

# Norway – 1999

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Mr. Jon Ragnar Aarset

## UN Youth Delegate Programme

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22. **Mr. Aarset** (Norway), speaking as a youth representative, urged Member States to implement the Youth Action Plan adopted at the third session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations system, held at Braga, Portugal, in 1998. While the offer of the Government of Senegal to host the next session of the World Youth Forum outside Europe was welcome, the Braga Youth Action Plan should be implemented further before the fourth session was held. To hold it in 2000 would not give youth organizations sufficient time to [\*4\*] prepare. Accordingly, Norwegian youth organizations believed that the fourth session should take place in 2001.

23. The World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, held at Lisbon in 1998, had called for the strengthening of the Youth Unit of the Secretariat. Without the necessary resources, the Youth Unit would not be able to promote the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, as envisioned by Member States.

24. His Government had included youth representatives in its delegation to the General Assembly for almost 30 years, and it recommended that all Member States do the same. Youth interests in the United Nations system could be fully represented only by young people themselves.

25. A United Nations report on young people's influence on and representation in society, especially in political decision-making, would be very useful. That should be the theme of a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) human development report.

26. Many of the world's poor countries spent more on debt repayment than on education, health care and basic services combined. Unsustainable debt should be cancelled; the international debt-relief mechanisms should be strengthened and improved; and debtor and creditor countries should work together to find flexible solutions.

27. In a world of increasing globalization, new threats to human rights, as well as new opportunities for the implementation of human-rights instruments, were emerging. The increased openness of Governments and the private sector in many countries gave youth and consumers an opportunity to advance human rights and democracy. In his country, for example, some companies placed a higher priority on ethical standards in investing in and trading with other countries because they had found that ethical behaviour was advantageous to all in the long run.

28. Non-governmental organizations formed the basis of civil society in every country. They were important channels for democracy and vehicles for freedom of expression. Young people had often been at the forefront of the fight for tolerance and human rights and against racism and xenophobia. The involvement of young people and their organizations in the preparations for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, was of great importance for the attainment of its goals.

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