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NATIONAL YOUTH POLICIES AND INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

National Youth Policies and International Co-operation
(prepared in the Social Development Division,
United Nations, New York)

Introduction

Mankind is always in an age of transition, but there are times when changes in the physical and ideological conditions of life seem to take place with unusual rapidity. Ours is such a time. Perhaps one of the most vivid expressions of the turmoil in national and international life today is the attitude that young people are taking towards established institutions and traditional ways of dealing with social, political and economic problems. In the year 1970, it often seems that the most vociferous challenges to the status quo, and the most outspoken demands that leaders live up to their slogans, come from the young.

Youthful idealism, traditionally cherished and nurtured as a well-spring of the future, suddenly seems to have become a motivating force for action - sometimes radical in nature - in the present. This idealism, only infrequently expressed in a comprehensive programme, has provided a feeling of unity among youth in many parts of the world in spite of differences in their social, political and economic backgrounds. Even in its least articulate forms this idealism is an expression of the internationalism of the future. When it is fully articulated it is a force that must be taken into account when national and international policies in social, political and economic fields are being formulated.

The purpose of this working paper for the 1970 Africa Regional Seminar on National Youth Service Programmes is to provide information and insights into some current thinking on youth policy formulation and to stimulate discussion on desirable forms of international co-operation.

The paper begins with a review of three principal issues in the development of youth policies and proceeds with a summary of current United Nations efforts in the youth area. Finally, several suggestions are made on the possible future direction of international co-operation.

I. Some Principal Issues

1. Reconciling traditional and innovative approaches to the development of youth policies

One of the main issues facing youth policy-makers at national and international levels is how to reconcile, in practice, two competing but not necessarily conflicting approaches to their responsibilities - the "traditional" approach, which deals with filling relatively specific youth "needs", and the "innovative" approach (for want of a better term), which holds that youth should be encouraged to assume a greater role as vehicles for social transformation.

Government and private sector programmes to help meet specific "needs" of children and youth (e.g. food, clothing, shelter, education, employment, recreation and health) have a long history, in recognition of the relative powerlessness of young people to protect themselves from the effects of war, famine, epidemic and economic dislocation.

On the international level, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations have provided material and advisory assistance in connection with these programmes, both before and since the founding of the United Nations twenty-five years ago. The International Labour Organisation, established in 1919, and World University Service, founded in 1920 as European Student Relief, for example, have supported programmes for young people in many countries for a number of years.

In addition, a considerable body of organizational and professional expertise has been developed in recent years to help families with children adjust to the demands of modern life.

This structure of ameliorative youth programming has grown primarily within the larger framework of social welfare programming, and has been strengthened at local, national, and international levels by research and by the work of experts who have made new techniques available in areas requesting them.

Within this larger framework a significant recent development affecting youth policy formulation and implementation has been a move on the part of governments and the United Nations to increase the relevance of social welfare to social change and development. The International Conference of Ministers Responsible for Social Welfare, meeting at United Nations headquarters in New York (3 to 12 September 1968), worked on the assumption that

"although the Ministers Responsible for Social Welfare may not have to deal directly with such major social sectors as education, health, employment or housing, they had nevertheless a general responsibility to ensure that no one is left behind in the process of development, that no one falls below the social standards that are recognized as a right for all. The concern of the Ministers Responsible for Social Welfare extended to the population as a whole, with special attention to those individuals or groups who were considered as more vulnerable. It was also part of the responsibility of social welfare leadership to encourage citizens to play their full part in efforts towards their own and society's betterment." 1/

In September, 1970, Ministers Responsible for Social Welfare in 18 Asian countries met in Manila in a follow-up to the 1968 Conference, and decided to establish permanent means for furthering regional co-operation. Several areas were identified for common efforts in the future, including youth programmes.

1/ E/CONF.55/L2, para.7.

One approach to the formulation and implementation of national youth policies, then, dealing with needs within a larger framework of social welfare policy, continues to develop and to be professionalized. This approach has provided one of the theoretical bases for youth service programmes, on the contention that "involving young people in the solution of their own and society's problems" provides them with activity consonant with their idealistic aspirations and helps meet practical needs.

A principal criticism of this approach is that it diverts the attention of young people from larger social, political and economic problems and does not attack the root causes of these problems. This criticism is based not on a denial that the "needs" of young people are real, but on the contention that social welfare policy provides a too narrow framework for the thinking and action now needed in the youth field. The claim is made by some youth policy-makers, and apparently by an increasing number of youth, that programmes for youth should be aimed at making them vehicles for social transformation instead of simple objects of assistance. One major implication of this claim is that national and youth policy should be determined at the highest political levels rather than in sectoral ministries.

The main justification for this attitude is the view that society has undergone fundamental dislocations during the past twenty-five years, that these dislocations require equally fundamental changes in the social order, and that youth are among the best qualified but least used vehicles for such changes.

Since World War II, youth's perceptions of the world, it is held, have been formed by apocalyptic events:

- nuclear technology and the danger of total destruction that it brings have eroded the foundations of complete national sovereignty without a compensating strengthening of trans-national political institutions;
- colonialism has been largely destroyed and hundreds of millions of people formerly under foreign domination are shaping their own future. In practice, however, the social, political and economic problems of independence have often seemed insurmountable, and opportunities for individuals to participate in decision-making often seem to grow less with each passing year;
- population pressures and food shortages in many parts of the world have combined to create an apparition of mass starvation in a few years or a few decades, in spite of dramatic increases in productivity resulting from agricultural research;
- revolutionary changes in communication, ranging from highly sophisticated data processing and transmission techniques to new roads opening up hundreds of thousands of villages to outside influences, have transformed the awareness of city-dweller and peasant alike of the world around them and perhaps also of what is good and what is destructive in modern life;

- perhaps most significantly, growth policies in the wealthy countries and development policies in the poor countries during the past twenty-five years have been based on a production-consumption ethic often hostile to cultural modes and health. The spread of environmental pollution and the unregulated growth of cities are among the most graphic illustrations of this fact.

To many young people, therefore, in developing as well as in developed areas, it appears that rapid change and disintegration of traditional institutions are more characteristic of modern life than slow and reasoned progress. By extension, therefore, traditional ways of meeting their own needs, of involving them in development and of redressing imbalances in the social order seem to have lost much of their validity. Young people today are more interested in action and the demonstrable results of action than in the tedious processes by which their elders discover and codify communities of interest. The "generation gap", therefore, is not one of age but one of experience and perception that happens to be linked with age.

The policy-maker increasingly will be faced with the need to deal with current youth attitudes and to reconcile these two approaches if he expects to capture youth interest successfully.

2. Balancing public and voluntary effort in the implementation of youth policies

One of the generally accepted realities of the post-World War II period as regards youth policy is that the public or governmental role in its formulation and implementation has increased greatly as compared with the voluntary role. The principal reason given for this is that only the public sector can generate the quantity of assistance needed to solve youth problems. A related, but not frequently articulated reason is that, only in relatively recent years have youth problems assumed the political proportions required for their escalation to the level of principal public issues.

These reasons do not provide a complete explanation for the relative decline in voluntary sector contributions in the youth field in recent years, however. Until very recently, the great majority of voluntary youth and youth-serving organizations, both at the national and international levels, while doing essential work, have emphasized particular religious, professional or vocational missions, and have not been able, for reasons of inertia or finances, or both, to expand their work as public awareness of youth problems has expanded. Some voluntary-sector youth and youth-serving organizations are now redefining their programmes to relate them more directly to overall problems of development, and to encourage youth to take a principal role in shaping these programmes. More often, however, new associations of young people are being formed to express the views and apply the energies of youth to the problems of the day, as youth perceive these problems.

In any case, this slow revitalization of the voluntary sector is accompanied by a renewed interest on the part of governments in what voluntary effort can accomplish. This is a result of at least four factors:

1. It is becoming clear that the simple application of financial resources to youth problems does not necessarily result in a solution of these problems. Some of the clearest examples of failure in the youth field have had all the financial support needed for success. There have been enough such examples, in all parts of the world, to demonstrate that the public sector, simply because it may have access to sizable resources, does not automatically mount successful programmes;

2. At the same time, some of the most conspicuous youth programme successes have been the result of voluntary-sector effort, often with limited resources. This suggests that, in the proper political context, and subject to popular control through governmentally-established policies, youth programmes implemented by voluntary-sector agencies have an important place in national efforts to solve the problems of young people;

3. Individually and collectively, young people often have greater incentive to participate in programmes in which their effort is given voluntarily - i.e. programmes in which they see a clear relationship between their own interests and aspirations and the interests and aspirations of the programme in question. It is difficult to "engineer" this incentive through programmes formulated only in a public-sector context.

4. Youth policy-makers are becoming increasingly aware of the need to tap all possible resources in their efforts to solve youth problems. The voluntary sector represents material and work resources that frequently are not available outside that sector.

The issue appears to be not one of having either public or voluntary approaches to solving youth problems, but of the best manner of relating both approaches to generally agreed-upon goals. Consequently, the youth policy-maker is faced with the need to integrate the resources and the personal incentive provided by the voluntary sector to overall national goals in his field.

3. Integrating youth policy formulation and implementation into overall national policy

One of the most frequently discussed and generally accepted principles of youth policy formulation and implementation is that youth questions must not be considered in isolation from overall national social, political and economic questions. It is said, for example, that unless education, training and employment programmes for young people are drawn up in light of the present and projected needs of the entire population, youth will not be provided with productive work opportunities throughout their lives. Population growth figures for the coming twenty-five years provide ample statistical evidence that this principle is valid. In the less-developed regions of the world for example, it is expected that the number of young people in the 15 to 24 year age group will increase by about 45 per cent between 1970 and 1985 ^{1/}.

^{1/} United Nations Population Division Working Paper No. 30, December 1969, "World Population Prospects, 1965-85 as assessed in 1968". The comparable figure for the more-developed regions is about 6-1/2 per cent.

Nevertheless, it is not difficult to point out examples, in both developing and developed areas, where policies and programmes for youth are adopted that tend to contradict this principle. Three of the most prevalent examples also, however, involve activities that may be attractive for the short-term political advantages that they offer:

1. At times, based on the theory that special attention must be given to the problems of youth, governmental responsibility in the youth field is placed in a separate Ministry or Department devoted to youth and sports, or placed in the governmental framework in a manner that tends to isolate youth concerns from other sectoral concerns such as education, labour and health. Unless this ministry or department is placed at the highest level of government and has direct access to the organs responsible for overall national planning and policy co-ordination, its responsibilities can become parochial and restricted to activities of peripheral concern at best to the long-term problems of young people.

An argument can be made against emphasizing the problems of youth to the detriment of other segments of the population, which can result from creation of a special body to co-ordinate youth policy and programmes at the presidential or prime ministerial level. It is said that if youth are given special attention, other groups such as the aged, children, women, the handicapped, etc. should also be provided with access to the highest levels of government. This is a valid criticism only to the extent that young people are considered a special interest group. From another point of view, however, the problems of the young cut across all segments of the population. Given the fact that youth now constitute a majority of the population in most countries, that their proportion of these populations is growing, and that they often bear the brunt of problems of unemployment and underemployment, health, nutrition and education, the conclusion can be drawn that dealing with youth problems is in fact dealing with the most pressing national problems.

2. Another example of policy formulation and programming that can result in short-term advantages at best is excessive dependence on mass recreation and cultural programmes. Although these are an important and necessary part of an overall approach to the problems of young people, and can help develop a sense of identity, self-confidence and pride, overemphasis on these programmes can have a counter-productive effect. If too great a proportion of the nation's talent, time and resources is given to these activities, they can have the effect of diverting the attention of youth and policy-makers alike from fundamental problems of employment, education, health and nutrition and the complex efforts needed to address these problems successfully.

3. Thirdly, a common pitfall is to approach youth problems on a sectoral rather than cross-sectoral basis. Studies conducted for the 1970 Report on the World Social Situation indicate that unemployment and underemployment in the less developed regions of the world, for example, is most marked among the young, especially among educated youth. Experience has demonstrated that youth unemployment and underemployment are not the result of narrowly-defined deficiencies in employment policies, but of fundamental imbalances in the processes by which national resources are developed and allocated, and in the ways in which education and training policies are related to the development of work opportunities. If there are no jobs at the end of the education and training process, unemployment may result even if education and training programmes are excellent.

The need for a cross-sectoral approach to youth policies, within the context of overall national policy, is demonstrated also by the fact that certain key questions can be answered in no other manner. It may well be, for example, that problems of unemployment are solvable in the long run only if one redefines what constitutes acceptable and remunerable employment. Many young people are voluntarily engaged in national service programmes that are not considered employment in the traditional sense, but which are considered socially valuable and for which some remuneration is provided. Youth service programmes and other relatively new conceptions of socially valuable work probably will attract more and more attention as solutions to the problem of unemployment. The social, political and economic implications of these programmes can be dealt with only on a cross-sectoral basis, and only at the highest levels of government.

II. Current United Nations Efforts in the Youth Field

Some of the questions that face the youth policy-maker in 1970 may be seen in the above review of issues. For several years, and particularly since 1965, the United Nations system has addressed itself to these issues and generally to helping solve youth problems.

The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, in resolution 1086J(XXXIX) of 30 July 1965, recommended that Governments, in formulating their development plans and establishing institutional arrangements for their implementation, should take fully into account the needs of young people and their role in national development. It was recommended that governments consider, as a priority, policies and measures for combatting unemployment and underemployment among young people and for youth service to their communities. The ECOSOC Resolution went on to request that the Secretary-General, in co-operation with UNICEF and the specialized agencies, assist Governments, at their request, in their planning for youth and in their measures for increasing the quality and scope of youth participation in national development, and encourage the participation of appropriate non-governmental organizations having consultative status with ECOSOC or the specialized agencies, so that their experience, competence and facilities may be utilized to the fullest extent in the interest of youth.

Similarly, the report on the first United Nations Development Decade submitted to the ECOSOC at its forty-first session ^{1/} declared that, in relation to youth, action by the United Nations family would have the following broad effects:

- " (a) to facilitate the contribution of young people to development and to ensure that their efforts are diverted to feasible ends which are relevant and integral parts of the total development plan;
- " (b) to strengthen the motivation of young people to participate and contribute to programmes of self-help and mutual assistance;
- " (c) to protect young people from exploitation and excessive participation in development activities which might harm their health or hinder their physical or mental growth and their development as individuals and as citizens".

The General Assembly, in resolution 2447 (XXIII) of 19 December 1968, endorsed the proposition that all means of education should be employed so that youth may grow up in a spirit of respect for human dignity and equal rights of man, without discrimination as to race, colour, language, sex, or faith, and went on to request that the Secretary-General provide for exchanges of information on action taken by States and organize seminars in this regard.

At the 2th Session of the General Assembly in 1969, a preliminary report by the Secretary-General on Long-Term Policies and Programmes for Youth in National Development was discussed, and resolution 2947 (XXIV) was subsequently adopted on October 28, 1969. In the second part of this resolution, the General Assembly endorsed ECOSOC resolution 1407 (XLVI), which contained a number of recommendations to governments regarding economic and social policies affecting young people and requested the Secretary-General to prepare an analytical study in depth of the world social situation of youth in which the needs and aspirations of young people would be described and the most effective methods of meeting those needs would be suggested. Both resolutions emphasized that the active participation of youth in all aspects of national and community life is an important factor in economic and social progress. The General Assembly resolution also requested the Secretary-General to consider measures to be taken to establish channels of communication with youth and international youth organizations.

^{1/} Official Records of ECOSOC, Forty-Fifth Session, Annexes, Agenda Item 5, Document E/4196 and add. 3, para. 117.

On the basis of these and other resolutions of United Nations organs, the Organization and its specialized agencies have collaborated with Governments and non-governmental organizations to provide comprehensive assistance in the youth field. This programme of concerted international action is aimed primarily at helping governments devise and implement policies to meet the needs of their young people, and, in the process, to use youth capabilities and aspirations fully and imaginatively in programmes for national, regional and international development.

During the past several years, a number of main themes have emerged in this work, reflecting the principal concerns that young people, governments and non-governmental organizations have in their spheres of activity. These themes are the primary concepts around which the concerted UN programme is centered:

- (a) the relationship of in-school and out-of-school education in the developing countries to problems of youth employment and training;
- (b) national youth service programmes as vehicles for the application of youth capabilities and aspirations to development efforts;
- (c) training of youth leaders, including the training of domestic volunteers;
- (d) the needs of young women and girls;
- (e) development of national youth policies, including the relationship of governmental and non-governmental bodies;
- (f) international youth co-operation, including youth exchanges;
- (g) rural youth needs.

In establishing practical programmes related to these themes, the United Nations has initiated activities that may be divided into three main categories:

1. Advisory services and material assistance to governments

(a) the work of the United Nations Interregional Adviser on Youth Policies and Programmes, who advises Governments on steps they might take to establish and strengthen their youth policies and programmes. The United Nations also participates in inter-agency teams sent at the request of governments to advise them on specific problems and programmes;

(b) intersectoral and sectoral programmes at the country level, including:

- (i) - field projects assisted by UNDP in co-operation with the UN and the specialized agencies proposed for Jamaica, Ceylon, Sudan and Zambia, and projects in the formative stage in other countries;
- (ii) - UN advisers on youth policies and programmes who have been appointed in Guyana and Hong Kong, and under consideration in Tunisia;
- (c) the work of the Human Rights Division of the United Nations Secretariat in the youth field, including, for example, a Seminar on the Role of Youth in the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights held in Belgrade, Yugoslavia in June, 1970;
- (d) a series of seminars and meetings, including;
 - (i) - an interregional seminar on National Youth Service Programmes held in Denmark in 1968 with the co-operation of the Government of Denmark and the International Labour Organisation;
 - (ii) - an interregional seminar on the Training of Professional and Voluntary Youth Leaders held in Denmark in 1969, with the co-operation of the Government of Denmark and UNESCO;
 - (iii) - an Asian Regional Seminar on the Role of Youth in National Development held in Bangkok in 1970 and sponsored by ECAFE under the regular United Nations Technical Assistance Programme;
 - (iv) - an African Regional Seminar on National Youth Service Programmes held in Addis Ababa in 1970 as a follow-up to the 1968 Interregional Seminar, with the co-operation of the Government of Denmark and the International Labour Organisation;
 - (v) - special youth components of the World Food Congress held in the Hague in June 1970;
 - (vi) - the World Youth Assembly held in New York in July 1970 as part of the United Nations twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations;
 - (vii) - the UNICEF Round Table Conference on "Planning for the Needs of Children and Youth in Developing countries" (New York, 1964) and subsequent regional meetings, have helped focus the thinking of governments and experts on the place of children and youth in overall national development;

- (viii) - the UNESCO regional meetings on educational planning have been important for methods of problem analysis and setting of education priorities. The 1964 UNESCO International Conference on Youth, held in Grenoble, France, was an important early step in UN efforts to mark out priority fields for governmental and non-governmental action in the youth field;
- (ix) - the Young World Food and Development Seminars of FAO's Freedom from Hunger Campaign have offered impetus to youth participation in development and provided practical guidelines for such participation;
- (x) - conferences, meetings and seminars projected for the future include a major Conference on Participation of Youth in the Second United Nations Development Decade in late 1971, which will include participant-observers from youth organizations as well as Government representatives, and a Seminar on Training Youth Leaders for Action in Development to be sponsored by the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut in 1971.
- (e) the Social Development Division of the United Nations has provided advisory services on a number of UNICEF-assisted projects related to youth, including projects in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and the United Arab Republic;
- (f) preliminary steps have been taken towards the appointment of regional youth advisers to be attached to ECA and ECAFE. The ILO also has taken steps to recruit regional advisers for youth employment and pre-vocational questions;
- (g) Regional training institutes being planned by the United Nations as a result of recommendations made by the International Conference of Ministers Responsible for Social Welfare, held at headquarters in September 1968, will include in their activities the training of personnel for youth development programmes. The first such institute is likely to be established in Manila at the invitation of the Government of the Philippines. Active consideration is being given to the establishment of a similar centre in the Middle East;
- (h) The specialized agencies continue to carry out extensive sectoral programmes in the youth field, and to co-operate in intersectoral programming. It is not possible here to include extensive details of this work, but reference may be made to co-ordination/R. 819/Add. 1 dated 23 September 1970 and entitled "Review of Current or Future Activities Related to Youth" for current information.

2. Activities that enlist the participation of youth in development efforts and in the overall work of the United Nations

(a) Continued development of a proposal that a group of United Nations Volunteers be established under the United Nations system. Volunteers have been associated with United Nations projects in a number of countries during the past several years.

(b) Continuing efforts by the NGO Section of the Economic and Social Council Secretariat and the United Nations Office of Public Information to relate young people more closely to the work of the United Nations through international and national youth non-governmental organizations. Consultations with youth NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC and the specialized agencies are held periodically in New York and in Geneva. In addition, the Office of Public Information in co-operation with the Economic Commission for Africa held an African Regional Conference of NGOs in February 1970.

(c) UNESCO and FAO have established special advisory bodies of young people to help these agencies evaluate policy formulation and implementation.

(d) Each year the United Nations sponsors a programme of summer internships to provide opportunities for young professionals from many countries to study questions of international, regional and national importance and become more acquainted with the United Nations system.

3. Activities and studies that call attention to the situation of youth

(a) The United Nations commission on the Status of Women continues to discuss studies that point out problems of young women and girls under 25 as well as of older age groups. For example, a study on the participation of women in national economic and social development ^{1/} calls attention to discrimination against girls in education and measures to extend education and training in rural and urban areas, the wider access of girls to technical institutes, educational policy, migration of girls and women from rural areas to rapidly expanding areas, the establishment of rural schools, the provision of girls' training camps in rural areas, residences for working girls, and special vocational guidance services.

(b) A preliminary Report of the Secretary-General on Long-Term Policies and Programmes for Youth in National Development was presented to the 24th Session of the General Assembly in 1969.

^{1/} Unified Long-Term Programme for the Advancement of Women and United Nations Assistance in this Field - E/CN.6/513/Add.4, 29 January, 1969, New York, United Nations, 1969.

(c) A study on New Trends on Service by Youth, commissioned by the United Nations, will be published in 1971. In recognition of the fact that Domestic Volunteers will be of great importance during the Second United Nations Development Decade, the United Nations Social Development Division will also commence a study on domestic volunteer programmes for publication in 1972.

(d) A Study of the Question of the Education of Youth all over the World for the Development of its Personality and the Strengthening of its Respect for the Rights of Man and Fundamental Freedoms was presented by the Secretary-General to the Commission on Human Rights in 1970.

(e) Recent studies by the Social Development Division include Participation of Young People in Community Development and Technical Co-operation Programmes of International Youth Organizations.

(f) The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) soon will complete a study on Youth and International Society, including the participation of youth organizations in international affairs at the international level. A projected second phase of the study will deal with participation at the national level by youth organizations active in fields of concern to the United Nations system.

(g) In response to General Assembly resolution 2497(XXIV) of October 28, 1969, the Social Development Division is preparing a report for the Secretary-General on measures that might be adopted to strengthen channels of communication between the United Nations and youth and international youth organizations. It is expected that this report will be presented to the 26th Session of the General Assembly in 1971.

(h) The Social Development Division is also preparing a Report on the World Social Situation of Youth for submission to ECOSOC and the General Assembly in 1972. In addition to research based on documentary sources, this Report will include the results of the work of consultants and working groups of young people in 12 countries.

(i) The United Nations Centre for Economic and Social Information is preparing a series of publications on youth and development for issuance in 1971, aimed particularly at providing background material for the 1971 Conference on Participation of Youth in the Second United Nations Development Decade.

III. Future International Co-operation in the Youth Field

During the past twenty-five years and more the United Nations and its agencies have created a realistic and flexible framework for international action to deal with youth problems. This framework is a fragile one in many ways, however, and there is an increasing awareness that youth programmes of the United Nations system must be strengthened and greater efforts made to help the developing countries mount concerted, cross-sectoral programmes to meet the needs and aspirations of youth. Three factors reinforce this awareness:

1. a growing conviction that unless greater attention is given within the United Nations system to the situation in which young people within the developing countries will find themselves within the next ten or fifteen years and to communicating with youth regarding their situation, the United Nations and its agencies might risk becoming detached from the needs and aspirations of the most energetic and creative among the intended beneficiaries of their development assistance;
2. a realization that ad hoc responses to youth needs and aspirations on the part of the United Nations family limit the quality of assistance that the United Nations is able to provide regarding youth;
3. a realization that the governments taking part in the projected 1971 Conference on the Participation of Youth in the Second United Nations Development Decade will expect the United Nations and its agencies to have the administrative machinery and the inter-agency and cross-sectoral capabilities necessary for relating youth needs and aspirations to the programmes of the Second Development Decade.

The experience of past years and awareness of current limitations in the UN's approach to youth suggest strongly that action is needed in the following areas:

1. The principal purposes and directions of United Nations activity in the youth field should be clearly defined. For this purpose the United Nations' policy-making organs may wish to consider consolidating its major resolutions regarding youth into a single comprehensive resolution that will provide guidelines and define relationships for action within the UN system. Concurrently, a thorough review should be made of programmes aimed at informing youth of what the United Nations is, what it does, and how they can relate to the Organization. These programmes should be organized to relate to youth at the country level, in their own languages.
2. The capacity of the United Nations system to provide practical advisory and material assistance in the youth field at the country level should be evaluated and strengthened. At present, there are a number of programmes of an advisory or assistential nature provided by the UN that are more or less related to this capacity, but these relationships are often inadequately defined, and the procedures for organizing comprehensive programmes for application at the country level are often unnecessarily time-consuming. Some positive steps might include:
 - (a) increasing the number of inter-regional advisers on youth policies and programmes from the present one to two or three, permitting each to spend more time in each country visited and to draw up practical proposals for follow-up action. These inter-regional advisers could be specifically responsible for discussing with Governments, at their request, youth needs and aspirations and programme proposals, in general terms, to be followed up by inter-sectoral teams from the UN and the specialized agencies who would consider these questions in depth and make detailed recommendations to the Government. This procedure could be accommodated within established UNDP procedures for project preparation;

(b) further decentralization of UN responsibility in the youth field to the regional and sub-regional levels. This could include the appointment of youth advisers and complementary staff to be attached to each of the regional commissions who would, on a full-time basis, work with governments and non-governmental organizations and help them develop the institutional infrastructure for co-operation at the country level;

(c) strengthening UN arrangements and structures for providing co-ordination among the United Nations and specialized agencies on youth matters. At present it is difficult to keep track of the increasing variety of UN programmes in this field and to arrange consultations among the agencies sufficiently in advance to ensure full co-ordination.

4. The relationship of non-governmental international youth organizations to the UN's aims in the youth field should be re-evaluated. Consideration should be given to asking these organizations to play a greater part in implementation of UN youth programmes at the international, regional and country levels, and they should be given appropriate assistance to strengthen their staff and programming capabilities in this area.

5. New means should be established to help youth have an impact on United Nations decisions and policies. However, these means should be examined closely and should be established in a spirit of mutual co-operation lest they become mechanisms simply for ratifying the status quo. Advisory bodies, conferences and assemblies should have a clear reason for existing, and there should be a clear mechanism for relating their conclusions to the overall United Nations deliberative process. This suggests that much serious thought should be given to the report being prepared by the Social Development Division for submission to the General Assembly on establishing channels of communication with youth and international youth organizations. Thorough consultations should be held with non-governmental international youth organizations on this matter in the coming year.

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