeding the schooling of girls and young women, including married and/or pregnant girls and young women.

### **3. Employment**

Girls and young women should be protected from economic and related forms of exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous, to interfere with their education or to be harmful to their health or their physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development, in conformity with the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Equal access for young women to all employment opportunities should be promoted and their participation in the traditionally male-dominated sectors should be encouraged.

### **4. Violence**

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

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

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

Any efforts and proposed actions in the other priority areas considered in this programme are, in a certain way, conditioned by enabling the economic, social and political participation of youth, as a matter of critical importance.

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

***Proposals for action***

The following actions are proposed:

(a) Improving access to information in order to enable young people to make better use of their opportunities to participate in decision-making;

(b) Developing and/or strengthening opportunities for young people to learn their rights and responsibilities, promoting their social, political, developmental and environmental participation, removing obstacles that affect their full contribution to society and respecting, inter alia, freedom of association;

(c) Encouraging and promoting youth associations through financial, educational and technical support and promotion of their activities;

- (d) Taking into account the contribution of youth in designing, implementing and evaluating national policies and plans affecting their concerns;
- (e) Encouraging increased national, regional and international cooperation and exchange between youth organizations;
- (f) Government 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***

Effective implementation of this Programme of Action for Youth 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, this Programme of Action will remain little more than a global statement of intent and general standard for action.

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

Implementation of this Programme of Action is ultimately the responsibility of Government with the support of the international community and in cooperation,

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

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

#### **A. National level**

Government should be urged to formulate and adopt an integrated national youth policy as a means of addressing youth-related concerns. This should be done as part of a continuing process of review and assessment of the situation of youth, formulation of a cross-sectoral national youth programme of action in terms of specific, time-bound objectives and a systematic evaluation of progress achieved and obstacles encountered.

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

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

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

## **B. Regional cooperation**

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

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

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

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

Regional non-governmental youth organizations, regional offices of bodies and organizations of the United Nations system and regional intergovernmental organizations concerned with youth are invited to consider meeting on a biennial basis to review and discuss issues and trends and to identify proposals for regional and subregional cooperation.

United Nations regional commissions are also invited to play an essential role through the provision of a suitable venue and appropriate input regarding regional action.

### **C. International cooperation**

An essential role for international cooperation is to promote conditions conducive to the implementation of this 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.

#### **1. Data collection and dissemination of information**

Capacities to collect, analyse and present data in a timely and accurate fashion are essential for effective planning and target-setting, for monitoring issues and trends and for evaluating progress achieved in implementing this Programme of Action.

Special attention should be directed towards building national capacities and institutions regularly to collect and compile socio-economic data series that are both cross-sectional and disaggregated by cohort. To this end, interested centres and institutions may wish to consider the possibility of jointly strengthening or establishing, in cooperation with the United Nations, networks concerned with collection of data and publication of statistics and to realize thereby greater economies of scale in the development and dissemination of statistics in the field of youth.

Major contributions related to data and statistics in the field of youth are currently being made by the United Nations. Such contributions include the socio-economic data collection and statistical development activities of the Statistics Division of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis of the Secretariat; the youth policies and programmes information activities of the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the Secretariat; the educational and literacy data collection activities of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; and the youth advisory networks of the United Nations Environment Programme. Concerned bodies and agencies of the United Nations system are urged to explore ways and means of achieving greater coherence in data collection and the publication of statistics. This could include programme planning and coordination on an inter-agency basis. For example, the data bank programme on adolescent health of the World Health Organization is coordinated with the work of the Statistics Division of the Secretariat. Other bodies and agencies of the United Nations system are invited to contribute data in their respective areas of expertise to an integrated socio-economic data bank on youth. For instance, the international drug abuse

assessment system of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme is urged to consider including a component on youth and drugs. An inventory of innovative youth policies, programmes and projects could be coordinated and made available to interested users by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. Other topics that could be considered for joint action include juvenile delinquency, runaways and homeless youth.

Public information and communications are equally important in building awareness of youth issues, as well as a consensus on appropriate planning and action. The bodies and organizations of the United Nations system concerned are urged, as a matter of priority, to review publications currently produced and to identify ways in which these publications can

better promote this Programme of Action and areas in which they may need to be complemented through the production of leaflets and posters in connection with special events.

To encourage widespread awareness of and support for this Programme of Action, Government, 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 this 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 this Programme of Action.

## **2. Research and policy studies**

Comparative studies on issues and trends concerning youth are essential to the continuous expansion and development of the global body of knowledge on

relevant theories, concepts and methods. International, regional and national research centres and institutions concerned with youth-related issues are urged to consider the possibility of establishing

cooperative relationships with the United Nations to ensure effective links between the implementation of this Programme of Action and relevant research and studies.

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

Another 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 this Programme of Action, to the identification and assessment of issues and trends and to the review and evaluation of policy initiatives.

### **3. Planning and coordination**

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

A complementary mechanism for coordination is provided by the channels that have been developed between the United Nations and intergovernmental and non-governmental youth organizations. Such mechanisms require appropriate strengthening to enable them to respond better to priorities for action, as identified in this Programme of Action.

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

Technical cooperation is an essential means for building national capacities and institutional capabilities. In this regard, special attention should be directed towards measures that will serve to promote expanded opportunities for international technical assistance and advisory services in the field of youth as a means of building expanded and strengthened networks of institutions and organizations.

There is a need to continue to improve the impact of technical cooperation activities carried out by the United Nations system, including those that relate to youth activities. The United Nations system must continue to assist Government,

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 like Jamaica should be assisted in improving their national capacities for project and programme formulation and execution.

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 any interested Government, non-governmental organizations and the private sector are invited to consider the possibility of supporting the activities of the Fund on a predictable and sustained basis. To this end, the parties concerned may wish to consider the possibility of constituting an advisory body at an appropriate level to review the application of the terms of reference of the Fund and priorities and means of strengthening its capacities.

##### **5. Outreach and partnership among specialized constituencies**

A crucial element in implementing this Programme of Action is the recognition that governmental action alone is not sufficient to ensure its success, that rather it should be further complemented by the support of the international community.

This process will also require both systematic outreach and partnership among the Programme's many constituencies in both the non-governmental and private sectors.

A critical first step is phased expansion and regularization of channels of communication between the United Nations and non-governmental youth organizations to include representatives of interested private sector organizations. This would build upon the provisions set forth in General Assembly resolution 45/103 of 14 December 1990 concerning the involvement of youth and non-governmental youth organizations in the formulation of the Programme of Action such as this one. 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 this Programme, and to the periodic review, appraisal and formulation of options to achieve its goals and objectives.

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

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

## EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE TO TAKE ACTION

This is not a detailed description and explanation of the concept and practice of empowerment. It is a brief outline of the concept, and it aims to stimulate and guide discussions and ideas about youth empowerment. In addition, the paper seeks to highlight the elements of the concept and practice of youth empowerment.

### *The Concept of Empowerment*

The concept of empowerment means different things to different people. It includes participation, rights and responsibilities, capacity-building, and/or social integration. When one hears about empowerment, words and images come to our minds such as enabling environment, authority, entitlement, and power. To empower youth suggests conferring power to young people as individuals, youth organizations, communities, systems, nations and international actors so that they have the opportunity to make decisions that affect their life and well-being instead of having decisions made for them which may go against their wishes and interests. It involves making young people active agents for change and development, instead of young people living a passive life waiting on others to do for them. An underlying assumption behind the empowerment concept is that youth actors lack the power or have insufficient capacity to exercise their right to choose and act. Hence it follows that their autonomy should be respected, restored or enhanced. To that end, it is important to build up their capacity and to remove obstacles that stand in the way of the assumption of sovereignty. In this context, capacity building compliments empowerment. At its second meeting in New York in February 2000, the International Preparatory Committee (IPC) of the fourth session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System decided that the theme of the Forum should be “Empowering youth for action.” This theme was selected because it is relevant to the major challenge facing the Forum: mobilizing

youth organizations to implement the recommendations of the Forum. This challenge demands a closer look at the real situation facing most youth organizations throughout the world. In many cases, it is quite evident that youth organizations are not in a strong position to effectively and efficiently promote and implement recommendations of world conferences. Furthermore, one of the aims of the Forum is to improve channels of communications between the UN system and youth NGOs. In this context, both the UN system and youth NGOs could contribute to the success of each other's work by working in partnership. Therefore, a consensus has been developed on the need to empower youth organizations to work in partnership with UN agencies and organizations. While the focus is on empowering youth in relation to the United Nations system, the outcomes of the Forum will be of enormous benefit to all sectors of the international community such as governments, Intergovernmental organizations, civil society, private sector, and academic institutions. It is important to highlight the fact that at the community and national levels, youth organizations, especially in developing countries, do not have adequate capacity to empower themselves. In cases where youth organizations might possess the required capacity, many of them need to use that capacity to empower themselves to remove barriers in the way of getting young people to really take charge of articulating and acting on their concerns and issues which affect youth. The current policies on development place much emphasis on economic growth. It is assumed that if countries increase their economic growth rates problems of social development will be resolved. Experience so far has not found this to be true. While economic growth is essential for development, it is not the key factor in generating social development. Economic growth means nothing by itself. Economic growth only has meaning when it is used to effectively address social development issues such as unemployment, poverty, disease, homelessness, governance and capacity building of government and civil society organizations. One of the major challenges for

young people - *Background papers for the fourth session of the World Youth Forum of the UN System* page 5 of 18- is to ensure that economic growth takes place and also to ensure that economic growth benefits young people. In this regard, young people must be in a position make their own case for economic growth to become meaningful to their lives. This means that they must have the necessary and relevant information, knowledge, skills, attitude, will, and organizational capacity to effectively advocate for youth participation in the creation and benefits of economic growth. The development process in which policy formulation, implementation and evaluation take place often do not include young people as part of the decision-making mechanisms. Quite often, they are told about the decisions. In many cases, decisions about development activities are imposed on young people. Young people could contribute and benefit more from the development process only if they are able to meaningfully influence the process. Throughout the world, the policy agenda of many countries increasingly includes a focus on establishing and developing democratic and participatory governance. This type of governance recognizes the urgent need to involve all sectors in decision-making at the sectoral, community and national levels. However, it is not limited to only decision-making. It also encompasses participation in the rewards of development. However, this does not just happened by magic. Social groups such as youth must be prepared to participate effectively in deciding what is to be done, how it is to be done, when it is be done, where it is to be done, and who is to benefit. This means that youth organizations must be equipped to participate alongside all other social groups in important decisions which affect their lives. Democracy requires that people be vigilant in demanding their right to participate and have their views respected by political authorities. Throughout the world people are demanding more democracy. Young people and their

organizations are part of this global movement for more democracy. As a matter of fact, in many countries young people have been playing a great role in making countries more democratic. However, in many countries, young people are not given enough opportunities to be active participants in democratic processes. At the time when the IPC has chosen empowering youth for action as the theme for the Forum, several important policy initiatives of the United Nations have also highlighted the need for much more focus on empowering young people to play an active role in the development of their societies. The World Youth Programme of Action to the Year 2000 and Beyond, the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, and the World Youth Forums have highlighted the urgent need to empower young people.

### *Why is Empowerment Needed?*

The rationale for empowering people and organizations (at whatever levels) is as follows:

- Empowerment enhances the capacity of people and organizations to defend their interests, improve their life situation and actualize their potentials
- Stakeholders are denied the right to act for themselves
- Empowerment is needed to check the abuse of rights, fight injustice and correct imbalance of power
- Stakeholder engagement corrects the biases of professionals, bureaucrats and other power holders in policy and program decisions
- Empowerment is needed to fight social exclusion
- Empowerment expresses the belief in the sovereignty of the people
- Empowerment manifests the value of democracy
- Empowerment improves governance

### *Who Should be Empowered?*

The subjects for empowerment include:

- Individuals (e.g. youths)
- Organizations (e.g. youth organizations)
- Groups (informal groups of young people)

### *What to Empower?*

The content of empowerment include:

- Enable actors to organize themselves and to exercise power
- Create, maintain and strengthen structures and institutions
- Provide opportunities for actors to participate in decisions affecting them
- Enable actors to monitor the performance of governments and organizations

To achieve empowerment of people, the following obstacles should be removed:

- Poverty
- Discrimination of all kinds (gender, race, religion, age etc)
- With regard to youth, obstacles include societal distrust in and neglect of youth rights

Certain pre-conditions are also necessary if real empowerment is to come about:

- Suitable channels for participation
- Supportive institutional framework and values
- Education and training to enable actors to acquire skill and ability
- Good health to give people the physical and intellectual capacity to assume responsibility
- Economic opportunities to acquire resources and assets

### *How to Empower?*

We should aim to empower people and organizations by achieving the following:

- Capacity building to provide people with skills and know-how to accomplish tasks and solve problems; and to provide the environment in which individuals can exercise their capabilities
- Consciousness raising to enable people to realize they have rights and sovereignty
- Overcoming psychological barriers to motivate people to get involved, believe in the efficacy of their participation and fight impassivity and apathy
- Providing the experience to promote learning through doing; and to help people to sum up their experiences and attain insights
- Raising the level of participation so that the degree of participation can be conceived of as a ladder starting from participation in activities/tasks, giving reactions and comments, making inputs in the policy and programming process, taking part in decision making, to exercise power and assume control. It is indeed important for young people to be empowered to contribute and benefit from the development of their societies. Empowering young people is an on-going process. It is not an end in itself. Youth empowerment could help to resolve many of the issues highlighted by the World Programme of Action for Youth and many other global plans of actions.

## YOUTH EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES:

### *Education and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)*

In order to guarantee universal access to primary, secondary and higher education as formulated in the Braga Youth Action Plan and the Dakar Education For All Forum (April 2001), we recommend to the United Nations and intergovernmental bodies involved in youth policies and governments:

- (a) An increase in technical, technological, material and financial support through the establishment of an Education and ICT fund, which promotes North – South and South – South cooperation, national, regional and international networking, and government and private partnerships of ICT training centres, and support specific youth voluntary services in the fields of both formal and non formal education and ICT;
- (b) the creation of peer education and exchange programmes and policies to encourage and improve the equitable, free and easy use of ICT in underdeveloped rural, urban and remote areas;
- (c) the establishment of vocational schools at a community level, the creation of internet cafés, distance learning centres, the training of trainers, and the development of re-training programmes;
- (d) The enhancement of existing mass media and interconnected radio, television and internet for improved education processes.

In order to mobilise resources and ensure universal and equitable access to education worldwide, youth must engage in advocacy to support policies that:

- (a) Improve the quality and access of education and ICT by means of giving a priority to education and ICT and waving of taxes on ICT materials intended for free community use;
- (b) Create government and private partnerships, global cooperation and regional strategies to promote ICT in education;
- (c) Increase the budget for education and ICT in the respective national budgets, expressed as a percentage of the GDP;
- (d) Eliminate school fees, and support children through grants to ensure that they do not leave school in order to work;
- (e) Stimulate non governmental and United Nations cooperation;
- (f) Implement of bilateral and multilateral debt relief for a better and broader ICT programme implementation;
- (g) Reduce the prices of ICT material and training;
- (h) Encourage the local production of educational and ICT content and access to content;
- (i) Create policies to address the special needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups.

In order to empower young people and close the digital divide, it is necessary that youth understand ICT. ICT must be used as media for the dissemination of information about such important issues as HIV/AIDS prevention and de-stigmatisation, sanitation, environmental problems and matters of cultural and social nature having a practical impact on the every day life of young people.

### **Employment**

Recognising the urgent need to create decent work for young people, we welcome the draft recommendations of the high-level panel of the Secretary-General's

Youth Employment Network, and in particular, the call for national government to develop within one year's time, national reviews and action plans on youth employment, and to ensure strong involvement of young people in this process. These action plans should take into account the recommendations of the World Youth Forum, as well as an analysis of the international dimensions of employment as call for by the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly entitled "World Summit for Social Development and Beyond: Achieving Social Development for All in a Globalizing World."

We recognize that there are too many young people lacking the necessary education and training for good productive jobs, too few jobs and too many unproductive jobs with poor remuneration and security. We therefore call for:

1. An increase in investment in relevant skills training, emphasizing training appropriate to the job market and the informal sector by among other things, greater collaboration between employers and training providers;
2. The more effective promotion of entrepreneurship among young women and men by the provision of better information on market opportunities, training in business skills, access to capital (credit and other financial services), mentoring by qualified persons, and other business support services; and
3. The establishment of a social floor for young people by improving their working conditions, promoting their rights at work and recognising their voice and representation at work, and guarantee a minimum income which covers life costs to protect the working poor, in keeping with the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (see also recommendation 9 of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Youth Employment).

There is a need to guarantee the freedom of association and the right to strike for young working people. There is also a need for taxes to be imposed on large international financial flows of multinational companies between countries.

We are also gravely concerned with the accumulation of international debt, particularly by developing countries, which creates a burden to be borne by young people and future generations. We call for continuing the process of debt cancellation by bilateral and multilateral creditors, and in that context, for ensuring social development, are substantively addressed by Poverty Reduction Strategies developed by Highly Indebted Poor Countries, and also that young women and men are fully consulted in the development of these strategies. Therefore, we call for the allocation of a portion of the corresponding resources from the re-conversion of developing countries' debts to funds to be co-managed by young people, that will be used to better integrate young women and men into labour markets and to programmes to create job opportunities.

A fundamental element of youth empowerment is access of young people to policy-making bodies at local, national and international levels. In this framework, the fourth session of the World Youth Forum takes note of work being organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to develop a Global Agenda for Employment. We further call for strong participation of youth in the Global Employment Forum being organized by the ILO in Geneva in November 2001 to elaborate this Agenda.

Mobility and migration of labour towards areas of high employment can not be denied or stopped. It causes, for instance, xenophobia, exploitation and a de-unionised labour force. A legal framework should be drawn up internationally to contain and manage this notion.

## **Health and population**

Recognizing that young people should take an active role in conceptualisation, decision-making, implementation and evaluation of health policies, and organize themselves at various levels to create effective networks and develop skills to mobilize resources in order to implement the following recommendations,

Requesting local, national, international government bodies, agencies of the United Nations System, school systems and health service organizations to support youth participation in creating, implementing and evaluating policies and programs pertaining to youth health issues,

Taking into consideration that HIV/AIDS is decimating our generation, that lack of education and information, stigmatisation and negative taboos have increased the vulnerability of youth, and that the public and private sector, national governments and the international community, including bodies such as the United Nations and all NGOs must take action in stopping the HIV/AIDS,

### ***Capacity Building***

Ask governments and the United Nations system for access to national and international resources in order to establish formal and informal programs of education on HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, sexual and reproductive health and mental health,

Improve and recognize the role of peers through reinforcement of capacities of intervention of young people at the same time on a technical, material and financial level.

Affirm the important role that families in all forms, peers and communities play in creating an environment conducive to the development of skills leading to healthier lives.

## Advocacy

Permit young people to participate actively in the conceptualization, decision-making, implementation and evaluation processes to,

- create effective youth-focused networks;
- the creation, development and support of free disease assistance for everybody (including care, treatment and vaccinations);
- prepare and disseminate statistical data which illustrate the health situation of young people to NGOs, local and national governments, international bodies, and youth themselves;
- demonstrate to the system of the United Nations, governments and NGOs the positive impact of youth participation in the promotion of healthier behaviours and practices.

Government to commit itself to implementing participatory policies that ensure:

- free access for young people to health information, education, health sector [in particular sexual and reproductive health and mental health] services in order to avoid STIs and HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancies, to prevent illegal abortion, substance abuse and mental illness,
- implementation of policies that promote a multi-sectoral approach to health that responds better to the specific needs of young people,
- equal opportunities and rights to all children and youth without distinction as to age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, and socio-economic status,
- mobilization of resources to implement the recommendations adopted by UNGASS on HIV/AIDS of 2001, especially those recommendations pertaining directly to rights and needs of young people,
- to consider the fight against HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and suicide as a priority in promoting the health of young people,
- to combat female genital mutilation and violence against women;

## **Awareness Raising**

NGOs, local and national governments, international bodies, and youth themselves to:

- support and sustain youth-empowering community-based peer-education activities to raise awareness on questions regarding the health of young people [on HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, sexual and reproductive health] in both formal and informal sectors, and this with special attention to taboos and traditional socio-cultural beliefs that have negative effects and to traditional socio-cultural beliefs that have positive effects,

- recognize the fundamental role that young people, families, teachers, and communities play in raising youth awareness on all health, including mental, sexual and reproductive health, issues,

- recall to mind that awareness-raising campaigns should reinforce positive behaviours and seek to transform negative practices in a constructive and positive way in all young people including marginalized and excluded youth.

## ***Hunger, Poverty and Debt***

In order to empower young people in rural and urban areas to combat hunger and poverty especially of youth they need to be provided with the necessary resources and capacities in order to create employment and raise an income for their own sustainable livelihoods. Priority should be given to rural youth greatly affected by hunger and poverty through specific programmes and funding involving the provision of production resources such as land, water and seeds, of appropriate technologies and the training on sustainable farming, life skills and natural resource management. The United Nations, United Nations bodies and agencies, governments and regional organizations should make decisive efforts to establish a fund for the development of youth, to be managed by youth and geared towards youth.

Education, training and capacity building of youth are of paramount importance in the provision of a long term strategy to minimize the effects of hunger and to eradicate poverty. To combat illiteracy free basic education has to go along with the creation of an enabling environment that accommodates the needs of young people. Curricula for both basic education and training should not only cover the intellectual aspect of human development but also practical and social skills.

Special programmes should be designed for illiterate out of school youth.

Capacities should be built for youth to effectively respond to the challenging global problems like climate change, land degradation, loss of biodiversity, HIV/AIDS, increasing marginalization of vulnerable groups, the growing gap between the rich and the poor, the instability of the international financial systems and the predominance of the neo-liberal paradigm. Governments, in collaboration with youth organizations should design, implement and monitor policies to meet the needs of young people in terms of education, training and capacity building.

Youth organizations shall be involved in this process at all levels.

To fight effectively against hunger and poverty a comprehensive approach needs to involve all parts of civil society, especially youth, in the policy making and implementation areas of hunger, poverty and debt at all levels. The cancellation of external debts is not only a precondition for any effective fight against hunger and poverty; it also frees funding for investment in education, health and youth. The monitoring of the use of this funding and the implementation of poverty eradication strategies shall be monitored by civil society and youth organizations.

In the process of globalization, more and more decisions are being taken at the international level (for example by the WTO, IMF and World Bank) having a strong impact on national policies without the installation any system of checks and balances. Governments and the United Nations must ensure full and comprehensive representation of civil society, youth organizations and developing nations in all global and multilateral decision-making forums. For ensuring the

minimum standard of life for everyone governments shall install social safety nets and give social assistance for young people in need facing difficulties beyond their

### ***Human Settlements and the Environment***

Recognizing the need for stronger involvement of young people in the United Nations system, there should be more cooperation between UNEP, UNCHS and UNDP to properly address the scope of the issues involved. To start with, UNEP Youth Advisory Council and Youth for Habitat International Network should become more closely integrated. As a result of this cooperation, national action plans and national reports for youth contributions to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and Agenda 21 should be prepared. The development and dissemination of a youth-friendly version of the Habitat Agenda should also be undertaken. Nation states must also fulfill their commitment to Agenda 21 and Habitat Agenda, by including young people in official delegations , the Commission for Human Settlements, follow-up meetings to Habitat II Conference and other important meetings at all levels.

We acknowledge the potential role for national and regional youth platforms to monitor the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Habitat Agenda. Sub-committees in national youth platforms and regional bodies should be created to monitor the implementation of global agendas such as Agenda 21 and Habitat Agenda. Communication between these sub-committees and regional bodies should also be encouraged.

We recognize the need for youth capacity-building in sustainable development in order to increase participation. There should be a number of training centers for Agenda 21 and Habitat to build capacity in young people. These centers should focus on training tutors, emphasizing peer education in issues of sustainable

development. These centers should also develop and supply training methods and multimedia materials for young people to bring to their communities. One way to implement these training centers could be to send young people to different nation states for an extended period (e.g. 3 months) to carry out the training. There should be follow up and monitoring of the training sessions, and indigenous and traditional knowledge should also be respected in the training.

Recognizing the ecological debt of the North to the South, sustainable development indicators, that adequately measure environmental services, and that take into account the current eco-systems of the countries of the South and the impact of their consumption patterns on the environment, need to be utilized in order to develop, in an integrated manner, policies of equity among the regions of the world. We also call for a halt to the exportation of waste and polluting consumer products.

### **Social Integration**

Technical, human and financial support must be focused on assisting marginalized and vulnerable youth to organize themselves in order to address their own needs and interests, and make their particular contribution to social progress. Training in and access to ICT for marginalized and vulnerable youth through means such as programmes of agencies and bodies of the United Nations system can then become, amongst other methods, an integral tool for networking, to develop awareness of programmes and legislation that is of benefit to marginalized youth, to facilitate exchanges, pressure groups and support.

Young people and youth NGOs are the best agents for delivering change for other young people, with volunteerism being a key tool that should be promoted among youth organizations in order for them to take the lead in peer-to-peer training to stimulate, support and facilitate the role of marginalized and vulnerable youth in the wider society. The United Nations system becomes a truly partnership

organization. Partnerships should develop skills within three spheres: Economical, Technical, and joint decision-making. Exchanges should be used to develop the capacity of young person NGOs by facilitating the interchange of information both between themselves and with the United Nations agencies and programmes. The free flow of people between nations should be facilitated. Advocacy that is significantly beneficial to the participation and integration of marginalized and vulnerable young people must be fulfilled at local, national and international levels: Making connections with authorities at local level increases the ability of activities to have an effect on the lives of young people. This must be sensitive to the opportunities and strategies at the local level. At the regional and international level, to promote and ensure the interests of marginalized and vulnerable youth in the regional youth platforms and by youth representatives to decision-making bodies such as the general assembly. National and Regional bodies should be promoted to act for and represent the needs of young people within a setting that has common values, history and methods. Advocacy should also promote equal opportunities for marginalized and vulnerable youth through such means as education – formal, non-formal and informal – and employment (including training) in order for them to participate in all levels and aspects of society. The International level should be used as an opportunity for methods and skills to be shared within a setting that has no prejudice and is diverse enough to give value.

Share among the organizations of marginalized and vulnerable youth the various ways in which they can collaborate within the United Nations system. This should include opportunities to work with field offices and to learn about the processes and criteria required to obtain consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system. Youth organizations should organize themselves to ensure that governments are effectively adopting and implementing resolutions adopted during the Copenhagen social summit and its + 5, and hence strengthen their social integration policies and programmes, including rehabilitation, health, education, entertainment and vocational training programmes. Youth organizations should mobilize the channels of social integration family, media schools, youth NGOS, religious groups to promote awareness about the causes and cost of social exclusion and to promote programmes that foster social integration.

### **Culture of Peace**

Peace is not just an absence of war, but also a state of mind, individual or collective, a social cultural, political and economic harmony. Peace is also a way of being, a way of living. Hence, to build a true culture of peace we need to develop justice, respect of human rights, to fight against poverty. We need to favour intercultural dialogue, which should be among civilisations, and to empower minorities and fight marginalization and exclusion. As youth, and bearing in mind the above, it is our challenge to be determined to increase our influence and our outspoken conclusion to our governments concerning the dialogue to build a culture of peace. Therefore we support the following concrete proposals to support youth against oppression: We have to recognise the number of existing obstacles for the realisation of a true culture of peace. We wish to underline the following elements:

- conflict and trafficking and circulation of weapons;

- intolerance, illiteracy and discrimination in all areas.

We call upon a network of young people that are involved with United Nations agencies to begin conflict resolution on all levels in a bilateral way. The three recommendations we propose to achieve this is by:

- To form a youth network which could generate mechanisms to ensure the participation of young representatives in reconciliation process, negotiation and peace building;
- To demand compensation and justice for slavery, colonization and marginalization as crimes against humanity;
- To develop and support the education of a culture of peace in programmes of schools in all levels.

### ***Youth Policy, Participation and Rights***

The United Nations system should improve its way of communicating with youth organizations, guaranteeing that any meeting or consultation fulfils the criteria of being affordable, respecting the existing democratic and legitimate channels of youth, and should grantee implementation and evaluation. We reiterate the call for national governments to include youth representatives, selected by youth in an open and democratic manner, in their delegations to the United Nations General Assembly and all other intergovernmental meetings. The United Nations Youth Unit, with the assistance of youth organizations experienced in this area, should serve as a clearing-house for information for youth organizations to lobby their governments for these youth representative positions. There should be increased representation of youth within the Youth Unit itself through a system of placements of members of youth organizations, as well as increased status for the Youth Unit within the United Nations system to coordinate all youth participation in the United Nations system.

The government should implement legislation to protect human rights, as they relate to youth, including protecting rights to participation in decision-making, access to quality education fostering responsible citizenship, and access to human rights education. We ask for the rights of the youth living in countries under occupation, embargoes and wars to be given international protection. We also call for government and the United Nations to promote and disseminate the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and demand that government show their commitment to the Convention through its full implementation.

Financial support, training and facilities need to be provided at a local, national and international level in order to ensure young peoples active participation in decision-making, and development activities and programmes. We further recommend that governments design and implement programs that can build the institutional capacity of youth organizations. We support the creation of independent and democratic local and national youth councils, as well as regional platforms where they do not exist. We call for existing youth councils and platforms to adhere to these aforementioned principles. In order to meet the challenges of young people specifically in developing countries, the United Nations should reconsider the United Nations definition of youth and raise the upper limit to 30.

### **Young Women and Girls**

We encourage all stakeholders to invest in compulsory and free education at all levels for girls, adolescents and young female, both in formal and non-formal environments. There is a need to involve girls and young women in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes that target youth. We demand cost reduction for contraceptives and AIDS treatment, and prevention/treatment for STDs. We call for the improvement of knowledge,

research and data, qualitative and quantitative, on the needs of adolescent's girls and young women.

We call for an increase in information and media coverage of issues related to girls and young women at local and international levels, using traditional and modern media. It is necessary to introduce skills and content related to sex education, family life education and human rights at all levels. Violence should be combated, and we call for the creation of youth and female friendly activities and services for young women and girls, offering life skills counseling, shelters for at risk young women. We call for an increase in training for peer counseling, respecting and focusing on gender balance. There is also a great need to ensure access to livelihood activities, such as income generating activities micro-project management training et cetera.

It is crucial to break stereotypes in education by raising awareness the role and contribution of girls and young women in society. Youth organizations should mobilize governments to offer economic incentives or policies to increase girls' education. Young women's positive image should be enhanced by encouraging young women who have education in science and math to be used as role models and mentors

### ***Youth, Sports and Leisure Time Activities***

Sports, leisure activities, such as leisure sports, cultural leisure activities and traditional forms of leisure, socio-educational leisure activities, and even paid entertainment allow individuals to manage their free time without constraints. Even in difficult situations, these activities give young people the opportunity to entertain themselves, to relax, to play, and to find cultural enrichment.

Furthermore, sports and leisure activities give young people the possibility of self-expression, personal fulfillment, and personal development as an individual and as a member of a group. In addition, sports and leisure activities can raise awareness

in young people that can inspire them to contribute to the improvement of their living conditions through volunteerism. These activities should be available to all young people without exclusion based on gender, religion or social condition. It favours social inclusion, including for young people with special needs.

Youth structures and associations should be granted by the United Nations organizations and others with human, material and economic assistance, necessary for the realization of different activities especially those related to the development of sports, leisure time activities, and socio-educative activities.

The United Nations should encourage international organizations and NGOs to work directly on grassroot levels through youth associations for the development of sports; culture, traditional activities and socio-cultural activities.

The United Nations system should encourage promote, and find ways to recognise the participation of young voluntary workers in different organizations, NGOs and youth associations. Moreover, the United Nations should take care of the security of young volunteers and promote all training facilities and technical assistance for their work.

We encourage sport programs that are specially for disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in the regular sports activities at all levels.”

### ***Implementation and Monitoring***

Mechanisms for monitoring and implementation of this empowerment Strategy must be established including: (a) national reports from youth organizations, (b) national reports from government, (c) a global report on youth, based on the national reports, published by the United Nations Secretariat.

Nations states such as Jamaica must fulfill their commitment to Agenda 21 (Chapter 25.9h) by including young people in official delegations to the United Nations General Assembly and other important meetings at all levels.

All agencies in the United Nations must strengthen and coordinate their youth programs, and develop strategies for enhancing participation of young people. Jamaica must give real and sufficient funding to youth activities by contributing significant amounts to a **Nations Youth Fund**, which must become more transparent and accountable to target beneficiaries.

The United Nations system must provide sufficient political, financial and technical support for further world youth forums, based on a broad, representative and democratic process in which criteria are identified.

## **ANNEX ON HIV/AIDS**

### ***Preamble***

1. Because HIV/AIDS represents the greatest threat to the health and security of our generation;
2. And because more than half of all new HIV/AIDS deaths occur in young people under the age of 24;
3. And because HIV/AIDS has been recognized as a critical issue in documents, including the 2000 Africa Development Forum, the 2001 United Nations General Assembly on AIDS Youth Caucus Position Paper, the 2001 Asia-Pacific Youth Declaration, and others;
4. And because HIV/AIDS is set to destroy much of our generation in Africa and is an increasingly deadly force in Asia and the Pacific, the Caribbean, South America, and in communities in North America and Europe;
5. We, the youth of the world, annex this document to the Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy in recognition of the crucial relevance of the HIV/AIDS crisis to all issues facing youth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### ***The Responsibilities of Youth***

6. We take it upon ourselves to lead the fight against HIV/AIDS in our own communities and worldwide;
7. We resolve to practice and promote sexual responsibility, including through the right to choose not to have sex, and if we choose to have sex, the use of condoms;

8. We resolve to create and support programmes and projects to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, reduce stigma and discrimination related to HIV/AIDS, and support treatment, care and support of people living with HIV/AIDS;
9. We resolve to organize and support North-South and South-South collaboration to share best practices and resources among youth organizations fighting HIV/AIDS;
10. We resolve to encourage our governments and international institutions to mobilize sufficient resources, political will and appropriate policies to effectively combat HIV/AIDS, with participation of youth;
11. We resolve to pressure our governments and global institutions to fulfill their commitments as outlined in the 2001 UNGASS Declaration on AIDS;

### ***Responsibilities of Government and Civil Society***

12. We call upon government, international institutions, and civil society to respect the human rights of youth and especially of young people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS;
13. We call upon governments, international institutions, and civil society to remove barriers to effective prevention, care and treatment – including laws that reduce access to essential medicines, laws that discriminate against people living with HIV/AIDS, laws that prevent the social marketing and free and low-cost distribution of condoms and other prevention materials, and laws that restrict the flow of comprehensive sexuality education to youth;
14. We call upon governments and civil society to finance and support the creation and distribution of new technologies to fight HIV/AIDS, including new medications, female-controlled methods of contraception including

female condoms and microbicides, and culturally appropriate ways to spread information about HIV/AIDS prevention;