



The Youth Employment Network



Dear Secretary-General,

We are writing to report to you on the outcome of the third meeting of your High-Level Panel on Youth Employment and to ask for the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how the goal of youth employment and the work of the YEN can be better harnessed to strengthen the international development agenda as embodied in the Millennium Development Goals and, we would add, the international security agenda. Enclosed are the agreed conclusions and recommendations of the meeting, which was hosted by the World Bank in Washington from 27 to 28 September 2004.

We were asked by you in 2001 to develop a strategy you could present to world leaders in one year's time. We did so in July 2001, and in September you transmitted our recommendations to the General Assembly where they were discussed within the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit. The strategy is based on the following elements:

- youth as an asset, not a problem;
- four global priorities: employability, entrepreneurship, equal opportunities and employment-generating macroeconomic policies;
- a political process to translate the four priorities into national action plans; and
- an invitation for ten countries to take leadership by setting examples.

These recommendations in the meantime have been translated into a strong global mandate through the General Assembly's Resolution on Promoting Youth Employment (A/57/165), which was adopted one year later.

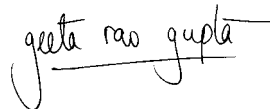
You asked us to continue working in an advisory capacity as a High-Level Panel. When we met in Geneva in July 2003, we delivered a five-step plan for the implementation of the strategy. We have also, as individual members, been active on fundraising, in advocacy and in advising national governments on youth employment.

The Youth Employment Network with its four global priorities has adopted a strategy to make employment a top priority, globally and nationally. This strategy has started a process of rethinking and reforming old policies. At our meeting in Washington we were encouraged by the fact that there are ten lead countries committed to the youth employment strategy and a number of other countries prepared to embark upon the strategy. Additionally, we recognized other forms of political commitment to youth employment, such as initiatives under discussion with China to start implementing the strategy through the All-China Youth Federation. We also recognized the ongoing discussions on the possibility of an India-Brazil-South Africa initiative on youth employment. Finally we recognized that the European Union and its 25 Member States are mainstreaming youth employment in their National Action Plans. Thus, less than two years

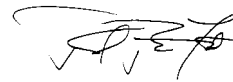
after the resolution in the General Assembly on youth employment, we are pleased that the strategy is gaining momentum.

We share the views, expressed by you, by President Wolfensohn and by Director-General Somavia that youth employment has gained increasing relevance and urgency in these troubled and insecure times. By starting with youth employment, the UN development strategy to fight poverty will be substantially strengthened. More jobs and productive jobs are, by far, the most important element in any strategy to successfully fight poverty and social instability.

We are, however, deeply concerned that the Millennium Declaration's commitment on decent and productive work for young people receive the attention it deserves in the General Assembly's five-year review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration including the Millennium Development Goals. Youth as an asset and youth employment as the starting point for economic and social progress has to be given a central role in this review. Therefore, we would ask for an opportunity to meet you personally to discuss how youth employment can be strengthened in this process, which will be of fundamental importance for the emerging new agenda on economic and social development and collective security.



Geeta Rao Gupta



Rick Little

Co-Chairpersons of the High Level Panel on Youth Employment

**High-Level Panel on Youth Employment:
Conclusions of the Panel meeting
at World Bank Headquarters, Washington, DC,
28th of September 2004**

1. The Youth Employment Strategy is gaining momentum

Young women and men are the world's greatest asset for the present and future. At over one billion worldwide, today's youth constitute the largest cohort ever to enter the transition to adulthood. The young generation of today is better educated and trained than any generation before. It represents a huge potential for economic and social progress and collective security. In order to give effect to this potential, significant reorientation of global and national policies are urgently needed.

The High-Level Panel (HLP) was asked by the UN Secretary-General in the year 2000 to develop policy recommendations on youth employment that could be conveyed to world leaders in one year's time. We delivered this strategy on schedule in 2001. These recommendations were transmitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, which in turn adopted by consensus in December 2002 a Resolution on Promoting Youth Employment (A/RES/57/165).

The strategy is aimed at a change from a target group approach to make youth employment the core of the emerging new global agenda for development and collective security. It is based on the following elements:

- youth as an asset, not a problem;
- four global priorities: employability, entrepreneurship, equal opportunities and employment-generating macroeconomic policies;
- building a global network, the YEN, to promote the strategy;
- a political process to translate the global four priorities into national action plans;
- encourage ten lead countries to take leadership by setting examples.

Last year, in 2003, the HLP delivered a five-step plan for the implementation of the strategy. Since the strategy was first presented to the General Assembly,¹ it has taken on increased relevance and urgency in the light of the growing unrest and anxiety in many parts of the world.

2. Implementing the strategy

Meeting at the World Bank in Washington 27-28 September 2004, the Panel had constructive discussions under the leadership of the President Wolfensohn. The HLP focused on three important issues:

- first, on the progress made since the political decisions were made 18 months ago: there are ten "lead countries"² committed to the youth employment strategy and a great number of other countries prepared to embark upon the strategy;
- second, on the urgent need to strengthen the political leadership to manage and focus the implementation process;
- third, on the necessity to bring the initiative to a new level of capacity to implement and profile

¹ See letter of the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly, A/56/422, 28 September 2001.

² Azerbaijan, Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Mali, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal and Sri Lanka.

the strategy.

The Panel will suggest the following actions:

2.1. The midterm review of the MDGs

The importance of youth employment has to be given a central role in the five-year review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which the UN General Assembly will undertake at its 60th session in 2005, and in the ten-year review of the outcome of the World Summit on Social Summit, which the UN Commission for Social Development will undertake in February 2005.

The Panel welcomes the commitment by President Wolfensohn of the World Bank to support youth employment as the key element in the overall development agenda, embodied in the MDGs.

2.2. National Action Plans

The HLP reaffirms the central role of the National Action Plans for the implementation of the strategy. The preparations of these action plans provide a framework for a broad-based national dialogue on youth employment. They provide a mechanism for priority setting in the face of scarce resources and should stimulate improved performance and learning by doing.

The HLP urges the UN, the World Bank and the ILO to support the completion of the action plans by the ten lead countries, so that they can be ready in time for the five-year review and to encourage other countries to follow their example. The Panel welcomes the commitment by World Bank President Wolfensohn to mobilize political support and resources to that end.

2.3. Youth employment in the Poverty Reduction Strategy process

The HLP welcomes the commitment by President Wolfensohn to give priority to youth employment in the World Bank's policy dialogue with developing countries in the PRSP process.

2.4. Other forms of commitment

The HLP recognises and welcomes other forms of political commitment to youth employment, such as initiatives taken in China to start implementing the strategy through the All-China Youth Federation. The Panel also welcomes the ongoing discussions on the possibility of an India-Brazil-South Africa initiative on youth employment. The Panel recognises that the EU has mainstreamed youth employment in the National Action Plans and encourages the EU to report on these plans in the framework of the resolution of the UN General Assembly.

3. The role of employers and workers and their organizations

The HLP reaffirmed its commitment to encouraging the use of social dialogue as a mechanism for gaining political commitment to youth employment.

The Panel urges the social partners to identify countries, where they can work together through their networks to create initiatives on youth employment.

4. The role of youth and youth organisations

The HLP recognises that participation of youth organisations at all levels is essential to a successful implementation of the strategy. The Panel welcomes the creation of the Youth Consultative Group (YCG) and the initiative taken by the YCG to review the implementation process and further development of this process (see YCG proposal in Annex).

5. Funding

The HLP recognises the growing number of donor countries, who are supporting this strategy (Sweden, Germany, Finland, the Netherlands, Ireland, Korea).

The Panel encourages the UN, the World Bank and the ILO to give priority in their own respective budgets to the YEN and to mobilise additional resources, both for core functions of the YEN and for support to the preparations and implementation of National Action Plans including the consultation process.

6. Dialogue and communication

The HLP urges the YEN to strengthen dialogue and communication between the actors in the network and with the outside world and to allocate the necessary resources for that purpose.

7. Youth, development and collective security

The Panel has agreed with the YCG to ask the UN, the World Bank and the ILO to present a comprehensive framework on the link between employment, development and collective security as a basis for the promotion of the strategy.

8. The role of the High-Level Panel

The HLP acts in an advisory capacity to the UN Secretary-General, to the President of the World Bank and the Director General of the ILO. This advisory role includes the preparation of policy recommendations subsequent to each of its annual meetings. Members of the HLP act as advocates for the work of the YEN, raise awareness about youth employment and help to raise funds in support of the YEN.

The Panel has agreed:

- to ask for a meeting with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to advance youth employment as a central element in the new emerging agenda on economic and social development and collective security;
- to meet in early spring 2005 to review the report on youth employment, to be prepared by the ILO in the framework of the YEN, for the five-year review of the implementation of the MDGs³;
- to propose a meeting in Geneva in July 2005 with the heads of the UN, World Bank and the ILO, planned to coincide with the High-Level Segment of ECOSOC, to review the further implementation of the strategy.

³ See "A United Nations initiative on Youth Employment," Provision Record of the Ninety-first session (March 2003) of the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization, 2003, page 11.

Youth Employment Network

Youth Consultative Group proposals to the High-Level Panel of the Youth Employment Network

Washington 28 September 2004

The role of the Youth Consultative Group (YCG) is two-fold:

1. at the *global political level*, aiming at contributing to the policy recommendations and priorities of the Youth Employment Network (YEN). In the first year of its mandate, the YCG will focus on youth employment in the framework of the 5-year review of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and of the 10-year review of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (WPAY2000).
2. at the *national level*, aiming at the youth contribution to the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of National Action Plans (NAPs)

The YCG has the capacity of being involved at the global, regional and national/local levels through its constituencies and partner youth NGOs, from the moment of the development of the policies at the global level until the implementation at the national/local level.

Assessment of National Action Plans

The YCG will focus on the YEN lead countries, starting with a pilot assessment on the process and the participation of youth NGOs. Indonesia will be assessed the first since it is the only country that has already developed an integral NAP. Based on the findings of the pilot assessment, the YCG will develop a model for the comprehensive involvement of youth NGOs in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of NAPs.

Elements of the assessment:

- The process leading to the development of a NAP
- The level of involvement of youth NGOs in the process
- NGOs bring in to the process elements of the local perspective.
- NGOs bring in to the process elements of an International and neighbouring region perspective
- Advantages and disadvantages of the process
- Implementation of policy and political willingness
- Recommendations for improvement of the NAP
- Recommendations for the process to be followed by other countries, in the neighbouring region or elsewhere

Timeframe

Working until the next meeting of the HLP in July 2005 the YCG will focus on:

- *October – December 2004*: Strengthening the capacity of the YCG; development of internal working methodologies and distribution of tasks
- *January – February 2005*: Evaluation meeting in the pilot assessment country (Indonesia) with participation of about 35 participants reflecting the international, regional/neighbouring and national/local dimension

- *End of March 2005*: Report of the pilot assessment is prepared
- *April 2005*: Report is distributed to the partners in YEN
- *May 2005*: Model for youth participation in the process of NAP development is developed and offered to the YEN partners and national governments
- *September 2005*: Assessment of the usage of the model