

# Netherlands – 1989

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Mr. van den Hurk

## UN Youth Delegate Programme

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Youth Delegate Search: <https://youthdelegatesearch.org/netherlands-1989/>

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18. **Mr. van den HURK** (Netherlands) said that a subject of particular concern to young people was their lack of independence in the years before they reached adulthood. Their dependence was apparent in the problems of the environment, the position of girls and boys in society, and homosexuality.

19. In the first place, young people nowadays were particularly concerned about environmental issues and wished to play their part. Interaction between youth organizations and the authorities should be encouraged in order to lessen the dependence of young people on decision-making by the generations in power. The United Nations System-wide Medium-term Environmental Programme (UNEP/GCSS.1171/Add.1) rightly emphasized the importance of international co-operation in tackling environmental problems and the involvement of young people was the best basis for a stable long-term environmental policy.

20. With regard to the position of boys and girls in society, young people were unable to influence their own lives, express themselves or develop in their own [\*6\*] way. They were held back by tradition which kept them dependent within the family and confined them to the traditional roles of girl and boy. Alternatives to traditional patterns should be brought to their attention so that they could explore and assess the options available and choose the way of life that suited them best. The Netherlands Government had developed an information campaign to encourage them to make independent choices.

21. The question of youth and homosexuality was dominated by a lack of understanding. That was clearly illustrated in the report of the Economic and Social Council entitled “Legal and Social Problems of Sexual Minorities” (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1988/31). Young men and women discovering their sexual preference during puberty depended on information and the understanding of people around them – parents, teachers and other young people. All people should be free to live according to their nature. Information should therefore be given to parents, teachers and others to give homosexuality a respectable place in society.

22. By adopting General Assembly resolution 43/94 entitled “Question of Youth” in 1988, the Committee had substantially rationalized its work-load, by providing for greater efficiency in monitoring policies and programmes affecting young people

and the promotion of global awareness of youth issues. It was important to coordinate youth policies throughout the United Nations system to ensure better implementation of guidelines. Since the stimulus given during the International Youth Year, attention to the functioning of communication channels between the United Nations system and young people and youth organizations seemed to be decreasing and the time had come for a thorough evaluation. The Geneva Informal Meeting, the main channel of communication, was being undermined by a lack of commitment, decreasing participation and an absence of concrete results. The Youth Information Bulletin was now issued only three times a year instead of quarterly and remained of poor quality. He trusted that the improvements referred to in paragraph 68 (c) of the report (A/44/387) would be successful. There was scarcely any direct contact between the United Nations and young people and between youth organizations at the regional and national levels. Co-operation was becoming a mere formality. It was essential to use the existing consultative structures for non-governmental youth organizations in the United Nations system and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should give priority to developing the active involvement of those organizations.

23. Despite the recommendations in operative paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution 43/94, the number of youth representatives in national delegations to the General Assembly and other relevant United Nations meetings or conferences dealing with youth had not increased. He wondered why the Secretary-General had not mentioned youth representatives in his report. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs should play a crucial role both in inter-agency co-operation and in the participation of youth and youth organizations in the implementation of youth policies and programmes. Unfortunately, the Centre's human and financial resources were decreasing and it was essential for the Youth Fund to continue to be included in the United Nations Pledging Conference.

