

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY SPECIAL SESSION FOR AN OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HABITAT AGENDA

YOUTH CAUCUS REPORT

5-7 JUNE, NEW YORK

A. INTRODUCTION

Date and time: 5-7 June 2001, 10:30-13:00 and 15:00-18:00

Organizer: Youth for Habitat International Network

Summary of the opening:

Youth for Habitat International Network, hereafter referred as YFHIN, is a non-governmental youth network established in 1995 working on awareness raising and information dissemination on Habitat Agenda and Agenda 21 as well as enabling youth for their implementation.

YFHIN has been organizing youth events during Commissions on Human Settlements and Preparatory Committees for Istanbul+5 to provide youth input to the process and review youth works in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. In the opening session, participants introduced themselves and presentation of Youth for Habitat International Network and the process was explained.

In the opening it was also discussed by the participants that the Draft Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium was not dealing with youth concerns in a substantial way as with the other Habitat partners. It was decided by participants to work on providing a proposal for the declaration promptly.

Youth for Habitat International Network was given the chance of making a statement before the General Assembly. It was also decided to organize a workshop to outline the youth concerns and problems to be mentioned in the statement before the governments.

B. Discussions:

Discussions on providing youth input in the draft declaration were held. It was agreed that input should be in a way to provide youth focus in the paragraphs that are concerned with other Habitat partners and paragraph 51 of the declaration, which is concerned with youth, should be rewritten in a substantial way. After the discussion the drafting team wrote the proposal, which is annexed (Annex 1). Despite the youth lobby to propose the drafted input, the governments did not propose the input mainly due to the discussions on the paragraphs which they could not agree upon and due to the fact that the deadline for the inputs which was 5 June Monday 4 p.m. had expired.

A workshop on Empowerment of Youth and Participation in decision making processes was held. With the opening of the workshop 6 main points were proposed to be discussed:

- How empowerment

Access to facilities, basic services and the mechanisms for participation in decision-making processes, economic and political empowerment (particularly generating micro-enterprises for economic empowerment of youth are important means for developing countries) were outlined as important means of empowerment due to the problems faced by youth in their respective countries.

- Who does the capacity building

It was underlined by the participants that the governments, institutions and other organizations should do capacity building but youth and youth organizations themselves should also be involved more in capacity building. There are good examples of peer education in different parts of the world.

- Desire or will in capacity building
- Awareness raising on both sides (both on youth organizations and governments, institutions working on youth)

It was realized that there was still a lack of awareness by youth about Habitat and Agenda 21 issues. However, it was also stated that there was a need to raise awareness on governmental institutions to meet the needs of youth realistically.

After these discussions to review the situation of youth in decision making processes in different countries, presentations from different countries with special reference to youth councils and parliaments took place. A summary of presentations is annexed (Annex 3).

The Youth Caucus gathered to draft the (Annex 4) to be made by Youth for Habitat International Network before the General Assembly. Following problems were outlined as problems:

- Lack of youth policies and ineffective implementation of the policies where they exist.
- Problems in access to basic services and facilities, information and financial resources.
- Participation in decision-making processes is ineffective
- Lack of database and documentation
- Lack of awareness raising on both youth side and on governments side
- Insufficient urban services
- Education: a big number of youth are not in the education cycle
- Health: there is lack of awareness and problems in access to basic health services
- Poverty: youth is one of the groups mostly affected from poverty.

These stated problems were discussed as the most important problems faced by youth organizations. Then recommendations on these problems were discussed:

- Governments should formulate national youth policies, effective administrative capacity and regular review mechanisms in consultation with youth themselves for coordinated and integrated approach and implementation in youth works.
- Access to basic services and facilities, information and financial resources- sufficient budgetary allocation and capacity building for fundraising and income generation should be facilitated.
- Youth councils and youth parliaments should be promoted for effective participation in decision making processes, which is a way to include youth in overcoming challenges of urbanization as a partner in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.
- Substantive awareness raising activities are needed to overcome the health problems.

- Potential of youth should fully be utilized for effective combat against poverty.

In the last day youth impact was also discussed. It was realized that youth involvement during important summits or events lacks coordination and preparation. Therefore it was discussed and agreed that youth organizations should collaborate better before such events. Participants also gave briefing about the upcoming events such as World Youth Forum and Rio+10. It was also agreed to get organized before Rio+10 to have more youth impact.

Another item discussed in the last meeting was the strengthening and revitalization of Youth for Habitat International Network. One participant argued that the parallel youth events should not be in a strategy orientation way, but be organized to discuss the revitalization and policy formulating discussions. However, one other participant argued that the participation is decreasing and in a caucus with organizations with different orientations it is not possible to articulate these youth policies on human settlements. So the main aim of these caucuses is to provide youth input to the conference. Firstly, youth should increase their participation in the upcoming events to discuss the institutionalization or strengthening of the Network. There was not a general agreement on the issue of what way to be followed for the revitalization of the Network. One other participant offered preparation of an action plan for redefining the structure and tasks well in the Network as well as strengthening this structure with a time frame. At the end, it was agreed that the Secretariat would facilitate developing a work plan for the revitalization and strengthening of the Network with the members, focal points and advisors which would be discussed during the World Youth Forum and Rio +10. 19th Commission on Human Settlements will also be an opportunity in this process.

ANNEX-1

05.06.01

Istanbul+5

Youth contribution to the draft declaration on cities and other human settlements in the new millennium:

Paragraph 10:

We also take note with satisfaction of the growing awareness of the need to address in an integrated manner poverty, homelessness, unemployment, lack of basic services, exclusion of women, children, youth and marginalized groups, including indigenous communities, and social fragmentation in order to achieve better, more livable and inclusive human settlements worldwide. Governments, international organizations and members of civil society have made continuous efforts to address these problems.

Silinmiş: and of

Paragraph 42:

We commit ourselves to the goal of gender equality *and intergenerational justice* in human settlements development. ~~We resolve to promote gender equality, intergenerational justice and the empowerment of women and youth~~ as effective ways to combat poverty and to stimulate the development of human settlements that are truly sustainable. We further commit ourselves to formulating and strengthening policies and practices to promote the full and equal participation of women in human settlements planning and decision-making.

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Silinmiş:

Paragraph 51:

~~We resolve to intensify efforts to enhance the role of young people in decision-making processes through the establishment and support of youth parliaments/councils and to increase cooperation between youth, civil society organizations and governments at all levels. We further commit ourselves to developing programs to empower young people and to acknowledge their potential in developing sustainable human settlements. (move to paragraph 16 as needed).~~

Silinmiş: youth

Silinmiş: and civil society, and to increase cooperation with parliamentarians in human settlements developments.

ANNEX II

YOUTH COUNCILS AND PARLIAMENTS

Germany:

There are some youth parliaments in Germany, in most cases, elected personally through school elections. The age group considered ranges from 14 to 21. Some of them have their own budget and have the right to speak in the local parliament and make proposals. These parliaments seem to work good if they are supported by city mayors and also have the right to speak in local parliament and right to making proposals. In some *Landers*, youth has the right to participate in the local elections starting at 16.

Sweden:

National Council of Swedish youth Organizations (LSU) is an umbrella organization working as a platform for different matters both at national and international levels. Through cooperation all the connected organizations can share experiences, run projects and influence society. The Youth Council mainly works on empowerment at the national level but also at the local level.

Despite young people in Sweden have access to information and to political power (in some municipalities young people have direct links with the decision-making bodies and decision makers are willing to give young people possibilities to take part in the decision making processes) young people in Sweden choose not to take part in decision-making processes. There is a small group interested in participation.

Another problem is that the structure, the political system have not been changed since many years. Young people want to change this in their own way but when they find out that the society is changing in a very slow way, they often leave to do something else.

Turkey:

There is not a national youth council in Turkey. Youth Association for Habitat and Agenda 21 has been working on the formation of a nation-wide youth platforms as a base to the national youth council. Under the project entitled Implementation of Local Agenda 21s in Turkey, local youth councils have been established. Under some other projects such as the Earthquake Project and Social Development Programme for Youth, similar youth platforms and youth centers have been formed or are well under way, which will turn into youth councils when they ensure their sustainability and institutionalization. According to the national youth action plan, these local youth councils are aimed at establishing a national youth council, which will be a national wide representative body formed through a bottom up approach. The main problems faced by these councils or youth centers are regional differences (while some centers are very successful as they are located in places where they can have more easy access to information and resources), the need for more substantial resources allocated for youth, more support from local authorities and ineffectiveness in participation in decision making processes.

Kenya:

Municipal Youth Forums were formed upon the realization that most of the population in the city and towns in Kenya are composed of youth.

The operational structure is based on gathering, sharing, disseminating and applying the lessons and experiences gained by youth groups. The project is aimed at complementing government efforts towards the establishment of a national youth council structure with a strong local youth base anchored within local authorities, known as municipal youth forums. There are two approaches to achieve this so far. One is the one initiated at the local level, through the bottom up approach and the other, which is government initiated through the top bottom approach. The project has enhanced the impact on improving the living conditions of people through collaboration and leveraging of sources, improved learning, based on the experiences of other leaders in the field, increased visibility and profile of all partners, provided a forum for addressing the special needs of youth at risk. Constraints are lesser participation of young women and limited sources.

Colombia:

Colombian Youth's Law since 4th July 1997 established the creation of vice-ministry of youth and the creation of national and municipal youth councils in Colombia. Parallel to this, in some cities, youth councils were also established through youth initiatives supported by private sector and governmental organizations. Some years after also a resolution was passed to regulate the creation of municipal youth councils. Youth Colombia, the entity in charge of youth politics in Colombia, is preparing a process of diffusion and promotion of these councils throughout workshops, training courses, television youth programs.

Zambia:

There is a national youth council, which is not very representative. It is not composed of local level councils. It was planned to be elected at local level but it is not working like that. There is a national youth policy where a fund for youth projects exists.

Rescue mission Zambia hopes to set up 5 City youth Councils focusing more on Habitat Agenda issues.

ANNEX –

PARTICIPANTS LIST

NAME

ORGANISATION

COUNTRY

TEL/ FAX

E-MAIL

Yasemin Uyar

The Secretariat of Youth for Habitat International Network

Turkey

Tel: +90 212 2755519

+90 2121 2757498

Fax: +90 212 2777436

Youthforhab@turk.net

Sezai Hazir

The Secretariat of Youth for Habitat International Network

Turkey

Tel: +90 212 2755519

+90 2121 2757498

Fax: +90 212 2777436

Youthforhab@turk.net

Pamir Yoruk

The Secretariat of Youth for Habitat International Network

Turkey

Tel: +90 212 2755519

+90 2121 2757498

Fax: +90 212 2777436

Youthforhab@turk.net

Zeynep Ozbil

The Secretariat of Youth for Habitat International Network

Turkey

Tel: +90 212 2755519

+90 2121 2757498

Fax: +90 212 2777436

Youthforhab@turk.net

Maïke Sippel

Youth for Intergenerational Justice- Europe

Germany

+49 231 171900

Maïke.sippel@gmx.de

Martin Viehover

Youth for Intergenerational Justice- Europe

Germany

+49 231 171 900

Viehover@yois-europe.org

Murugi Carol

Kenya National Council of Youth for Habitat

Kenya

+2542 442011

Youth4habitatkenya@planetmail.com

Juma Assiago

UNCHS (Habitat)

Kenya

+2542 623 771

Juma.assiago@unchs.org

Tatsuya Sueda

United Nations Students Association Japan

Japan

+81 90 1090 5899

Soet@mvi.biglobe.ne.jp

Norihisa Takeda

United Nations Student Association Japan

Japan

+81 44 857 5203

n-takeda@muc.biglobe.ne.jp

Hiroko Funamizu

United Nations Student Association- Japan

Japan

+81 45312 4258

W0212004@fps.chuo-u.ac.jp

Pohamba Shifeta

National Youth Council of Namibia

Namibia

+26461 248218/ 19/20

Shifeta@youthcouncil-namibia.org

Viktor Morawski

National Youth Council of Sweden

Sweden

+468 6634173

Viktor@lsu.se

Vijay Sharma

Indian Committee of Youth Organizations

India

+91 11 462 4776

Vitalink@mail.com

Kuria David

Habitat Young Professionals League

Kenya

+254 2 339139

Youngprofs4habitat@africamail.com

Adriana Valenzuela

Corporacion Grupo Tayrona

Colombia

Adri_val@hotmail.com

Juan Diego Valenzuela

Corporacion Grupo Tayrona

Colombia

Juandiegoval@hotmail.com

Silvia Mestroni

Aiesec-Italy

Italy

Silvia.vpp@infinito.it

Oluwole Oshata

International Students Movement for United Nations

Ooshata@hotmail.com

Alessio Brussemini