

# Norway – 1995 – I

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Ms. Nordbø (Norway)

## UN Youth Delegate Programme

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**Ms. Nordbø** (Norway): As a youth representative of Norway to the General Assembly it is a great honour and a pleasure for me to focus on youth and global youth policy in a plenary meeting of the Assembly.

Let me at the outset express my appreciation of the fact that the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, which is also the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year, has focused on a draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. We regret that there has been no consensus on the draft text. We hope, nevertheless, that Governments will use the draft Programme as a guideline for further development of national youth policy.

Youth is a part of the population with specific needs and potentials. Young people are not solely human beings passively waiting to enter adulthood; nor are we a more demanding and troublesome version of the child. Youth is a stage marked by strong sentiments and values. It is a period of life characterized by enthusiastic energy combined with a critical view of the established structures of society.

The youth of today is experiencing a rapidly changing world. Some aspects of the global development are not causing positive effects. Our vulnerable environment is suffering from pollution, and devastating wars are going on in several parts of the world. Recent decades have increased our consciousness that the Earth is fragile. It is more crucial than ever that it be populated by responsible and concerned people, ready to unite their efforts in finding global solutions. In order to strengthen [\*3\*] this feeling of responsibility and concern, youth must be given the opportunity actively to take part in the shaping of society. We must be given a fair opportunity to influence decision-making at all levels. The fiftieth session of the General Assembly has discussed the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. The United Nations has recognized the need for a global youth policy. I hope that this will lead to a greater awareness of the specific needs of youth, not only in the Governments here present, but also in the various United Nations agencies which are working with youth in the field around the world.

I would like to draw attention specifically to one of the priority areas mentioned in section IV J of the draft Programme, entitled "Full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making". The Programme stresses the importance of enabling youth to participate actively in order to be integrated into and to influence the society they are, and will be, living in. It is important that youth at an

early stage be able to use their resources and energy in constructive contribution to the decision-making processes, and not give up because of the overwhelming challenges the world is facing. A feeling of resignation amongst youth must be prevented. The successful implementation of the important results of the Rio, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing Conferences needs the active support of all generations.

Youth organizations should be recognized as schools of democracy. Through active participation, young people will gain experience in how democracy works. Recognizing youth organizations as important arenas for developing skills necessary for efficient participation in society, Governments should facilitate their existence by respecting full freedom of association, and should contribute with financial, moral and organizational support.

In Vienna four years ago, a global youth forum brought together 150 representatives of national, regional and international youth non-governmental organizations and agencies of the United Nations system. In 1996 another United Nations youth forum is scheduled. The United Nations system should provide financial resources to ensure that the event can take place. The Organization should encourage Governments to include youth representatives in their national delegations to the General Assembly and other United Nations events. This will give youth an opportunity to influence and share their ideas and perspectives with decision-makers within the United Nations system. Further, it is a valuable experience that these representatives will make use of in their work with youth issues in their home countries. Very few countries practice this today on a regular basis, although the experiences of those countries that have youth representatives are positive. The General Assembly has already invited Governments to include youth representatives whenever possible in their national delegations. I will remind all Member States of their responsibility to implement this resolution.

It is my sincere hope, that the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year will not be reduced to a commemoration of the past, but that the opportunity will be used to look forward, and to identify the challenges and potentials of the future.

