

Netherlands – 1994

Mr. Vos

UN Youth Delegate Programme

Original: UN Doc. A/C.3/49/SR.9, 19 October 1994, p. 7-8

Youth Delegate Search: <https://youthdelegatesearch.org/1212-2/>

29. **Mr. VOS** (Netherlands), speaking as youth representative of the Netherlands, said that in his country, as elsewhere, the family had changed, becoming what the United Nations had acknowledged to be a “pluriform entity”. Societies should act with understanding and tolerance, rather than rejection and discrimination, towards non-traditional families and allow young people to choose the family lifestyle best suited to them, even if it was not the same as that chosen by the majority. [*8*]

30. Young people were deeply concerned about the problem of inequality between rich and poor, North and South, and even within countries. Increasing numbers of children, especially in the 6 to 11 age group, were unable to attend school because they had to work to provide for their families. Measures to promote access to education and reduce the school drop-out rate should therefore be included in the proposed World Programme of Action for Youth towards the Year 2000 and Beyond. Those measures should not focus only on young people between the ages of 15 and 25; they should also take account of the situation of younger children. They could take inspiration from the plan initiated by President Nelson Mandela in South Africa, encouraging attendance at school, particularly by girls, by providing both lessons and school meals free of charge.

31. Every year, poverty and war drove thousands of migrants to settle in countries which were not their own and where, unfortunately, they were often victims of exclusion and discrimination. Their children often experienced problems of social integration and identity. The proposed Programme of Action did not adequately address the problems of young migrants. Countries should make greater efforts and devote more resources to training for first- and second-generation migrants, create jobs for them and increase the local population’s awareness of cultural diversity in order to foster understanding and tolerance.

32. In a world in which hunger, overpopulation and environmental problems were a source of universal concern, the Programme of Action for Youth should provide young people with fresh opportunities to participate in the search for solutions to such problems, which they themselves would eventually have to face. In that regard, it was disappointing to note that, despite the good intentions expressed at the United Nations, only three youth representatives were present in the Third Committee. If the Organization really wanted to tackle the problems of young people, youth representatives would have to be included in national delegations. On the tenth

anniversary of the International Youth Year, it was time for the United Nations to realize that young people were not the problem, but the solution.

