



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*



United Nations Development Programme

EMPOWERED YOUTH, SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

UNDP YOUTH STRATEGY 2014-2017



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UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in more than 170 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>I. DEFINING YOUTH</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>II. SITUATION ANALYSIS: THE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES</b>	<b>10</b>
A. Youth within an increasingly complex development context	10
B. Inclusion of young women and other disadvantaged youth	11
C. Demographic shifts and youth employment	13
D. Civic engagement and participation in decision-making and political processes	17
E. Resilience building	20
<b>III. YOUTH STRATEGY OUTCOMES</b>	<b>23</b>
Outcome 1. Increased economic empowerment of youth	27
Outcome 2. Enhanced youth civic engagement and participation in decision-making and political processes and institutions	29
Outcome 3. Youth engagement in resilience-building strengthened	32
<b>IV. A FOUR-PRONGED APPROACH TO ACHIEVING RESULTS</b>	<b>35</b>
A. Support capacity development of young people and youth organizations	35
B. Engage through outreach, advocacy and mainstreaming of youth issues in all spheres of development planning	36
C. Influence through thought leadership, global policy debates and networks	39
D. Sustain progress through support to national youth policy development and implementation	40
<b>V. MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>VI. FORGING SUSTAINABLE AND INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS TO DELIVER</b>	<b>42</b>
A. Strengthening partnerships and dialogues with civil society and youth organizations	42
B. Raising awareness and strengthening partnerships with governments at national and sub-national levels	42
C. Partnering for greater coordination and coherence within the UN system	43
<b>VII. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY OF UNDP TO DELIVER</b>	<b>46</b>
A. Core youth team and support facility	46
B. Knowledge management	46
C. Partnerships and resource mobilization	46
D. Promoting venues for youth engagement	46
<b>ANNEXES</b>	<b>47</b>
Annex 1: Defining 'youth'	47
Annex 2: United Nations Youth-SWAP commitments and measures	48
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>ACRONYMS</b>	<b>51</b>



## FOREWORD



Today, we have the largest generation of young people the world has ever known. One third of them live in countries that have suffered a violent conflict, 75 million are unemployed, and political representation is systematically much older, in all regions of the world, than the society it represents. In other words, the institutional public space is scarce for young men and women; if war was a tragedy for all, peace is difficult for them and jobs are hard to get and tough to keep.

The young generations have made their voices heard loud and clear about the future they want. In the Post-2015 Consultations, they have demanded, more than anything else, education, jobs, honest and responsive governments, and greater and meaningful participation in decision-making. Their views must count.

Politics needs rejuvenation, balancing the weight of experience with the needs, energy and innovative force of youth. Labour markets must offer young people a decent chance in life. Education has to attain the quality that allows students to learn and be competitive. Basic equality has to be acquired at birth, established in childhood and consolidated during the youth years.

UNDP's first-ever corporate Youth Strategy, "Empowered Youth, Sustainable Future", is about resilience, sustainable and human development, and effective and democratic governance. It calls on the young generations to become even more committed agents of change in development processes.

Together with the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, UNDP is also increasing its engagement with young women and men, their organisations, and other stakeholders that matter. The UNDP Youth Strategy carries the message of our Strategic Plan to young people. It is about hope in the future, but it is mostly about a present of opportunity.

Magdy Martínez-Solimán, Director a.i.  
Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Youth are a positive force for transformational change

This youth generation is the largest the world has ever known. More than 60 percent of the population in many UNDP programme countries are youth aged 15-24. Their opportunities for communicating, acting and influencing are unprecedented. The challenges they face are unprecedented, too, from climate change to unemployment to multiple forms of inequalities and exclusion, in particular for youth belonging to vulnerable or marginalized groups.

UNDP's first Youth Strategy 2014-2017 engages young people as a positive force for transformational change.

The **strategy** at a glance:

- **THREE OUTCOMES:** (1) increased economic empowerment of youth; (2) enhanced youth civic engagement and participation in decision-making and political processes and institutions; and (3) strengthened youth engagement in resilience building;
- **TEN GUIDING PRINCIPLES:** human rights, gender equality, sustainability, national ownership and leadership, participation, innovation, South-South cooperation, volunteerism, inter-generational knowledge-sharing and working by, with and for young people;
- **FOUR-PRONGED APPROACH:** capacity development, advocacy and mainstreaming, thought leadership, and national policy.

UNDP supports policy and programming aiming to ensure that youth are informed, engaged and empowered to contribute to sustainable human development and resilience of their communities. The combination of youth and innovation has the potential to create solutions to development challenges and to transform societies.

*Helen Clark, Administrator, UNDP*

This is the first organization-wide strategy that explicitly states UNDP's commitment to youth. The main expected outcomes of the strategy are threefold.

### Youth are economically empowered

Decent work and livelihood creation are chief determinants in the socio-economic empowerment of youth; they also contribute to sustainable human development overall. Success means increasing the quantity of jobs for young people. It also requires enhancing the quality of jobs by improving their productivity, facilitating movements of young people to more productive sectors, and increasing access to social protection. Access to finance and markets is one area for action—with skill-building for young entrepreneurs, in particular young women entrepreneurs, support for social enterprises, and public-private employment opportunities. Non-formal education will build skills for employability, internships and apprenticeships, and better access to job market data and job centres. Another important area will be fostering a policy environment conducive to job creation for young people.





### *Youth are engaged in public life and participate in political processes and institutions*

When young men and women understand their rights, they can become empowered to engage in civil society, public service and political processes, at all levels. They need to know the channels through which they may exercise their civil and political rights and contribute to decision-making processes that impact their lives. Channels for engagement include formal political processes such as youth advisory boards at local level, youth parliaments or shadow councils at national level, and engagement with United Nations processes at the global level, for example. Other entry points include volunteerism, access to civil service positions and decision-making processes in the public administration, initiatives for transparency and accountability, promotion of human rights, legal reform, support for youth organizations, policy review and use of media, including social media, to increase access to information and collect and report on relevant data.

### *Youth are agents for community resilience*

Youth can be positive agents of change in their communities in time of conflict and disaster. Early action to stabilise their livelihoods builds resilience and supports social cohesion; it also provides alternatives as conflict prevention for at-risk youth. Strategic entry points focus on mobilizing and empowering youth as positive agents of change in their communities, including emergency employment and entrepreneurship and recovery of critical livelihoods assets such as skills development and access to finance. Youth also can be mobilized in disaster preparedness, education and post-disaster efforts—e.g. managing natural resources, mobilizing communities via new technologies, acquiring peace-building skills, or supporting efforts to reduce gender-based violence.



UN LAO PDR/LAOPHOTO

*Helen Clark visits Vientiane Youth Center in Lao PDR*

### **About the strategy**

The UNDP Youth Strategy 2014–2017 is designed to complement and reinforce the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014–2017 by deepening the youth focus across all areas of work. It offers key entry points for systematic and coordinated action to support youth. It also supports, among others, the work of the United Nations Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, and the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, including support to the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth (UN Youth-SWAP)<sup>1</sup> in particular in the areas of employment, entrepreneurship, political inclusion, civic engagement and protection of rights.

While the focus is on young women and men aged 15–24, the range may extend to 30 and even up to 35 depending on national context, and will remain flexible to ensure that programming related to the implementation of the strategy is responsive to the diverse needs of youth in different country contexts. The strategy incorporates

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.undg.org/docs/13099/UN%20System-wide%20Action%20Plan%20on%20Youth%20%283%29.pdf>



a human rights-based approach, is in line with UNDP’s gender equality strategy and promotes other guiding principles including national ownership, non-discrimination, and participation.

To carry out the many activities proposed, the strategy takes a four-pronged approach:

- **SUPPORT** through capacity development of young people and youth organizations, including youth caucuses in government, parliament or other representative bodies;
- **ENGAGE** through outreach, advocacy and mainstreaming of youth issues in all spheres of development planning;
- **INFLUENCE** through thought leadership, global policy debates and networks, that include the voices of marginalized youth, and build on improved data

collection to monitor the post-2015 development process;

- **SUSTAIN** through support to national policy, more effective strategies to protect young men and women from exploitation and neglect, and support their informed and active participation in all spheres of society.

UNDP will strengthen partnerships with civil society and youth-led and youth-based organizations, networks and movements, governments at national and sub-national levels, and throughout the development community at all levels, including philanthropic organizations and the private sector. Partnerships will also contribute to improving coordination and coherence within the UN system, particularly in areas of political inclusion, civic engagement, human rights, employment and health.

Measuring the results of these endeavours will require the design of targets and indicators for youth development, collection and analysis of sex and age disaggregated data within existing robust monitoring, and evaluation frameworks.

UNDP supports youth empowerment as a major contribution to sustainable human development. UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in more than 170 countries and territories, UNDP offers global perspectives and local insights to help empower lives and build resilient nations. Young people—informed, empowered and engaged—will be leaders, today and tomorrow, for sustainable human development and the builders of resilient nations.

*Young Iraqis at Youth Training Camp 2013, American University in Sulaymaniya, Iraq*



KAISER AL-WARDY





## INTRODUCTION

The world is changing with unprecedented speed. This is profoundly affecting the lives of the world's one billion young people, 85 percent in developing countries.<sup>2</sup> Recent political and social developments are triggering changes in the social fabric of communities and countries. In many corners of the world, both developed and developing, young people are a force for change, asserting themselves as agents with a powerful voice on the public scene. Youth movements and student groups are challenging traditional power structures and advocating for a new social contract between State and society. Access to information and communication technologies is providing young people with new means to express their aspirations and concerns more freely, to mobilize in large numbers, and to collaborate with other young people across borders to debate and seek solutions to the problems that concern them most. Forty-five percent of the world's Internet users, are below the age of 25.<sup>3</sup>

Youth<sup>4</sup> have also demonstrated their ability and potential to be positive agents of changes who can help address and solve the problems that surround the planet's present and future. They have contributed fresh ideas and been proactive in identifying solutions to development challenges, and have also shown their ability to build bridges of dialogue across cultures. Investing in this sector will enable youth to reach their full potential as individuals, leaders and agents of change and promoters of social justice.

The 2013 report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015

2 UN DESA, Youth Social Policy and Development Division

3 ITU Telecom World; ICT Facts and Figures (2011)

4 For the purpose of this strategy, the term 'youth' encompasses young women and men at large, youth networks, and organizations that are youth-serving, youth-based or youth-led.

### BOX 1: TUNISIA CONSTITUTION AND YOUTH

Article 8: Youth are an active force in building the nation. The state seeks to provide the necessary conditions for developing the capacities of youth and realising their potential, supports them to assume responsibility and strives to extend and generalize their participation in social, economic, cultural and political development.

Source: Tunisia Constitution, adopted on 26 January 2014.

Development Agenda regards young people as a vital asset for society: "Today's adolescents and youth (...) are shaping social and economic development, challenging social norms and values, and building the foundation of the world's future".<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, they remain often sidelined in formal decision-making processes. Voter turnout among youth ages 18-25 continues to be lower than other age groups and they are less likely to join political parties.

Engaging young people in policy dialogues and decision-making processes on the social, economic, environmental and cultural affairs that matter most to them therefore has to be an important component of the engagement process with youth. Achieving sustainable human development would remain an aspirational concept without the inclusion of all segments of society in a holistic, consultative and participatory way. Young men and women need to play a key role in this process. Safeguarding the rights of young people and investing in their quality education, decent work and employment opportunities, effective livelihood skills, and access to health and services and participation are essential to achieving development and a sustainable future, asserted the Global Review Report of the International Conference on Population and Development (February 2014).<sup>6</sup> Likewise, the international community was urged to

In many corners of the world, both developed and developing, young people are a force for change, asserting themselves as agents with a powerful voice on the public scene.

5 United Nations, 'A New Global Partnership', 2013.

6 Released by UNFPA in 2014, pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/65/234 of December 2010.



The Youth Strategy reflects UNDP's heightened level of engagement with and for youth in order to enhance their role as development actors and beneficiaries.

*Youth discuss human rights and diversity in Uruguay during global consultations on the post-2015 development agenda*

invest in youth, protect their rights and better equip them to adapt to changes and seize opportunities by the UN Commission on Population and Development (April 2013). A call to action focused on the following thematic areas—employment, entrepreneurship, political inclusion, civic engagement and protection of rights, education including comprehensive sexual education, and health—is the message of the first United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth Development (endorsed in April 2013).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) aims to support youth development as a major contribution to sustainable human development. UNDP's mandate is to partner with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and to drive and sustain growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. UNDP advocates for and supports an enabling environment where human rights are respected, protected and promoted – where vulnerable

and marginalized groups of young men and women are empowered to develop their full potential to lead dignified lives in societies where their voices are heard and valued. UNDP continues to apply human-rights and gender-based approaches across policy and programme development, and to advocate for the elimination of all forms of discriminatory practices, including gender-based violence. On this basis, it has strengthened its engagement with and for youth.

UNDP embarked on the development of its first organization-wide youth strategy in 2012. At that time, the organization was preparing the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014–2017<sup>7</sup> and co-convening consultations on the post-2015 development framework. The priority areas of the Youth Strategy are now aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan and reflect UNDP's key commitments as part of the first-ever UN System-wide Action Plan on Youth as well as UNDP's active engagement more broadly in activities undertaken by the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development.

This UNDP strategy, titled 'Empowered Youth, Sustainable Future', is the result of extensive multi-stakeholder consultations. E-discussions<sup>8</sup> involved teams at UNDP Headquarters, Regional Services Centres and Country Offices. UNDP held consultations with members of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development and discussions with young people, youth and civil society organizations, and youth experts. The insights and practical recommendations received from colleagues and practitioners were instrumental in shaping this strategy, and contributed to the greater integration of youth perspectives into other strategies, such as the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017.



UNDP URUGUAY/PABLO BIELLI

<sup>7</sup> Approved by the Executive Board on 13 September 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Pursuant to the global e-discussion within UNDP in 2012.



FIGURE 1: DIAGRAM ON RETHINKING DEVELOPMENT, UNDP STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2017



The Youth Strategy reflects UNDP's heightened level of engagement with and for youth in order to enhance their role as development actors and beneficiaries. The strategy seeks to address the aspirations of youth, and aims to create an enabling environment for inclusive and meaningful engagement and participation of young men and women in development discussions, formal planning, programming and decision-making processes. This requires the availability of formal and informal platforms that young women and men – including the most vulnerable, marginalized or excluded – can use to voice their opinions and perspectives. It also requires new forms of capacity development to equip young people with the employment and entrepreneurial skills they need to contribute to inclusive economic growth and sustainable human development.

UNDP has learned extensively from its prior engagement with young people and interactions with national Ministries of Youth. UNDP has been engaged with youth, youth policy and programming in the areas of democratic governance, natural resource management, employment generation and entrepreneurship, conflict prevention and peace building,

for many years. The strategy reflects an organizational commitment to systematically support youth development for sustainable human development; it builds on UNDP's previous experiences and aims to apply that learning to make programming more agile, adaptive, innovative and effective. The strategy seeks to include young men and women and engage their talents and potential to ensure that development policy and programming works with and for young people.





The UNDP Youth Strategy is grounded in (a) the recognition that young people, in all their diversity, have both a right and a duty to participate and contribute to development at the community level and beyond, and (b) the belief that participation of young men and women in community development, labour markets, political processes, public life, environmental stewardship, peace-building and conflict prevention will increasingly shape and transform the quality of and prospects for sustainable human development.

Underpinning all these efforts is a human rights-based approach, recognizing the universal human rights of all young men and women, without discrimination.



- Section I defines the youth population and explains why a flexible approach to the youth definition is needed to accommodate socio-cultural realities and adjust to national contexts.
- Section II provides an overview of the many challenges youth face today. The challenges relate to the three areas of work that UNDP will focus on under its Strategic Plan 2014–2017: (i) sustainable development pathways, (ii) inclusive and effective democratic governance (iii) resilient societies.
- Section III outlines the three main outcomes the Youth Strategy aims to achieve, as well as guiding principles and entry points for UNDP programming as aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan outcomes and guided throughout by a rights-based approach to programming.
- Section IV explains the four-pronged approach of the Strategy: support through capacity development, engage through advocacy and mainstreaming, influence through thought leadership and sustain through support to national policy development and implementation.
- Section V covers monitoring and evaluation.
- Section VI addresses the importance of partnerships needed for a successful strategy implementation.
- Section VII addresses UNDP's organization capacity to deliver, including through a core team and support facility.



UN PHOTO/MARCO DORMINO



Students of the University of Bamako, Mali discuss peace and reconciliation.

## I. DEFINING YOUTH

UNDP acknowledges the United Nations General Assembly definition of youth as between the ages of 15–24.<sup>9</sup> Considering how individual countries define youth, however, and taking into account a broader range of socio-cultural and contextual issues, the UNDP Youth Strategy uses a more flexible definition of youth to allow programming to be aligned to national and local realities. Flexibility in defining youth allows for country-specific policies and programming, considering the heterogeneous nature of the youth population, and recognizing that different age groups within the younger population may have different needs in different contexts, particularly in crisis or post-crisis settings where years of ‘childhood’ and ‘youth’ may easily be lost.<sup>10</sup>

By ‘youth’, UNDP refers to young women

and men, in all their diversity of experiences and contexts, taking into consideration the existing definitions of youth used at the country and/or regional level(s). In terms of programming, UNDP proposes to focus *principally* on young women and men ages 15–24, but also to extend that youth group to include young men and women ranging from ages 25–30 (and even beyond through age 35), based on contextual realities and regional and national youth policy directives.

The collection and analysis of sex and age disaggregated data on young women and men would heighten the understanding of challenges facing younger populations in various age categories and enhance the relevance and specificity of youth programming, policy analysis and development at all levels. UNDP advocates for such an approach.

Annex 1 further explains the reasons why a flexible approach to the youth age range is needed.

Flexibility in defining youth allows for country-specific policies and programming, considering the heterogeneous nature of the youth population, and recognizing that different age groups within the younger population may have different needs in different contexts.

<sup>9</sup> Secretary-General’s Report to the General Assembly, A/36/215, 1981

<sup>10</sup> Pursuant to UNDP global e-discussion.



## II. SITUATION ANALYSIS: THE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Success in addressing today's multiple development challenges will depend on finding ways to fight poverty, inequality and discrimination, deepen inclusion, and reduce conflict – and doing so without compromising human rights or inflicting irreversible damage on environmental systems.

### A. Youth within an increasingly complex development context

The life experiences and perspectives of young people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century differ greatly. Some 87 percent of young women and men living in developing countries face challenges brought about by limited and unequal access to resources, healthcare, education, training, and employment as well as economic, social and political opportunities.<sup>11</sup> In many parts of the world, youth face poverty, hunger, barriers to education, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, violence, and limited opportunities for growth and employment prospects. Youth are generally excluded from decision-making processes and are looking at untraditional avenues for civic engagement. More than 600 million youth

live in fragile and conflict-affected countries and territories. In other places, youth are the creative digital innovators in their communities and participate as active citizens, eager to positively contribute to sustainable development. Elsewhere, young people are both the victims and the perpetrators of the violent societies they live in.

This diversity of situations explains why youth are considered both a source of concern and a beacon of hope and positive thinking. The development landscape overall is becoming far more complex. Development thinking, knowledge and experience are available from a wider array of sources and providers. Environmental, social and economic opportunities and risks are becoming harder to predict. While the complexity of today's social, economic, political and environmental issues constitutes a significant challenge, it also offers tremendous opportunities for youth to show their strengths as a strong self-organizing force with the potential for innovation and for embracing change.

Youth-related goals, targets and indicators are being considered for inclusion in the post-2015 agenda and related development processes. Many of today's challenges affect youth in a particular manner; young women in particular require special attention.



**87 percent of young women and men living in developing countries face a broad range of development challenges and issues related to inequalities**

<sup>11</sup> Fact Sheet from International Year of Youth 2010-2011.



## B. Inclusion of young women and other disadvantaged youth

### 1. Vulnerable groups

UNDP recognizes that youth are not a homogeneous constituency and that the needs and life experiences of youth vary dramatically. Several groups of young men and women require specific attention because they face the particular challenges of exclusion, inequality and multiple forms of discrimination. These groups include young men and women from indigenous, ethnic and minority groups, migrants, refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI), young people living with HIV, young people with disabilities or living in conditions of poverty and/or conflict, young sex workers and drug users, those facing religious discrimination, those suffering from domestic and sexual violence, widowed young women, as well as young women entering into forced marriages or victims of human trafficking into slavery or the sex industry.

Indigenous youth over the world, estimated at approximately 67 million,<sup>12</sup> live in poorer health conditions and suffer from high suicide rates, malnutrition and lack of access to basic health care. They do not always have equal access to education and employment and many are increasingly becoming the victims of drug trafficking and human trafficking. Oftentimes, their struggle for everyday survival does not allow them to practice their ancestors' customs, cultures and languages, and discriminatory government policies have led to the extinction of native languages in many countries and sub-national regions.

12 DESA News. Feature Articles, Volume 17, No. 05, May 2013



UN PHOTO/EVAN SCHNEIDER

Age discrimination against youth--which involves assumptions surrounding age, capability and respect--can be found in many societies. That in itself is a form of marginalization, as young people face an imbalanced power structure in an 'adult society'.

In the Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS (2011), UN Member States expressed grave concern that young people still have limited access to high-quality education, decent employment and sexual and reproductive health programmes with the skills, services and commodities they need to protect themselves.<sup>13</sup> A new wave of community and political advocacy, led by young men and women, is needed to scale up the demand and supply of youth-friendly HIV programmes and services for all, regardless of HIV status, sexual orientation or gender identity.<sup>14</sup> Between 2005-2012, AIDS-related deaths among adolescents rose by 50 percent, in stark comparison to the falling rates of AIDS-related mortality.<sup>15</sup> Although significant progress has been made during the past 30 years, an estimated 780,000 youth ages 15-24 were

13 UN General Assembly A/RES/65/277 of July 2011.

14 UNAIDS, 'CrowdOutAIDS', 2012.

15 Global Report: UNAIDS report on the global AIDS epidemic 2013. Geneva, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, 2013.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his wife Yoo-Soon-taek meet with the members of Dance4Life, a group of young Mexicans living with HIV.

Several groups of young men and women require specific attention because they face the particular challenges of exclusion, inequality and multiple forms of discrimination.



Investing in girls and young women is particularly important, as reflected in all three outcome areas of the Youth Strategy.

newly infected with HIV in 2012. Moreover, there is a gender divide as young women are 50 percent more likely to acquire HIV than their male peers. In HIV endemic regions such as Africa – where almost three-quarters of all people living with HIV reside – female youth have higher prevalence rates of HIV than male youth, particularly at the youngest ages. Males do not have comparable prevalence levels in many African countries until age 30 or more. There is a critical need for greater investment in youth-friendly sexual and reproductive education and health services.

## 2. Gender inequalities

The extent to which young girls and women are affected by many of the challenges faced by youth can be significantly heightened due to two factors: (a) gender biases and discrimination faced in educational, cultural and political contexts as well as in the labour market, and (b) access to health services and in the private sphere. Young women may be expected to take on unpaid domestic care responsibilities or may marry early. They may face a broader range of obstacles preventing them to actively engage in the public sphere. Gender-based discrimination in the labour market, traditional practices, fewer opportunities and the lower value placed on women's

economic contributions leave young women with higher rates of unemployment or tied to unpaid, family-based work.

The legal and de facto status of young women with regards to marriage also continues to differ from young men. As of 2010, for example, 158 countries had a legal age of marriage of 18 years. Nevertheless, for the period 2000-2011, an estimated 34 percent of women ages 20–24 in developing regions had been married or in union before age 18; further, an estimated 12 percent had been married or in union before age 15. The ICPD Beyond 2014<sup>16</sup> review process Global Survey (2013) shows that only 51 percent of countries have addressed child marriage and forced marriage during the past five years.

Girls and young women continue to face multiple and interlocking forms of discrimination, leaving them often among the most marginalized, vulnerable and hard-to-reach young people. Investing in girls and young women is particularly important, in all three outcome areas of the Youth Strategy. It is not only a human rights imperative: Evidence demonstrates that unleashing the potential of girls and young women is an effective tool to address poverty, improve health and sanitation and reduce violence in communities.

### BOX 2: SEEKING JUSTICE FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS

Young people from vulnerable groups in Moldova are connecting with legal aid providers and learning strategic advocacy skills they can apply to address their key concerns. UNDP-supported project 'Law in Action for Poor and Disadvantaged Youth in Moldova' mobilizes and links youth towards increased access to justice and human rights protection and promotion, in line with national objectives for better social and economic opportunities for youth, justice and social inclusion. It builds on opportunities presented by the planned expansion of Moldova's guaranteed legal aid system into addressing civil matters beyond criminal cases. The project involves at least 10 advocacy groups working with youth who are unemployed, members of the Roma community, living with HIV or disabilities, and migrants or refugees. The project also provides links to initiatives that develop the capacities and empowerment of these youth in society.

<sup>16</sup> <http://icpdbeyond2014.org/>





## C. Demographic shifts and youth employment

Sustainable human development cannot be achieved without decent work and living wages. Income losses and joblessness diminish human and social capital, are associated with poorer health and educational outcomes, and contribute to long-term and intergenerational poverty and inequality, weaker resistance to shocks, and weaker social cohesion. The world population will increase by over 400 million within a decade, posing additional pressures on the labour markets in developing countries, which have high proportions of young people.<sup>17</sup>

### 1. Global picture

Under the right conditions, countries undergoing demographic shifts characterized by a large youth cohort and declining fertility rates are able to accelerate their development due to a declining dependency ratio and subsequent larger national incomes. However, this 'youth dividend' cannot be realized if new entrants to the labour force cannot find decent employment opportunities or if those already in the labour market work for poverty wages.

Current employment statistics are not encouraging. Young people make up 37 percent of the global working-age population but 60 percent of the total unemployed. As many as two thirds of youth in developing economies are either without work, not studying, or are engaged in irregular informal employment.<sup>18</sup> The global financial crisis and subsequent recession have further increased this gap. Between 2000 and 2011, the youth labour force participation rate decreased globally from 52.9 to 48.5 percent, indicating that less than half of young people ages 15–24 were actively participating in the labour markets.



UNDP/TOGO/EMILE KENKOU

*In Korbongou, located in extreme northern Togo, 24-year-old Yalenli Lamisse works as a farmer.*

That is partly due to young people studying longer. However, as a consequence of the global financial crisis, there are now 73.4 million unemployed young people globally.<sup>19</sup> Youth unemployment has reached disturbingly high levels exceeding 15 percent in two thirds of countries with advanced economies. Precarious working conditions in the informal economy and poverty wages continue to plague youth in many developing countries.

### 2. Regional trends

Nearly 70 percent of the population of Africa is under 30; and this figure reaches 75 percent in many of the continent's least-developed countries. High levels of youth populations are also observed in the Arab States, South-East Asia and the Pacific region, Latin America and the Caribbean.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) reports 28.3 percent of young people in the Middle East and 23.7 percent of young people

<sup>17</sup> World Population Prospects 2012.

<sup>18</sup> ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.



in North Africa cannot find work. Other regions such as East Asia (9.5 percent), South Asia (9.3 percent) and sub-Saharan Africa (11.8 percent) have lower youth unemployment figures, but these data mask high rates of vulnerable employment characterized by long working hours, insecure work arrangements and overall low job quality.<sup>20</sup> A lack of viable employment alternatives, coupled with weak access to social protection, forces young men and women to work for poverty wages or to perform subsistence jobs on their families' farms or in enterprises. In fact, young people are more prone than adults to be working poor. About 152 million young workers live in households that are below the poverty line (\$1.25 per day), comprising 24 percent of all working poor.<sup>21</sup>

*Young woman takes a break from sorting pistachios at a factory in Herat, Afghanistan.*



UN PHOTO/ERIC KANALSTEIN

### 3. Gender inequalities

Young women are particularly vulnerable in the labour market. The gender gap reflects not only traditional gender roles, but also systemic issues, such as the difficulty in combining work and family responsibilities or the fact that women often receive lower wages than men for the same work. If not addressed, these barriers to employment, as well as existing inequalities, will persist into the next generation. For example, although unemployment rates at the global and regional levels are similar for young males and females (with the exceptions of the Middle East and North Africa), lower women's participation rates reveal their disadvantage with respect to the labour market. In the Middle East, only 13.2 percent of young women are active participants in the labour market, compared to 46.5 percent of their male counterparts. In North Africa, the female youth participation rate stands at 19.7 percent compared to 46.8 percent for young males.<sup>22</sup> To a lesser extent, this is also the case in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Household higher income level, investment in education and urban origins offer critical advantages to youth undertaking the transition from education into the labour market, and in countries where such data are available, young males are more likely than young females to complete the transition to stable and/or satisfactory employment.

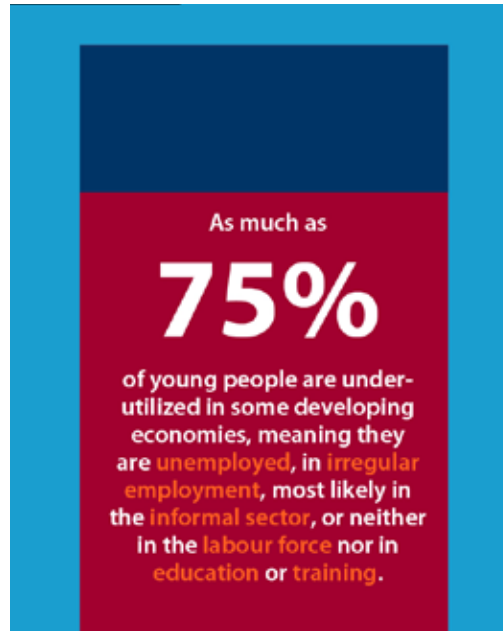
### 4. Job creation, employment and entrepreneurship

Youth unemployment, underemployment and poor wages can have long-term adverse impacts on human, economic and social capital. They can trigger a vicious cycle of intergenerational poverty and vulnerability that can adversely impact on sustainable

<sup>20</sup> ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013.

<sup>21</sup> ILO, Global Jobs Pact – Policy Brief No. 14.

<sup>22</sup> ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013.



human development. Economic hardship coupled with lack of opportunities to meaningfully participate in the society puts youth at risk of long-term social exclusion; this compromises countries' social cohesion and can lead to political instability.

Increased attention is needed to ensure young people's effective transition from school to decent jobs. In post-crisis environments in particular, early economic revitalization and livelihood strategies are critical to stabilization and to rapidly provide incomes to sustain livelihoods and recovery. This also addresses social cohesion in the communities. The creation of decent jobs, the reduction of discrimination in the workplace, and the creation of a basis for fair wages are all imperative, as is the need for quality education and training that provide graduates with the skills that employers seek.

The global economy will need to create 600 million productive jobs over the next decade in order to absorb the current unemployment levels and to provide employment opportunities to the 40 million annual labour market

entrants.<sup>23</sup> Yet, in many countries, schools and vocational training centres lack the relevance and quality to prepare new entrants for currently available jobs, let alone for future jobs, which will require more technology skills, innovation, adaptation and flexibility.

The Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2012 'Youth and Skills: Putting Education to Work' emphasizes the urgent need to invest in skills for youth that will enhance their employment opportunities.<sup>24</sup> In developing countries, 200 million people ages 15–24 have not completed primary school and one in four young people are still not able to read. They need alternative pathways to acquire basic skills for employment. Although there has been progress towards achieving gender parity in educational enrolment, girls in many developing countries are still disadvantaged in secondary and tertiary formal education, which are key determinants to employability and to equalization within societies. Barriers

Increased attention is needed to ensure young people's effective transition from school to decent jobs.

23 ILO, Global Employment Trends, January 2012.

24 UNESCO, EFA Global Monitoring Report 2012.



UNDP

*In Guinea, a UNDP youth employment project is training young entrepreneurs and providing them with credit to develop modern agricultural techniques.*

that deny disadvantaged youth access to jobs that demand highly specialized skills can be a long-standing consequence of entrenched inequalities and exclusion from quality education, healthcare and other factors affecting human capital.

At the other end of the spectrum, many university graduates cannot find employment commensurate with their qualifications, especially in the developed and the middle-income countries of Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States or the Middle East. Whether caused by under- or over-education, skills mismatch has long-term adverse impacts on the human and productive capacities of young people and hampers a country's economic development. Young people view many higher educational systems and institutions as inadequately tailored to the actual dynamic needs of the labour market.

Interviewed for *Putting Education to Work*, young people said that formal education curricula are often overly theoretical, leaving students feeling ill-prepared and lacking the necessary practical skills for the labour force.<sup>25</sup> Vocational skills training and professional

<sup>25</sup> UNESCO, EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013.

training for young people can complement formal education with important distinct skills and also serve as an important resource for youth without access to formal education. Additionally, young people said that internships and volunteerism offer opportunities to develop life skills and improve employment prospects, including in entrepreneurship.

Youth entrepreneurship can reduce youth unemployment and poverty, and produce additional socio-economic outcomes. Many young people in developing countries turn to self-employment because there are simply no jobs elsewhere. Young entrepreneurs not only create their own work and possibly employ others, but also gain experience, marketable skills, responsibility, self-esteem and linkages to local communities while contributing to overall social cohesion. Today's young entrepreneurs might become future employers and leaders who contribute to economic development and change in their countries. Unfortunately, young entrepreneurs in developing countries face daunting challenges that make the above-mentioned objectives difficult to attain. In the least developed countries (LDCs), most owners of micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMs) are likely to just barely sustain themselves and many would prefer to take on salaried employment, which is scarce.<sup>26</sup> In middle-income countries (MICs), compared to adult-run-businesses, young entrepreneurs' efforts to grow beyond the micro-levels are thwarted by the unavailability of credit, weaker business networks and inadequate know-how. In many developing countries, young entrepreneurs are often found in the informal sector, where they are particularly subject to a broad range of abuses and corrupt practices.

<sup>26</sup> Young people in LDCs often work as unpaid workers in the family-owned businesses and later move on formal salaried employment, e.g. in sub-Saharan Africa only 21.4 percent of workers receive wages or salaries compared to nearly 50 percent at the global level. ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013.



## 5. Migration

Without job prospects at home, young people are often forced to leave their families and communities behind in search of job opportunities abroad or in urban centres. According to UN DESA's World Youth Report 2013, 75 million of the world's 232 million international migrants are under the age of 30.<sup>27</sup> About half the population of young international migrants are women and girls and 60 percent of young international migrants live in developing countries. Involuntary and unregulated migration is accompanied by various benefits, including skill acquisition, remittances, professional opportunities and higher wages. But job migration among young people also brings specific development challenges, including sex industry trafficking, crime, drug abuse, increased vulnerability to HIV and other health-related challenges, and weak migrant worker protection. For the communities of origin, ageing, gender imbalances and brain drain are usually the negative social effects of massive economic migration.

### D. Civic engagement and participation in decision-making and political processes

Young people continue to remain at the margins of the political, social and economic mainstream, in most parts of the world. Formal political processes and institutions are still characterized by limited youth participation. Young men and women are very often disillusioned with political leadership and political institutions and excluded from policy development. As a result, political activism of youth is not always organized according to formal groupings. As a global force, however, youth are increasingly moving to the centre stage of development debates; they demand to

be involved in the decisions that shape their societies.<sup>28</sup> Several United Nations Member States have established youth structures and programmes to bring the voices of young people to government representatives. The key message of a side event on empowering youth for sustainable human development at the 51<sup>st</sup> Session of the Commission for Social Development was "Nothing about us without us".

From a development perspective, the involvement of young men and women in participatory processes and planning and policymaking at all levels plays a pivotal role. It ensures that their rights are promoted and that their voices are heard, that inter-generational knowledge is shared, and that innovation and critical thinking are encouraged at all ages to support transformational change in people's lives and communities. From a crisis prevention perspective, such engagement further reduces the risks related to the political exclusion of large groups.

Valuable resources that can contribute to the advancement and quality of development are lost or underutilized when young men and women are excluded from or insufficiently engaged in formal decision-making processes and institutions.

The recent United Nations Development Group global thematic consultation on governance and the post-2015 development framework acknowledged the critical concerns of young people who, as inheritors of current challenges and leaders of the future, must participate in the design and implementation of a new development agenda. Of the 1.6 million people who participated in the MY World global survey, more than half were below the age of 30.<sup>29</sup> The priorities identified through that survey are education, health and jobs as well as honest and responsive governments.

As a global force, youth are increasingly moving to the centre stage of development debates – determined to be involved in the decisions that shape their societies.

27 UN DESA, World Youth Report 2013.

28 Policies and programmes involving youth (E/CN.5/2014/5), December 2013.

29 MY World, [www.myworld2015.org](http://www.myworld2015.org).



LOY9: BBC MEDIA ACTION

*UNDP-supported radio talk show encouraging young Cambodians to strengthen civic participation*

In another survey conducted by the IANYD in August 2012, a majority of 13,000 respondents from 186 countries said one of the main challenges for youth is a lack of opportunity for meaningful participation in decision-making processes. As a result, young men and women often feel excluded and marginalized in their societies and communities. Respondents also noted the need for participatory structures and greater trust between youth and institutions, and for increased capacity development to allow effective participation. Efforts should focus primarily on the most vulnerable of young people, and on specific actions targeting young women.

In order to respond to the needs of young people, and to guarantee that their basic human rights are recognized and enforced, young peoples' active and meaningful participation in their societies and in democratic practices and processes is of crucial importance. Meaningful youth participation and leadership require that young people and

youth organizations have opportunities and capacities, and benefit from an enabling environment and relevant evidence-based programmes and policies at all levels.<sup>30</sup>

Throughout history and in diverse contexts, young men and women have participated in, contributed to and even catalyzed the change of political systems and power-sharing dynamics for a better world. In recent decades, however, youth voter rates and memberships in civic associations in high-income countries have consistently declined, while globally young people are less likely to vote than adults.<sup>31</sup> This trend has been attributed in part to lack of trust among young people in governments and formal political systems.

There is strong evidence that the participation of young people in formal political processes is

<sup>30</sup> Participation is one of the guiding principles of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and young people's right to participation has been deemed important in numerous international agreements.

<sup>31</sup> World Bank, World Development Report 2007.



relatively low when compared to older citizens across the globe. This challenges the representativeness of the political system and leads to the disenfranchisement of young people. Age-related exclusion typically reaches beyond age 24. People under the age of 35 rarely occupy formal political leadership positions. In one third of all countries, eligibility for the national parliament starts at age 25 or higher and it is common practice to refer to politicians as 'young' if they are below 35–40 years of age.<sup>32</sup> Overall, youth (in particular young women) are not represented adequately in formal political institutions, processes and decision-making (parliaments, political parties, electoral processes, the judiciary, and public administrations at all levels).

The lack of trust and frustration with increasing levels of poverty and unemployment, and sense of profound political and social injustice and inequality has led in another direction which seems to indicate an inclination towards participation in informal political processes. This has translated into new forms of youth mobilization, through social media channels or innovative informal groupings, and a heightened engagement in volunteering.

Promoting youth participation in formal processes, platforms and institutions should

aim for achieving levels comparative to those of the rest of the population. Political parties can still be important pathways towards formal political structures for youth political engagement. But to establish inclusive policies and mechanisms that effectively support civic engagement of young people, it is important to better understand the perceptions, voices and demands of young people, their degree of engagement through formal political structures, and the capacities of youth-led organizations, networks and informal groupings to support civic engagement and participation of young people.

The focus on supporting youth, in terms of their engagement in the political arena and the public life in general, is a relatively new priority but it is timely, particularly in light of recent events and democratic transitions in the Arab States as well as other regions. Opportunities for youth to participate in decision-making and policymaking processes that impact their lives depend largely on the political and cultural contexts. Social norms in many parts of the world result in multiple forms of discrimination against youth, and young women in particular. A society that abides by democratic principles is usually more favourable to participation in general, which does not mean that youth are participating or being heard. Both formal and



**Voter turnout among 18-25 year olds continues to be lower than other age groups and youth are less likely to join political parties.**

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.



**BOX 3: INNOVATION FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

The UNDP Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund (DGTTF) supported more than 35 UNDP Country Offices in developing innovative projects on youth, participation and governance. These projects have strengthened capacities of youth advocacy groups, provided quality research to interact with public authorities, and supported the creation of national youth councils and plans. Several projects have placed a strong emphasis on social media and information technology as platforms in support of accountability and feedback mechanisms on service delivery.

The DGTTF-supported projects have achieved a number of key results:

- The establishment of a Youth Studies Centre in Armenia, and the development of staff capacities to conduct surveys, undertake research, analyze data, and facilitate participation of youth groups in policy formulation and implementation processes;
- The development of a results-based monitoring and evaluation framework for the State Programme on Azerbaijani Youth, and the establishment of a legal framework for internships for young people in civil service in Azerbaijan;
- The strengthening of a regional network of youth leaders against corruption through youth integrity camps, spearheaded by youth leaders in Côte d'Ivoire;
- An improved youth-related data collection system, validated by the National Institute of Statistics in Madagascar; and
- The organization of the first innovation camp on youth and local governance in Jordan, with strong emphasis on electoral candidacy preparedness.

The projects have also informed organizational learning in terms of the design and implementation of youth-centered initiatives, taking into particular consideration the development of appropriate and measurable youth indicators, institutional and contextual analyses during the programme design phase, and partnership building.

For more information on youth projects and the DGTTF, see: [www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/democraticgovernance/projects\\_and\\_initiatives/dggyouth](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/democraticgovernance/projects_and_initiatives/dggyouth)

informal engagement can be understood as political participation, and both are beneficial for a vivid and resilient democracy and should be supported.<sup>33</sup>

Youth empowerment requires guaranteeing their rights to participate in government decision-making and processes at the national, sub-national and local levels. Youth should be accepted as partners in decision-making and invited to express their views, without these being limited to youth-related issues. The participation of youth was therefore widely acknowledged in the resolution on youth and adolescents adopted by the UN Commission on Population and Development in 2012 and the Bali Global Youth Forum Declaration in 2012 (adolescents and youth).<sup>34</sup>

33 UNDP, *Enhancing Youth Political Participation throughout the Electoral Cycle*, 2013.

34 <http://www.icpdyouth.org/delegate/declaration>

## E. Resilience building

'Resilience' refers to the capacity of men, women, communities, institutions, and countries to anticipate, prevent, recover from, and transform in the aftermath of shocks, stresses and change. Key issues in resilience are recovery from conflict-induced crises, stronger ability to prepare for and deal with the consequences of natural disasters, and capacity to adapt to change.<sup>35</sup>

As recalled in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20): "Poverty eradication, changing unsustainable and promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are the overarching objectives and essential requirements for

35 UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017, p.34.





sustainable development.”<sup>36</sup> Sustainable human development reinforces this approach by emphasizing the importance of the capabilities and wellbeing of people and their relationship with their environment.

### 1. Conflict prevention and recovery

It is a challenging task to foster social cohesion and trust through an inclusive and participatory peace-building process during and after a transition or conflict, or a recovery process after a crisis. Many stakeholders remain on the margins or excluded from the processes. In particular, the potential contribution of young people to effective peace-building and reconstruction has received little attention and support. Yet, young people’s contributions and leadership in preventing and resolving conflict, violence and extremism, or in the recovery process after crisis, is a rich resource essential to building sustainable peace and stability. Young people can play valuable roles as innovators and agents of change, and their contribution should be actively supported and seen as part of building peaceful communities and supporting democratic governance<sup>37</sup> in crisis and post-conflict settings. Young people have demonstrated the potential to build bridges across communities, working together, helping to manage conflict and promote peace.

The international community has increasingly focused attention on young people in the context of conflict prevention and recovery programming efforts. Young people face the major burden of war and violence: “These young people often face the additional barriers of a lack of sufficient education, health care, protection, livelihood opportunities, recreational activities, friendship, and family support”, reports the United States Institute of Peace in ‘Youth and Peace Building’: Crisis,



conflicts and wars will remain unavoidable if we do not engage youth constructively in the shaping of the social contract.<sup>38</sup> The rationale for these interventions is often linked to preventing violence and/or reinforcing peace, based on the underpinning assumption that youth can be both a threat to peace and a force for peace.<sup>39</sup> In times of conflict, young people are particularly affected by the collapse of education and employment opportunities; they are the segment of the population that is most likely to be recruited into fighting forces, and are the most vulnerable to increased risk of HIV and other sexually-transmitted diseases and sexual violence. On the other hand, violent conflict often brings about rapid changes in social norms, and opens up opportunities to a lost generation to reintegrate in civilian peaceful life.

### 2. Marginalized youth

Marginalized youth who lack economic livelihoods and employment opportunities may be prone to become attracted to illicit sectors, organized crime and gang associations or

Young people have demonstrated the potential to build bridges across communities, working together, helping to manage conflict and promote peace.

36 ‘The future we want’ (A/RES/66/288), para. 4, September 2012. <http://www.un.org/en/sustainablefuture/>

37 Guiding Principles on Young People’s Participation in Peacebuilding, April 2014.

38 A social contract is a dynamic agreement between state and society on their mutual roles and responsibilities. The social contract refers to the agreement of individuals, either explicitly or tacitly, to derogate some of their freedoms and consent to the authority of government, in exchange for the state’s protection of their universal human rights, security and the provision of public goods.

39 UNDP BCPR Information Note, 2007.



**BOX 4: ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP: CARING FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

Children and youth are essential participants in projects funded through the UNDP Small Grants Programme (SGP) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). They are the bearers of future commitments and efforts towards global environment and sustainable development. Inter-generational knowledge transfer over the long term is important particularly in the context of climate change, where it is the next generation that is likely to suffer the impacts. Projects with environmental education and raising awareness components involve children and youth who actively participate in campaigns to protect species and local habitats, tree planting, creating home and community gardens, and renewable energy initiatives that provide solar power.

Low income and high unemployment among youth often pose great challenges to community welfare. SGP projects work with youth to enhance their professional skills and provide alternative livelihoods that contribute to global environmental achievements. In Lithuania, a project engaged unemployed youth in eco-friendly tourism activities such as providing tricycle services to tourists.

School children in Mauritius cultivated indigenous/endemic medicinal plants at the Britannia Government School. Students, parents, teachers and local residents converted a neglected plot of land at the school into a greenhouse and a conservation area. Revenues generated by selling the seeds and plants were used to maintain and further expansion the conservation area. Children identified and propagated medicinal plants, which helped them to develop a love for conservation and prepare for future economic activities related to conservation.

For more youth-centred projects, see the GEF Small Grants Programme at <http://sgp.undp.org>

Youth often play a pivotal role in adopting and promoting environmentally-friendly practices at home and in the community.

piracy. The growing dissatisfaction with political leadership and livelihood opportunities is also attracting increasing numbers of youth towards ideologically-driven groups associated with radicalization, violence and extremism. At the same time, marginalized youth are often also the victims of limited citizen security and deficiencies in access to justice. Efforts undertaken in implementing the UNDP Youth Strategy in this regard will be geared towards the social, political, economic and, in some cases, cultural reintegration of young men and women back into the fabric of their societies.

**3. Environment**

Climate change is a threat to development, the stability of countries and economies, and the health of the planet. Extreme weather has a cost of trillions of dollars and is endangering lives and livelihoods all around the world. Adaptation and mitigation are the central approaches in the international climate change process.

Few societies are untouched by the effects of climate change, ozone depletion, loss of biodiversity and protected areas, rapidly depleting

fish stocks in international waters, and a need for renewable energy technologies. Young men and women are playing an active role in protecting and renegotiating relations and hierarchies based on age and gender. During periods of crisis, alternative political structures might emerge that are more inclusive of women and/or youth. After crisis, youth often play a pivotal role in adopting and promoting environmentally-friendly practices at home and in the community.<sup>40</sup> Young women are contributing as managers of natural resources in rural economies and this in turn impacts both diagnostics and solutions towards resilience building.

Concern is growing that the world may well face an irreversible ecological crisis that will affect future generations. Supporting young men and women in formal processes and platforms where they can advocate for sustainable utilization of environmental resources will reinforce national efforts for reducing the environmental carbon footprint while still continuing to grow and deliver goods, services and jobs to their populations.

<sup>40</sup> UNDP, 'Powerful Synergies', 2012.



### III. YOUTH STRATEGY OUTCOMES

The UNDP Youth Strategy will directly contribute to areas of work that support the UNDP Strategic Plan outcomes. These areas of work focus on:

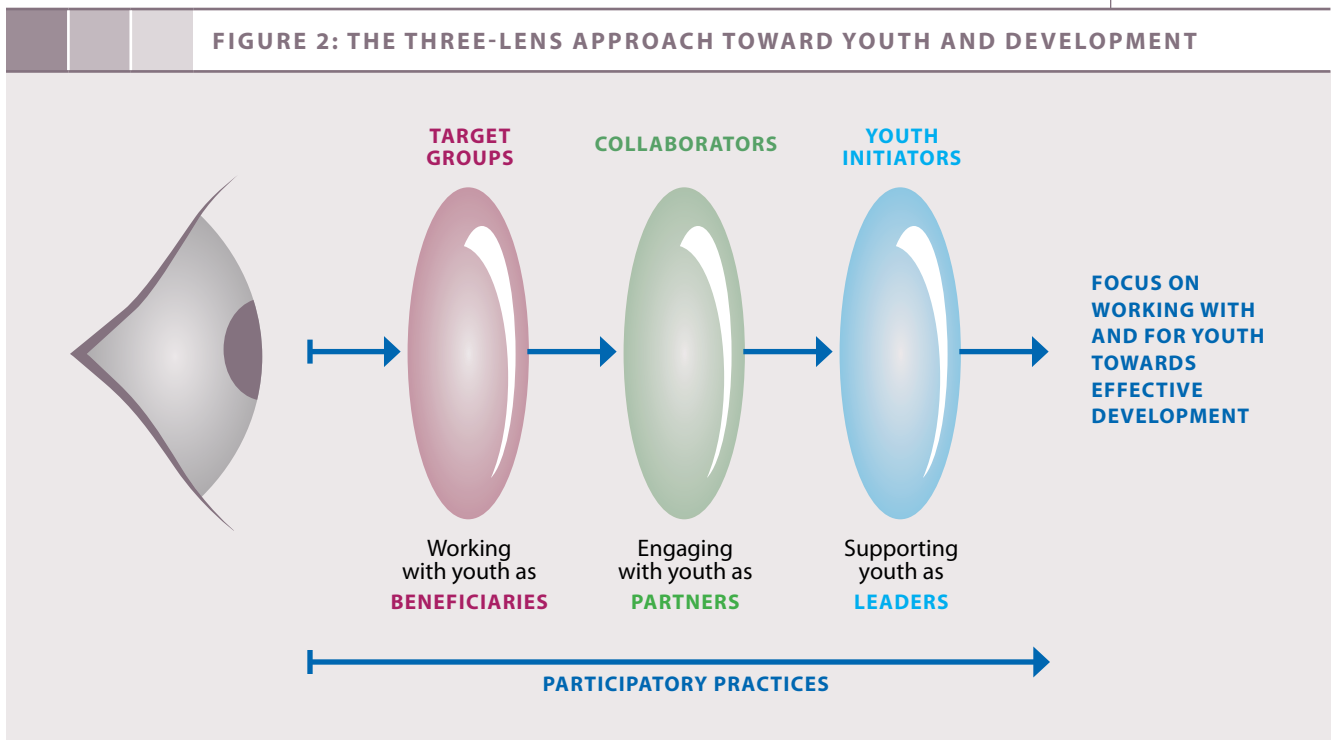
- how to adopt sustainable development pathways;
- how to build and/or strengthen inclusive and effective democratic governance; and
- how to build resilience.<sup>41</sup>

The Youth Strategy outcomes are aligned with the outcomes of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017, ensuring the mainstreaming of youth throughout. Each of the Youth Strategy outcomes will contribute to one or more outcomes of the UNDP Strategic Plan. Each

Youth Strategy outcome is also expected to contribute specifically to Outcome 4 of the Strategic Plan on gender inequality and women’s empowerment.

The Youth Strategy recognizes the intrinsic and internationally-recognized human rights standards and principles pursued through the human rights-based approach. The strategy aims for the fulfillment of the civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights of young women and young men, which are central to UNDP’s sustainable human development framework. UNDP also recognizes that young people are not simply recipients of development efforts. Young people have the potential to respond positively to life challenges and be positive agents of transformational change, as collaborators and as leaders. Given these dimensions, the strategy takes a three-lens<sup>42</sup> approach:

FIGURE 2: THE THREE-LENS APPROACH TOWARD YOUTH AND DEVELOPMENT



Source: Youth Participation in Development: A Guide for Development Agencies and Policy Makers, 2010. Figure adapted from: World Bank Development Report 2007

41 UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017, p.20.

42 DFID, Youth Participation in Development, March 2010.



UNDP/NOELLA RICHARD

Working toward  
The Nairobi Declaration,  
Youth21,  
Nairobi, 2012

- working for youth as beneficiaries (target groups);
- engaging with youth as partners (collaborators); and
- supporting youth as leaders (initiators).

UNDP offers added value to the United Nations system’s work on youth, drawing on its multi-disciplinary approach towards development in its policies and programming, considering the nexus among development challenges in the areas of employment, gender equality, democratic governance, environment, crisis prevention and recovery, HIV and health, and its strong presence in the field and coordination role in many contexts.

The UNDP Youth Strategy is guided by key principles embedded in internationally-agreed outcomes, regional frameworks and conventions and other important documents of the United Nations system. The strategy has been guided the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, World Programme of Action for Youth, Millennium Declaration, Outcome Document of the High Level United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20): The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288), African Youth Charter, Ibero-American Convention on Youth Rights, and the United Nations Volunteers Programme (A/

RES/31/131).<sup>43</sup> It also draws from the UNDP Strategy on Civil Society and Civic Engagement and the UNDP Strategy of Response to Transformative Change Championed by Youth in the Arab Region. The outcome of the global consultation on the post-2015 development agenda, ‘A Million Voices: The World We Want’ (September 2013) has also inspired the approach.

The Youth Strategy offers strategic entry points as outlined above for UNDP’s work in each of the three outcome areas. The strategy recognizes the distinct needs and priorities within each region. Implementation of the strategy at the regional level will be informed through the Annual Business Plan for each regional programme. This Youth Strategy aims to provide elements for implementation at the national level wherever national authorities and the UN system through the UNDAF, and UNDP through the Country Programme Document (CPD) have agreed on specific UN/UNDP assistance to youth policies for development. In that case, the strategy can be implemented through specific projects or by addressing relevant components of the youth strategy through existing projects and programmes.

All human beings including young people are accorded with human rights and as such are entitled to internationally agreed standards and principles, both as a group and as individuals. A **human rights-based approach** to programming will be applied to the design, adaptation, and implementation of the UNDP Youth Strategy. A rights-based approach acknowledges, in this case, youth as the subject of rights and places them centrally in all development programming. As a consequence, it enables them to engage with systems, processes and institutions at all levels; it advocates for appropriate capacity development of both

<sup>43</sup> This Resolution expanded the mandate of UNV to promote the role of youth in development through volunteerism.



TABLE 1: UNDP YOUTH STRATEGY – SUPPORTING THE UNDP STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2017

### Three Outcomes



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS

#### Increased economic empowerment of youth

Adapting sustainable development pathways to eradicate extreme poverty and reduce socio-economic inequality and exclusion through building productive capacities of youth and an enabling environment for enhanced youth employment, employability and entrepreneurship.



INCLUSIVE AND EFFECTIVE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

#### Enhanced youth civic engagement and participation in decision-making and political processes and institutions

Promoting inclusive and effective engagement and participation of youth in planning and decision-making processes and platforms at local, national, regional and global levels that support sustainable development solutions to poverty, inequality and exclusion.



RESILIENCE

#### Strengthened youth engagement in resilience building

Strengthened youth engagement in disaster preparedness, crisis response, and resilience building in crisis and/or conflict contexts

### Four-pronged Approach

SUPPORT

through capacity development

ENGAGE

through advocacy and mainstreaming

INFLUENCE

through thought leadership

SUSTAIN

through support to national policy

### Ten Guiding Principles

- Working by, with and for young people as initiators,** collaborators and target groups, by further integrating youth across UNDP programming and assisting programme countries to create mechanisms that empower, engage and include young people – especially the vulnerable and marginalized.
- Protecting youth human rights** by promoting a human rights-based approach to programming and developing the capacity of young people to claim and exercise their economic, political, social, civil and cultural rights.
- Reflecting the pivotal significance of gender equality and empowerment of young women,** understanding that sustainable human development will not be fully achieved unless women and girls are able to contribute on an equal basis with men and boys to their societies.
- Seeking sustainable human development** through livelihood creation for poor youth and, in all actions, being guided by processes that enlarge young people's choices by expanding their capabilities and opportunities in ways that are sustainable from the economic, social and environmental standpoints, benefiting the present without compromising the future.
- Being guided by national ownership and leadership,** including youth leadership, with programme countries making decisions about how best to meet their young people's aspirations and with UNDP helping to develop the policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities and institutional capacities that can sustain results for youth.
- Ensuring youth participation and voice** in pursuit of equitable access for young women and young men to development opportunities, recognizing young people as agents of positive change for their own development, strengthening youth civic engagement and participation in politics and public institutions.
- Encouraging innovation for transformational change,** by investing in the development of new and innovative tools and approaches, and considering throughout, the potential to replicate and scale up successful experiences.
- Advancing South-South and triangular cooperation** to promote the exchange of knowledge, experiences, best practices and other resources that promise development solutions for youth, especially Southern solutions generated by young entrepreneurs.
- Optimizing youth volunteerism for development** to engage young people in tackling development challenges, gaining both skills and strengthening trust and solidarity in society, and creating opportunities for participation.
- Sharing inter-generational knowledge** by supporting the two-way transfer of information and experiences between younger and older generations, strengthening dialogue between traditional community leadership, elders and young people, especially in conflict and post-conflict contexts.

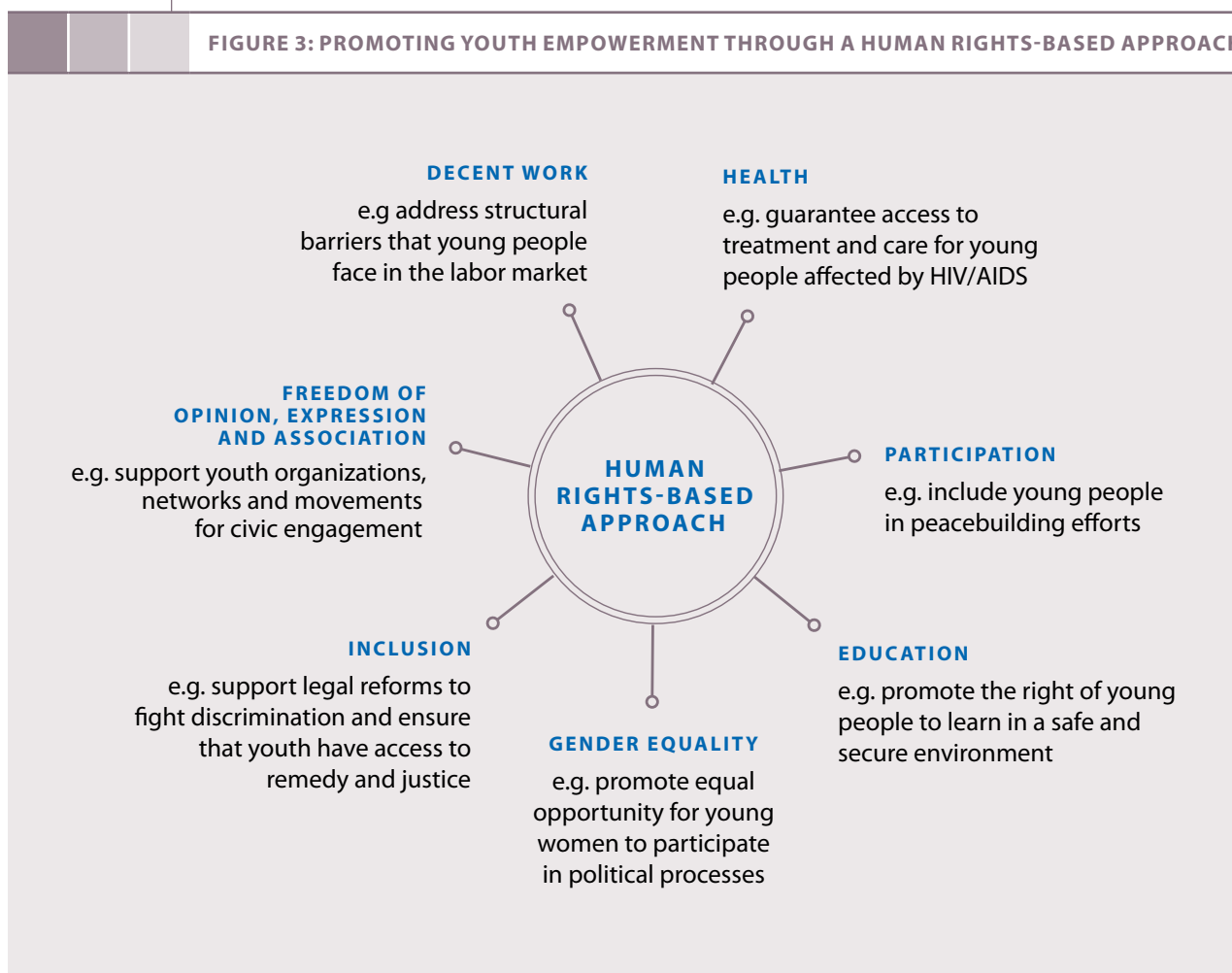


claim holders (groups, individuals) and duty bearers (the State, the private sector, political parties and other social, political and economic groups). The rights-based approach also takes a holistic perspective to development, recognizing that rights are interdependent, inter-related, and indivisible; i.e. without economic and social rights, young people cannot fully exercise their civil and political rights.

The implementation of the Youth Strategy will promote the integration of human rights

principles (participation, non-discrimination, accountability) and standards into all stages in the programming process. Such stages encompass assessment and analysis, objective setting, design of capacity development strategies, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The strategy aims to develop the capacities of young people to claim and exercise their rights, and to develop the capacities of duty bearers to fulfill their human rights obligations, in particular as they affect young people.

FIGURE 3: PROMOTING YOUTH EMPOWERMENT THROUGH A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH





## YOUTH STRATEGY OUTCOME 1

### Increased economic empowerment of youth



**References to UNDP Strategic Plan Outcome 1: Growth and development are inclusive and sustainable, incorporating productive capacities that create employment and livelihoods for the poor; Outcome 4: Faster progress is achieved in reducing gender inequality and promoting women's empowerment; Outcome 6: Early recovery and rapid return to sustainable development pathways are achieved in post-conflict and post-disaster settings; Outcome 7: Development debates and actions at all levels prioritize poverty, inequality and exclusion, consistent with our engagement principles.**

UNDP development policy and practice concerning youth recognizes decent work and livelihood creation including through local economic development, as chief determinants in the socio-economic empowerment of youth. Economically empowered youth will more actively contribute to local economic development and sustainable human development. Outcome 1 of the UNDP Youth Strategy works towards increasing the quantity of jobs for young persons and also towards enhancing the quality of jobs by increasing their productivity, facilitating movements of young people to more productive sectors, and increasing access to social protection. In addition, the economic empowerment of youth has important societal benefits including promotion of social justice and gender equality, and offers the potential for social transformation, through increased, constructive interaction between generations. Jobs provide young people with a sense of identity and dignity but also respect for societal values and norms. Thus, they increase social cohesion, re-establish trust in political systems and institutions and provide an important vehicle for the exchange of ideas and opinions between generations in the workplace.

UNDP's programming on youth employment focuses on factors affecting labour demand and supply as well as on a policy environment conducive to job creation for young persons and improvements in the general quality of employment (the creation of decent jobs for men and women).

### Strategic entry points for promoting economic empowerment of youth

- (a) From the perspective of demand for labour:
  - Support young persons' access to finance, markets and other resources that will increase their productive capacities and competitiveness. This will also encompass skills-building and establishing business services or business incubators. Particular attention will be given to young women entrepreneurs and to disadvantaged youth.<sup>44</sup> (Outputs 1.1, 4.1)
  - Support social enterprises,<sup>45</sup> by building capacities of youth to help communities, solve social problems, increase youth employment, reduce poverty and give back dividends to the community. (Outputs 1.1, 1.2, 4.1)
  - Work with the private and public sectors to encourage youth employment opportunities through internship and apprenticeship schemes and incentives for private and public employers to hire young people or contract their services. (Outputs 1.1, 1.2, 4.1, 4.3)
  - Work with governments in crisis and post-crisis contexts to design, implement and monitor public employment schemes targeted at youth as a way to secure livelihoods and reintegration; include young persons in peace-building efforts and reduce the risks that unemployed youth will (re)join armed and/or criminal groups. (Output 6.1)
- (b) From the perspective of supply of labour:
  - Work towards increasing employability of young persons through development of skills, capacities and knowledge as well as promotion of non-formal forms of education. Such initiatives will seek to support the training of low-skilled and disadvantaged youth in an effort to upgrade their skills so that they might be better able to find work in more productive sectors, including in the green economy. (Outputs 1.1, 4.1, 4.3)

<sup>44</sup> In relation to labour markets, youth might also be disadvantaged, based on their disability, ethnicity or minority status or location.

<sup>45</sup> Social enterprises function as other business enterprises in economic and financial terms, but the profits and/or dividends go back to the community.



- Promote internship, apprenticeship and volunteering schemes in support of young persons' transition from school to work or their reintegration into the labour market after long-term unemployment spells and as a means to the acquisition of skills. (Output 1.1)
  - Address skills mismatch through support for job centres and job market information systems. Efforts also will be directed at greater coordination among businesses, policy makers and education and vocational training bodies in designing curricula based on labour market assessments and forecasts. Other efforts will be directed at strengthening labour information systems and making job market data easily available to youth. (Outputs 1.1, 4.3)
- (c) From the perspective of the policy environment:
- Support the development and implementation of institutional and policy frameworks conducive to youth employment and entrepreneurship. Specific attention will be directed at structural barriers that young women and other disadvantaged youth groups face in the labour market. (Outputs 1.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)

**BOX 5: TWO REGIONAL INITIATIVES PROMOTING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

Holistic approaches to youth employment are the hallmark of a regional programme in sub-Saharan Africa that seeks not only jobs but social cohesion. YERP, the Regional Programme for Social Cohesion and Youth Employment for Sub-Saharan Africa, aims to make employment central to economic growth policies by raising the demand for labour, fostering enterprise and job creation and promoting education and vocational training. At the same time YERP supports the provision of relevant information on labour markets to influence legislation, and facilitates strategies for social cohesion and decent work.

The programme has achieved significant results. It has:

- Established strategic partnerships with the African Union and ECOWAS to support the harmonization of legal frameworks and strategies that can facilitate regional integration, as well as guarantee linkages between job creation, food security, peace and inclusive development;
- Created a National Youth Commission in Sierra Leone and provided training for 400 young farmers in agricultural business development and for 300 youth in life skills such as critical thinking, conflict management and leadership;
- Strengthened the capacity within the Ministry of Youth in Senegal, along with two institutions promoting youth employment (Agence Nationale pour l'emploi des Jeunes, Fonds National pour la Promotion de la Jeunesse) for results-based management and implementation of youth employment programmes;
- Provided training to more than 125 officials of statistical and employment institutions to strengthen the National Labour Market Information System in Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea and Guinea Bissau;
- Institutionalized the value chain approaches a strategy for creating youth employment under the ongoing youth employment programme in Kenya, with strong demonstrated commitment from the government for 'green job' promotion and procurement of 128 greenhouses to increase youth employability.

The second example is Youth-IN or "Youth Innovation: A Caribbean Network for Youth Development." Within this initiative, more than 1,700 young people have learned how to start and run a business through entrepreneurship training in business labs and online seminars. Regional and national partners work with Youth-IN to facilitate training programmes. The CARICOM Secretariat is piloting the Creativity for Employment and Business Opportunity (CeBo) initiative, which aims to motivate entrepreneurial action among youth in the Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Jamaica and Saint Kitts & Nevis.

Youth-IN hosted the Caribbean Innovation Challenge 2013, a competition and business start-up accelerator for young entrepreneurs in the CARICOM Member States, and is now building a support system for its ongoing activities.<sup>a</sup> The competition incorporated an 'eco-challenge' to encourage youth enterprise in environmental conservation and protection. Youth-IN is also working with the Young Americas Business Trust (YaBt) on a mapping exercise that will assess current entrepreneurial programmes throughout CARICOM and offer an evidence-based platform for national interventions.

a) [www.youthin-cic.net/about](http://www.youthin-cic.net/about)





- Continue to provide policy support for the development of national strategies that prioritize the generation of youth employment, particularly for women and disadvantaged groups and that consider youth-sensitive budgeting. (Outputs 1.1, 4.3, 7.3)
- Promote investment in sectors with the potential for growth in youth employment, such as the service sector (e.g. in tourism or ICT-based services); include measures to support the development of regional and local economic development agencies that incorporate youth-specific initiatives. (Output 1.1)

UNDP will collaborate to the extent possible with ILO and other UN agencies and partners working on youth issues by leveraging on the expertise of each agency. This will help to ensure a cohesive, comprehensive approach to the economic empowerment of youth.

*Tunisian youth vote for the issues to form the basis of the national youth strategy.*



INDI/ANGELA SHORT

## YOUTH STRATEGY OUTCOME 2

### *Enhanced youth civic engagement and participation in decision-making and political processes and institutions.*



*References to UNDP Strategic Plan Outcome 2: Citizen expectations for voice, development, the rule of law and accountability are met by stronger systems of democratic governance; Outcome 3: Countries have strengthened institutions to progressively deliver universal access to basic services; Outcome 4: Faster progress is achieved in reducing gender inequality and promoting women's empowerment; and Outcome 7: Development debates and actions at all levels prioritize poverty, inequality and exclusion, consistent with our engagement principles.*

Youth Strategy Outcome 2 recognizes the need to support young men and women in understanding their rights and the channels through which they may exercise their civil and political rights and contribute to decision-making processes that impact their lives.

### *Strategic entry points for promoting civic and political empowerment of youth*

- Strengthen youth political participation in formal political processes, platforms and institutions (e.g. elections, constitution-making processes, political parties, parliaments) to ensure that more young people are positioned to exercise spheres of influence in formal decision and policymaking processes.
  - **AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL:** To promote youth-friendly community-based development planning exercises in a participative and inclusive manner (i.e. youth advisory boards) (Outputs 2.4, 3.2)
  - **AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL:** to empower youth to work effectively within and with political institutions and engage with political processes; to support formal and informal platforms enabling dialogue between youth and political leaders (creation of a permanent national youth parliament/council); to support the development of a cross-party and cross-University Student Council, and/or local youth shadow council



INV/UNDP BRAZIL/FLAVIO LOPES

*Consultation with indigenous youth of Guarani, Kaiowá and Terena People in Panambizinho, Mato Grosso.*

networks, to discuss common policies and statements on youth participation and establish linkages to political parties, as well as develop skills of young leaders and political activists; to provide forum to promote dialogue for articulation of common policies and statements support, to ensure the adequate presence of youth representatives in national youth policy coordination and monitoring bodies comprising government and other stakeholders<sup>46</sup> (youth caucuses in parliament and youth branches in political parties could also be important vehicles to channel youth collective action within and across political parties); to promote youth advocacy campaigns for violence-free elections; to support internship programmes and encourage collaboration between universities and political institutions. (Outputs 2.1, 2.4, 4.3, 4.4)

- **AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL**, young people should continue to participate in United Nations processes and conferences to ensure that

young people contribute and have a voice in the decision-making consultations, implementation and accountability. Youth should in particular be invited and supported to participate in post-2015 consultations, and greater efforts should be made to define targets and indicators on youth participation at all levels as a result (Output 7.1)

- Identify cultural, societal and institutional bottlenecks that hamper youth participation in formal decision-making platforms and explore approaches toward mitigating these bottlenecks. (Outputs 2.1, 2.3, 4.3, 4.4)
- (b) Promote civic awareness and volunteerism into programming as a means to facilitate more inclusive participation of youth. This includes deepening an understanding of the disposition of youth towards civic engagement and youth activism, the degrees of engagement through informal and formal political structures, and the reasons why young people are not transitioning from civic engagement to engagement in formal politics and political structures. (Output 2.4)
- (c) Promote youth access to and preparedness for civil service and strengthen the trust and participation in public institutions (national or subnational levels), including in mid-level and upper level positions. (Outputs 2.1, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4)
- (d) Support youth initiatives aimed at government transparency and accountability, with focus on mitigating sectoral corruption, implementing social audits and enhancing government accountability for delivery of public services. (Outputs 2.2, 2.4)
- (e) Support awareness and promotion of human rights of youth, implementation of existing human rights instruments and promotion of access to information. (Output 2.3, 4.3)
- (f) Promote enabling legal and policy environments for HIV responses that advance human rights of youth affected by HIV, empower young women and most at-risk populations, and tackle gender-based violence (Output 3.3)

<sup>46</sup> Somalia Human Development Report 2012, p.132.



## BOX 6: TOOLS FOR EVIDENCE-INFORMED POLICY FOR YOUTH

Evidence-based advocacy for stronger youth policy demands good data. One resource for reporting youth analytics is a National Human Development Report (NHDR) that focuses on youth.

UNDP published its first Human Development Report in 1990. Since 1998, UNDP has contributed to the development of country-specific versions focusing on youth. More than 20 national reports have been developed, the latest in Egypt, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Qatar and Somalia, plus a sub-regional report covering the Caribbean and the South Cone in Latin America.

Youth NHDRs are used as instruments for both advocacy and policy development, as the production process engages all relevant stakeholders in the country as well as the target group.<sup>a</sup> Youth NHDRs are based on participatory processes. They aim to involve youth organizations and are informed by target group surveys, consultations or focus group discussions. They provide in-depth analysis of the situation of youth in the country as well as existing barriers and opportunities, providing guidance to UNDP programmes as well as youth policy development.

Several NHDRs have pioneered youth indices with the objective of measuring the progress of youth development. An index can be used as benchmark to monitor the impact of programme interventions on youth well-being, empowerment or the variety of barriers they are facing – depending on its construction. An index is a powerful communications tool that can raise awareness of issues and generate a debate within a country or region.

Egypt proposed a Youth Well-being Index, which measures various dimensions of progress, such as education, employment, poverty, security, gender aspects, participation, ICT access etc.<sup>b</sup> Kenya constructed a Youth Development Index based on the Human Development Index but adjusted to its definition of youth.<sup>c</sup> Somalia presented a Youth Frustration Index that includes social aspects such as lack of family support, drug abuse or feelings of humiliation, gathering this data for the first time through a survey.<sup>d</sup> A Youth Expectations Index was developed for the Ibero-American Youth Survey to measure positive or negative expectations for the future in each of 20 assessed countries.<sup>e</sup>

Challenges in disaggregating data on youth according to sex or age group are ongoing. However, NHDRs have been successful in innovating human development measures. Developing and establishing a youth index can serve several purposes. It can be used by national statistics offices, it can enhance monitoring of programme progress, and it can be a starting point for the set-up of future youth programmes.

a) NHDR Guidance Note, UNDP, 2013. b) Egypt Human Development Report 2012. c) Kenya Human Development Report 2009. d) Somalia Human Development Report 2012. e) 1<sup>st</sup> Ibero-American Youth Survey, July 2013.

- (g) Through tailored Institutional Context Analysis<sup>47</sup>, better understand capacities of stakeholders (e.g. policy makers, academia, civil society organizations, media and private sector) to establish inclusive policies and mechanisms that support civic engagement of young people. (Output 2.4)
- (h) Support legal reform to eliminate discrimination against marginalized segments of the population, promote access to justice and security, as well as support a youth-friendly legal framework that embraces engagement of youth for participation in politics and decision-making. UNDP shall work with national justice institutions including legal aid providers, law schools, police and wider law enforcement, prosecutorial authorities and the judiciary to strengthen youth participation as action in these institutions as well as to address increased access to justice for youth. In addition, national government and parliaments, civil society organizations and other electoral assistance providers to review and discuss legal frameworks on youth and for youth participation, and identify and address context-specific legal barriers to youth participation (e.g. barriers to registration and financing of youth-led organizations). (Outputs 2.4, 2.6, 3.4, 3.5, 4.2, 4.4.)
- (i) Support strengthening of governance structures of youth organizations and networks of youth organizations at the grassroots level. (Output 2.4)
- (j) Explore the role of social media and ICT in enabling access to information and fostering political participation, in particular those voices of historically

47 UNDP Guidance Note: Institutional and Context Analysis, September 2012. The note articulates a political economy approach to analyzing how different actors (including youth) within a development context interact to shape the likelihood of programme success or failure.



marginalized youth<sup>48</sup>; examine how to mitigate the ‘digital divide’ and promote more inclusive approaches towards information dissemination, sharing and networking. (Output 2.4)

- (k) With regard to national youth policy, UNDP shall support processes for review or implementation of youth policies; advocate for youth-sensitive budgeting to accompany policy implementation; continue to support the development of evidence-based instruments such as youth political participation indexes and National Human Development Reports on Youth to inform youth policy. (Outputs 2.4, 4.3, 7.3)
- (l) Given advances in ICT and the rise of ‘big data’, UNDP will also explore innovative technologies and approaches for engaging youth in data collection and analysis, decision-making, and monitoring of public policies and youth initiatives.<sup>49</sup>(Output 7.6)

UNDP will seek partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs), educational institutions and media to encourage continuous youth participation and civic education in schools, universities, and outside formal education frameworks; design training programmes as incubators for new projects; support youth-led community development and volunteering organizations; provide flexible support to innovative, small-scale youth projects; and provide capacity building for young members of political parties in a multi-partisan setting. During electoral periods, UNDP could partner with electoral management bodies and CSOs to ensure youth involvement in all phases of voter education campaigns and include youth as election observers. During post-electoral periods, UNDP will encourage parliaments, governments and advocacy-oriented CSOs to make the voices of youth heard in parliament and government, facilitate youth-led national youth councils and/or parliaments, promote youth-based organizations, invite youth groups to visit national parliaments, initiate internship schemes for students in parliaments, in legal and justice institutions, and in civil service, initiate and support youth councils at the local level, and train and support young members of parliament.

48 [www.juventudconvoz.org](http://www.juventudconvoz.org) is an online platform established by the UNDP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean for regional knowledge sharing and debate, to strengthen individual and youth organizational capacities to influence public policies.

49 UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluations Results, November 2013.

YOUTH STRATEGY OUTCOME 3

**Strengthened youth engagement in resilience building**



*References to UNDP Strategic Plan Outcome 2: Citizen expectations for voice, development, the rule of law and accountability are met by stronger systems of democratic governance; Outcome 4: Faster progress is achieved in reducing gender inequality and promoting women’s empowerment; Outcome 5: Countries are able to reduce the likelihood of conflict and lower the risk of natural disasters, including from climate change; and Outcome 6: Early recovery and rapid return to sustainable development pathways are achieved in post-conflict and post-disaster settings.*

Early recovery and a return to sustainable development in post-conflict and post-disaster settings should start as early as possible.

**Strategic entry points for mobilizing and empowering youth as positive agents of change in their communities, particularly in post-crises and natural disaster contexts**

- (a) Support livelihoods stabilization of young men and women as early on as possible in crisis-affected settings as an important building block for resilience and to support social cohesion. Entry points include emergency employment and entrepreneurship (see also Youth Strategy Outcome 1) and recovery of critical livelihoods assets, including skills development and access to finance. Provide youth at-risk of (re)joining armed or criminal groups with alternative/diversified livelihoods opportunities as conflict prevention. Engage youth in recovery efforts (e.g. rehabilitation of social and socio-economic community infrastructure) to support a more positive image of youth at risk in reintegration efforts. (Outputs 6.1, 6.2, 6.4)
- (b) Mobilize youth in disaster preparedness, education and post-disaster efforts, in particular those focusing on emergency employment creation, community infrastructure rehabilitation and local governance. Identify local capacities, engage with them and



### BOX 7: YEMEN USES A “3X6” TOOL TO INCREASE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Based on success in post-conflict Burundi, the Government of Yemen has adopted the 3x6 approach to bring innovation to youth employment based on savings. Three phases promoting inclusiveness, ownership and sustainability with six key activities. The 3x6 approach is designed to create conditions for conflict-affected men and women to transition from emergency employment to sustainable development starting with cash for work, creating savings, business planning, sustainability vetting, grant allocation and mentored implementation of a small business. It also creates conditions for project beneficiaries to take control over their own development processes and outcomes.

The approach was adopted in the country’s Youth Employment Action Plan, endorsed by the Council of Ministers and Friends of Yemen in September 2013, and prioritized for immediate implementation under the transition agreement or MAF (Mutual Accountability Framework, Priority 9: youth employment). Already it is reducing the likelihood of youths to join the armed conflict and increasing their positive engagement in social and economic transition. With a total budget of US\$ 10,514,000 for two years, following a successful pilot (2012-2013), the Youth Economic Empowerment project (YEPP II) is targeting 8,000 vulnerable youth, to empower them economically through the creation of job opportunities. The project aims to support the Government and the people of Yemen in addressing youth unemployment as one of the root causes of the 2011 conflict.

UNDP support for the implementation of this plan includes staff embedded in the Prime Minister’s Office and Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. UNDP Yemen works both upstream at the policy-level supporting this national youth employment plan, and downstream with the implementation of the 3x6 approach, both interlinked in the perspective of full national ownership and economy of scale.

For more information, visit the UNDP Yemen website: [www.undp.org/content/yemen/en/home/library/poverty/3x6-approach-for-youth-economic-empowerment-project/](http://www.undp.org/content/yemen/en/home/library/poverty/3x6-approach-for-youth-economic-empowerment-project/)

build on them, recognizing the contributions and potential of young people in emergency response, community renewal, reconstruction and development, particularly in environmentally vulnerable locations. Engage young women as managers of natural resources in rural economies. Support adaptation and mitigation actions and enhance effective participation of youth in climate change policy decision-making processes, bringing innovative perspectives and solutions. (Outputs 1.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2)

- (c) Mobilize youth to engage in peace-building, lead non-violent transitions, and use new technologies to mobilize communities and society to bring about change. Empower people or groups to gain new awareness and understanding of goals, options, skills, resources and channels of decision-making, which makes it possible for them to use these new insights in mediation and negotiations.<sup>50</sup> UNDP will support initiatives that work with youth to form their visions for their countries, strengthening



UN PHOTO/ISAAC BILLY

An honour guard of Rwandan peacekeepers

50 Adapted from Nepal Human Development Report 2004, p.10.



UNDP/MDG ACHIEVEMENT FUND

*Young Nicaraguans participate in a biodiversity preservation programme that also addresses livelihoods and access to clean water by prioritizing education and risk management strategies.*

capacities of youth for peace-building through focused skills-based training and soft skills, training that will enable youth to make positive contributions to minimize factors that contribute to violence, increase global security and prevent further armed conflict. (Outputs 5.5, 5.6, 6.2, 6.4)

- (d) Support youth and youth organizations to play a pivotal role in helping to re-establish relationships, including a renewed social contract between the state and its citizens (state-building), addressing the

root causes of violence, exclusion, conflict in order to avoid recurrence. (Outputs 2.4, 5.6, 6.2, 6.4)

- (e) Analyze and support gender-sensitive resilience and violence reduction strategies, in particular in conflict, post-conflict, militarization and humanitarian crisis contexts. This will involve the transformation of societal norms and changes in sexuality patterns that result in violence, e.g. gender-based violence, sexual violence and violent assertion of male roles and masculinity. (Outputs 4.2, 6.2, 6.4)



## IV. A FOUR-PRONGED APPROACH TO ACHIEVING RESULTS

The many activities proposed in the UNDP Youth Strategy will be carried out through a variety of processes. Working towards the strategy's three main outcomes will be furthered through a four-pronged approach.

### A. Support capacity development of young people and youth organizations

An essential action will be to invest in the capacity of young people and youth organizations, equipping them to effectively engage in local and national development processes, as promoters of social accountability and innovative development solutions. When working with youth organizations, the aim of UNDP interventions will be to support capacity assessments, strengthen organizational capacities for advocacy and networking, and develop institutional capacities (e.g. decision-making processes, degree of participation,

knowledge and transparency, accountability, leadership, organizational linkages and coordination, conflict management capacity).

#### 1. Youth leadership capacity

The next tier of capacity development of young people and youth organizations will focus on leadership development, involving leadership training, including training in negotiations, mediation and advocacy for stronger articulation of youth policies and statements. It will be important to promote South-South and triangular cooperation for the exchange of youth leadership practices, e.g. through electronic platforms, fora, innovation and leadership camps, or young leader exchange programmes. Convening local, national, regional and international youth fora on a diversity of development issues will also strengthen youth leadership skills and contribute to the development of a new cadre of young leaders. Central to this work will be the participation of young people from marginalized communities with specific attention paid to gender equality.

An essential action will be to invest in the capacity of young people and youth organizations, equipping them to effectively engage in local and national development processes, as promoters of social accountability and innovative development solutions.



Fiji Women's Rights Movement Training Officer signs on to the global #TimeToAct campaign in Suva City.

FIJI WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT



Through the process of engaging youth and youth organizations in leadership development, UNDP will develop an evidence-informed understanding of the actual sphere of influence as well as the correlation between youth leadership, participation in policy and programme development, and participation in local, national, regional and global decision-making bodies.

**2. Enabling environment**

An enabling environment is critical as the nature of the dynamics and experiences among youth organizations, civil society organizations and government is diverse, depending largely on the nature of the state and governance characteristics. In this regard, UNDP will support capacity strengthening within governments (including but not limited to ministries of youth and higher

councils of youth) in addition to decentralized bodies that support youth engagement and participation. Youth peer-to-peer training will be strongly encouraged.

When working with youth and youth groups in the context of capacity and leadership development, UNDP will continue to work closely with local and national governments and civil society groups in order to develop and nurture the appropriate platforms for young men and women to have the ‘space’ for expression, to be heard and to have the opportunity to meaningfully contribute.

**B. Engage through outreach, advocacy and mainstreaming of youth issues in all spheres of development planning**

In countries or contexts where systems/networks for youth information exchange and dissemination do not exist or are weak, investment in developing and implementing such mechanisms in collaboration with state and non-state actors, should be a priority. Partnerships will aim to devise appropriate mediums and channels of communication and information dissemination that will garner, maintain and develop youth interest and participation in sustainable human development planning and solutions. Youth information mechanisms will take into consideration the diversity of young people and their access to communication tools, information technology and social media. Special consideration will be given to digitally-excluded youth groups including young people living in rural areas, young people in areas of conflict, young people with disabilities and illiterate young people. Identification of Youth Goodwill Ambassadors who are prominent figures in the national, regional or global context may support this effort to engage those without access to ICT, particularly if information may be channeled through sports, music, art or culture.

**BOX 8: SUPPORTING YOUTH LEADERSHIP**

**ASIA:** To create a critical mass of leadership for good governance, a project in Asia invested in key change makers with a sphere of influence on governance outcomes. Recognizing young people as key stakeholders in the national and global development agenda, the UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre in Bangkok implemented the Asia Young Leaders for Governance (AYLG) initiative from 2005 to 2009. Training courses involved young leaders ages 25–35 working in government or in areas of leadership in good governance. The project partnered with LEAD international, an international non-governmental organization, to produce a set of customized leadership resource kits, hold five national and two sub-national leadership courses, train 29 leadership trainers and graduate 187 Leadership Fellows trained in leadership skills. Stakeholders and beneficiaries later replicated many of the techniques and adapted the approaches in their own countries in local languages.

**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:** The New Youth Leadership initiative has been implemented by the Spain-UNDP trust fund and RBLAC since 2009, with the objective of contributing to strengthening youth political and social leadership of indigenous people (afro-descendants were also included at a later stage) and their organizations. The New Youth Leadership initiative organized seven seminars at the national level, two dialogues at the regional level. Training at the events reached 661 young indigenous leaders from five countries: Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Paraguay.





UN PHOTO/RICK BAJORNAS



Mainstreaming of youth perspectives and youth-related issues in development planning processes will entail working with a range of government and non-government actors, and other actors in the development field. Identifying entry points for advocating and integrating youth into policymaking, budgeting and implementation processes at national, sector and sub-national levels, is envisaged as a multi-year, multi-stakeholder process aimed to address and change in many cases, the very nature of a country's decision-making norms and practices. UNDP will work with practitioners and champions of youth mainstreaming in development planning, to support engagement of young men and women in planning and design, implementation, measurement and engagement alongside governments on policy and programming that contribute to sustainable human development planning, solutions and innovation.

UNDP has the unique advantage of infusing youth voices and ensuring inclusion of youth issues within the development priority areas

of poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis and recovery, environment and energy, health and HIV and women's empowerment as a model for effective youth engagement. Within the post-2015 paradigm, UNDP will contribute to youth mainstreaming in all relevant areas, and participation in national consultations and in global conversations. Also, in subsequent phases, UNDP will contribute by providing evidence and insight on the development of relevant indicators and targets on youth.

Mainstreaming youth voices in development policy and programming will be complemented by establishment of 'youth-sensitive' organizational mechanisms within UNDP at the global, regional and national levels, including the formation of youth technical advisory board(s) and of youth engagement task teams to oversee the degree of youth inclusivity in organizational planning processes; the development of a communications, learning and outreach strategy for youth mainstreaming; and reform of the existing UNDP internship programme and professional entry-level

*The closing ceremony of the UN Year of Youth celebrations highlighted the role girls and young women play in advancing dialogue and mutual understanding.*



Engagement platforms such as crowd-sourcing, gaming, mobile technologies and other emerging innovative platforms and approaches need to be further explored.

recruitment requirements to enable contributions of young men and women in all their diversity and particularly from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

Advocacy for the empowerment and engagement of young men and women in development processes shall take various forms including:

- Development, facilitation and advocacy of a global platform on knowledge exchange to facilitate North-South, South-South, South-North and triangular exchanges, as well as public-private partnerships;
- Mainstreaming and advocacy, in partnership with the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, and specifically, the implementation, monitoring and reporting and communication on the UN System-wide Action on Youth (United Nations Youth-SWAP). In collaboration with partner UN agencies and the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, UNDP shall advocate for more inclusive policies and mechanisms at the multiple levels where it operates and will identify greater synergies for heightened collaboration and visibility of joint programming within the UN system;
- Mainstreaming and advocacy in cooperation with governments; UNDP will continue to contribute to strengthening youth participation in governance through legislative reviews, youth advisory councils, production of and support to youth sensitive reporting, advocacy for issues of high interest of young men and women, and policymakers including sustainability and climate change, the role of youth as active agents for social transformation, employability and entrepreneurship, and ICT for youth gender sensitive services (use of cell-phones for information, medical and justice related services). UNDP's solid positioning vis-à-vis governments should be leveraged with regard to youth policy advocacy or increased participation and representation of young people in decision-making processes;
- Mainstreaming and advocacy in cooperation with CSOs and State support to youth-led organizations, informed by youth organizations' assessment, will contribute to their capacity building in advocacy for youth issues at the local and national levels. Specific approaches to youth advocacy skills training are needed in contexts of conflict and post-conflict;
- As social media and ICTs have proven to be effective tools for advocacy and constituency building, reaching out to young men and women through innovative campaigns and new media will be essential in order to advocate for

**BOX 9: REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR YOUTH ADVOCACY IN ASIA**

The N'Peace Network (UNDP, Search for Common Ground, and Institute for Inclusive Security) is facilitated by the UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre and recognizes the leadership of women in conflict prevention, dispute resolution, reconstruction and peace. The N'Peace Awards Initiative includes a category for emerging peace champions, targeting young women between ages 25–35. Young women who receive the award and become part of the N'Peace network enjoy opportunities to present and highlight their work at the regional level and access to training, forums and advocacy opportunities. The role of the Regional Office is to organize trainings and events, facilitate knowledge-sharing, and provide advocacy opportunities at the regional level. Regional governmental forums such as ASEAN and SAARC are potential spaces for UNDP to advocate for more youth involvement and for integrating youth issues into policy dialogues.



## BOX 10: IDENTIFYING GOOD PRACTICES IN YOUTH POLICIES

In Ibero-America, 25 percent of the aggregate population is between the ages of 15 and 29, youth unemployment has created significant challenges, and the basic needs of 25 percent of Latin American youth are still not met. Responses to youth-related issues have become essential.

UNDP, in cooperation with the organization of Ibero-American Youth (OIJ), UNFPA, ECLAC and UNESCO, launched at the 22nd Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government in November 2012, an innovative publication that elaborated on 20 examples of public policies targeting and involving the most marginalized youth in Latin America and the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal. This represents an attempt to recognize the totality of governmental processes and their results with regard to youth development in the Ibero-American context. This was complemented by a regional survey for further policy analysis on youth. These initiatives, designed and implemented by governments, NGOs and the private sector, propose interesting alternatives for youth development, with great potential for replicability. Many sectors/areas are included, such as entrepreneurship, microcredit, capacity building, scholarship mechanisms, health and youth information centers.

The publication can be accessed at: [http://www.oij.org/file\\_upload/publicationsItems/document/20121114001302\\_13.pdf](http://www.oij.org/file_upload/publicationsItems/document/20121114001302_13.pdf)

youth and youth-relevant issues. Engagement platforms such as crowd-sourcing, gaming, mobile technologies and other emerging innovative platforms and approaches need to be further explored and tapped into. It is essential to ensure that means of engagement are user-driven and appropriate to youth; this implies involvement of youth from the very beginning of the ‘engagement’ process to ensure that design of engagement methods are appropriate for the user. Building on existing local solutions, and advocating for the space for youth to develop their own solutions and new approaches will also be essential.

agenda and sustainable development goals is critical. Youth have an important role to play in participating in, leading and influencing development debates and policy discussions where stakeholders will examine lessons learned from the MDG framework, and incubate forward-looking development solutions that may optimally address the nexus of complex challenges facing our world. Emphasis will be made to bring in youth who have historically not been brought into such development debates and to support linkages among youth, youth

*Youth consider future development priorities on International Youth Day in Astana, Kazakhstan.*

The networks created among young men and women and people, institutions, civil society groups, media, private sector, sister UN agencies, etc. will be a strong impetus for generating new ideas and taking ideas forward into action.

### C. Influence through thought leadership, global policy debates and networks

As the MDG framework comes to a close in 2015, thought leadership on completion of the MDGs and in the advent of the post-2015



UNV/JI HYUN YANG



UNDP is well-positioned to facilitate dialogue with governments and civil society organizations and other non-state actors with regard to youth participation in decision-making and youth policy development.

organizations and networks in order to strengthen collective impact on the dynamics of public policies. UNDP will support today's and tomorrow's youth leaders in defining and maximizing space for thought leadership on data collection, measurement and analytical systems that must be put in place to monitor the progress of the post-2015 agenda.

**D. Sustain progress through support to national youth policy development and implementation**

Every country needs effective strategies to protect young men and women from exploitation and neglect, and to support their informed and active participation in all spheres of society. Towards this end, many countries have sought to develop a long-term, consensus-based, integrated and cross-sectoral youth policy. National youth policy strategies that are effective and beneficial for youth are those that empower young people to actively influence and shape the political agenda. A progressive national youth policy obliges traditional decision makers to work not only **for** young people, but **with** them and to let their experiences inform the development of appropriate interventions and services. A national youth policy will remain purely symbolic unless it is a policy of the State, reflects an integrated, cross-sectoral and coherent approach, is interdisciplinary, inter-ministerial and multi-departmental and sets out concrete priority areas of policy intervention as the basis for the development of specific projects.<sup>51</sup> Youth-sensitive budgeting is also a critical element in the context of government fiscal planning and policy implementation. Without a coherent national policy

framework, youth programmes still operate mainly in discrete sectors.

Support to policy development involves influencing legal frameworks for the implementation of policy, reviewing institutional set-up and helping to ensure that financial, human and knowledge resources are mobilized for its implementation.

UNDP is well-positioned to facilitate dialogue with governments and civil society organizations and other non-state actors with regard to youth participation in decision-making and youth policy development. This would entail, for example, support to the establishment of youth data baselines where such baselines do not exist; the review of legal frameworks (enabling environment); capacity development of civil servants and youth leaders in youth policy development; gathering and supporting exchange of good practices at country and regional levels; supporting the development of national youth policy reports as a basis for youth policy development as well as youth policy review; and supporting assessments of existing youth policies and their implementation. Not all countries have sufficient infrastructure to support the development, implementation and reviewing of national youth policies. It will be essential to support structures at different levels including local youth councils, municipal and provincial youth councils, a national youth council and government agencies focused on youth. It will be equally important to analyze where national youth policies stand, why some have been implemented and why others have not, and how young people can play a role in partnership with governments and other stakeholders in implementing existing policies.

<sup>51</sup> UNESCO, *Empowering Youth through National Policies*, 2004, pp.6-7.



## V. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Particular efforts will be made to evaluate and monitor policies and programmes in relation to youth policy strategies, considering frameworks, mechanisms or tools for monitoring and/or evaluation and the scarcity of resources dedicated to such exercises. It is therefore fundamental to develop indicators for youth development – in particular, sex and age disaggregated data (SADD). These indicators should ideally cascade up and down connecting the UNDP Youth Strategy to relevant youth policy and programming/project frameworks, through which results can be leveraged at country, regional and global levels, including the UN Youth-SWAP. The implementation of the UNDP Strategic Plan, country programmes, regional programmes and global programmes together with their monitoring and evaluation frameworks with an extensive indicator base provides an organizational wide framework to coherently monitor and measure the specific youth policy, and policies that have components or different strategies for young people.

Several composite indexes are to be developed and used, as well as specific indicators, which may for example focus on youth participation in decision-making, gender equality indicators, outreach to specific groups of young men and women such as youth in conflict and post-conflict contexts, and perceptions and analyses by the beneficiaries of youth services. Development of statistical systems is a UNDP corporate priority with particular emphasis on making available sex and age disaggregated data. This would help measure not only how the UNDP Youth Strategy manifests in specific action but also the ensuing results in countries. The respective country UNDAFs and their inclusion of youth programming and associated monitoring



UNDP

tools by UNDP and UN sister agencies will also provide data for measurement and aid monitoring. UNDP will support an environment of greater openness and accessibility of data on development progress against key indicators, and will encourage development partners to support youth to more constructively engage with decision makers.

Traditional approaches to monitoring and evaluation often include quarterly reviews to assess whether pre-defined milestones are 'on track'. Important as they are, these approaches may no longer be sufficient or too slow to be able to influence decision-making in time. Given the rise and accessibility of ICT, the collection of large and complex data sets in real time ('big data') and greater accountability demanded by civil society and the public, particularly young people themselves, it will be important to triangulate and validate results through both conventional monitoring and evaluation techniques as well as emerging and innovative methodologies, including for example, crowd-sourcing, participatory statistics, mobile data collection and micro-narratives, among others.<sup>52</sup>

*The UN joint programme on youth empowerment in Montenegro is applying user-led design so that young people come up with solutions to problems such as high youth unemployment.*

<sup>52</sup> UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluations Results, November 2013.



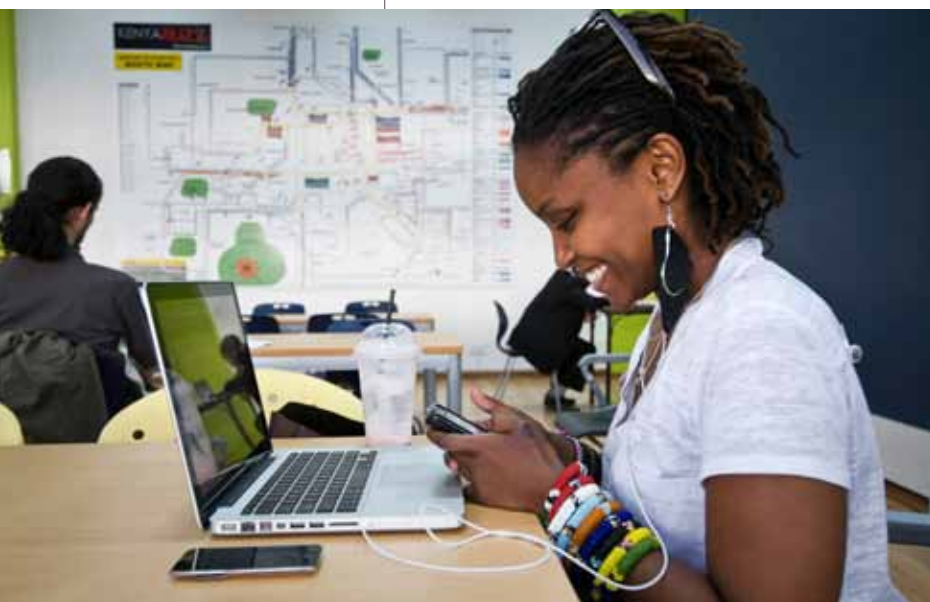
## VI. FORGING SUSTAINABLE AND INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS TO DELIVER

Progress towards youth empowerment depends heavily on how the organization will be able to mobilize resources and on how development partners, the UN system, regional and international organizations, government, civil society, youth organizations, non-governmental organizations, the media and the private sector come together to align their activities related to youth and development and mainstream youth perspectives into policy and programmes.

### A. Strengthening partnerships and dialogues with civil society and youth organizations

UNDP will proactively engage with youth experts and practitioners, youth organizations, civil society organizations working with young people, and expert groups on youth in order to engage with and reach out

*A young woman working at an iHub facility, an innovation and business space for the technology community in Kenya.*



iHUB

to young people. Support to and partnership with youth organizations will aim to facilitate young peoples' empowerment and action in their areas of interest, as well as their representation and participation in youth policy-making and programming processes at all levels. It will also aim to strengthen youth advocacy efforts through skills building and capacity development.

UNDP shall seek expanded partnerships with global, regional and national youth research groups and youth associations in order to support as well as be informed by recent knowledge development in the field of youth. UNDP will also involve youth researchers in consultative processes with regards to youth programming and results measurement in order to strengthen evidence-based approaches to policy and practice. As reflected earlier in the strategy, UNDP's approach towards young men and women includes working for youth as beneficiaries (target groups to be reached through social media, programme effectiveness, youth information mechanisms and other outreach mechanisms); engaging with youth as partners (collaborators); and supporting youth as leaders (initiators, ambassadors, young men and women taking action on behalf of UNDP).

### B. Raising awareness and strengthening partnerships with governments at national and sub-national levels

As referenced above on several occasions, UNDP shall continue to work closely with governments as it pertains to all levels of youth empowerment, from capacity development of the youth sector, to advocacy and policy development and implementation. While doing so, UNDP will consider the unique national and local contexts and adapt innovative approaches to support meaningful youth interventions and work with governments to



recognize and engage with and better address the needs of vulnerable groups and youth at risk. UNDP shall advocate for the youth agenda in all levels and sectors of the government in order to raise awareness across all government bodies, facilitate coordination mechanisms and harmonization of youth policies and help to ensure that government initiatives as they pertain to youth are well integrated and mutually reinforcing. Local level partnerships in particular will become increasingly critical to address emerging issues such as youth in sustainable cities, accountability and service delivery. Support to integration of youth policies in national development plans for instance will also be a priority as it would help to ensure that youth policy implementation will actually be supported by a corresponding budget. It will also be essential that UNDP partners with regional institutions and inter-governmental processes ensure alignment and complementarity with existing initiatives and strategic approaches.

### C. Partnering for greater coordination and coherence within the UN system

UNDP is contributing to the goal of improving coordination and coherence within the UN system and among its many partners in governments, civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

#### 1. Contributing as an active member of the IANYD

The United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development is an important internal mechanism for integrating the efforts of individual United Nations entities and in ensuring that through more and better cooperation, we can achieve greater results and impact together. What started as a knowledge sharing platform to exchange information between United Nations entities has grown into a strong advocate and joint partnership



UN PHOTO/RICK BAJORNAS

*Ahmad Alhendawi, the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, addresses an NGO briefing in New York.*

for youth development on global, regional and national levels. Since its creation in 2010, the IANYD has grown both in membership and integration. The network is not only pooling the efforts of different UN entities but it also offers a platform for the engagement with young people by exploring innovative ways of working more closely with youth. UNDP is contributing to the implementation and monitoring of and communication about the first UN System-wide Action Plan on Youth endorsed by the UN Chief Executives Board in 2013 (UN Youth-SWAP, see annex). Throughout 2012 and 2013 the Network focused a significant portion of its attention on enhancing inter-agency collaboration through the development of activities and actions related to the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth and the hosting of an open meeting with youth-led organizations, networks and movements. For the purposes of the Action Plan, the Network employed thematic sub-working groups to move forward the five thematic areas outlined in the Action Plan. UNDP co-chairs with UN-Habitat the sub-working group on Protection of Rights, Civic Engagement and Political Inclusion, and is particularly active in the sub-working group on Employment and Entrepreneurship with ILO, among others.

**In April 2013 the UN Chief Executives Board endorsed the United Nations Youth-SWAP as a framework to guide youth programming for the UN system.**



**BOX 11: UNDP AND UNV WORKING TOGETHER IN WEST AFRICA**

Following technical and financial support provided by UNV and UNDP to governments and civil society organizations for the establishment of national youth volunteer schemes, five countries — Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Mali, Mozambique and Togo — now have a law on volunteerism and functional institutions that support the promotion of youth volunteerism.

The adopted laws on volunteerism contribute to an enabling environment for: (1) youth development in terms of gaining and developing skills that equip youth for the employment market and for personal growth; and (2) youth contribution to development in terms of contributing for example, to the achievement of the MDGs.

**2. Supporting the work of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth**

UNDP is contributing to the work plan of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, whose offices responds to the Secretary-General's Five-year Action Agenda and is guided by the World Programme of Action for Youth. UNDP is also strengthening South-South and triangular cooperation and partnership among the UN, governments, and the youth community to advance youth development.<sup>53</sup>

The UN Secretary-General appointed Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi of Jordan as his first-ever Envoy on Youth. The Envoy assumed his position on 17 January 2013, with the task of bringing the voices of young people to the United Nations system. He also works with different UN agencies, governments, civil society, academia and media stakeholders towards enhancing, empowering and strengthening the position of young people within and outside of the United Nations System. The role of the Envoy on Youth is also described by the UN Secretary-General as a "harmoniser", bringing UN entities together to explore cooperation opportunities for working with and for young people. The work plan of the Envoy on Youth outlines four priority areas: participation, advocacy, partnerships and harmonization.

<sup>53</sup> [www.un.org/youthenvoy/the-envoys-work/workplan/](http://www.un.org/youthenvoy/the-envoys-work/workplan/)

**3. Partnering with United Nations Volunteers**

A dedicated trust fund has been set up to boost youth volunteerism and harness the energy of young people around the world to contribute to achieving development goals while enhancing their own lives. For UNDP and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, the new youth trust fund is an important milestone in developing the inspirational UN Youth Volunteers Programme.<sup>54</sup> The Fund will promote youth volunteerism throughout UN policy and programming initiatives. UNDP will collaborate closely with UNV to further initiatives that support capacity and skill building of young volunteers and professionals, particularly in the transition of youth from school to work (see Box 10); seek to strengthen the capacity of governments to develop their own national and regional youth volunteer schemes; and contribute to peace and development of society.

Volunteerism is widely recognized as a powerful means of transforming the pace and nature of development and draws upon the inherent core values of self-help, solidarity and social cohesion. On their role in change, UNDP Administrator Helen Clark said, "Through volunteering, young people gain a strong sense of civic engagement to bring about transformational change in their communities."

<sup>54</sup> UNV Press Release, 25 January 2013.





The trust fund will provide the financial basis for the further design and implementation of a youth volunteering modality, which will ultimately each year involve thousands of young people supporting peace and development activities worldwide.

#### 4. Partnerships within the wider development community

UNDP will develop partnerships with multi-lateral, international and regional organizations and development partners in order to advocate on youth development issues, and promote cooperation with regard to youth mainstreaming and advocacy, policy development, technical and programmatic partnerships, youth research and information knowledge management, and impact assessment. UNDP will proactively seek new partnerships with philanthropic institutions, foundations and the private sector along the principles of corporate social responsibility. As young men and women face various forms of discrimination in the job market, in order to support equal opportunities for

young men and women seeking jobs, partnerships developed with the private sector will in particular advocate for non-discriminatory practices and support to organizational culture changes in society and within sectors.

Addressing the mismatch between market labour needs and supply must be achieved through greater coordination among businesses, policy makers, academic institutions and vocational training bodies in designing curriculum, fostering apprenticeships, and developing programmes that reinforce emphasis on education and skill-building that will support youth's capabilities and adaptability in the long-term. Think-tanks and research institutions will be brought in to support SADD and other comparative data collection, research and analysis; engender in-depth research; and support knowledge generation.

These partnerships will inform UNDP's policies and programming, improve our outreach and strengthen the impact and sustainability of our action on youth-related issues and more broadly to promote sustainable human development.

**UNDP will proactively seek new partnerships with philanthropic institutions, foundations and the private sector along the principles of corporate social responsibility.**

*Participants in the national consultation on youth volunteering in Morocco*



UNV/LABORATOIRE BRAHIM



UNDP UZBEKISTAN

Participants of Project Management Training and Social Innovation, Uzbekistan, write out priorities, which include creating youth-led groups on addressing climate change, teaching bead braiding to young women with disabilities and promoting student interest in science and design.

## VII. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY OF UNDP TO DELIVER

### A. Core youth team and support facility

A core UNDP multi-disciplinary facility on youth, composed of staff from different professional teams in the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS), the regional bureaus and other UNDP bureaus and units will continue to be the anchor for the advocacy and implementation of the UNDP Youth Strategy. Responsibilities will also include conceptualization and coordination of global youth events, representation of UNDP, policy and programme support, and support to monitoring and reporting at an aggregate level. The UNDP core team will gradually operate as a global support facility, assisted by a team of vetted experts and consultants who may be rapidly deployed to support country offices. The core team will also serve as the primary interlocutor between UNDP and the global UN IANYD and the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth; support partnership-building and resource mobilization efforts, develop and maintain global knowledge management platforms

and communications. The appointment of focal points on youth in UNDP bureaus, centres and Country Offices will be encouraged. All UNDP business units are encouraged to bring on board youth expertise.

### B. Knowledge management

A dedicated youth portal and knowledge management platform will be developed within UNDP to support knowledge exchange through e-discussions, virtual debates, webinars, dissemination of knowledge products and other activities. This will support promotion of UNDP's work on youth in social media and contribute to existing UN platforms and groups.

### C. Partnerships and resource mobilization

UNDP will actively forge new partnerships and mobilize resources at global, regional and country levels to ensure the viability of the strategy implementation.

### D. Promoting venues for youth engagement

UNDP will establish a central UNDP Youth Advisory Committee that will meet annually. UNDP will also promote the creation of Youth Advisory Boards at the level of UNDP Regional and Country Offices. The constitution of these groups would take into account thematic specificities, gender balance, diversity in socio-economic background of members, and give particular attention to representation of historically marginalized and/or disadvantaged youth.

UNDP will also support the creation of UN Youth Task Forces within the UN Country Teams as well as potential United Nations consultation mechanisms established by the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Youth.



## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Defining ‘youth’

The UNDP Youth Strategy proposes to focus principally on young women and men ages 15–24, but to also extend that youth group to include young men and women ranging from ages 25–30 (and even beyond through age 35 in particular circumstances).

For statistical purposes, the United Nations defines ‘youth’, as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States.<sup>55</sup> Several UN entities, instruments and regional organizations have somewhat different definitions of youth, which the United Nations Secretariat recognizes. The following table<sup>56</sup> summarizes these differences:

ENTITY/INSTRUMENT/ ORGANIZATION	AGE
UN Secretariat/UNESCO/ILO	Youth: 15–24
UN Habitat (Youth Fund)	Youth: 15–32
UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA	Adolescent: 10–19 Young people: 10–24 Youth 15–24
UNICEF/ The Convention on Rights of the Child	Child under 18
The African Youth Charter	Youth: 15–35

In many countries across the world the transition to adulthood and autonomy extends past age 24, and even at age 30, a person still needs opportunity for capacity development, either because of competitive employment environments, or to succeed in a leadership position or a political career. Some are of the opinion that the age limit of youth should be reduced, taking into account societal realities around the world (e.g. a young drug user or young mother at the age of 13 should be part of youth programmes to reintegrate them in better and safer environments). But there are other opinions that the youth age group should not start earlier than 18, which is the voting age in most countries.

Many countries in the world have defined youth ages differently in their national youth policy. The African Youth Charter defines youth up to age 35. In the Pacific, some countries consider youth up to age 40. The USAID

Youth in Development Policy<sup>57</sup> also presents a strong case for not limiting the definition at age 25.

The diversity shows that there are many different ways to define youth given the programmatic and political priorities, which range from demographic to bio-psycho-social and sociological definitions. While most countries and institutions adopt an age-based definition, others approach youth as a sociological construct, considering youth as a period of transition to adulthood<sup>58</sup> that does not always coincide with bio-psycho-social transitions. The sociological definition considers the diversity of young person’s experiences and the ways these are affected by complex social realities as well as young peoples’ capacity to engage with them. Narratives of class, ethnicity/race and gender as the primary forces that shaped young people’s prospects and identities have now been supplemented by a host of other factors such as geography, mobility, disability, education and technology. These combine in myriad ways to produce better or worse life opportunities.

The key issue in the age-based discussion ‘is the fault line within ‘youth’ that divides ‘young people’ from ‘young adults’. There is crossover here but young people tend to be those whom policy wants to keep ‘in good shape’ (in learning, away from drugs and crime, doing constructive things in leisure) while young adults are more engaged in independent living, perhaps studying but closer to, or already in the labour market (though they may not have a job). The policy issue here is supporting ‘life management’: capacity, resilience in relation to family formation, housing, and employment. The ‘fault line’ is positioned differently in different countries and contexts. There is also the recurrent policy question as to whether the challenge is to build foundations (for participation, education, healthy lifestyles, for example) or to address challenges (such as the democratic deficit or civil society capacity building, youth unemployment, or drug misuse and mental health problems, for example).<sup>59</sup>

When designing its Youth Strategy, UNDP organized extensive discussions on the age range to be adopted. Most opinions share the view that UNDP should not

55 UN DESA Fact Sheet, Definition of Youth.

56 Ibid. References: UN Instruments, Statistics; Agenda 21; UNFPA; UNICEF; African Union, 2006.

57 <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/youth>

58 Williamson, Howard, Supporting Young People in Europe, 2002, p.31.

59 Contribution from Professor Howard Williamson, Professor of European Youth Policy, University of Glamorgan, Wales, United Kingdom.



just conform to the UN General Assembly definition and define youth by age, but to go beyond towards a functional definition that takes into account youth and society's perception and expectations. Hence, the challenge is to adopt a definition broad and flexible enough to capture and reflect different national contexts and needs and the nature of the problems to be addressed. While the definition used by the United Nations is important for statistical purposes, UNDP, in its programming, needs to adapt to the realities of the national context. It is for example important that country offices in Africa work within the age range adopted by the African Youth Charter.

UNDP endeavours to realise young people's potential through support to their learning, capacity development, inclusive participation and civil engagement. The Youth Strategy therefore adopts a flexible age range, whereby UNDP proposes to focus *principally* on young women and men ages 15–24, but also to extend that youth group to include young men and women ranging from ages 25–30, and even beyond based on contextual realities and national youth policy directives.

## Annex 2: United Nations Youth-SWAP commitments and measures

When the UN Secretary-General and Member States called for an action plan on youth, members of a UN network embarked on the creation of the first United Nations Youth–SWAP, the System-wide Action Plan on Youth. The United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development developed the Youth-SWAP through a process involving 27 UN entities (including UNDP), with inputs from 22 others. The IANYD also conducted a global online survey in all official UN languages: more than 13,000 people from 186 countries responded.<sup>60</sup>

In April 2013 the UN Chief Executives Board endorsed the United Nations Youth–SWAP as a framework to guide youth programming for the UN system. It will enhance coherence and synergy in key areas related to youth development. It is a way to implement the World Programme of Action for Youth (1995) and youth-related aspects of the Secretary-General's Five-year Action Agenda (2012). It builds on the mandates, expertise and capacities of individual UN entities, pooling strengths of the whole UN system and promoting joint programmatic work.

60 IANYD, 'Uniting 4 Development', December 2013.

The United Nations Youth–SWAP focuses on the following five thematic areas:

- employment and entrepreneurship;
- protection of rights and civic engagement;
- political inclusion;
- education, including comprehensive sexuality education; and
- health.

The action plan aspires to improve the situation of young people in both peace and conflict-affected settings. Gender equality is mainstreamed and ICTs are seen as an enabler throughout the plan. Given that the definition of young people varies by country context, it may also apply to young people older than 24 years old (regarding political inclusion in particular).

A core group meets on a regular basis. UNDP supports coordination and reporting on two areas:

- employment and entrepreneurship (thematic area led by ILO, with active involvement of UNDP), in line with UNDP Strategic Plan Outcome 1; and
- political inclusion (thematic area co-led by UNDP and UN-Habitat), in line with UNDP Strategic Plan Outcomes 2, 4 and 6.

UNDP's Youth Strategy is also fully aligned with these roles and responsibilities.

The Youth–SWAP is an important tool to enhance cooperation between United Nations entities, helping to better focus and coordinate initiatives at the global level. The creation and further fostering of national and regional networks is important to reach its goals and bring its implementation down to the programming level. The IANYD will annually report on the progress made in the implementation of the plan at all levels. To make the progress measurable, a set of indicators has been developed. A baseline for each of the indicators will be established through the reporting in the first year. It is expected that the implementation of the UNDP Youth Strategy will contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Youth–SWAP, and vice versa.

For more information on the role of the IANYD, see the publication 'Uniting 4 Development':

- [www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/un-ianydn.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/un-ianydn.pdf)
- <http://www.unsceb.org/content/youth-swap-commitments-and-measures>



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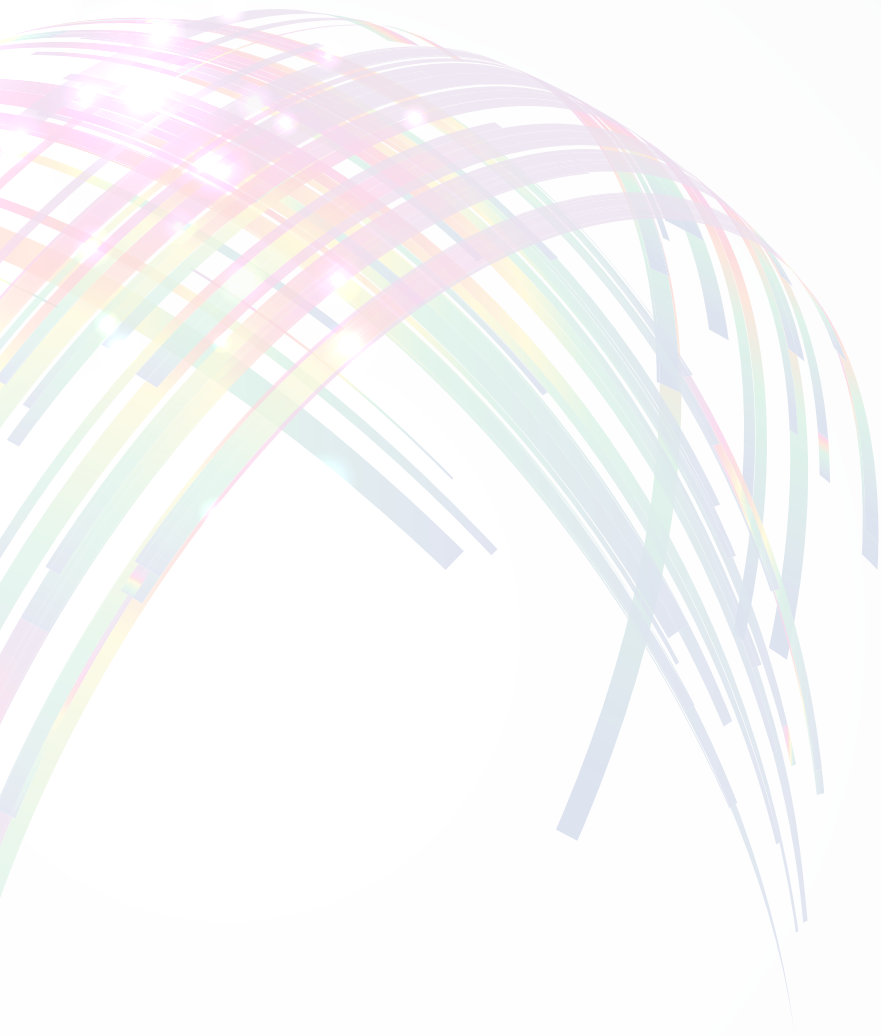
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## ACRONYMS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil society organization
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IANYD	United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development
ICT	Information and communications technology
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
ILO	International Labour Organization
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex
RBLAC	Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SADD	Sex and age disaggregated data
UN Youth-SWAP	United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Youth
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund



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